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## LETTER TO PARTICIPATING PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT

The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

*[Publication Note: This letter was originally distributed only among the Participating Parties and Organizations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM). In making this letter available publicly, what had been an Introductory Note at the beginning was instead included here as an Appendix, and for purposes of clarity some minor editing was done in that Appendix and in the main text of this letter.]*

Dear Comrades,

We are writing you at a time when the shared experience of working together in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has brought us to a sharp juncture where the forces formerly united in it are dividing out over cardinal questions. We face a moment where two-line struggle has to be joined over the most fundamental questions of what ideological and political line will define the international communist movement, if there is to be genuine communism in today's world.

The formation of RIM in 1984 was the start of a very important role that it played for two decades as the embryonic center of the world's Maoist forces – that is, those who at that time were committed to carrying forward the legacy of Mao Tsetung to advance communism, after the defeat of the revolution in China in 1976. As we all know, for several years now RIM has no longer been functioning as such a center. The reasons for this are part of the current dispute, while the great need for the unity of revolutionary communists on an international level, *based on principled cohesion around a correct ideological and political line*, is all the more important now. But such unity must and can only come about through fierce two-line struggle.

The failure to carry this process forward has done real damage. Look, for example, at the upsurges that have taken place in North Africa and the Middle East in 2011 and whose sequels are continuing in complex and contradictory ways, and see the consequences of the lack of an international force of communists clear on and fighting for a fundamentally revolutionary line in opposition to false "solutions". In that upsurge, as well as in other upsurges of the masses such as the Occupy movements which have arisen mainly in the imperialist countries, it is easy to recognize the great need for the clear and sharp projection of a revolutionary communist line and the need for the communist forces to join their efforts to affect an increasingly complex situation, bringing forward forces who can lead these struggles onto a path that can break out of the current framework humanity is locked within. The alternatives that are being presented to the masses all over the world are in most cases one or another variant of systems dominated by outmoded ruling classes, which do not lead people in the direction of breaking free from the domination of

the system of capitalism and imperialism, and onto the road to socialism and ultimately communism.

Without a genuinely revolutionary communist trend which is capable of presenting a viable and truly liberatory vision and program, and on that basis forges links to and leadership of masses caught in horrendous circumstances all over the world, the people are and will continue to be stuck between reactionary alternatives. Establishing revolutionary communist organization and leadership which can take root in particular countries, in the context of a common ideological line on a world scale, will be a crucial part of bringing forward a new stage of proletarian revolution.

The simple fact is that there can be no viable framework for the organization of communists internationally without confronting these questions of ideological and political line that go to the very core of what communism is, breaking with conceptions that are in contradiction to communism. The international communist movement needs to advance, and the basic political and theoretical scaffolding that has been developed with the new synthesis of communism by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP,USA serves as the basis for such an advance.

Most fundamentally, things have come to an impasse not because of the obstruction of one or another party, or the inactivity of the CoRIM [Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement] in the face of the acute differences over line, nor even fundamentally because of the very real betrayal of the revolution in Nepal with all of its negative fallout (about which we will have more to say below). Rather, the crisis of RIM and the international communist movement more generally arose because the understanding on which the movement was based – what we have called Marxism-Leninism-Maoism – is "dividing into two": its revolutionary, correct and scientific kernel is both validated and is advancing to new levels, while secondary but nonetheless real and damaging errors in politics and theory have been identified and can and need to be struggled against as part of making the leap that is required. That is the approach that Bob Avakian and our Party have taken and have called on others to join with us in filling that great need. In opposition, a line and outlook has consolidated that raises these very same errors to a principle and constructs a "Maoism" which has only an empty shell in common with the revolutionary communist politics and ideology that Mao represented and forged, while this wrong line denounces the new synthesis of communism as "counter revolutionary".

## **I. COMMUNISM AT A CROSSROADS**

After the coup d'état in China the formation of RIM gave heart and orientation to revolutionary communists all over the world. The RIM went into a political and ideological battle united and basing itself on what was, at that time, an advanced understanding reflected in the *Declaration*<sup>1</sup>. With this basic foundation uniting them, comrades from different countries engaged in revolutionary communist practice in accordance with the strategy and stage of development of the revolutionary process in their particular countries. In some instances, in accordance with the basic character of the country and the concrete conditions, most notably in Peru and Nepal, comrades were able to make real breakthroughs in leading masses in people's war. But comrades

in different countries encountered serious obstacles as well, and in some places the revolutionary process was reversed or stagnated, which has had an impact on RIM as a whole. There is a real need for a scientific examination of all of this experience, in different countries and on a world level. Even more, there is a need to situate those experiences and what should be learned from them in the larger context of summing up the whole sweep of the communist movement, and the historical and present developments of communist theory, and join the struggle over the different lines that have emerged over what lessons should be drawn from this experience, as well as from social and scientific experience more generally.

Our Party has for several years been calling attention to the crossroads facing the international communist movement, presenting our understanding of the nature and cause of the present crisis, inviting and insisting that comrades engage with the new synthesis brought forward by Bob Avakian. In truth, there has been far too little examination of the real obstacles and contradictions in the process of making revolution, referring both to the more recent experience of RIM but, even more importantly, summing up and learning from the proletarian revolution as a whole. Nevertheless, while the necessary debate has hardly begun, there have been continuing and sharpening divergences within the international communist movement and, flowing from this, different proposals of what needs to be done.

In 2009, we issued *Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage, A Manifesto from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*, which summarizes our evaluation of the overall goal of the communist revolution and an assessment of the current crossroads facing the communist movement.<sup>2</sup> The orientation is sharply summed up in Chapter V: Communism at a Crossroads: Vanguard of the Future, or Residue of the Past? In 2009 we sent a letter to all the participating parties and organizations in RIM, asking for their evaluation and response to this *Manifesto*. To date, only a few have responded to this request. This is unacceptable, a concrete manifestation of the wrong approach to advancing the international communist movement at this key juncture. Instead, some of those who have refused to engage any of this are issuing calls to form a new international communist movement based on what they call "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism," with no discussion of what they understand to be the content of MLM and, in particular, a shocking lack of delineation with the revisionist line that has been in command in the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) since 2005, which is not surprising since the UCPN(M) was a signatory to 2011 Call.<sup>3</sup>

There is something ironic and wrong in claiming the banner of MLM, while avoiding Mao's key point that "the correctness or incorrectness of ideological and political line decides everything" and refusing to approach all key questions seriously in that light. The international communist movement has often seen this kind of approach to seeking unity without principle, of blurring the distinction between Marxism and revisionism, and proceeding on the basis of pragmatism – which always means, in fact, accepting revisionist positions. There is the history of the Second International when "comrades" ended up supporting their own imperialist states in gunning down the workers in the "enemy" countries in World War 1. There is the whole experience of many forces, such as the Vietnam Workers Party and others, which argued in the 1960s for the "unity of the international communist movement", which meant demanding a stop to the struggle, led by Mao, against modern revisionism centered then in the Soviet Union. In more recent

decades there have been several other international initiatives, such as those of the Belgium Workers Party or the Communist Party of the Philippines, which tried to erase the struggle against revisionism and/or substitute some criteria other than revolutionary communism as the basis of unity.

### **What Is the New Synthesis of Bob Avakian?**

Over a whole period of time, Bob Avakian has developed the new synthesis of communism which has a great deal of substance and involves many different elements. Avakian himself and our Party have directly addressed the content of the new synthesis in a number of published documents.<sup>4</sup> The essential points have been summarized in *Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage: A Manifesto from the RCPUSA*. It is helpful to examine how the *Manifesto* presents this:

"In terms of philosophy and method, this new synthesis is, in a meaningful sense, regrounding Marxism more fully in its scientific roots. It also involves learning from the rich historical experience since the time of Marx, upholding the fundamental objectives and principles of communism, which have been shown to be fundamentally correct, criticizing and discarding aspects that have been shown to be incorrect, or no longer applicable, and establishing communism even more fully and firmly on a scientific foundation.

"In the original conception of human society's historical development toward communism, even as formulated by Marx, there was a tendency – although this tendency was definitely very secondary – toward a somewhat narrow and linear view. This was manifested, for example, in the concept of the 'negation of the negation' (the view that things proceed in such a way that a particular thing is negated by another thing, which in turn leads to a further negation and a synthesis which embodies elements of the previous things, but now on a higher level). This concept was taken over from the philosophical system of Hegel, whose philosophy exerted a significant influence on Marx (and Engels), even while, in a fundamental sense, they recast and placed on a materialist foundation Hegel's view of dialectics, which was itself marked by philosophical idealism (the view that history consists in essence of the unfolding of the Idea). As Bob Avakian has argued, the 'negation of the negation' can tend in the direction of 'inevitable-ism' – as if something is bound to be negated by another thing in a particular way, leading to what is almost a predetermined synthesis. And when applied to the historical sweep of human society, in such a way that it verges on being simplistically formulaic – as in the construct: primitive classless (communal) society was negated by class society, which in turn will be negated by the emergence once again of classless society, but now on a higher foundation, with the achievement of communism throughout the world – the tendency toward reductionism with regard to the extremely complex and variegated historical development of human society, the tendency toward a 'closed system' and toward 'inevitable-ism,' become more pronounced and more problematical.

"Again, this was a secondary shortcoming in Marxism, at its foundation (as Bob Avakian has also argued: 'Marxism, scientific communism, does not embody, but in fact rejects,

any teleological...notion that there is some kind of will or purpose with which nature, or history, is endowed'). But tendencies of this kind asserted themselves more fully with the development of the communist movement and were particularly noticeable, and exerted a negative effect, in the thinking of Stalin, who in turn influenced Mao's philosophical views, even while Mao rejected and ruptured in significant ways with Stalin's tendencies toward 'woodenness' and mechanical, somewhat metaphysical, materialism. The new synthesis of Bob Avakian embodies a continuation of Mao's ruptures with Stalin but also in some aspects a rupture beyond the ways in which Mao himself was influenced, even though secondarily, by what had become the dominant mode of thinking in the communist movement under the leadership of Stalin.

"Internationalism. In the early 1980s, in the work *Conquer the World?*, Bob Avakian made an extensive critique of erroneous tendencies in the history of the communist movement, and in particular the tendency toward nationalism – toward separating off the revolutionary struggle in a particular country from, and even raising it above, the overall world revolutionary struggle for communism. He examined ways in which this tendency had manifested itself in both the Soviet Union and China, when they were socialist countries, and the influence this exerted on the communist movement more broadly, including in the sometimes pronounced moves to subordinate the revolutionary struggle in other countries to the needs of the existing socialist state (first the Soviet Union, and then later China). Along with this, Avakian made a further analysis of the material basis for internationalism – why, in an ultimate and overall sense, the world arena is most decisive, even in terms of revolution in any particular country, especially in this era of capitalist imperialism as a world system of exploitation, and how this understanding must be incorporated into the approach to revolution, in particular countries as well as on a world scale.

"While internationalism has always been a fundamental principle of communism since its very founding, Avakian both summed up ways in which this principle had been incorrectly compromised in the history of the communist movement, and he strengthened the theoretical foundation for waging the struggle to overcome such departures from internationalism and to carry forward the communist revolution in a more thoroughly internationalist way.

"On the character of the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist society as a transition to communism. While deeply immersing himself in, learning from, firmly upholding, and propagating Mao's great insights into the nature of socialist society as a transition to communism – and the contradictions and struggles which mark this transition and whose resolution, in one or another direction, are decisive in terms of whether the advance is carried forward to communism, or things are dragged backward to capitalism – Bob Avakian has recognized and emphasized the need for a greater role for dissent, a greater fostering of intellectual ferment, and more scope for initiative and creativity in the arts in socialist society. He has criticized the tendency toward a 'reification' of the proletariat and other exploited (or formerly exploited) groups in society – a tendency which regards particular people in these groups, *as individuals*, as representative of the larger interests of the proletariat as a class and the revolutionary struggle that corresponds to the

fundamental interests of the proletariat, in the largest sense. This has often been accompanied by narrow, pragmatic, and positivist outlooks and approaches – which restrict what is relevant, or what can be determined (or is declared) to be true, to what relates to immediate experiences and struggles in which the masses of people are involved, and to the immediate objectives of the socialist state and its leading party, at any given time. This, in turn, has gone along with tendencies – which were a marked element in the Soviet Union but also in China when it was socialist – toward the notion of 'class truth,' which in fact is opposed to the scientific understanding that truth is objective, does not vary in accordance with differing class interests, and is not dependent on which class outlook one brings to the pursuit of the truth. The scientific outlook and method of communism – if it is correctly taken up and applied, as a living science and not as a dogma – provides, in an overall sense, the most consistent, systematic, and comprehensive means for arriving at the truth, but that is *not* the same thing as saying that truth itself has a class character, or that communists are bound to arrive at the truth with regard to particular phenomena, while people who do not apply, or who even oppose, the communist outlook and method are not capable of arriving at important truths. Such views of 'class truth,' which have existed to varying degrees and in various forms in the communist movement, are reductionist and vulgar materialist and run counter to the actual scientific viewpoint and method of *dialectical materialism*.

"As a related part of the new synthesis, Bob Avakian has criticized a one-sided view in the communist movement toward intellectuals – toward seeing them only as a *problem*, and failing to give full recognition to the ways in which they can contribute to the rich process through which the people in society overall will come to a deeper understanding of reality and a heightened ability to carry out an increasingly conscious struggle to transform reality in the direction of communism.

“Again, as the *Constitution* of our Party explains:

'This new synthesis also involves a greater appreciation of the important role of intellectuals and artists in this whole process, both pursuing their own visions and contributing their ideas to this broader ferment – all, again, necessary to get a much richer process going....

'In short, in this new synthesis as developed by Bob Avakian, there must be a solid core, with a lot of elasticity. This is, first of all, a method and approach that applies in a very broad way.... A clear grasp of both aspects of this [both solid core and elasticity], and their inter-relation, is necessary in understanding and transforming reality, in all its spheres, and is crucial to making revolutionary transformations in human society....

'Applied to socialist society, this approach of solid core with a lot of elasticity includes the need for a leading, and expanding, core that is clear on the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the aim of continuing socialist revolution as part of the world struggle for communism, and is determined to continue carrying forward this struggle, through all the twists and turns. At the same time, there will

necessarily be many different people and trends in socialist society pulling in many different directions – and all of this can ultimately contribute to the process of getting at the truth and getting to communism. This will be intense at times, and the difficulty of embracing all this – *while still leading the whole process broadly in the direction of communism* – will be something like going, as Avakian has put it, to the brink of being drawn and quartered – and repeatedly. All this is difficult, but necessary and a process to welcome.'

“As a unifying theme in all this, Avakian has stressed the orientation of 'emancipators of humanity': the revolution that must be carried out, and in which the masses must be the conscious driving force, is not about revenge nor about changes of position within a narrow framework ('the last shall be first, and the first become last') but is about transforming the entire world so that there will no longer be people who are 'first' and others who are 'last'; the overthrow of the present system, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the continuation of the revolution in those conditions is all for the purpose and toward the aim of abolishing all oppressive divisions and exploitative relations among human beings and advancing to a whole new era in human history.

"Strategic approach to revolution. Avakian's new synthesis has regrounded communist work in, and has enriched, Lenin's basic understanding of the need for the masses of people to develop communist consciousness not only, or mainly, through their own immediate experience and struggles but through the all-around exposure of the nature and features of the capitalist-imperialist system and the clear setting forth of the convictions, aims, outlook and method of communism, which is brought to the masses, in a systematic and all-around way, by an organized vanguard party, linking the struggle at any given time with, and diverting and directing it toward, the strategic revolutionary goal, while also 'setting before the masses' the essential questions and problems of the revolution and involving them in forging the means to resolve these contradictions and advance the revolutionary struggle. With the leadership of Bob Avakian, the basic strategic orientation necessary for carrying out revolutionary work in an imperialist country, to hasten while awaiting the development of a revolutionary situation and the emergence of a revolutionary people, in the millions and millions, and then to seize on such a situation when it does finally come into being – and to be able to fight and win in those circumstances – has been developed and is continuing to be further developed."

The *Manifesto from the RCP, USA*, makes a basic evaluation of the whole first stage of the communist movement and where we need to go from here:

"The first stage of the communist revolution went a long way, and achieved incredibly inspiring things, in fighting to overcome the very real obstacles it faced and to advance toward a world where all relations of exploitation and oppression would be finally eliminated and people would enjoy a whole new dimension of freedom and would undertake the organization and continuing transformation of society, throughout the world, with a conscious and voluntary initiative unprecedented in human history. But, not surprisingly, there were also significant shortcomings and real errors, sometimes very

serious ones, both in the practical steps that were taken by those leading these revolutions and the new societies they brought forth, and in their conceptions and methods. These shortcomings and errors were not the *cause* of the defeats of the initial attempts at communist revolution, but they did contribute, even if secondarily, to that defeat; and, beyond that, this whole experience of the first stage – with both its truly inspiring achievements and its very real, at times very serious, even if overall secondary, errors and shortcomings – must be learned from deeply and all-sidedly, in order to carry forward the communist revolution in the new situation that has to be confronted, and to do even better this time."

It is from this perspective of building upon the initial achievements of the communist revolution, and most especially doing even better this time, that we need to examine how the international communist movement can emerge from its current crossroads and provide direction to revolutionaries and people all over the world who find the current world order intolerable and are increasingly seeking out a solution. In this light, it is particularly necessary to understand the process that has gone on within the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, why it has no longer been able to fulfill the role of an embryonic political center, and what needs to be done for the international movement to be rescued and revitalized in the conditions of today.

In the *Manifesto from the RCP, USA* an analysis is made of two erroneous trends from within the international communist movement which make up a kind of "mirror opposites" and which, together, stand in opposition to the new synthesis which Avakian has brought forward and which represents communism in the world today. These tendencies are, on the one hand, those who have "an approach to communist theory and principles as some kind of dogma, akin to religious catechism" and, on the other hand, those who ignore or dismiss scientific communist analysis of the profound contradictions that have given rise to the danger of capitalist restoration in socialist society, and who attempt to substitute in place of that analysis an approach based on bourgeois-democratic principles and criteria, and bourgeois-democratic notions of legitimacy. These "mirror opposites" share a number of political positions and methodology which have been present in RIM, such as:

"Never taking up – or never engaging in any systematic way with – a scientific summation of the previous stage of the communist movement, and in particular Mao Tsetung's pathbreaking analysis concerning the danger of and basis for capitalist restoration in socialist society. Thus, while they may uphold – or may in the past have upheld – the Cultural Revolution in China, they lack any real, or profound, understanding of why this Cultural Revolution was necessary and why and with what principles and objectives Mao initiated and led this Cultural Revolution. They reduce this Cultural Revolution to, in effect, just another episode in the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat – or, on the other hand, reinterpret it as some kind of bourgeois-democratic 'anti-bureaucracy movement' which in essence represents a negation of the need for a communist vanguard and its institutionalized leading role in socialist society, throughout the transition to communism.

"The common tendency to reduce 'Maoism' to just a prescription for waging people's war in a Third World country, while again ignoring, or diminishing the importance of, Mao's

most important contribution to communism: his development of the theory and line of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and all the rich analysis and scientific method that underlay and made possible the development of that theory and line.

"Positivism, pragmatism, and empiricism. While again, this may take different expressions in accordance with different particular erroneous viewpoints and approaches, what is common to them is the vulgarization and degradation of theory – reducing it to a 'guide to practice' only in the most narrow and immediate sense, treating theory as, in essence, a direct outgrowth of particular practice, and attempting to establish an equivalence between advanced practice (which itself, especially on these people's part, involves an element of subjective and arbitrary evaluation) and supposedly advanced theory. A scientific communist, materialist and dialectical, viewpoint leads to the understanding that practice is the ultimate point of origin and point of verification of theory; but, in opposition to these narrow, empiricist distortions, this must be understood to mean practice in the broad sense, encompassing broad social and historical experience, and not simply the direct experience of a particular individual, group, party, or nation. The very founding, and the further development of, communist theory itself is a powerful demonstration of this: From the time of Marx, this theory has been forged and enriched by drawing from a broad array of experience, in a wide range of fields and over a broad expanse of historical development, in society and nature. Practice as the source of theory and the maxim that 'practice is the criterion of truth' can be, and will be, turned into a profound untruth if this is interpreted and applied in a narrow, empiricist, and subjective manner."

## **II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRISIS OF RIM**

What is cited above stands as a succinct summation of the current juncture in the international communist movement and in RIM in particular. The current crisis of RIM is not taking place in a vacuum – nor is it even principally a result of RIM's own internal dynamics. It needs to be considered in relation to objective world developments, which then have had their reflection and consequences amongst the ranks of the communists. For several decades, the entire experience of proletarian revolution has been the target of a relentless attack led by the triumphalist imperialist ruling classes, which have proclaimed the "death of communism". Slander and distortion of the great experience of struggling to transform the world through revolution has been echoed and relayed by the great bulk of public opinion makers through the mass media, academia, political parties and mass organizations. This process has been so relentless that verdicts of the bourgeoisie on the communist project are bandied about everywhere and go essentially unchallenged in public discourse.

New generations are propelled to struggle against the people-devouring capitalist system and all of the myriad abuses and horrors that are created by this system, or are propped up and living in symbiosis with it. However, even the great majority of those who are fighting the abuses of this system and are looking for some explanation for the state of the world and a means of transforming it are left clueless, cheated of the historical truth of the great accomplishments of

the first wave of proletarian revolution, or even convinced that this tremendous effort was a "failure" or worse. Without revolutionary communism, new fighters will remain with lowered sights, confining their efforts to what is in reality the impossible task of trying to reduce the inequalities, injustice, and spiritual bankruptcy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world while leaving the wellspring of the present world order – the capitalist and imperialist system – intact.

The theoretical framework for a new stage of proletarian revolution has been laid, but for this stage to reach fruition – and anything less will only mean continued misery for the masses of people and continued frustration for those who are searching for a way out – there is a great need for new batches of women and men to be won to the necessity, desirability and viability of constructing a new, communist social system all over the globe. Without winning over new initiators of a new stage of communism there will, quite simply, be no new wave of proletarian revolution. Oppression does lead to resistance, as Mao taught. But whether this resistance actually leads to the overthrow of the existing political and economic order, and to the necessary transformation of social conditions, depends on the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line.

### **The Coup In China And The Formation Of RIM**

Although the response to the revisionist coup in China in 1976 was foundational for the RIM, it is worthwhile revisiting it, not only because most of those now involved in political life have no direct knowledge of that period but also because all of us, old and young, have been constantly bombarded with lies and distortions on this subject for more than three decades.

The revolution led by the Communist Party of China had achieved nation-wide victory in 1949, and a new socialist system was fought for and put into place, bringing about enormous benefits to previously downtrodden masses in China. But Mao Tsetung did not rest content with these tremendous accomplishments. As he was learning from the actual contradictions of socialist society in China, he was also examining the previous historical experience which had resulted in the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union after Khrushchev came to power in 1956. Determined not to repeat this negative experience, and searching for the ways to lead the masses in continuing to make revolution under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Mao led a kind of revolution within the revolution, aimed at preventing China from being dragged back to capitalism by a new bourgeoisie born from within the Communist Party itself and feeding on the remaining inequalities and birthmarks of the old exploitative society. Mao initiated the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, in the mid-1960s, bringing forward an unprecedented explosion of transformative revolutionary energy from among the masses of people in China. This also served as a clarion call to revolutionaries and oppressed the world over. The GPCR pointed to the possibility and means of actually transforming society in a fundamental way which would free it from all previous systems of exploitation and the material and ideological scars from centuries of class division. Mao Tsetung was analyzing the problems of the proletarian revolution on the theoretical level and arming a new communist movement politically and ideologically with the revolutionary communist viewpoint.

The attraction of revolutionary China and with it, Maoism (called Mao Tsetung Thought at that time), was immense: Guerrilla fighters against colonialism in Africa, many European revolutionary intellectuals from the within the very institutions that were supposed to churn out loyal functionaries and ideologues of the bourgeois system, revolutionary young workers on the barricades of Paris in May 1968, participants in India's Naxalbari movement or land struggles in Brazil, in the convulsions that accompanied the creation of Bangladesh out of what had formerly been East Pakistan, in the midst of the Black liberation movement in the U.S. and in the fight against imperialist aggression in Vietnam: in all of these places, and many, many more, a new generation of revolutionaries was greatly influenced by the revolutionary energy and communist ideology coming out of China. It was taking place in a situation where the Soviet Union had gone from being a socialist state and revolutionary bastion and inspiration to revolutionaries and oppressed all over the world to a revisionist society standing as an obstacle to revolution. Out of those turbulent times and the worldwide two-line struggle that Mao was leading against modern revisionism, many came forward to embrace what was then known as Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, which had been identified as a completely new and higher stage of Marxism-Leninism,<sup>5</sup> even if their understanding of MLM at that time was primitive and contradictory. A Maoist movement emerged internationally with the Communist Party of China as its ideological center, even though the movement had no formal structure.

The material loss of the socialist bastion after 1976 and its rapid transformation into the ugly capitalist monstrosity that is China today was accompanied by an attack on the basic theses of Mao. Although launched by the new reactionary rulers in China, it dovetailed with the more generalized ideological assault on genuine communism from the bourgeoisie and its ideological representatives world wide. It is impossible to overstate what all this meant to the communist forces at the time and the revolutionary movement more generally. Confusion and demoralization was widespread. Many sought different forms of accommodation with the imperialist and reactionary dominated world. Some others, such as Enver Hoxha – the leader of Albania, who had supported Mao in the practical struggle against the Soviet Union but never really understood or accepted his core theses or grasped the revolutionary communist theory Mao was taking to new levels – ended up viciously attacking Mao Tsetung Thought and furthering the ideological, political and practical decomposition of the existing communist movement.<sup>6</sup>

For many in the Maoist movement of the time, what they understood as Maoism or Mao Tsetung Thought was difficult to separate from a kind of revolutionary nationalism, essentially limited to developing and waging revolutionary struggle against imperialism and semi-feudalism. Many of these comrades never really understood or shared Mao's orientation of taking the revolution forward in the direction of the goal of communism.<sup>7</sup> In class terms, this thinking actually represented the orientation and outlook of sections of the national bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries, for whom the communist movement was seen as a vehicle for fighting against the imperialist domination of their countries and some reactionary domestic class forces tied to imperialism. In the West, there was real attraction to the experience emanating from China among different strata who saw the experience of socialism there as pointing the way for solving many of society's harsh inequalities and giving voice to the formerly oppressed. This included some from the intelligentsia who were attracted to Mao's unleashing of the masses in the Cultural Revolution against the capitalist roaders in the Party and Mao's criticisms of Stalin and the

Soviet experience but who did not really understand, and in reality ended up opposing, Mao's framework of upholding and strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact, today's very much in vogue French philosopher Alain Badiou, a leader of an MLM grouping in France in the 1970s, is an example of those whose early enthusiasm for Mao was mixed with a rejection of the basic Marxist-Leninist understanding Mao was carrying forward. Later Badiou, and many others like him, "resolved" this by abandoning any pretext of Maoism altogether, and Badiou has coupled this with postulating a "communism" that is, in its essence, nothing more than glorified bourgeois democracy.<sup>8</sup>

In the aftermath of the counter-revolutionary coup in China, these kinds of wrong political tendencies that had been partially held in check by the ideological and political strength of Mao's China mainly abandoned any pretense of Maoism. The majority of communists either themselves blindly tailed the new revisionist rulers of China and took the path into the swamp, or in some other form abandoned the outlook and objectives of the communist revolution.

It was in this critical and dire situation that early efforts to regroup the remaining communists began shortly after the coup in China, leading to the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in 1984. It was essential to fight to preserve and advance the revolutionary forces that had not been swallowed up by the wave of demoralization and capitulation that followed the coup in China. The work of Bob Avakian was decisive and central in this process, in particular in formulating a penetrating criticism of the revisionist coup-makers in China (along with their 'centrist' obfuscators), and systematizing, popularizing and defending Mao Tsetung's contributions to the science of revolutionary communism.<sup>9</sup> While today it is obvious that capitalism is in the driver's seat in China, even though it is ruled by a Party that has maintained the name communist, it took real science to analyze and synthesize these developments on the level of communist theory, and Bob Avakian led a major struggle in the RCP,USA to take the correct line on this and then to fight for this in the international communist movement.

The questions involved in understanding the coup in China required going deeply into what Mao had analyzed about the contradictory nature of socialism, about the material and ideological basis for the emergence of a bourgeoisie "right in the communist party", about the communist goal and the means of getting there, and, underlying all this, Mao's development of dialectical materialism. But this, unfortunately, is very different than how most forces in the communist movement, even those who opposed the coup makers, approached analyzing the coup in China. There were many (as noted in the earlier cited passage from the *Manifesto* of the RCP,USA[]) who continued to view Maoism as essentially a recipe for waging people's war in a third world country and either failed to absorb or even rejected his most essential contributions concerning continuing the revolution under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, so central to Mao's overall development of Marxism to a new level.

At the time of the coup in China, it was not yet possible to see sharply that a whole stage of proletarian revolution had come to an end. There was a necessary fight to carry forward the proletarian revolution from the heights it had achieved under the leadership of Mao Tsetung and the tremendous accomplishments of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976.

There was a great need for Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought<sup>10</sup> to be upheld and defended, and there was a need for the remaining embattled forces of the Maoist movement to be rallied and given leadership.

There were always very divergent and contradictory understandings of how and on what basis it would be possible to advance the communist movement in the conditions existing at the time, and precursors existed of what have now developed into the incorrect lines evident in the international communist movement today. In retrospect, we can see even more clearly the importance of the work that Bob Avakian had begun of interrogation and evaluation that would eventually come together in what is now the new synthesis. Bob Avakian's work *Conquer the World?, the International Proletariat Must and Will* represented a particular nodal point in this process. In this work Avakian began summing up the experience of proletarian revolution from the period of Marx up through the coup d'etat in China.<sup>11</sup> In contrast to this, others tried to resolve the defeat by getting Maoism "back on the map," sidestepping the crucial task of addressing the significance of Mao Tsetung's greatest contribution to the science of MLM and the actual synthesis that had been achieved.

Nevertheless, despite existing differences, a generally correct and guiding understanding was spelled out in the Declaration of the RIM and guided the work of its leading Committee, even though there were differences and struggles within the CoRIM on major points of line throughout this period. Most especially, the Declaration was based upon the recognition of Mao Tsetung's great development of Marxism in many spheres, especially his breakthrough analysis of the contradictions remaining in socialist society; the re-emergence of a capitalist class from within these contradictions, headquartered in the Communist Party itself; and the need to continue to carry on the proletarian revolution throughout the whole period of socialist transformation toward overcoming the birthmarks of the old capitalist society and achieving communism. The regroupment of revolutionary communist forces determined to carry forward the great achievements of the communist revolution, and especially to go forward along the path charted by Mao Tsetung, was a powerful rejoinder to the reactionary chorus of the death of communism and an important factor in strengthening the hopes and confidence in the future of the communist cause at a very dark hour.

Despite the unevenness and contradictions we will examine below, the advanced understanding reflected in the *Declaration* around which RIM united also gave further impetus to different kinds of revolutionary practice – including, where appropriate to the situation in particular countries, communists took up or prepared for armed struggle for the seizure of power. Where the conditions did not yet exist, or had not yet been brought into being, for launching and carrying out people's war on a correct basis (as well as in those countries where such conditions did exist) other forms of mass mobilizations were carried out, such as opposing imperialist war and wars of aggression, and in many cases working to develop new revolutionary communist organization with a correct program and strategy. Participants in RIM led masses to give political support for the advances and to rally in the face of setbacks of the revolutionary movements in different parts of the world. This took on particularly powerful expression first in Peru and later in Nepal.

However, in the several decades since the formation of RIM, important debates have taken place in the international communist movement and divergent understandings emerged and sharpened.

Further positive and negative experience of waging revolutionary struggle under contemporary conditions was obtained and this, too, has given rise to further discussion and debate, especially as the revolutions in Peru and Nepal first helped rekindle hope among the revolutionaries and oppressed but then both ran into an impasse and major questions of line came to the fore. Throughout this whole period differences existed, sometimes becoming very sharp, of how and even whether to confront the challenges. Today these differences are crystallizing into opposing lines.

As we have noted, the last several decades were also a period of unrelenting ideological assault on the communist project. The collapse of Soviet social-imperialism and its bloc (socialism in name but imperialism in essence and in deed), following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, accelerated this even further, as the Western imperialists sought to portray what had in fact been social-imperialism as "communism". Some collective efforts were made by RIM to respond to these attacks, but a strong tendency also existed to feel that the ideological dispute would be settled by progress in the practical struggle, especially the advance of people's wars. This had serious negative consequences, both internal to participating parties and organizations, and in the ability of RIM to counter the reactionary ideological offensive of the imperialists with a vision of a viable and liberatory communism.

With the notable exception of the work being done by Bob Avakian, generally speaking comrades in RIM paid little heed to the effect of this ideological offensive, and continued on with the pragmatist and empiricist approaches to their work. Within the RCP,USA itself this was a major feature of the revisionist line which was going counter to Avakian's line and leadership. The cultural revolution in the RCP,USA, discussed in its *Manifesto*,<sup>12</sup> in essence revolved around the very same questions that are now at the heart of the struggle in RIM, in short the new synthesis brought forward by Bob Avakian. The fact that there was a need for such a cultural revolution in our Party is actually an expression of the same crossroads that the whole international movement must confront.

It is not possible nor desirable to answer either the attacks of the enemy or the legitimate questions of the masses by simple repetition of previous understanding, even the most advanced version of that understanding that Mao brought forward (and, of course, that kind of empty dogmatism does not and cannot actually reflect Mao's revolutionary approach, but rather inevitably guts it and renders it a sterile caricature). There are answers to the vexing questions of what can be learned from the past experience, of what can be done to enable the next stage of proletarian revolution to advance further toward communist society. But as Avakian has put it in discussing the need to understand the loss in China, to find the answers you have to dig for them.

Indeed, if revolutionary communists fail to examine the tremendous experience of proletarian revolution and the actual, material conditions that these revolutions faced, including in their contradictoriness, it will, more often than not, pave the way for the familiar political somersault in which empty lip-service to prior understandings flips over into a rediscovery of the bourgeois-democratic denunciations of classless "totalitarianism" and the worship of the bourgeois-

democratic political philosophy and institutions that both mask the domination of the exploiting classes and serve the consolidation and perpetuation of the bourgeois system and all of the oppression, injustice and horror that flows from it. Indeed, this is part of what we have been seeing in RIM organizations in the last period, most notably – but not only – in Nepal, where failing to give any serious attention to these life and death questions helped leave comrades politically and theoretically disarmed in the face of the "democracy" assault by enemies of communism, from inside the movement as well as from the imperialist bourgeoisie and their various political representatives and apologists.

### **III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EMERGING LINE DIFFERENCES AND THE RECENT DEBACLE OF NEPAL**

While differences over line and methodology, including differences over how to sum up the first stage of communist revolutions in the Soviet Union and China, were developing over time and in relation to actual developments in the world – including how RIM responded to the setback in the revolution in Peru, which we will speak to later in this letter – this process took a leap with the emergence of a revisionist line within the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), and the response to this development on the part of participating parties in RIM. The line developed by the leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist),<sup>13</sup> in essence, abandoned the People's War in that country and with it the revolutionary struggle to transform that society as part of transforming the world, instead opting for participation in the reactionary state apparatus and seeking a slightly improved place in the imperialist-dominated world order. The line questions that are at the heart of the crisis of the revolution in Nepal are themselves conditioned by and partial reflections of the overarching line questions that face our movement as a whole.

If we review the history of the emergence of a revisionist line in Nepal, we will see that it has very much to do with the contradictory understanding of Maoism which existed and had developed further within RIM and more generally in the international communist movement. This has very much involved the summation (either explicitly or implicitly) of the first stage of communist revolution, of the need for a communist vanguard, of the viability and desirability of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and of whether or not the goal of communist society must be reaffirmed – and, on the basis of scientific understanding of that goal and process, further deepened and developed. This goal must, in fundamental terms, guide choices of strategy and program. Furthermore, the response and reaction to the development of a revisionist line (or perhaps better put, general *lack of response* to the revisionist line) on the part of many RIM participants is itself a reflection of deep and developing differences over fundamental questions of line. These differences touch not only questions of line on the state and revolution, but also on the nature of proletarian internationalism and how to approach major questions of political line, that is to say, either in light of scientific communist principles and theory and the Marxist method more generally, or according to non-communist standards and approaches, such as *realpolitik* with its underlying instrumentalism, pragmatism and empiricism.

Let us consider how the revisionist line in Nepal emerged in a full-blown way. Babarum Bhattarai, a top leader of the CPN(M), developed and strongly fought for a series of positions that went against the basic revolutionary communist understanding on a whole series of

questions. In an article entitled "On Building a New Type of State"<sup>14</sup> he echoed the arguments of the bourgeoisie and the revisionists and opportunists who argue that the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union and China had been fatally flawed and had evolved into a "dictatorship of the party" and a "dictatorship of the single leader." Bhattarai also argued that in Nepal, instead of striving to complete the new democratic revolution (a new type of bourgeois-democratic revolution, under the leadership of the proletariat, aimed at overthrowing imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism as the first step in establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, and which clears the path for pushing forward into the socialist stage) it was necessary and desirable to go through a special "sub-stage", aimed at abolishing the country's monarchy and bringing about a transitional state and a period of democracy, without clarifying where this democracy would lead or what would be the *class character* of such a transitional state. Bhattarai argued that it would be necessary to install multi-party democracy, in fact just another name for the bourgeois-democratic system which has proven to be such a useful vehicle to insure the domination of the bourgeoisie and other reactionary classes. Bhattarai's repackaging of the socialist goal as really only a version of bourgeois democracy went hand-in-hand with, and laid the basis for, rejecting the path of new democratic revolution leading toward socialism and substituting instead the goal of establishing a (bourgeois) democratic republic.

Many of these arguments against the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat were almost a direct repetition of arguments made in 1990 by K. Venu, leader of the Central Reorganisation Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), even down to using the same worn-out quotation of Rosa Luxemburg about the "dictatorship of the party" which remains a favorite of Trotskyites and social-democrats the world over.<sup>15</sup> The CRC had been an early and active member of RIM, and it was necessary that RIM criticize the reflection in its ranks of the anti-communist offensive that had reached a high point with the collapse of the Soviet-led bloc. Bob Avakian, at the request of CoRIM, wrote a major piece refuting K. Venu's arguments against the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat entitled "Democracy: More than Ever, We Can and Must Do Better Than That."<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, many comrades in RIM did not give adequate attention to the struggle against K. Venu and the pivotal question of the proletarian dictatorship at the center of that struggle, and were also not vigilant when Bhattarai's "New State" article appeared. For many comrades, questions of what to do after seizing power were not seen to be of much importance, when, according to this view, virtually all attention needed to be focused solely on the problem of how to launch and carry forward people's war. This was a further illustration of the dangerous tendency toward belittling revolutionary communist theory that has existed in the RIM. Failing to pay attention to and enter into the struggle over such cardinal questions over a whole period of time has contributed greatly to the situation we are in today. It is particularly remarkable that the CPI (M-L) (Naxalbari) which came out of the CRC and had even written its own criticism of Venu, however belatedly (8 years later), was unable to see the similarities between Bhattarai's positions and Venu's liquidationism.

Inside the CPN(M) there were attempts to develop new thinking that took into account changes in the world and the problems that the revolution in Nepal was encountering. But these were still being done largely within the incorrect framework of confounding communist ideology and program with bourgeois democracy. And this was accompanied by focusing on immediate tactics divorced from the actual goals of the revolution. CPN(M) Chairman Prachanda sometimes tried

to distance himself from Bhattarai's loud and aggressive repudiation of the experience of proletarian revolution, but Prachanda also shared some of the same underlying assumptions and, together with his own pragmatism and eclecticism, this left him unable and/or unwilling to develop a real struggle against Bhattarai's unabashed revisionist positions. Furthermore, struggle that did take place with Bhattarai was focused on secondary matters and did not get to the heart of his revisionist line. Prachanda had increasingly trained the Party in pragmatism and eclecticism, especially the eclectic combination of opposites – "two into one" – which he called "fusion," in opposition to the Maoist concept of "one divides into two".<sup>17</sup> The result of this was that Bhattarai's basic theses were adopted by the Party as a whole at the Party Central Committee Meeting in October 2005, even if a thin veneer of eclecticism was maintained.

For our part, our Party began to wage a sharp and serious struggle against the developing revisionist line, beginning in October 2005, prior to the April 2006 anti-monarchy movement and subsequent ceasefire. The RCP,USA issued a private letter to the Nepal Party leadership, critiquing the above-cited article by Babarum Bhattarai that contained a series of revisionist theses concerning the nature of the state, the construction of a special stage of anti-monarchical struggle in place of the new democratic revolution, the history of the communist movement, and other points. The letter of the RCP also sharply criticized what was, at the time, a little-noted proposal that had been made by CPN(M) Chairman Prachanda for the merger of the People's Liberation Army with the reactionary Royal Nepal Army. A second letter was sent just after the November 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and a third shortly after the 2008 elections. Copies of all of these letters were distributed to participating parties and organizations of RIM. In 2009 a decision was made to release all of these letters publicly, along with a fourth.

Any honest review of the content of those letters shows that the RCP had been able to identify the basic questions of political and ideological line that were at stake in Nepal. A few other forces in the ICM also made criticisms of the Nepalese comrades.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the dismissive accusation that these RCP letters were merely re-stating the "ABC's of Marxism" – abstract principles that bore no relation to the practical necessities on the ground – the arguments made in these letters were both substantial on questions of principle and very relevant to the immediate juncture facing the revolution. We felt that it was our internationalist responsibility to struggle very hard against the line that our scientific method told us was leading the revolution to defeat.

Once CPN(M)'s wrong ideological and political position was thus solidified, the practical implications came rapidly. Various agreements were made with reactionary, pro-imperialist political parties to accept a bourgeois-democratic framework. After the absolute monarchy was forced to back down as a result of the People's War and an upsurge in the urban areas also involving middle class strata as well, the Party leadership acted to consolidate this "sub-stage". The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in November 2006, by which the People's War was formally ended, organs of political power established by the revolution were abolished, the People's Liberation Army was locked down in cantonments under the supervision of the United Nations, and the Party agreed to take part in and swear allegiance to the new bourgeois institutions, including the provisional government. The international community – that is, the

network of imperialist and reactionary states and international institutions, such as the UN and the IMF, which had been vicious opponents of the People's War and exploiters of the Nepalese people – were presented by CPN(M) as necessary and helpful allies for the reconstruction of the country. And while this process went on, most of the parties of RIM applauded or, at best, were silent. All of the major leaders of the CPN(M) also went along. Among the most enthusiastic supporters of this revisionist dismantlement of the revolution are most of those who are now so loudly accusing Bob Avakian and the RCP,USA of "revisionism" and having a "counter revolutionary" line, such as CPI (M-L) (Naxalbari), and PCm (Italy).

The advances as well as difficulties in the revolution, and the severe crisis of the old regime, did present the CPN(M) with big challenges and new and complex problems. But a wrong theoretical framework and wrong methodology adopted by the Party leadership made it impossible to correctly confront these complexities and chart a course which could lead to the completion of the new democratic revolution and the creation of a radically different type of state. Furthermore, the Party's line had wrongly accepted a bourgeois-democratic framework as the source of "legitimacy," which left it dependent on the outcome of elections and reaching agreements with bourgeois political parties and imperialist and reactionary powers. The various steps that the CPN(M) took during these crucial years were not just a series of mistakes; they were a response to objective developments, but with a non-communist line, outlook and methodological tools.

The revolutionary struggle in Nepal had inspired great hope and enthusiasm among genuine revolutionary communists and millions of oppressed people around the world. On this basis, RIM and its participating parties built mass political support for the People's War in Nepal among the masses and spread the lessons of the struggle the world over.

The advance of the People's War to the threshold of Kathmandu Valley<sup>19</sup> had brought into sharp relief the question of what kind of state power could be forged. What was needed was a state that would both rely on and enable the most oppressed masses to transform social conditions while embracing the extremely divergent and contradictory social forces and streams of activity which could involve many who do not share, or do not share fully, the orientation and goal of proletarian revolution. Communists needed to focus on and correctly answer cardinal questions: Could the revolution actually achieve nationwide state power, and what would it look like? How could it do better than the previous socialist societies, rather than model itself on bourgeois revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century? What would be the underlying economic relations established and enforced by the new state? How could it welcome dissent and diverse initiative *without giving power back* to the exploiters via multi-party democracy, as Bhattarai and Prachanda advocate and practice? How could one correctly draw forward and lead the middle strata who were concentrated in the capital, without letting their (wrong) conception of Nepal's problems and solutions set the terms and vision for what kind of new state needed to be established?

While mastering this process will not be easy in Nepal or any other country, we believe that the orientation at the heart of Avakian's new synthesis, solid core with a lot of elasticity, speaks to this dynamic in a basic way. This includes the need for a leading and expanding core that is clear on the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the aim of continuing socialist revolution as

part of the world struggle for communism, and is determined to continue carrying forward this struggle, through all the twists and turns. At the same time, there is the need for acting on the understanding that there will necessarily be many different people and trends in socialist society pulling in many different directions – and leading in such a way that all of this can ultimately contribute to the process of getting at the truth and getting to communism.<sup>20</sup> How this will work out in any country will surely be full of surprises and complexities we can only imagine now: as Lenin quoted Goethe, theory is gray, but green is the tree of life. Unfortunately, the UCPN(M)'s has rejected the basic framework which has emerged for navigating this process.

Exactly because the People's War in Nepal was a profound revolutionary process, it inevitably ran into new and unforeseen territory. It was necessary for all of the parties and organizations in RIM, as well as its leading committee, to learn all that could be learned from this new revolutionary experience coming forward in Nepal. Every party and organization needed, to the extent of its ability, to enter into a dialogue with the Nepalese comrades and each other, over how best to understand this experience and what light and what questions it posed for revolutionary communism in general.

To the extent this process took place, it enriched RIM and its participating parties. But here, too, the long-standing problems in both line and methodology interfered with this process, even at an early stage, and grew increasingly worse. Here, too, a kind of "mirror opposites" played a role. For example, at several points in the course of the People's War, the Party leadership felt it necessary to carry out negotiations with the enemy, including a temporary ceasefire. There were those in RIM who considered such a tactic wrong, even capitulationist, ipso facto, regardless of the specifics of the situation and how it might fit into an overall strategic plan for developing the People's War to final victory. Later, when the CPN(M) took a leap in a wrong direction with the adoption of the Bhattarai sub-stage thesis, these kinds of tactics, such as ceasefire, etc., took on new meaning as part of a strategy that explicitly renounced dismantling the old state apparatus. As we know, many in RIM either applauded or remained silent as these revisionist theses were formulated and later put into practice. What links both the earlier facile dismissal of any discussion of negotiations with the later acceptance of the dismantlement of the revolution is the failure to examine questions of strategy, line and policy in light of the actual material conditions facing the movement, but more importantly to evaluate how they serve or hinder the longer-term objectives.

Given the reality of the very important and positive role that the Nepal revolution had played in a period of difficulty for the international communist movement, and given the history of its relation with RIM, there is no doubt that the triumph of a revisionist line in Nepal would have, and has had, negative repercussions on the RIM, as well as tragic implications for the Nepalese masses.

What is particularly disturbing is that the objective blow of the domination of the revisionist line and its capitulationist consequences was coupled by a self-imposed wound by much of the rest of RIM of justifying or apologizing for the political developments in Nepal – or, upon seeing that things were going in the wrong direction, not taking responsibility to wage the struggle deeply against these wrong lines and falling into a kind of passive determinism. Little attention was given to the revisionist positions coming from the Nepal Party, even when these positions were

identified and polemicized against by our Party and a few others as this process unfolded. Instead, communist principles and its basic theory were suspended until the results of these policies were to be "seen in practice".

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2006 led to the CPN(M) election victory the following year, and Prachanda became the Prime Minister of the new Republic, most comrades in RIM, to paraphrase Lenin, suspended disbelief and joined in the exuberance of what even revolutionary comrades in Nepal were considering "the election miracle".

As the ugly consequences of the revisionist line became more and more flagrant, when betrayal followed upon betrayal and broken promise followed upon broken promise, even many comrades in Nepal who had initially gone along with the revisionist line went from discomfort to real hatred of what they correctly perceived as betrayal of the revolution. But even these opposition forces have as yet been unable to make a decisive rupture with the revisionist trajectory and framework. They have been dragged along by the leadership of the Party, eclectics, and the whole momentum of the revisionist line and practice, even if many have been kicking and screaming, while the fruits of the revolution have been abandoned and a new facade on the reactionary order has been cemented into place brick by brick.

One would have hoped that the comrades of RIM parties and organizations would have firmly opposed the revisionist line coming from the Party leadership, and in so doing give real internationalist support to the masses in Nepal and the revolutionaries in the Party who were so clearly in need of assistance, by waging struggle over the line that was leading to objective betrayal. But, unfortunately, such help was very rare indeed. In fact, many seemed to feel that it was up to the comrades in Nepal alone to determine what line was correct, and that so long as that Party said in words it was not abandoning the goals of the revolution, we should continue to tell the world that there was no reason to be concerned. This is actually a profound betrayal of the masses in Nepal, and in the world as a whole, leaving people disarmed as to the stakes and unable to play a role in fighting against the revisionist line.

But many others in the ICM, including many in RIM, instead of being able to help the comrades in Nepal sort their way out of the eclectics as well as bald revisionist lines in which they were enmeshed, contributed to these same eclectics by embroidering new levels of wishful thinking masquerading as political analysis, and engaging in plain old double-talk.

Given that the revisionist line in Nepal ended the People's War and disbanded the People's Liberation Army, perhaps it seems paradoxical to point out that the tendency to reduce all of MLM to the waging of people's war actually blinded some to understanding what was happening in Nepal. Instead of looking at the actual content of the CPN(M)'s program for society, many comrades focused on Prachanda's promises to "prepare an insurrection" which were often repeated to masses in Nepal, revolutionary-minded Party members and ICM comrades. However, few seemed to notice that the insurrection he promised, to paraphrase Clausewitz, would in reality mean only a violent means of obtaining the same non-revolutionary objectives of establishing a bourgeois democratic republic that the Party had been pursuing by other, in this case peaceful, means. From this political goal flowed the whole conception of an "insurrection" whose success would be based on support from major sections of the officer corp of the

reactionary army, while the People's Liberation Army was being de-legitimized by the whole peace process.<sup>21</sup>

#### **IV. RIM'S PARALYSIS IN RELATION TO NEPAL**

It was not inevitable that most of RIM would applaud or stand silent as the CPN(M) slipped deeper and deeper into revisionism. Indeed, had more determined criticism arisen from more quarters, our movement would be in a much different situation today – better equipped to deal with the ideological and political challenges and better prepared to confront the crossroads in the communist movement.

The extreme failure of RIM to respond energetically and correctly to the emergence of the revisionist line in Nepal was not inevitable, but it is, unfortunately, consistent with underlying and long-standing erroneous ideological and political tendencies that have grown over time within RIM and the ICM more generally. Particularly stark is the avoiding of fundamental questions concerning what type of society we are fighting for? What kind of economic system needs to be established? What will be the relationship between a new state and the existing imperialist-reactionary world order? What are the responsibilities toward the revolution in other countries? What will be the nature of the new state power? What will be the role of the vanguard party? How will the state be similar to and different from previous socialist states? What is the role for the intellectuals and other middle strata especially in the urban centers? What is the answer to those who argue that pure democracy is the solution to the problems of society?

Unfortunately, while Bhattarai took the ideological struggle extremely seriously, others have acted as if it were of no importance.<sup>22</sup> Even when the real questions have been sharply focused upon in the work of Bob Avakian, and specifically in relation to Nepal in the many documents produced by the RCP,USA, the main response has been silence. And this silence has been justified, in part, by the mistaken belief that political and ideological questions would be sorted out "in practice", without the hard work of actually examining real life contradictions in light of our revolutionary science.

Silence and "ignore-ance", however, are not neutral. What they mean is that the dominant ideas in bourgeois society go unchallenged. It means ignoring how these same ideas are incorporated into the thinking and practice of communists themselves. In relation to Nepal, it has meant being disarmed ideologically and politically in the face of a powerful and seemingly successful revisionist line and program – until now, when the bitter fruits of this line and approach have become all the more evident to all who have eyes to see. And yet even today, there are those in our movement who seek to bring together an amalgam of Maoist forces without actually confronting the revisionist content of the political line that has led to the debacle in Nepal.

What at first may seem incongruous is that among the forces in RIM who applauded or observed in silence as the Nepal revolution has been going down the drain are many who in the past had opposite political positions. For example, rather than openly support Bhattarai-type renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, some others, who went along or said nothing during the UCPN(M)'s revisionist turnaround, have been happy to ignore the problems of socialist revolution and/or simply repeat rote formulas from the past. Among the most enthusiastic

supporters of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Nepal are those who had previously argued (or at least refused to break with those who argued), in relation to the line struggle over the setback of the revolution in Peru, that even *considering* the viability of any negotiation, even on a tactical level, was rank betrayal. How is it possible for someone to switch so suddenly and so easily from one wrong position to another, equally wrong, or worse, position? As we shall see later, this has a lot to do with deeply entrenched errors in politics and ideology, including what methodology is used to understand and act in relation to objective reality.

## V. PERU AND THE CONSECRATION OF POLITICAL TRUTH

The movement's poor response to revisionism in Nepal was, in many respects, foreshadowed in RIM's contradictory and largely inadequate response to the developments that took place in the Communist Party of Peru following the capture of the PCP Chairman Gonzalo in 1992 and the emergence of what came to be called the Right Opportunist Line (ROL). It was quite correct and an expression of proletarian internationalism to rally forces all over the world to come to the aid of the PCP under these circumstances and to wage a campaign to defend the life of Chairman Gonzalo in the face of his arrest and imprisonment. But there were other internationalist tasks that fell to the communists, in RIM especially, and it was in relation to these where differences began to emerge.

About one year after Gonzalo's capture and presentation before the press, where he had proclaimed that his capture was only a "bend in the road" and that the People's War should continue to go forward, documents and videos attributed to Chairman Gonzalo were released which argued for ending the People's War. An argument was made that the conditions for carrying forward the revolution, in the face of the capture of Gonzalo and other top leadership and changed international conditions, were not favorable and this necessitated a major retreat (for ten or twenty years), and a call was made "to struggle for a Peace Accord" with the Fujimori regime in Peru. Most of the leadership of the Party outside of the prisons denounced the call for peace accords as an enemy-organized "hoax". They denounced those in the prisons advocating this as revisionist capitulators, and refused to even consider that Gonzalo might be making such arguments. Supporters of the PCP attacked anyone who felt it was necessary to investigate the actual circumstances surrounding the call for the peace accords and to understand and proceed from actual reality to the best of their ability.

The position of the CoRIM, which our Party supported, was to argue that there needed to be an investigation into the actual circumstances concerning the call for negotiations (for example, the actual position of Chairman Gonzalo). Above all, the call for negotiations needed to be evaluated on the basis of revolutionary communist principles and an examination of the concrete conditions, not primarily on the *authorship* of the line ("line not author" was the formulation that was adopted). The adoption of the essentially correct document "Rally to the Defense of Our Red Flag Flying in Peru" was the culmination of a vigorous process of investigation and struggle. But it should be remembered that adopting this position was no easy matter. This basically correct method of coming to correct conclusions was opposed by some, and overall involved a great deal of struggle throughout the RIM.

Unfortunately, this was not the approach taken by the leadership of the PCP outside of the prisons. The Party leadership failed to address the political arguments of the ROL of arguing for peace accords, which under those circumstances and with that approach could only lead to the defeat of the revolution. Instead the Party leadership essentially restricted its criticism to the denunciation of the proponents of the ROL in the vilest of terms while continuing to insist that Chairman Gonzalo's involvement in the ROL was essentially impossible and could only be an enemy "hoax".

Meanwhile, the PCP's supporters abroad (known as the Peruvian Peoples Movement or MPP) took the same harmful position and raised it to the level of lunacy. All those who did not embrace the "hoax" theory were themselves accused and defamed as aiding and abetting the imperialist and reactionary "hoax". RCP,USA chairman Bob Avakian was a central target of their vituperative and outrageous attacks. Indeed, examining the pros and cons of the arguments of the ROL – and concluding that the ROL did represent an incorrect line and analysis regarding the prospects for carrying forward the revolution that needed to be combated for the revolution to advance – was considered, somehow according to this strange logic, to be giving aid and comfort to the enemy. The more facts that came to light pointing to the possible involvement of Gonzalo in the ROL (such as the series of PCP leaders who were arrested and claimed that Gonzalo had convinced them of the need for a Peace Accord), the more frantic and vitriolic the MPP and some others became. It was in these circumstances that some in RIM first openly invoked the doctrine of "political truth" in this affair. Regardless of the actual facts involved, this doctrine argued that it was politically true that Gonzalo was not behind the Peace Accords and communists internationally were duty-bound to propagate this "truth" and to not fall into what some called "journalistic truth". While few were so bold or consistent as to openly proclaim political truth as a philosophical principle, this same approach often guided or at least interfered with the thinking of many other comrades as well. Really, this was nothing different than the concept of truth as a "vital organizing form of experience" that Lenin had criticized so thoroughly in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.<sup>23</sup>

Even forces that had been fighting for a correct line, such as the RCP,USA, were not unaffected by this powerful negative current. One example was the adoption of the Millennium Resolution in 2000, which made opportunist concessions to the "hoax" theory and other non-scientific propositions. Our Party erroneously accepted this resolution in the perceived interest of achieving a certain superficial unity of the movement to project out into the world, which did real harm and strengthened the wrong understanding on a number of important questions, including the line struggle regarding the revolution in Peru – although our Party did quickly recognize this error and move to make the parties and organizations of the RIM aware of this.<sup>24</sup>

The point is that responding to the emergence of the Right Opportunist Line in Peru required that all communists, and especially RIM, adopt a communist approach to line struggle and act on a scientific basis to analyze and change the world. But this approach was adopted unevenly in RIM and openly attacked by many, which weakened the ability of RIM and the international communist movement generally to draw correct conclusions and aid the comrades in Peru under very difficult conditions. This approach left the masses all over the world without adequate communist leadership to understand what had happened in Peru and what conclusions should be

drawn. It also went against the requirement to take a scientific approach to reality, including those parts of reality that are unpleasant, or may run counter to the advance of the revolutionary movement at any given time. What had been a positive feature of the basis for regrouping the Maoist forces after the coup in China – communists confronting the reality of a revisionist coup in China – was being undercut by this whole instrumentalist approach to negative developments, not caring what impact this would have on the ability of the masses to take up the challenges of emancipating humanity.

It is worth underlining that the whole method and approach referred to above contributed to the great difficulties that the PCP itself was facing on the ground. The insistence on the "hoax" theory rang more and more false as evidence continued to mount about Gonzalo's position as the likely author of the ROL, and a whole series of PCP leaders either accepted the ROL position or else condemned Gonzalo as a traitor for authoring the ROL. The PCP membership had never been educated in any thoroughgoing way as to why the call for a Peace Accord was wrong, nor on how to carry forward the revolution under these changed conditions. Instead, the leadership had relied on simplistic denunciations of betrayal. The remaining PCP leadership outside of prison seemed to believe that the political battle over the call for a Peace Accord could be sidestepped or ignored while advancing the People's War on the ground. This whole approach did more and more damage, contributing to the situation where the People's War itself was eliminated as a contending force for nationwide state power, the great bulk of its forces destroyed or demoralized, and those remaining reduced to small pockets of rival groupings, some of whom are themselves demanding peace accords.

Unfortunately, this whole chapter in the common experience of RIM has not been adequately summed up. Some comrades have refused, to this very day, to condemn the handful of PCP supporters abroad whose deep vitriol against comrade Avakian and the CoRIM was matched only by their heights of fantasy about the current state of the People's War in Peru. The greater problem, however, is not the tolerance of vicious opportunists by some, but rather the far more prevalent attitude of simply ignoring the whole experience in Peru and in particular the wrong method and approach that was far too much accepted, and adopted, within the RIM.

In actual fact, the People's War in Peru was one of the most important revolutionary struggles over the last few decades. The revolution in Peru encouraged the hopes of people all over the world, and it was a living illustration of the great potential of the masses to be led to struggle for communist revolution. At the same time, the experience in Peru also reveals, especially in light of further developments and examination of line, serious contradictions and errors in the line of that Party, including on the level of epistemology. In an effort to struggle for a more correct method and approach, including over how to practice proletarian internationalism in these circumstances, our Party issued a document calling for further discussion over the Peru experience and identified problems in the approach of RIM, including tendencies toward instrumentalism.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, this document went mainly ignored within RIM.

There is both a scientific need and a revolutionary moral requirement to have a more complete and correct summation of the whole experience of the Communist Party of Peru. It is a sad commentary on the state of affairs in RIM that more than a few comrades went from ignoring or

even tailing some seriously wrong positions of the PCP when the successes of the People's War provided a kind of "capital," but when the movement in Peru began to appear more a burden than an asset, these same comrades took the irresponsible attitude of dropping any concern for what had been an important effort to make communist revolution in contemporary conditions and which had played a major role in the collective experience of RIM. And it is not surprising that key figures in the call for a new international organization are among the worst offenders.

## VI. PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM : TWO OPPOSING CONCEPTIONS

Two different and opposing lines on the nature of proletarian internationalism have very much been at the heart of sharpening differences within RIM and the ICM. This explains to a large degree the opportunist efforts to build "unity" of communist forces internationally by avoiding crucial questions of ideological and political line. A wrong understanding of "proletarian internationalism" also helps explain the history we have reviewed above, when many have considered it fine to tail first one then another wrong line in the ICM, as long as that line appeared to be "getting somewhere".

A deeper and more scientific understanding of proletarian internationalism is a core element in the new synthesis that Bob Avakian has been bringing forward. Avakian's view of proletarian internationalism is very much linked to an understanding of the communist revolution as essentially a process taking place most fundamentally on the world scale.

Avakian's understanding is both consistent with and develops further Marx and Engels' original theorization of the proletarian revolution. However, differing understandings of proletarian revolution have been contending throughout the history of the communist movement.

Proletarian internationalism was central in Lenin's thinking, including as he confronted the problems of beginning proletarian revolution in Tsarist Russia amidst the catastrophe and crisis that the first imperialist world war had wrought. Avakian's *Conquer the World?* was a key work in excavating basic teachings of Marx and Lenin, criticizing erroneous trends of thinking within the communist movement, and putting the understanding of proletarian internationalism on a more scientific footing. As part of this, Avakian addresses the difference between Lenin's understanding of internationalism and that of the Irish revolutionary John Connolly. Connolly argued that internationalism was the support or aid that one revolution extends to another, unlike Lenin's more scientific understanding that, in his own words, the revolution in each country should be seen as "my share in the preparation, the propaganda and the acceleration of the world revolution."<sup>26</sup> Avakian developed this further, emphasizing that, while political power can and must, as a general rule, be seized first in one or several countries, the revolution in a given country needs to be seen in the context of a single world process which is the most determinant factor in shaping the terrain on which the revolution is advancing.

Despite the fundamentally correct and scientific orientation of Marx and Lenin, the opposite view also has long and deep roots in the communist movement, which was particularly ardent during the period of Stalin's leadership in the USSR and the serious errors that took place in this

regard. These included treating, in practice, the necessary defense of the socialist country as the equivalent of the advance of the world revolution. In fact, as Avakian analyzed over a long period of time, the defense (both by the masses in that country and by the communists and revolutionary masses worldwide) of the socialist state, while essential, is subordinate to the overall process of world revolution. Further, Avakian recognized that some of the measures taken by the socialist state to defend itself in a hostile imperialist-dominated environment, such as the need to practice peaceful coexistence, objectively come into contradiction with the larger task of advancing the world proletarian revolution, even when such measures are correct and necessary. This is much different from the argument that the socialist state has an identity of interests with the international proletariat, as was the understanding during the period of the Comintern (the Communist International, which was brought into being shortly after the October Revolution in Russia and continued in existence until the Second World War).

In the sphere of proletarian internationalism, it is to be noted that Mao's rupture with Stalin and the experience of building socialism in the USSR was less complete than in a number of other spheres. This could be seen in some of the questionable foreign policy measures adopted by Mao involving a series of reactionary states in the Third World, such as the Marcos regime in the Philippines, the Shah of Iran, Mobutu in Zaire (Congo), etc., and efforts to develop a worldwide united front with the US-led bloc of imperialist countries against Soviet social-imperialism, portrayed as "the main danger."<sup>27</sup>

These problems were not only evidenced in practice, they also took on a theoretical formulation as well. Mao had argued during the period of new democratic revolution that, "thus in wars of national liberation, patriotism is applied internationalism."<sup>28</sup> In fact, this formulation confounds two different questions: the stage of the revolution in China, which needed to carry out new democratic revolution, and the ideology and orientation of the communists, which could not be "patriotism". Mao's formulation "patriotism is applied internationalism" had a great deal of influence on the newly emerging Maoist movement in the 1960s and '70s. One reason is that this viewpoint dovetailed with spontaneous tendencies that existed, especially but not exclusively in the countries where revolution required going through a stage of new democracy, to confound the ideology of nationalism and anti-imperialism with the proletarian internationalist world view, to make a kind of "two into one" of these two ultimately opposite world views.

Within RIM and the ICM there has been discomfort and disagreement and little desire to engage and struggle over this important analysis by Avakian and his drawing of a sharp line of distinction between nationalism and communism as the orientation of communists, even when necessarily and correctly waging a struggle for new democracy.<sup>29</sup> This kind of appeal to nationalism also explains why some forces in RIM have continued to insist on repeating empty exhortations about "revolution is the main trend" and "Africa, Asia and Latin America remain the storm centers of the world revolution" when even the most cursory study of the actual conditions of revolutionary struggle in the world today shows that, in even the most viciously exploited and oppressed countries, the revolution is not only not surging ahead but is confronting the same fundamental questions facing the whole international communist movement, questions whose correct resolution is crucial to enable future advance.

## **The Outlook Of The National Bourgeoisie**

Throughout the history of the communist movement – and the Maoist movement has been no exception – there has been a recurrent problem in failing to distinguish clearly between revolutionary communism and bourgeois democracy. There is a great deal to be learned positively, once again, from Mao's last great battle against the revisionists in the final stages of the Cultural Revolution. The revolutionaries in China carried out a very rich discussion and struggle over the phenomenon of some forces who, during the new democratic stage of the revolution, joined the Party "organizationally but not ideologically", and linked this to the phenomenon seen in socialist revolution of bourgeois democrats becoming capitalist roaders.<sup>30</sup> However, this is another important development of Marxism by Mao and his followers that went largely ignored by much of the Maoist movement.

While Mao's theses on the new democratic revolution are widely known and often cited among Maoists, in reality this has often been approached in a dogmatic and formalistic way, without really struggling to understand the dynamics of the relationship between these two stages of revolution in the oppressed countries, the inter-penetration of these two stages, and how this takes shape in varying and different ways in the contemporary world. Meanwhile, empty repetition of rote formulas covers over an actual content of limiting the struggle to national and democratic rights.

Different political tendencies, and ultimately different classes, have differing understandings of what are the fundamental problems of society and, flowing from this, what are the fundamental solutions that need to be provided. For the proletariat and its political representatives, the revolutionary communists, the fundamental problems that need to be solved are exploitation, oppression, and class divisions generally, and all that is bound up with this. From this flows the need for world proletarian revolution, including the crucial component of new democratic revolution. But if the problem of society is seen from the class interests and world view of the national bourgeoisie and its political representatives (regardless of their personal class background or social condition), that is to say, if the problem is seen as a society in which commodity production is stifled and bourgeois competition does not take place "fairly", it is quite natural that a bourgeois-democratic revolution will be seen as the solution.

## **James Connolly or Lenin – What Kind of International Organization?**

In a certain sense, the failure of RIM to take a firm and scientific stand in relation to events in Nepal, as well as real difficulties and opposition earlier to taking a responsible stand in relation to the two-line struggle in Peru after Gonzalo's capture, is very much linked to the wrong understanding of internationalism we have been discussing. Instead of grasping the central ideological and political role of RIM and the need for it to collectively confront new difficulties and challenges from a revolutionary communist standpoint, a different type of logic set in: RIM was seen by many as an organization to promote the Connolly conception of internationalism, of extending assistance from one revolution to another – and please don't interfere in the activities of another party, even if that party is destroying the revolution. Often this included the belief that the people on the ground are necessarily the ones most capable of understanding the line

questions, and that people outside the country must not challenge what people on the ground are saying, no matter what line they are advocating, or the method they are employing to try to arrive at the truth.

Within RIM these two different understandings of proletarian internationalism, these two different understandings of MLM, were coexisting from the beginning, occasionally coming into sharp contradiction. The understanding Avakian fought for provided the orientation that also enabled and led our Party to make its contribution to the formation and development of RIM. The RIM Declaration, despite reflecting some aspects of compromise, reflected on the whole a generally advanced and correct understanding of these questions. But there was always a strong counter-current which reflected the James Connolly conception of internationalism and, to the extent these ideas had any basis in Mao, they built upon what actually were weaknesses in Mao's understanding and practice, not his strengths.

Within RIM there was also a distorted and pragmatist understanding of the relation between practice and the truth, according to which advances in practice would automatically be translated into theoretical advances, or the correctness or incorrectness of theoretical propositions could be determined by examining their successes (real or supposed) in practice. And, as we have seen, practice itself was often narrowly defined, quite literally, to mean only armed struggle. If we look at the draft "Proposal" that has just been brought to our attention as we finalized this letter (see Appendix, below), we see this kind of vision fairly clearly spelled out: "a potential new wave of the world proletarian revolution develops and emerges, with the people's wars led by Maoist parties as its reference points and strategic anchor. The realisation of this potential ultimately depends on how successful the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties are in fulfilling their revolutionary tasks at the national and international level. The pooling of their understanding and experience and the development of their capacity to take a united revolutionary message to the rebellious masses all over the world, have decisive importance." The essential task of the ICM, in this impoverished view of things, is the "pooling of understanding and experience". What understanding is to be "pooled"? How is experience to be summed up, for example the "experience" of a Maoist-led government in Nepal? The very conception of "pooling understanding" is a combining of "two-into-one," worthy of Prachanda and his "fusion" theory, and is an open appeal for pragmatism. What happened to the primacy of political and ideological line so central in Mao?

It is not surprising that such wrong political and ideological currents existed within RIM. These problems have their antecedents in the history of the Maoist movement, of the international communist movement more generally, particularly but not only during the period of Stalin's leadership, and they have their material bases in society itself. But what is to be deplored is a stubborn tenacity to hang onto and insist on these wrong approaches when something more correct has been available. In so doing, previous secondary errors in understanding take on a whole different dimension. Avakian has been able to identify and criticize these erroneous ideological trends (including their philosophical, epistemological and methodological elements). This is a crucial part of the new synthesis, putting communist theory on a more scientific basis. It is exactly because the new synthesis puts its finger on these deep and persistent errors, that some who consider these errors to be so central to their understanding of "Maoism" feel the need to leap out with their outrageous charges of "counter revolutionary".

Like the nationalism and concessions to nationalism which we have discussed above, other related ideological and methodological diseases include empiricism, pragmatism, instrumentalism and the political application of *realpolitik* (analyzing and evaluating political developments not on the basis of revolutionary communist principles, and with a scientific method, but from the narrow, pragmatic perspective of how a political decision or practice could, in the short run, have perceived beneficial results). Avakian described instrumentalist thinking as an approach where the conclusion is tautologically connected to the beginning premise. "In other words you set out to 'interpret' – and you end up bending – reality in a certain way to make it 'useful' to the objectives that you have.... It's a kind of circular tautological approach in which you start with certain objectives or premises and then you interpret reality to be a verification and vindication of those objectives or premises, rather than objectively and scientifically investigating reality, analyzing and synthesizing and, through the back and forth between theory and practice, arrive at a deeper appreciation of reality and an enhanced ability to transform it."<sup>31</sup>

## VII. WHAT KIND OF UNITY DO THE COMMUNISTS NEED?

Throughout the history of RIM, there was tension between correctly building RIM on the basis of its political and ideological line, as expressed in its most concentrated form in its *Declaration* and the document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!*, and a wrong tendency to build RIM mainly on the basis of its "forces" and, in particular, the strength of the People's Wars in Peru and Nepal. Later, this wrong secondary approach was also expressed in the belief of some that RIM should incorporate new participants not on the basis of the overall political and ideological positions of these organizations, but rather on whether these parties were seen as successfully carrying out armed revolutionary struggle under a banner of Maoism, without a real discussion of what the content of that meant. In a certain sense, this is another expression of the movement is everything, the final goal nothing, as Lenin had so sharply criticized the revisionist Bernstein in the period of the first world war. This wrong approach has been more stubbornly clung to and insisted upon in the face of the need to advance the theoretical foundations of our movement beyond the initial unity of these above mentioned documents, and when the very real changes and challenges posed in the objective world require further ruptures.

If one examines the May 1, 2011 Call for a new international communist organization,<sup>32</sup> as well as the most recent document of the draft Proposal (see, again, the Appendix below) this type of approach is striking. As we have seen, the latter document has taken this approach to its logical conclusion in which people's wars are "the reference points and strategic anchor". No real effort is made to express the political and ideological criteria for any such regroupment. In the 2011 document a false (and frankly ridiculous) picture is painted in which people's war is advancing in Peru, the Philippines and Turkey, and, somehow, this will serve as the basis for regrouping the communists. As CPI (M-L) (Naxalbari) puts it in arguing for this type of approach, "This [unity] must necessarily be broad enough, in the topics selected as well as participation, so that the present reality of the international Maoist movement is properly represented. Through this process the points of unity and differences can be identified and a relatively advanced platform can be arrived at, to become the basis of reorganization."<sup>33</sup> In other words, rather than focus on the lines of demarcation that have emerged and are sharpening, we must first decide who should

be included in this discussion and then look for the lowest common denominator of political line that can keep these forces "united". The signatories to the May 1, 2011 Call included the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), so we can understand what the "relatively advanced platform" is likely to look like and what kinds of revisionism it will tolerate. However, the paltry May 1 Call does have some unifying threads, which reflect precisely some of the features of the "mirror opposites" referred to in the *Manifesto from the RCP, USA* quoted earlier – including talk of Maoism with no discussion of Mao's most important contribution on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and reducing Maoism to people's war. In many ways, this 2011 Call is a concentration of all that was wrong and secondary in the previous functioning of RIM, and this can only lead backward. Now we see, with the latest 2012 Proposal, just where it leads to: denouncing Bob Avakian's new synthesis as "counter revolutionary".

## **VIII. STAGES, CONTINUITY AND RUPTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM**

We have already discussed above how Bhattarai and Prachanda were, in their own fashion, offering a summation of the first stage of the communist revolution and proposing lessons, albeit very wrong and unscientific ones. It can also be seen that Chairman Gonzalo of the PCP had also begun examining some of this experience and had developed a series of formulations, some of which came to be incorporated in what the PCP called Gonzalo Thought.

For example, Gonzalo tried to answer the very important question of why the revolution in China had been overturned by focusing overwhelmingly on the problem of arming the masses under socialism. While the problem of leadership of the armed forces in a socialist society is a major problem and has contributed to counter-revolution, it cannot be said to encompass the whole question of the political and ideological line resulting in reversals of previous socialist societies. For example, even if there are armed militias (as Mao's followers in China sought to develop), who leads them? How can it be assured that these forces will be used to support a genuine proletarian line? What about the even greater force of the central army of the socialist state – still needed in a world where powerful, antagonistic imperialist states are a major force? But instead of picking up on the orientation and basic discoveries of Mao concerning the class struggle under socialism and how to wage it, Gonzalo developed an alternative line of "people's war until communism," envisioning armed struggle as a permanent and even decisive element in the whole transition period to communism. This was linked to the PCP's understanding of political power. The PCP had very correctly popularized the quotation of Lenin that without political power all is illusion. But, at the same time, the achievement of political power tended to become itself the final goal, as reflected in the PCP's statement that political power is the most important thing in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.<sup>34</sup> Our Party noted that, as important as political power is in the revolutionary process, it needs to be seen in the context of political power for whom and for what?<sup>35</sup>, which we believe is consistent with a correct interpretation of Mao's theses. This is an important example, but only an example nonetheless, of diverging responses to the experience of the first wave of the communist revolution.

There were many other questions as well in which different and contradictory understandings concerning the goal of communism, the nature of the socialist transition period, and other crucial

questions began to appear in sometimes embryonic form. Unfortunately, most of the forces in RIM and the ICM did not pursue this line of interrogation.

On one level, all communists accept in words at least that Marxism is something that must develop. The question is: in what direction will change occur? With the new synthesis, Marxism becomes more scientific, more true, more revolutionary, more capable of guiding the struggle forward to the emancipatory goal and on that basis attract increasing numbers of masses of people in the world. But if communists fail to respond to the great needs, and ultimately end either tailing the non-liberating non-solutions of the bourgeois era, or dogmatically wall themselves off from the real problems of revolution and what passes for Marxism, or MLM changes by shriveling up and dying, our science will become a pale shadow of its revolutionary past, incapable of responding to new challenges and new contradictions.

We have seen that, apart from Avakian and advocates of the new synthesis, it has mainly been the leaders of the UCPN(M) or, in other words, the right, who have addressed questions emerging from the first stage of communist revolution. Of course, the answers that the UCPN(M) leaders have advanced all go in the direction of liquidating the communist project. Among those in RIM who have more tended to the dogmatic, "left" in form position, few have presented arguments in writing. One exception to this is the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan. Although it is necessary to strongly protest the venomous and gratuitous attacks the C(M)PA makes, especially against comrades from the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist), the C(M)PA article "The Communist Party of Iran (MLM) has fallen into the lost road of 'post MLM'" does shed light on the ideology and politics involved in these efforts to "regroup the ICM".<sup>36</sup> The C(M)PA's main point is to argue that it is wrong to recognize that a stage of the communist movement has ended and it is necessary to usher in a new one, and similarly it is wrong to believe that the understanding of communists must also reach a new level.

The C(M)PA's "Post MLM" article puts it this way: "New synthesizes such as Gonzalo Thought or, a new path such as Prachanda Path or an ism such as Avakianism are not like following up and further developing Marxism Leninism Maoism. Rather it stands for a brand new post Marxism, Leninism, Maoism mental weapon and framework. This is exactly why we consider it as a line that is much more of a side-spinning deviation in contrast with what was exposed by the wrong line of the Communist Party of Peru called Gonzalo Thought and way deeper and further than the deviationist Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) called Prachanda Path."

This statement that Bob Avakian's new synthesis, mis-labeled "Avakianism", is a "way deeper" deviation than that of the UCPN(M), is itself astounding. Who has aborted a revolution? Transformed the goal of the struggle to perfecting bourgeois democracy? Which line has effectively turned its back on the struggling masses all over the world? Nevertheless, there is something important to be considered underneath the C(M)PA's denunciation: a wrong understanding of the process through which Marxism (or any science for that matter) develops from a lower to a higher stage. In reality, Avakian's new synthesis is not a departure from Marxism, as the C(M)PA suggests, but rather a further development of Marxism. But the C(M)PA understands this whole process wrongly.

Here is how the C(M)PA explains the development of Marxism from one stage to another:

"Also, in the qualitative level of changing, while the qualitative changes are the major aspect of the phenomenon changing into another phenomenon, there also are quantitative changing of types as well. This is the way in which through the process of quantitative changing, the qualitative changes are accumulated as well, and also qualitative changes get accumulated eventually. During the qualitative level of changing, a qualitative leap takes place that changes the fundamental contradiction of the phenomena and turning it into a new phenomenon.

"The theoretical framework founded by Marx is also not an exception in regard to this law. Since the time of Marx and Engels, this mental weapon has passed through two levels of progressive development that were Leninism and Maoism. This is not intended to underestimate the importance of the new qualities of Leninism and Maoism. Our intention is to clarify that in Marxism Leninism, the continuation of Marxism and generality of Marxism Leninism is the essence of changing. Breaking off from original Marxism is not the major factor. Also in Marxism, Leninism, Maoism, the continuation of Marxism, Leninism in Maoism and generality of Marxism, Leninism, Maoist is the essence of changing. Breaking off from Marxism, Leninism is not the major factor. This is why the different levels of Marxism, Marxism Leninism are fundamentally different levels of development of a single ideological weapon."

The C(M)PA touches on the important question of the relationship between continuity and rupture in the development of the revolutionary communist science from a lower to a higher level. In an overall sense, the principal aspect is continuity – that is, the upholding and enriching of the propositions, theses, methods of analysis first developed by Marx and later raised to successively higher levels by Lenin and Mao, and today by Avakian – while rupture, which involves (although not exclusively) the rejection of those elements of the previous understanding that are discovered to be wrong, or partially wrong, is in an overall sense secondary in the process through which Marxism has taken leaps, which does involve synthesis. On one level, this seems to be what the C(M)PA is arguing in the above cited passage, and with which we would agree – there is a single continuity of Marxism, and it does represent a single ideological weapon. But this correct observation must not be used to negate that Marxism has gone through leaps in the course of its developments, and these leaps also involve rupture with what were previously understood truths. Achieving synthesis involves both rupture and continuity, whereby the whole, including even previous positive elements, are recast. In the C(M)PA discussion, reaching a new stage is a very mechanical process essentially resulting from the accumulation of incremental advances in understanding. This leaves out the central role of synthesis in reaching a higher level of understanding, especially at key nodal points in the development of our revolutionary science. "As Bob Avakian has expressed it, communism is an integral philosophy and political theory at the same time as it is a living, critical and continuously developing science."<sup>37</sup>

The C(M)PA constructs a Great Wall between rupture and continuity. First, to note what should be obvious: rupture and continuity are a unity of opposites. It is the dialectical inter-penetration between them that needs to be grasped. In the development of Marxism, it is necessary to stress that without rupture there can be no continuity.

If Marxism does not rupture with those aspects and elements that are wrong, one-sided and unscientific, Marxism cannot maintain its continuity with its scientific kernel. If Marxism does not weed out its own previous wrong understandings, as they are discovered in the course of social practice and the advance of human knowledge more generally, if it is not in this sense continually re-examining and probing its premises, it ceases to be a science at all. This is what Avakian has been doing in criticizing those secondary but nonetheless real and damaging elements in the previous understanding and practice that have actually gone against the basic scientific understanding of Marxism. And the result is not simply to add corrections or amendments to the existing body of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism: the previously existing understanding itself is recast, a new synthesis emerges.

The C(M)PA's mechanical description of quantitative advances in understanding leading to qualitative leaps, and its efforts to apply this to the development of Marxism, is very much linked to the erroneous viewpoint that the application of Marxism in a specific country will automatically lead to the corresponding advance in theoretical understanding. Among many of the supporters of the PCP at the height of its struggle, that argument was never far below the surface: because the Peruvian revolution was advancing, the recognition of this advance would also prove the universal validity of Gonzalo Thought. Conversely, some comrades have argued that because there has not been a successful socialist revolution since China, there cannot be a leap in the realm of theory. This kind of thinking is heavily marred by nationalism and empiricism.

Let us return to the C(M)PA's arguments about the quantitative and qualitative additions to Marxism. In fact, qualitative breakthroughs are not only the result of an accumulation of partial truths, although that is definitely involved. At certain nodal points in the development of any science, accumulated experience, further debate, and the influence of discoveries and controversies in other fields will require re-examination of some of the postulates and previous understandings.

That the C(M)PA would object so violently to the process of reaching and uniting around a new higher understanding of Marxism, is not so puzzling. Indeed, in the process to form RIM itself, and in the subsequent adoption of the formulation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the problem of stage and leap in our understanding was directly struggled out. There were those, even inside RIM, who fought tooth and nail that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism was not a higher development of Marxism-Leninism.<sup>38</sup> Very much at the heart of this refusal was a stubborn denial of the critique that Mao developed of Stalin's errors in many fields: in understanding the class struggle under socialism; the difference between the contradictions among the people and the contradictions between the people and the enemy; failing to see the unity and struggle of opposites as the central law of dialectics; and so on. To the extent that lip service was given to the contributions of Mao, these were seen as the simple additions to the existing body of theory. There was a refusal to recognize that these additions also involved rejection of certain ideas and the recasting of others. Sometimes it was even accepted that Mao understood some aspects better than Stalin, but this was to be explained, according to this view, simply by the fact that Mao lived later than Stalin and that further experience had been accumulated – as if further experience alone would necessarily lead to a more advanced understanding.

In reality, new experiences of making proletarian revolution generally do not lead to a single new explanation, but to different, contradictory explanations. They lead to two-line struggle. In our view, the coup d'état in China was a tragic and unfortunate "testing" of Mao's whole thesis concerning the danger of capitalist restoration in socialist society and the need for continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. It both confirmed his basic thesis and also provides a great deal of material for the further development and recasting of the understanding he developed. But this is not how many others looked at it, and indeed it is not the conclusion that necessarily imposes itself spontaneously. Enver Hoxha and many others considered the loss in China "proof" that Maoism was of no use whatsoever.

Today, revolutionary communism has again reached a new stage in its development through the elaboration of Bob Avakian's new synthesis. Like previous advances in our science, it involves both continuity and rupture and the recasting of the ensemble. The new synthesis provides genuine continuity with Mao by going beyond Mao, and identifying elements, albeit secondary, which are actually in contradiction to the overwhelmingly scientific aspects of Mao's teachings. In the words of Avakian himself (as cited in the *Manifesto from the RCP, USA*): "It is very important not to underestimate the significance and positive force of this new synthesis: criticizing and rupturing with significant errors and shortcomings while bringing forward and *recasting* what has been positive from the historical experience of the international communist movements and the socialist countries that have so far existed; in a real sense *reviving* – on a new more advanced basis – the *viability* and, yes, the *desirability* of a whole new and radically different world, and placing this on an ever firmer foundation of materialism and dialectics....So we should not underestimate the potential of this as a source of hope and of daring on a solid scientific foundation."

In the course of this letter, we have discussed some of those elements that are incorporated into the new synthesis. For a more comprehensive treatment we refer again to the *Manifesto from the RCP, USA* and other documents.<sup>39</sup> The discarding of the notion of class truth and what Avakian refers to as the "reification of the proletariat," are part of the philosophical and epistemological elements of the new synthesis. The present two-line struggle that is shaping up in the ICM involves these ideological questions as well.

Avakian has also identified and criticized quasi-religious elements that have co-existed and interfered with correctly understanding Marxism as a science. Notions such as the "negation of the negation" which Marx and Engels borrowed from Hegel, or the often repeated statement of the "inevitable victory of communism", have always existed as a counter-current in revolutionary communism. Within RIM some of these wrong ideas were taken to new heights by Gonzalo's concept that "the revolution is on rails" or that "billions of years of matter in motion are leading to communism."<sup>40</sup> This kind of thinking cannot be dismissed as mere empty triumphalism seeking to buck up the courage of the comrades and the masses. Quasi-religious notions stand in the way of looking at revolutionary communism as a science and helping it advance as a science which can approximate reality more fully and serve as an even better tool for transforming the world.

In this light, there is also an important discussion concerning the role of Marxism as a science and its relation to the proletariat as a class. Within RIM a wrong and mechanical understanding of this has been widely adopted. Some of this was discussed in our debate with Ajith of the CPI (M-L) (Naxalbari) in *Struggle!*,<sup>41</sup> concerning the relationship between partisanship and the truth in Marxism. Marxism is partisan to the interests of the proletariat, but it is not true because it is partisan. Indeed, the fundamental reason for Marxism's partisanship lies in the objective position of a class (the proletariat) whose ultimate interests lie in leading the transformation of society beyond the realm of commodity production, and everything ultimately bound up with this.

It is only in this sense that Marxism can be considered to be partisan. It is not, and must never be presented as, a reflection of the consciousness of the workers at a specific moment or in a specific country, nor as an ideology which reflects the immediate or particular or corporate interests of the workers. This is an important point in Avakian's criticism of "reification of the proletariat", meaning a failure to conceive of the proletariat in its abstract, higher than life quality as a class occupying a certain position in relation to the mode of production and in the overall historical development of class society, but instead to look at the proletariat as a conglomerate of concrete or actual workers found in a specific country or situation. It is the objective role of the proletariat as a class, and its fundamental interests as a class, in abolishing all relations of exploitation and oppression, through the advance to communism, on a world scale – and not the ideas, or the more immediate and limited interests, of particular proletarians, or even of the proletariat as a whole in this or that country, at any particular time – to which communism fundamentally corresponds, and which it serves.

Here again we see both continuity and rupture. Marx and Engels first emphasized the world-historic task of the proletariat of ushering in a whole new epoch in human history. Both Lenin and Mao upheld this concept and defended it against revisionist distortion, and in so doing further enriched it. For example, Lenin's important work *What is To Be Done?* insists on communists being a tribune of the people, and not a trade union secretary, and Lenin's whole discussion of the role of consciousness reflects a very important correct understanding. It is no surprise that this work is one of the most ignored and/or distorted and attacked of Lenin's writings, precisely because it does go directly against the economism and narrowness that has so often masqueraded as communism. Similarly, Mao led the CPC to emphasize, popularizing a citation from Marx, that "the proletariat can free itself only by freeing all of mankind." But it is also true that there were secondary trends in the CPC (not to mention more egregious errors of this type during the USSR under Stalin's leadership and his insistence that "communists are made of special stuff") to lose sight of this, or to attribute a kind of "special place," in relation to reaching the truth, to specific people from an exploited class position or representing that section of the masses – a kind of "reification".

Avakian's criticism of the reification of the proletariat is thus a criticism and rupture with some of the secondary non-scientific understanding and practice of Mao and his predecessors in their understanding of the relationship between the proletariat as a class and the revolutionary process. At the same time, Avakian is upholding the correct scientific kernel that runs through the whole development of revolutionary communism, and is taking it further. His whole emphasis on communists being emancipators of humanity is a good example of both continuity with a theme

that has run through the whole history of communism since Marx but which also has required rupture with counter-currents linked to mechanical materialism and concepts of class truth and a reified proletariat.<sup>42</sup>

## **IX. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR A NEW STAGE OF COMMUNIST REVOLUTION**

Despite the wishful thinking or self-delusion of some comrades, we have a great deal of work to do if the communist movement is to answer and defeat the slanders of our enemies; provide a scientific summation of the whole first wave of proletarian revolution; bring forward new initiators of a new stage of this revolution; and present a viable, attractive and convincing vision of the society that we are fighting to bring into being.

Thanks to Bob Avakian's new synthesis, there is a basis to both scientifically and enthusiastically uphold the great achievements of the communist movement while rigorously criticizing those elements that are incorrect and actually run counter to communism – such as class truth, and the related concept of reification of the proletariat, nationalism, pragmatism and positivism – as well as secondary but real errors in carrying out the dictatorship of the proletariat in the previous socialist societies. Indeed, these two tasks are inextricably linked: Without criticizing past errors, we will not successfully defend our achievements. Without basing ourselves on our achievements, we will not correctly see the actual mistakes that need to be overcome to do better next time. These political and ideological tasks are present on a world scale and in every country.

It is neither possible nor desirable to simply turn back the clock and try to reconstruct RIM or some other international organization on the basis of previous criteria, and certainly not by seeking to organize forces while opposing the necessary and critical focus on cardinal questions of ideological and political line. Any lingering doubts anyone might have on this subject should be dispelled by the 2012 "Proposal" (referred to in the Appendix to this letter). It represents a whole wrong political and ideological line which is now being articulated and fought for. It is an attempt to "regroup communists" without and against revolutionary communism as it has been further developed through the new synthesis.

The authors of this Proposal hope to avoid and prevent substantive discussion of the new synthesis, even while hurling charges of "counter-revolutionary" and asking others to sign-on to this latest crusade. They want to claim the achievements of RIM while turning their back on the revolutionary thrust that the formation and development RIM historically represented. In reality, if the "Proposal" were to be adopted it would only negate the real accomplishments of RIM and work against the whole purpose for which RIM was founded. Such an approach could only lead to a setback at a time when the proletarian revolution has a great need for an advance. A framework for that advance exists.

There is a pressing objective need for a thoroughgoing debate amongst those who have made up the international communist movement, and others as well. It is a debate whose successful

conclusion can also deeply intersect with and strengthen the political growth of a new generation coming forward in struggle – which, to paraphrase Mao, is seeking philosophy but needs to be won to revolutionary communism. On the other hand, a failure to adequately confront the political and ideological questions of the hour, or to draw the wrong conclusions, will further accelerate the downward slide of the communist movement.

Only on the basis of achieving a deeper level of political and ideological unity will it be possible to take a further look at how the practical unity of the communist forces can best be further advanced. The question of choosing between being "the vanguard of the future," or being reduced to being the "residue of the past," is acutely posed – and the outcome of this struggle will have tremendous implications. It is necessary that all of the forces who have made up RIM and the international communist movement devote the attention and energy that is commensurate with both the extreme dangers of allowing the current slide to go unchallenged and, on the other hand, the real possibility and great need of ushering in a new stage of the communist revolution. Indeed, this discussion is already overdue, and there can be no good reason or valid excuse for ignoring it.

A two-line struggle has now sharply emerged from amongst those forces who have made up the RIM. There can be no turning back.

To quote the conclusion from the *Manifesto from the RCP, USA*:

"To the revolutionaries and communists everywhere, to all those who thirst for another radically different and far better world: Let us not retreat into and retrench in the past, in whatever form – let us instead go forward boldly toward the goal of communism and the emancipation of humanity from thousands of years of tradition's chains."

The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA      May 1st, 2012

## APPENDIX

*As we were finalizing this Letter to Participating Parties and Organizations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, we learned of the existence of two new documents being circulated for signature by "a few RIM parties," entitled On the World Situation and A Proposal for a Conference to Build a New MLM International Organisation. While these documents do not attempt any substantive engagement with the analysis and arguments our Party has made over a number of years, they have the audacity to characterize Bob Avakian's new synthesis as "revisionism" and furthermore declare that not only did our Party "deviate from the path of revolution and communism" but has a "counter-revolutionary line ... responsible for the current crisis and collapse of RIM". These documents also list, in second place, criticism of what they call the "Prachanda-Bhattarai line" in the UCPN(M); but, as will become clear, this is actually just a "throwaway" line, designed to cover the authors' of these documents own tailing and apology for the revisionist line in the UCPN(M) over a whole period of time and continuing, in a new form, until today. The clear target of these documents is Bob Avakian and his new synthesis of communism.*

*The content of these documents serves as a perfect example of the very problems of ideological and political line, and corresponding method, all too prevalent in RIM for a number of years, which our letter is addressing. It has been a correct principle of communists to not lightly brand forces in the communist movement as "revisionist" or "counter-revolutionary", and especially to not do so without making an argument as to why their line is revisionist or counter-revolutionary. Such a conclusion should only be announced after rigorous examination of the political and theoretical questions involved, and after real effort has been made to carry out principled struggle to win over those who are falling into one or another erroneous line. The struggle for more than 5 years our Party has been waging against the revisionist line in the UCPN(M) is an illustration of this correct approach. However, those forces behind this current effort to form a new international organization have proceeded according to a different logic, one far removed from fundamental principles of conducting two-line struggle within the ICM. They declare, like the Red Queen in Alice in Wonderland, "first the sentence, then the trial". This approach is not an accident. Hurling the most extreme and unfounded charges without even the slightest effort to substantiate them, and a reckless disregard for the truth, are themselves indicative of a political and ideological line, consistent with the kind of "communist movement" the reorganizers would like to develop and reflective of their conception of the future society that such an approach would bring into being.*

*Until now, many comrades have sat on the sidelines as the political and ideological struggle has been sharpening. The leaders of this new "initiative" are not troubled by this lack of substantive engagement, because they are trying to substitute a different criterion for "unity", in particular a demagogic and pragmatist appeal to taking Maoist-led people's wars as "its reference points and strategic anchor", as opposed to Mao's stress on "the correctness of the political and ideological line". However, it is important to stress that this is not, as some may have thought, only a pragmatist effort to avoid lines of demarcation and cobble together a shattered unity of the communist movement. While such an approach would be bad enough and doomed to failure, the actual content and goals are much worse. Their central goal is to oppose and combat the advance and development of a viable revolutionary communism in the world today.*

*While we are not going to attempt here to address everything that is wrong in these documents, we believe what we have already written, in our letter, will provide important criteria and standards for evaluating the ideological and political line that they are advocating.*

*These new documents declare the end of RIM. Yet the cardinal issues of communism that have been at the heart of the impasse of our movement for several years are hardly addressed, let alone thoroughly struggled over, by most of the parties and organizations of the RIM. It is the purpose of our letter to go directly at those very questions.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> See *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*, 1984. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.revcom.us/Manifesto/Manifesto.html> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>3</sup> It seems that some section of the UCPN(M) may have signed the joint 2012 document referred to above, which denounces the "Bhatterai-Prachanda" line. However, we are still not aware of any thorough criticism of that line or decisive rupture with the practice of the UCPN(M). [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>4</sup> "What Is Bob Avakian's New Synthesis?" By Lenny Wolfe. [http://revcom.us/a/129/New\\_Synthesis\\_Speech-en.htm](http://revcom.us/a/129/New_Synthesis_Speech-en.htm) , and Making Revolution and Emancipating Humanity, Part 1 by Bob Avakian. <http://revcom.us/avakian/makingrevolution/> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>5</sup> See in particular the Report of the 9th Party Congress of the Communist Party of China, 1969. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>6</sup> See "Beat Back the Dogmato Revisionist Attack on Mao Tsetung Thought" in the *Communist*, No. 5, May, 1979. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>7</sup> The proletarian revolutionaries in China described the transition to communism based on Marx's citation in *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-50*: "This socialism is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations." [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>8</sup> "Alain Badiou's 'Politics of Emancipation' A Communism Locked Within the Confines of the Bourgeois World" by Raymond Lotta, Nayi Duniya, and K. J. A. *Demarcations* No. 1. [www.demarcations-journal.org](http://www.demarcations-journal.org) [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>9</sup> See *Revisionists are Revisionists and Must Not Be Supported; Revolutionaries are Revolutionaries and Must be Supported* published in *Revolution and Counter-Revolution: The Revisionist Coup in China and the Struggle in the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*, RCP Publications, 1978; and *Mao's Immortal Contributions*, RCP Publications, 1979. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>10</sup> In the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*, RIM described the third stage of revolutionary communism as Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, in keeping with the nomenclature that had been adopted by the Communist Party of China under Mao's leadership. In 1993 the RIM united in referring to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>11</sup> Bob Avakian, *Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Must and Will*, special issue of *Revolution* (propaganda organ of the Central Committee of the RCP,USA) No. 50, RCP Publications, 1981. Available on line at [http://www.revcom.us/bob\\_avakian/conquerworld/index.htm](http://www.revcom.us/bob_avakian/conquerworld/index.htm) [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>12</sup> See Chapter VI, "A Cultural Revolution within the RCP," in *Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage, Manifesto from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*. [www.revcom.us/Manifesto/Manifesto.html](http://www.revcom.us/Manifesto/Manifesto.html) . [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>13</sup> As part of the revisionist transformation of the Nepal Party's line and practice, the Party adopted the name Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in 2009 after uniting with another party which had not taken part in the People's War in 2009. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>14</sup> *The Worker*, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), No. 9. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>15</sup> "Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen Party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an elite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously-at bottom, then, a clique affair- a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of the handful of politicians, that

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- is a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense...". (Luxemburg 1918:118) Footnote taken from Bhattarai 'New Type of State', Luxemburg, R. (1918), "The Russian Revolution", in Gupta, S.D. (ed.), *Readings in Revolution and Organization: Rosa Luxemburg and Her Critics*, Calcutta, 1994. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>16</sup> *A World to Win*, No. 17, 1992. Later republished in *Phony Communism Is Dead... Long Live Real Communism*, RCP Publications, 1992. <http://www.revcom.us/avakian/index.html> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>17</sup> See "On the Importance of Summing Up the Experience of Socialism" by Revolutionary Communist Organization, Mexico, June 2006 for a pertinent criticism of "two into one." [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>18</sup> See the letters from the RCP,USA to the UCPN(M). <http://revcom.us/a/160/Letters.pdf> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>19</sup> This is not to imply that the revolution was necessarily on the verge of military success in the 2005 period. There were also real difficulties, as shown by the reactionary regime's capacity to withstand attacks on its well-fortified strongholds, and where the benefits of the regime's connections to and support from imperialists and reactionaries would come more into play. These realities "fed into" other line questions as well, both in Nepal and more generally. For example, the understanding of the UCPN(M) leadership concerning the need and form of what they called "an insurrection" to finish the revolution was predicated on support from a section of the officer corps of the enemy's armed forces. This also interacted very much with the more general question of what type of state, with which socio-economic program, would be brought into being by such an "insurrection." [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>20</sup> *Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party*, USA, RCP Publications, 2008. <http://revcom.us/Constitution/constitution.html> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>21</sup> See *Revolution*, No. 201, May 16, 2010. "On the Critical Crossroads in the Nepal Revolution, and the Urgent Need for a Real Rupture with Revisionism." See also an article by K.J.A. "Save the Revolution!" May 2010. Reprinted at [www.thenextfront.com](http://www.thenextfront.com) [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>22</sup> This reminds us of Chang Chun-chiao's warning to comrades in China when he said that many people considered the Party-wide campaign to "study the dictatorship of the proletariat" as a "flexible task" while the capitalist roaders were quite clear on the life and death nature of this debate and considered fighting for a revisionist line an inflexible task. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>23</sup> Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Chapter 5. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>24</sup> A few months after the adoption of the Millennium resolution, the RCP,USA made a self-criticism in a letter circulated to RIM parties and organisations for having accepted that resolution. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>25</sup> "The Movement and the Bend in the Road," in *Struggle!*, No. 6, August 2005. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>26</sup> Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1972, p. 80. "The Socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says: "I must argue, not from the point of view of 'my' country (for that is the argument of a wretched, stupid, petty-bourgeois nationalist who does not realize that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of *my share* in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution. That is what internationalism means, and that is the duty of the internationalist, of the revolutionary worker, of the genuine Socialist." [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>27</sup> These theories became consolidated as the "Three World's Theory" by the revisionists in China after Mao's death. But many of the threads and policies that went into this thinking were already evident in the policies carried out in China during Mao's lifetime and were consistent with an understanding that had been prevalent in the ICM since the 1930s. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>28</sup> Mao Tsetung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>29</sup> In addition to the above mentioned "Conquer the World?" see also "Advancing the World Revolution", "On the Principal Contradiction on the World Scale" (available at [http://www.revcom.us/bob\\_avakian/advancingworldrevolution/advancingworldrevolution.htm](http://www.revcom.us/bob_avakian/advancingworldrevolution/advancingworldrevolution.htm)), and many other articles from Bob Avakian over several decades. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>30</sup> Text 38: From Bourgeois Democrats to Capitalist-Roaders and Text 39: Capitalist Roaders Are the Bourgeoisie Inside the Party. From *And Mao Makes Five*. Edited and with an introduction by Raymond Lotta, Banner Press,

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1978. [\[back\]](#)

- <sup>31</sup> Bob Avakian, "Getting Over the Two Great Humps: Further Thoughts on Conquering the World," excerpted in the RCP newspaper *Revolutionary Worker* October 1997-January 1998 under the title "Getting Over the Hump," and October 2003-January 2004 under the title "On Proletarian Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship – A Radically Different View of Leading Society." Available at <http://revcom.us/avakian/index.html> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>32</sup> "People want revolution, Proletarians want the Party of the Revolution, Communists want internationalism and a new international organization." Widely reprinted – for example, see *Maoist Road*, No. 1, 2011. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>33</sup> "On the Present Situation of the RIM and the Challenge of Regrouping Maoist Parties at the International Level." CPI(M-L) (Naxalbari). [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>34</sup> This formulation can be found in a number of PCP documents, including the Party's General Line document. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>35</sup> Bob Avakian, "Views on Socialism and Communism, A Radically New Kind of State, A Radically Different and Far Greater Vision of Freedom." <http://www.revcom.us/avakian/index.html> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>36</sup> "The Communist Party of Iran (MLM) has fallen into the lost road of 'post MLM'", a public document from the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>37</sup> From the *Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*, RCP Publications, 2008. <http://revcom.us/Constitution/constitution.html> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>38</sup> This was true in particular of MB Singh of the Communist Party of Nepal (Mashal) and the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>39</sup> "What Is Bob Avakian's New Synthesis?" By Lenny Wolfe. [http://revcom.us/a/129/New\\_Synthesis\\_Speech-en.html](http://revcom.us/a/129/New_Synthesis_Speech-en.html) and Making Revolution and Emancipating Humanity, Part 1 by Bob Avakian. <http://revcom.us/avakian/makingrevolution/> [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>40</sup> From his speech to the 1979 major party meeting before the launching of the People's War. [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>41</sup> "Response to the article 'The Current Debate on the Socialist State System'" in *Struggle!*, No. 8, June 2006. Also published in *Demarcations* No. 2. [www.demarcations-journal.org](http://www.demarcations-journal.org) [\[back\]](#)
- <sup>42</sup> Some have argued, or questioned, whether Avakian's emphasis on the "emancipation of humanity" is a reflection of a kind of "humanism" and a departure from the proletarian class viewpoint and method. In fact, it is the proletarian interests in the most fundamental and largest sense, and the world outlook and method that corresponds to that, which we are upholding and fighting for, and which forms the basis for the movement for revolution we are working to build. On the other hand, it is a reified, narrow and economist vulgarization and fundamentally reformist reduction of the interests of the proletariat – involving not the struggle for communism but something far short of that, chained within the confines of bourgeois relations and the reality of an imperialist-dominated world – to which the new synthesis brought forward by Bob Avakian is in opposition. [\[back\]](#)