

# Vicious RU Attack on Union Militants

# Maoists in a Muddle

Rumors are flying fast and thick among U.S. Maoists nowadays. Two years ago one group would accuse the other of "waving the Red Book against the Red Book." Now that the compiler (Lin Piao) of the good book has been unmasked as a secret agent of "Soviet fascist social imperialism" and a purveyor of Confucius Thought, the pages of the Maoist press, particularly the *Guardian* and *Revolution*, are filled with charges of "PL mentality" and of outright Trotskyism.

What is going on? It would be difficult for even an insider to figure out, since the Stalinist idea of political "discussion" consists of boundless innuendo and slander. Rather than political struggle to draw the line between revolutionary Marxism and various reformist and centrist fakers, the heirs of the liquidator of the Communist International prefer more "edifying" methods: denunciations of opponents as "cop agents" and physical violence against those who are out of step with the General Line.

Judging by public polemics and the statements of recent defectors from the Revolutionary Union (RU) in particular, the current vitriolics apparently center on three crucial issues: when and how to build the vanguard party, the Leninist position on black nationalism and the fundamental lines of communist work in the trade unions.

These are central questions for serious revolutionists. The fact that U.S. Maoists have been functioning for years without a serious discussion of them is an indication of their political bankruptcy and thoroughgoing opportunism. But this is not the heart of the matter. More revealing is a recent comment by the RU:

"...it must be stated frankly that at this point in the development of our movement, there is a certain amount of pessimism and demoralization.

"This seems to stem primarily from the fact that many of us have learned through experience that it is easier to read Marxism-Leninism than it is to apply it to developing the revolutionary movement....

"...Have all of us made many mistakes, some of them pretty serious? We certainly have. Have we been plagued by a tremendous amount of sectarianism in our ranks that has made unity a hard thing to achieve? We certainly have. Have we also been plagued by opportunism of all stripes that has succeeded somewhat in confusing some people and has also made unity hard to achieve? Yes, we have."

—*Revolution*, May 1974

## The RU's Fake Left Turn

It is this demoralization which is driving several of the Maoist groups into a frenzy, producing a dizzying merry-go-round of changing political positions. Most affected has been the Revolutionary Union, which has suffered a recent split by most of its black members (reportedly in the direction of the Black Workers Congress). In the complex jockeying between the October League (OL), RU, BWC, Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRW), Communist League (CL) et al., Avakian & Co. are attempting to take up relatively left positions. For instance, recent issues of *Revolution* have published articles critical of the trade-union bureaucracy, against black nationalism and for the creation of a Leninist party now.

A couple of years ago Avakian would have denounced such positions as "Trotskyite" and "racist." Today the RU proclaims "it is essential to establish the vanguard Party as soon as possible" (*Revolution*, May 1974). But in 1970 it argued that "work to begin building the united front should not wait for the formation of a Communist Par-

ty" (*Red Papers* No. 2). In *Red Papers* No. 1, the Panthers were the vanguard; today "all nationalism is nationalism," and a bourgeois ideology besides.

What has happened to produce such reversals is that Avakian & Co. have been outflanked to the right by the Klonsky Family's October League. The RU's lack of success in worming itself into the labor bureaucracy is due only to its brainlessness at opportunist maneuvering. Its new "left" positions simply reflect the verbal militancy displayed by any out-bureaucrat until he latches on to a "piece of the action." Moreover, they have nothing to do with the RU's cravenly reformist practice. Thus the RU criticizes the OL for the latter's support to Arnold Miller, who is currently crushing mine workers' wildcats and enforcing gangster Tony Boyle's sellout contract. But at the time of the Mine Workers' elections in December 1972, the RU gave "critical support" to Miller!

Another example: the May issue of *Revolution* contains an article mildly critical of pro-Meany "UFW leaders" (who do you suppose they might be?). But last summer when it counted, the RU did exactly *nothing* to oppose Chavez' criminal liquidation of the farm workers' strikes. On several occasions it attempted to get SL supporters, who did criticize the UFW tops' defeatist policies, expelled from picket lines (see "Meany/Chavez Abandon Strike, Turn to Boycott," *WV* No. 30, 12 October 1973). The RU's "opposition" to the Meany/"UFW leaders" policy is just so much toilet paper!

## The RU's "Support" for Workers Democracy

When the Revolutionary Union was itself undemocratically prevented from handing out a leaflet stating its position on the Equal Rights Amendment (it opposes the ERA) at a Chicago International Women's Day demonstration this March, it suddenly discovered that:

"...each participating organization in a coalition has the right to disagree with certain slogans, demands, etc. and to put forward these disagreements during the event itself, probably in the form of a leaflet, as long as it is done in a way that doesn't disrupt the overall unity of that event."

—*Revolution*, April 1974

However, lest anybody jump to the conclusion that these Stalinists had suddenly rediscovered Leninist principles of a united front ("unity of action, freedom of criticism"), a gang of RU goons recently assaulted five members of the Militant Action Caucus, an opposition group in the Communications Workers of America (CWA), after an RU-dominated rally for women's rights in San Francisco on June 1. These militants' "crime" was to have handed out a pro-ERA leaflet! A MAC leaflet later described this vicious assault:

"As we left the demonstration to return to the afternoon session of the CLUW [Coalition of Labor Union Women] conference, we were followed by about 20 or 30 people. There were only five of us. Hearing shouts from behind, we turned around. RU supporters and people from the Committee for Better Working Conditions viciously began tearing our literature out of our hands and shoving us down on the pavement. Serious injury was avoided *only* because a number of people from the demonstration saw what was happening and ran to defend us. A Stanford campus worker received minor injuries; two *Workers Vanguard* salesmen were hurt, one seriously. Vern Bown, a well-known speaker at RU sponsored rallies ... and a member of ILWU Local 6 bit off the ear lobe of one of our defenders. This savage mutilation gives an accurate idea of the savageness of the attack. The police arrived and attempted to arrest a black man who

had joined in the defense effort. Thus, the RU attack almost gave the cops another victim to subject to Operation Zebra-style harassment. After arguing with the cops for a few minutes we secured his release. At the afternoon session of the CLUW conference there was general horror at the assault, which some participants in CLUW had witnessed, and almost everyone at the afternoon session signed a petition protesting the attack.

"...CWA members know that we are not pacifists. Union members have a duty to defend themselves and their un-

porarily dropped its attempts at intimidation and slunk off with its tail between its legs (see "Fremont UAW Upholds Workers Democracy," *WV* No. 32, 9 November 1973).

## Political Bankruptcy Leads to Gangsterism

The RU's "left" posturing and thug attacks are the expression of a frenzy growing out of its own internal turmoil. RU-brand Maoism can hardly be satisfying to any halfway serious revolutionary militant these days: support for "peaceful coexistence" with Nixon, the murderer of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese; apologies for the "anti-imperialist" butchers in power in Ceylon and Pakistan; support for the Arab bourgeoisies who are now hobnobbing with Kissinger; occupying the Statue of Liberty for a few hours to demand, in effect, Nixon's replacement with the arch-conservative Ford; and fighting to retain the University of California Criminology School in Berkeley!

In the unions, having been rebuffed by the Chavez regime in the Farm Workers and the leaders of the Brotherhood Caucus at Fremont UAW, the RU now warns against giving support to "opportunists out of office." Yet it has no intention of organizing the necessary political struggle in order to replace the present hidebound reactionary union bureaucracy with a truly revolutionary leadership.

Its contradictions and political bankruptcy may lead the RU zigzagging from disaster to disaster along the path to oblivion, but its supporters would do well to avoid hastening its demise through inexcusable hoodlum attacks on its political opponents, which will not be tolerated by the workers movement. ■

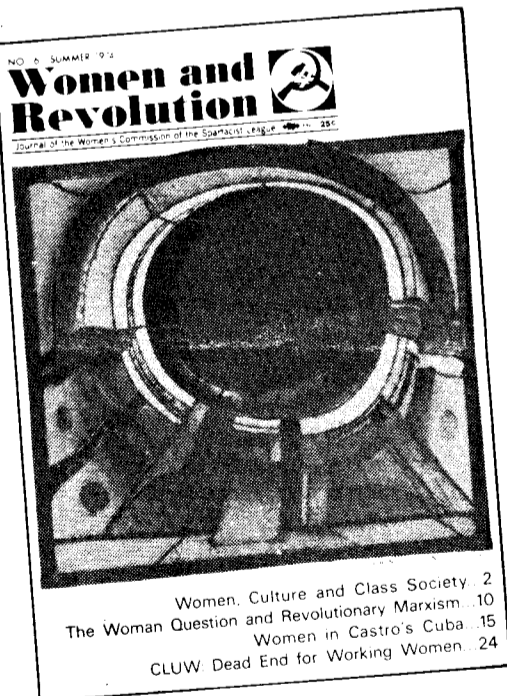


Bob Avakian

ions against gangsterism, scabs, police attacks on picket lines, and against all forms of company attack and strike breaking. But inside the workers movement discussion, not physical violence, must be used to resolve disputed questions and make decisions...."

The Spartacist League calls on all tendencies in the workers movement to sharply condemn this thug attack against union militants. (The RU assault was denounced by the Socialist Workers Party in the June 21 *Militant*.) A good example of how united action can put a stop to such anti-labor hooliganism was given by Fremont, California, UAW members last year. During the summer and fall of 1973, supporters of the RU-backed newspaper *Bay Area Worker* repeatedly harassed and on several occasions attacked salesmen of *WV* and the Workers League's *Bulletin* outside the Fremont GM and Milpitas Ford auto plants. However, after the third such attack, the members of UAW Local 1364 (Fremont) voted overwhelming for a resolution affirming the right of all "labor-socialist" groups to sell and distribute literature at the plant. With its gangster-like behavior roundly condemned by the workers, the RU tem-

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