

# Once Again on Red Guards Austin: Lackeyism and U.S. Empire

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Red Guards Austin’s (RGA) recent reply to our polemic *RGA Is Not an MLM Organization* provides us with more negative examples of the anti-people orientation and practice that revolutionaries in the U.S. need to combat and overcome. In their reply, RGA claims that we don’t have “credentials” to talk about revolutionary politics, distorts quotes from our document, and obscures basic geopolitical realities to justify their pro-imperialist and revisionist stands. RGA’s document itself is not actually written to refute our document, but rather to reassure their followers—most of whom seem not to have read our document—that RGA is correct, and that by extension they are correct for following RGA’s so-called leadership. The title itself, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, positions RGA as a teacher, leading a class, with their facebook lackeys as the “good students” and those who disagree with RGA as students in the back who are not “listening up.”<sup>1</sup> This relative positioning reveals a lot about how RGA imagines themselves, namely as bourgeois figures of authority. This idea is reinforced throughout their document at every level, and this practice further exposes their fundamentally anti-people outlook and politics.

It’s worth restating that in our last document we concluded that RGA is not a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (MLM) organization, and that they lack clarity on the most fundamental and basic lessons of MLM. This was demonstrated through analysis of a number of their documents and statements. These statements included a position paper, analyses of the present situation in this country, reportbacks on RGA’s events, statements about international groups, and more. Our polemic offered a detailed analysis of how the content of these statements negated numerous lessons learned through the history of the International Communist Movement (ICM).

We will begin this document by analyzing, side by side, what we said in our polemic, and what RGA said about our document. Through this analysis we aim to demonstrate their deep-seated opportunism and willingness to distort, misquote, and misrepresent what others write and do. We hope that this will

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<sup>1</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

clarify the unprincipled and bourgeois way in which RGA approaches political struggle. We will then discuss in greater detail a few criticisms of RGA's politics which we raised in our initial polemic. We will primarily focus on RGA's negation of dialectical materialism and their bourgeois understanding of the united front. We hope to both further clarify the MLM understanding of these topics and demonstrate the deep-seated metaphysical views which form the foundation of RGA's politics.

It is also our hope that through this exposition, comrades can see the underlying lackeyism which is fundamental to RGA's approach to politics. The proletarian approach to politics analyzes material reality through collective discussion and, in doing so, provides the basis for the people to methodically advance the struggle to overcome all oppression and exploitation. In contrast, lackeyism encourages a mentality of avoiding, obscuring, and mystifying the key political questions of our moment in favor of currying favor with power and thereby builds unprincipled political unities based on opportunism, convenience, and slavish deference to authority.

This lackeyism is evident in RGA's approach to both questions of local political work and in their analysis of the international situation—in particular in their assessment of the political character of groups like the Syrian People's Protection Units (YPG). RGA's reductionist analysis and lackeyist approach to politics encourages people not to examine questions concretely, but instead to follow the line that their "leadership" has developed based on reductionist and metaphysical dualisms such as "us versus them" and "revolutionary versus fascism." RGA has innovated new ways of reducing revolutionary principles to counterrevolutionary soundbites, a process endemic to the bourgeois world order and constantly refined by various pro-state interests in the U.S. including its vast NGO apparatus. RGA's blatant distortions of Maoism, and their rabid support for the lackeys of U.S. imperialism in Syria, should sound loud alarm bells to revolutionaries in the U.S. that RGA is not to be trusted, and indicate that they see fit to mingle with some of the most negative forces of our times. Historically, these have been telltale signs of a deep betrayal of the people's cause, and have provided fertile ground for active attempts to stifle revolutionary developments.

## 1. A Comparison of Quotes

In *One More Time For Those in the Back* RGA repeatedly misquoted our polemic and attributed to us positions and ideas which we have never supported. By placing RGA's quotes side by side with what we actually wrote, we hope to reveal their tendency to distort what others write in order to make themselves look better. This is a deeply opportunist practice that is in contradiction to the MLM approach of dealing with criticism honestly and as objectively as possible.

## On Antifa and the Question of What is a Primary Contradiction

**MP:** “RGA promotes antifa work under its command as the primary task.” In quoting this we made reference to RGA’s document *On the Rise of White, Right Wing Terrorism in the US* in which they stated “Fascism must be resisted at all costs and we must build a popular antifascists [sic] movement—this is our crucial task.”<sup>2</sup>

**RGA:** “We also do not consider this [antifascism] to be the ‘primary task.’ Our documents since our founding have insisted that building the party is the *principal* task of revolutionaries.”<sup>3</sup>

**Commentary:** While RGA has nominally upheld the idea that building the party is the principal task of revolutionaries,<sup>4</sup> they have also claimed that building a popular antifa movement is the “crucial task” and repeatedly promoted this as the key link politically. This is evident in their claims that “antifascism is first and foremost internationalism”<sup>5</sup> and that “antifascism means serving the people.”<sup>6</sup> Instead of dealing with the differences between anti-fascism, internationalism, and serving the people, RGA lumps these all together, negating the important qualitative differences between the three. We discuss this approach in further detail below.

In our view, the principal task of revolutionaries cannot be reduced to party building but is instead situation specific. At a certain moment it may be most important to sum up lessons from a recent failure, at another to lead a strike, and at another to engage in self-defense against attacks by the state or reactionary forces. In his text, *On Contradiction*, Mao describes this principle when he states, “when a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy.”<sup>7</sup> To claim that the principal task of revolutionaries in this country is to build the party is a metaphysical,

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<sup>2</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

<sup>3</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>4</sup>RGA, *Create Two, Three, Many “Parties of a New Type”?*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/08/11/create-two-three-many-parties-of-a-new-type/> and “With no such party in existence the principal task is building the party—a new revolutionary communist party.” From RGA, *Condemned to Win! Position paper from Red Guards Austin, 2016*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2016/07/05/condemned-to-win-position-paper-from-red-guards-austin-2016/>

<sup>5</sup>See RGA’s *Statement of Solidarity with Front Revolutionnaire Antifasciste de Provence (Revolutionary Antifascist Front of Provence-F.R.A.P.)*: <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/11/21/statement-of-solidarity-with-front-revolutionnaire-antifasciste-de-provence-revolutionary-antifascist-front-of-provence-f-r-a-p/>

<sup>6</sup>RGA, *Solidarity with Charlotte Antifascists*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/25/solidarity-with-charlotte-antifascists/>

<sup>7</sup>Mao, *On Contradiction*, MZSW (Mao Zedong Selected Works), vol. 1, p. 311-347. Available online here: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_17.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm)

“one-size-fits-all” approach to politics; this approach is related to their claims that antifascism, serving the people, and internationalism are all effectively the same thing. We analyze RGA’s metaphysics in detail in the next section of this document.

**MP:** “RGA states ‘Antifascism is first and foremost internationalism.’ On the contrary, antifascism needs to be seen as antifascism. Antifascism can contribute to revolutionary internationalism, as it did in many ways during World War II, through international solidarity for revolutionary forces who were often on the front lines against fascism. Such was the case among many partisan forces in Europe, and among the Chinese communists who were fighting the Japanese invaders.

“But opposition to fascism can also harm revolutionary forces if non-proletarian politics are in command. The unprincipled united front policies orchestrated by the Comintern under Dimitrov and Stalin in the approach to and during World War II often resulted in a withdrawal of support from mass struggles. This occurred in the U.S. when—as part of the Comintern’s Popular Front policy—CPUSA de-emphasized support for, and ties with, southern black workers and sharecroppers, and instead focused on building influence among white liberals. This was also reflected in the CPUSA’s increased support for President Roosevelt’s reelection in 1936, and their decision to shut down the militant and widely read Southern Worker newspaper in 1937. Not coincidentally, in cities such as Birmingham, Alabama, a large number of black people left the party that same year.

“Later during WW II, the Comintern promoted the Nationalist Party (KMT) in China as the primary anti-Japanese force, and instructed the Chinese Communist Party to defer to the KMT. When the Nationalists launched efforts to exterminate the CCP and its supporters, the Comintern’s response was to encourage the CCP to “bargain” away its base areas in order to pacify Chang Kai-shek. Smartly, the CCP did not heed this advice, and Mao preemptively attacked Chang’s invading army. Subsequently, through its all-around correct political line, the CCP was able to unite all of China in resistance to the Japanese invaders, and later achieved liberation of the entire country and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat.”<sup>8</sup>

**RGA:** “They attack us for suggesting that antifascism is first and foremost internationalism, but the truth of this statement is particularly clear when a simple look around reveals that every contemporary brand of fascism in the US embraces aggressive nationalism. While obviously not everything in history that has ever called itself antifascism has understood the necessity of internationalism being a core value, the fact that MP suggests that genuine antifascism is not also anti-imperialist, pro-people, and internationalist shows a remarkably dull perception of what we are actually about when we oppose fascism. Imperialism,

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<sup>8</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

hyper-nationalism, and white supremacy all go into the mix of most US fascist organizations. We attack the problem at its root instead of just looking at the branches.”<sup>9</sup>

**Commentary:** Either RGA did not bother to read what we wrote, or they did read it, but decided that they would look better if they could convince their readers that we do not believe anti-fascism can be anti-imperialist, pro-people, and internationalist. The former is typical of dogmatists who do not bother to investigate situations because they assume they already have all the answers. The latter is the stuff of the most vile revisionism and bourgeois attempts to discredit Marxism.

In our document, we analyzed a number of cases in which antifascism was not internationalism, including aspects of Stalin and Dimitrov’s formulation of the Popular Front Against Fascism described above. In doing so, we highlighted how an incorrect approach to antifascism can and has set back revolutionary movements internationally, thereby functionally supporting the interests of the imperialists instead of the broad masses of people. In our view these are valuable lessons from the ICM that Maoists should take seriously. In contrast, despite RGA’s claim to understand how and when antifascism is internationalism, they actually demonstrate a liquidationist and reductionist view of the question.

For example, when discussing organizing “workplace struggles, organizing against benefit cuts, or directly feeding and clothing working-class communities,” RGA subordinates all of these struggles to antifascism: “All of these fronts no matter where we are must be considered as part of our antifascist work, which must inform our tactics.”<sup>10</sup> By subordinating all these particular struggles to antifascism, RGA demonstrates that they see antifascism as the “key link.”

In our original polemic, we discussed various lessons from the ICM which contradict RGA’s theory and practice. They refused to grapple with these basic points, instead pretending that they have “the answers” without bothering to do basic investigation. This is indicative of their tendency to position themselves as experts to preemptively dismiss criticisms levied against them. In this particular instance, this practice was coupled with an attempt to discredit our group by claiming that “MP suggests that genuine antifascism is not also anti-imperialist, pro-people, and internationalist.” On the contrary, RGA’s conception of the anti-fascist struggle paves over the difference between principled, pro-people anti-fascism and liquidationism.

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<sup>9</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>10</sup>RGA, *IT WILL NOT FALL UNLESS YOU HIT IT: An analysis of the growing fascist trends in the United States*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2016/11/09/it-will-not-fall-unless-you-hit-it/>

## On RGA's Support for the U.S. Imperialist Backed YPG

**MP:** “RGA has promoted uncritical support for the YPG. In a mock-funeral held in Austin, Texas for American fighters killed in Rojava they stated, “Today it does not concern us what leftist school of thought these comrades belonged to, what matters to us is that they have given their lives in the same spirit of internationalism and revolution which we hold so dear. All revolutions demand blood.” For RGA, political content is less important than bloodshed and nominal support for revolution. In contrast, MLM demands principled political unity based on grappling with the contradictions of the moment and upholding the lessons of the history of the ICM. This applies to united fronts as well, as spelled out in the TPK/ML’s statement. By failing to concretely analyze the situation in Rojava and Syria, RGA negates the importance of politics, instead emphasizing liberal unity based on anti-fascism. By seeing fascism, in the form of ISIS, as the “real evil,” they endorse forces who are increasingly functioning as a proxy for the U.S. imperialists.”<sup>11</sup>

**RGA:** “MP falsely states that we show “unabashed” and “uncritical” support for YPG/J. Of course they do not bother to engage with anything but a solidarity video made for US martyrs of the YPG. It is correct that we did not criticize YPG during a memorial for martyrs. To suggest that such a place is appropriate to criticize is farcically unprincipled; we honored their courage and their sacrifice.”<sup>12</sup>

**Commentary:** To support progressive people who died fighting against fascists is one thing. To say that the fighters of a proxy force for an imperialist nation “have given their lives in the same spirit of internationalism and revolution that we hold so dear” is quite another. One must ask, what sort of internationalism and revolution is RGA promoting if they think the YPG fights in the same spirit? The YPG has been instrumental in furthering the interests of U.S. imperialism in the region by coordinating the slaughter of civilians in the race against the Russian Imperialists—and their compradors in the Syrian Government—to redivide Syria.

This is evident in Mazlum Kobane’s—commander of the SDF and member of the YPG—recent statements that the YPG has developed a “strategic relationship” with the U.S. In the interview, Kobane goes so far as to justify imperialist intervention in the region, including by the U.S., as part of these countries’ “responsibilities” to “eradicate terrorism.” Based on this comprador logic, which justifies imperialist intervention and invasion of other countries, Kobane concludes “we want the United States to stay here.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

<sup>12</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>13</sup><https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/09/turkey-kurdish-commander-says-us-should-stay-in-syria.html>

This strategic alliance is in line with the U.S.'s long-term plans in the region, as should be clear by the fact that the U.S. state has armed, trained, advised, and directed the YPG and SDF.<sup>14</sup> The U.S. has established a number of permanent bases in northern Syria, as was recently leaked by Turkey's state-run news company, Anadolu Agency.<sup>15</sup> Trump also recently approved a new \$393 million military "aid" package for the YPG and related forces which includes heavy weapons, numerous armored vehicles, 12,000 AK-47's, and 6,000 machine guns.<sup>16</sup> This is part of the U.S.'s longer term strategy in the region now that ISIS has largely been defeated and the U.S. controls approximately twenty-eight percent of the territory in Syria.<sup>17</sup> As part of this plan, the U.S. is working to have the YPG become the leading force in a planned 30,000 strong army—which they insist is simply a "border-guard."<sup>18</sup>

RGA seeks to downplay this strategic alliance by stating "the YPG/J has accepted US imperialist aid something many legitimate revolutions have done when facing a massive threat posed by groups like Daesh."<sup>19</sup> However, the dishonesty of this description of the situation should be clear based on the above information about the YPG's relationship with the U.S. By reference to the threat of ISIS, RGA justifies the YPG's role as U.S. comprador and thereby justifies U.S. imperialist intervention in Syria. In our view, there has not been a single "legitimate revolution" which forged a strategic—as opposed to tactical or temporary—alliance with an imperialist power; to do so is to betray the cause of revolution.

Is it correct to call a person who died fighting for U.S. imperialism an internationalist and revolutionary martyr? Not if one has an understanding of revolution and internationalism based in MLM. As Lenin stated: "*There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is—working whole-heartedly for the*

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<sup>14</sup><https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa-exclusive/exclusive-us-forces-to-stay-in-syria-for-decades-say-militia-allies-idUSKCN1AX1RI> and <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/News/News-Releases/Article/1298936/sdf-clear-great-mosque-of-raqqah/> and <http://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/1345107/operation-inherent-resolve-observes-task-forces-third-anniversary/> and [https://media.defense.gov/2017/Nov/03/2001837456/-1/-1/1/LIG\\_OCO\\_OIR\\_INBRIEF.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2017/Nov/03/2001837456/-1/-1/1/LIG_OCO_OIR_INBRIEF.PDF)

<sup>15</sup><https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-19/turkish-leak-of-u-s-positions-in-syria-seen-endangering-troops>

also c.f. U.S. Department of Defense Spokesman Eric Pahon's statement in response to the leak: "While we cannot independently verify the sources that contributed to this story, we would be very concerned if officials from a NATO ally would purposefully endanger our forces by releasing sensitive information." <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2017/07/19/turkey-s-state-run-news-publishes-locations-of-previously-unknown-us-bases-in-northern-syria/>

<sup>16</sup><https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2017/12/23/us-to-resume-aid-for-ypg-in-2018-as-trump-approves-393m-syria-weapons-list>

<sup>17</sup><https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/25/welcome-to-syria-2-0/>

<sup>18</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/15/turkey-condemns-us-plan-for-syrian-border-security-force>

<sup>19</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

*development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception.*<sup>20</sup> In contrast, RGA seems to see the YPG's efforts to become a U.S. proxy as revolutionary and internationalist. Anyone who supports the YPG in the name of internationalism is negating the MLM understanding of internationalism.

What's more, RGA states that we distorted their views on the YPG by only engaging with their solidarity video. They further implied that they have previously criticized the YPG or clarified the divided nature of the group, and that we simply overlooked such a document or purposely did not address it. We cited the video in particular because it was indicative of RGA's line on the YPG, and, other than One More Time for Those in the Back, we cannot find a single document by RGA which even acknowledges, let alone criticizes, the YPG's cooperation with U.S. imperialism. The only criticism we can find of the Kurdish forces in Syria that RGA has published is this statement: "While we are Maoists who do not share their Democratic Confederalist ideology, we too are inspired by their commitment to revolutionary armed struggle, especially by the groups who are fighting Daesh (ISIS/ISIL)."<sup>21</sup> This does not adequately address the politics of the YPG or clarify its relation to U.S. imperialism.

RGA's support for these forces was not limited to erroneously claiming that they are committed to "revolutionary armed struggle." The quoted document also contains a call for readers to donate to an RGA fundraiser "to send anti-fascists to Rojava." This amounts to raising funds to send people to fight for U.S. interests in the region. This imperialist lackeyism is justified by claims that "The city of Raqqa is a Daesh stronghold and Daesh poses the most immediate threat to the masses of people—Arab and Kurd alike."<sup>22</sup> Instead of analyzing the situation, and understanding that imperialist forces such as the U.S. are the dominant oppressors of the masses—as is evident by the YPG's coordination with and participation in U.S.-led coalition, including brutal bombings that have shown disregard for the lives of civilian populations<sup>23</sup>—RGA uses a dualistic logic of "revolutionaries vs. fascism" to conclude that the fascists of ISIS were the dominant enemy of the people of the region at the time. This reductionist analysis serves to justify RGA's opportunist support of the proxy force of U.S. imperialism.

This is coupled with RGA's claim that the YPG, PKK, and related forces are "progressive bourgeois nationalists," and "the best existing representatives of the

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<sup>20</sup>Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution, *LCW (Lenin Collected Works)*, Vol. 24, p. 55-92, Available online here: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/tasks/index.htm>

<sup>21</sup>RGA, *Internationalism is a Matter of Life and Death*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/02/07/internationalism-is-a-matter-of-life-and-death/>

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/20/us-airstrike-allegedly-kills-56-civilians-in-northern-syria> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2016/jan/08/us-led-airstrikes-against-islamic-state-syria-iraq-interactive-isis>

oppressed Kurdish nation.”<sup>24</sup> In reality, their strategic alliance with U.S. imperialism means that these forces are the best representatives of the Kurdish comprador bourgeoisie, but not the Kurdish nation, and certainly not the Kurdish proletariat. In discussing the national question Lenin was clear that Marxists should always give their “independent appraisal” before supporting a national liberation struggle. In particular he emphasized the importance of “taking into consideration the conditions of capitalist development and the oppression of the proletarians of various nations by the united bourgeoisie of all nationalities, as well as the general tasks of democracy, first of all and most of all the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.”<sup>25</sup> He also warned that “workers who place political unity with”their own” bourgeoisie above complete unity with the proletariat of all nations, are acting against their own interests, against the interests of socialism and against the interests of democracy.”<sup>26</sup> This is the case with any members of the Kurdish working class who join the YPG and related U.S.-backed Kurdish forces.

Lenin was also quite clear that imperialist states will, at times, sponsor bourgeois national movements in order to further their own interests and gain a foothold against a rival imperialist power. In these cases, he argues that it is the duty of revolutionaries to oppose these national movements, much as Marx and Engels opposed the Czech and South Slav national movements in 1848, which “were in fact reactionary nations, and outposts of tsarism.”<sup>27</sup> In line with this spirit, we believe that Maoists today must oppose the actions of the YPG which is not a genuine expression of the Kurdish people’s struggle for national liberation, but rather an outpost for U.S. imperialism in Syria.<sup>28</sup>

**MP:** “Some, including RGA, have looked to the YPG, a group affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, as a principled anti-fascist and pro-people force in the region. The YPG has been a key organization fighting against ISIS affiliated groups in northern Syria, and has also defended the semi-independent territory of Rojava. However, over the past year the YPG has engaged in close collaboration with the U.S. state’s armed forces. This consolidation to the camp of U.S. imperialism, as well as the YPG’s participation in the ongoing slaughter of civilians throughout Syria by U.S. airstrikes, clearly demonstrates that their politics are a dead-end for the liberation of the Kurdish and other peoples[...]Revolutionaries must support democratic ideas and struggles while simultaneously opposing and rejecting arguments that subordinate mass struggles and national movements to the interests and initiative of oppressors such as the U.S. imperialists. The case of the YPG is no exception. However, RGA

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<sup>24</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>25</sup>Lenin, *Theses on the National Question*, LCW, Vol. 19, p. 243-251. Available online here: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1913/jun/30.htm>

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Lenin, *The Discussion On Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW, Vol. 22, p. 320-360. Available online here: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/jul/x01.htm>

<sup>28</sup>To further clarify this point, we will analyze the situation in Syria and how the YPG and related forces came to be the main U.S. proxy in the region in a forthcoming document.

has promoted uncritical support for the YPG.”

And: “This does not mean that we should support ISIS because the U.S. is opposed to it. Instead, we must support a revolutionary path necessary to advance the struggles of the people against their oppressors—the most fundamental of which are the imperialists—and struggle against deviations from this path, in particular the willingness to subordinate organizational initiative to imperialist interests.”<sup>29</sup>

**RGA:** “On the contrary, MP’s cheap view is to ignore the democratic content of the YPG/J and instead (!) to play up the”anti-imperialist” content of Daesh! This puts them sadly close to the hard-Trot defense of Daesh by groups like the Spartacists. US imperialism, like its ally Turkey, is more likely to find common ground with Daesh long term as it has done in the region by waging war against a group to turn around and support it later, or inversely by supporting a group to make war on it later. US imperialism is no one’s friend, and it changes up regularly whom it works with and whom it fights; it can and does at times even support both sides. There is no sense in ignoring the evidence that US imperialism has provided aid to Daesh while claiming to fight it or actually fighting it.”<sup>30</sup>

**Commentary:** Our initial statement was not primarily about criticizing the YPG and their role as a U.S. proxy in the region, but rather about RGA’s uncritical acceptance and support for the YPG. We spelled out the divided character of the YPG, the role it has played in fighting against ISIS, and what we have seen as its process of development towards consolidation as a proxy force for U.S. imperialist interests in the region. We also included links to several articles in a footnote that highlight how the U.S. played a key role in supporting the rise of ISIS in the region.

To avoid dealing with our criticism of their uncritical support for a force that has become a U.S. proxy, RGA claims that we ignore the democratic content of the YPG, and that we support ISIS, or are at least close to doing so. RGA either did not read our document very closely at all, or is intentionally distorting what we wrote in an opportunist attempt to portray us as an unprincipled force and compare us with Trotskyists.

**MP:** “As Ganapathi, Chairman of the Communist Party of India-Maoist said in 2009, revolutionaries must see the basis to unite the masses in Muslim countries against imperialism, stating:

“See, Islamic jihadist movements have two aspects: one is their anti-imperialist aspect, and the other their reactionary aspect in social and cultural matters. Our party supports the struggle of Muslim

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<sup>29</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

<sup>30</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

countries and people against imperialism, while criticising and struggling against the reactionary ideology and social outlook of Muslim fundamentalism. It is only Maoist leadership that can provide correct anti-imperialist orientation and achieve class unity among Muslims as well as people of other religious persuasions.”

“Opportunists and reactionaries have little patience for these inconvenient”details.” Hence, while RGA may not have endorsed U.S. bourgeois elections, when it comes to U.S. military adventures abroad, they can give a pass, as long as blood is involved, together with the chance to do a photoshoot with “antifa” oriented fighters.”<sup>31</sup>

**RGA:** “We take no issue at all with the content of the Ganapathy quote which MP uses to imply that we oppose Muslims generally. This false conflation of Daesh with Muslims is akin to the right suggesting that all Muslims are like Daesh. MP’s suggestion that our opposing Daesh means we oppose Muslims generally is disgusting and should be swept away.”<sup>32</sup>

**Commentary:** In no way did our document state or imply that RGA opposes Muslims in general. Instead, it criticized RGA’s line of uncritical support for the YPG, and showed how their belief that the YPG is a revolutionary and internationalist organization has led RGA to support the interest of U.S. imperialism in Syria. Given the antagonistic contradiction in Syria between imperialist powers and the oppressed people, this amounts to opposing liberation of the Syrian masses, in favor of supporting an oppressed nationality comprador force.

The history of the ICM make it clear that imperialists will, at times, support elements of an oppressed nation if it can give them a foothold against a rival imperialist power. The lessons of MLM make it clear that Maoists must oppose these reactionary compradors in order to support the genuine liberation of oppressed people. To do otherwise is to lapse into social-chauvinism and support imperialist interests or imperialist aspirations. RGA was either so confused by this basic point that they really believe we were calling them Islamophobic, or they deliberately misrepresented what we said to make us appear ridiculous and unprincipled.

## On Mass Proletariat’s Approach to Political Orientation

**MP:** In our document *Serve the People: Become One with the People* we state, “For the last six months members of our collective have joined workers in their daily struggles on the job. While it is too early to provide a comprehensive summation of our experiences thus far inside these **work places**, we offer the following observations which we think may be of use to collectives attempting to

<sup>31</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

<sup>32</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

forge mass links through fusing with the masses.” We also stated that “Building sustained links with mass contacts has proven to be vital not only to workplace organizing but to our early attempts at neighborhood organization.”<sup>33</sup>

**RGA:** “MP, by their own admittedly limited scope, chooses (at least according to their blog anyway) to focus only on organizing one job site. This is syndicalism, which avoids intervention in the mass movement for the sake of economism.”<sup>34</sup>

**Commentary:** RGA either didn’t bother to read even the second sentence of our document *Serve the People: Become One with the People*—not to mention our other documents—or they simply lied about our documents to support their claims that we are engaged in syndicalism. Either way, this is a negation of Maoist politics, but both of these practices are quite typical among Trotskyists.

**MP:** Here are a few statements from our political documents which summarize some of the work that we have been doing and some key lessons learned:

“Since the national meeting of the Maoist Communist Group in April [2016], we in Boston have been engaged in sustained investigation and struggle into the internal contradictions within our group[...]Externally, we have been focused on outreach, propaganda and agitation work in Dorchester. This is a form of social investigation to determine contradictions which define the situation in Dorchester and, more broadly, Boston as a whole. These investigations have also included prolonged follow-up meetings with contacts to explore mutual grounds for political development in a clear and non-mystified manner.”<sup>35</sup>

“In the wake of recent acts of police violence in Louisiana and Minnesota, members of Mass Proletariat attended a meeting for the planning of a left unity rally as part of the national upsurge in public protests against police violence. At both the meeting, and at the subsequent rally, our comrades pursued the two-line struggle, putting forth the distinction between reformist politics which diffuse the correct ideas of the masses and proletarian politics which concentrate the correct ideas of the masses.”<sup>36</sup>

“Following the decision last week for the People’s Forum to become a weekly event, our comrades met with a contact to continue the discussion. The People’s Forum was created in an effort to go beyond the organizational form of reformist marches, and build a discussion and exchange of experiences that could serve as a basis for building proletarian power.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Mass Proletariat, *Serve the People: Become One with the People*, [http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/serve\\_the\\_people\\_become\\_one\\_with\\_the\\_people.html](http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/serve_the_people_become_one_with_the_people.html)

<sup>34</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>35</sup>Mass Proletariat, *On the Immediate Situation*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2016-06-17-immediate.html> (Dorchester is a largely oppressed nationality neighborhood in Boston which is experiencing large-scale gentrification)

<sup>36</sup>Mass Proletariat, *The People’s Forum: A Reportback*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2016-07-17-the-peoples-forum.html>

<sup>37</sup>Mass Proletariat, *Second People’s Forum Report 7/23/16*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2016-07-23-second-peoples-forum-report.html>

“Since this summer [2016], Mass Proletariat engaged in a work place struggle in Boston. The struggle comprised two fronts: struggle against the oppression of the workers at the hands of the reactionary capitalists, and the struggle to show the basis for revolutionary politics among the workers in the face of the dominant ideology of reform and trade-unionism. Before we joined the struggle there were positive elements in the workers’ ranks.”<sup>38</sup>

“For the last six months [starting in early 2017] members of our collective have joined workers in their daily struggles on the job. While it is too early to provide a comprehensive summation of our experiences thus far inside these work places, we offer the following observations which we think may be of use to collectives attempting to forge mass links through fusing with the masses.”<sup>39</sup>

**RGA:** “The criticism contained in the recent polemic issued against us by Mass Proletariat (MP) is really nothing new. We have heard so much of this before from a few individuals in revisionist organizations placed indirectly, and we are glad to have a chance to respond organizationally, since an organization (we presume they are an organization) has regurgitated these claims.”

“For starters, we have little understanding of what MP actually does—what their day-to-day work consists of or what kind of base-building they’ve accomplished over the past year. The shortage of statements and the lack of evidence that Maoism is even a force in Boston makes it hard for us to respond in kind to their attempts to prove we are not Maoists. Maybe they can prove to the world that they are Maoists, as the only evidence at our disposal proves only that they are bloggers who vaguely reference ‘mass work.’ Lack of credentials aside, what they have produced is worth responding to even though our response is intended solely to prove them wrong and ourselves right.”

And: “It is no coincidence that fake-communists, bloggers, and meme-creators are not part of that unity [forged between RGA and related collectives], including but not limited to MP.”<sup>40</sup>

**Commentary:** The above quotes from our group are excerpts from a number of public documents which summarize our work and key lessons that we have learned through struggle. We also have a number of documents on our website which attempt to clarify key theoretical positions and lessons from the history of the ICM. These documents reflect several years of Maoist organizing and collective struggle. Rather than critiquing positions we put forward, the lessons that we have summarized, or our approach to political work, RGA instead chose to baselessly insinuate that we are not really a collective. They also claim that they “have little understanding of what MP actually does.” This is either an

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[info/writings/peoples\\_forum\\_7\\_23.html](http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/peoples_forum_7_23.html)

<sup>38</sup>Mass Proletariat, *Summation of Recent Work*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-02-02-summation-of-recent-work.html>

<sup>39</sup>Mass Proletariat, *Serve the People: Become One with the People*, [http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/serve\\_the\\_people\\_become\\_one\\_with\\_the\\_people.html](http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/serve_the_people_become_one_with_the_people.html)

<sup>40</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

outright lie, or a reflection of their willful ignorance and unwillingness to read our documents.

We welcome all criticism of our work, and hope to have more in the future. We are engaged on several fronts of struggle, and have publicly shared our reflections on our work, hoping to exchange experiences with others around the country. We do not feel the need to misrepresent what we are doing or to deceive anyone about our level of activity—such maneuvers serve to accumulate facebook followers and hangers-on but do not serve the interests of the people. Comradely, regular collective discussion and criticism is necessary to develop positive relationships between collectives. This requires an openness towards criticism and also a recognition of the fact that we are all capable of making mistakes and of misunderstanding situations. RGA’s approach to these questions, by contrast, has been to cast doubt on our group’s existence, equate our criticism of them with that of facebook trolls and social democrats, and to thereby negate any possibility that they could be incorrect.

RGA’s polemic is not really a criticism of our document. Instead, it is an attempt to discredit our group and claim that we are “bloggers” instead of an MLM collective, and that therefore their followers need not critically engage with our arguments. RGA’s decision to respond in this manner, instead of engaging in a forthright manner with our polemic, is indicative of their overall approach to politics. Instead of struggling in a principled manner against criticism with which they disagree, they seek to use other means to undermine the position of those who delivered the criticism, such as questioning “credentials” and petty name-calling. This is the logic of bourgeois experts, who fear to be unmasked as the charlatans that they are. This sort of approach has no place in Maoist politics. Mao himself spoke on precisely this point when he said:

“If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point out our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it.”<sup>41</sup>

**MP:** “The urgency we must seize is the urgency to address the actual contradictions among the masses, not as we imagine them, but as they actually are. Only thus can we handle contradictions among the people in a manner which develops proletarian power in individuals and emerging collectives, even if progress may be hard and slow at first. While we may be relatively weak now, it is only through such work, in addition to daring to struggle and daring to win in the course of confrontations with oppressors, that we will become strong.”<sup>42</sup>

**RGA:** “MP promotes faulty notions of developing”proletarian power within

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<sup>41</sup>Mao Zedong, *Serve the People*, MZCW, Vol. 3, p. 227-228. Available online here: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3\\_19.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_19.htm)

<sup>42</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

individuals.” Proletarian power, for Maoists, means the establishment of base areas and the dictatorship of the proletariat—it is developed and conquered through war, not in individuals by resolving contradictions among the people. This diffused concept of power is a hallmark of postmodernism and does not at all capture the Maoist understanding and use of the word “power.”<sup>43</sup>

**Commentary:** By cutting off the end of our quote RGA makes it seem that we are only concerned with individuals and not collective politics. Perhaps in this and other cases, RGA hoped that people would not bother to read our polemic, and that by cherry-picking select phrases, they could successfully portray us as postmodernists. However, anyone who took the time to investigate our document should be able to see the deeply unprincipled and opportunist nature of RGA’s writing and approach to politics.

If there was a misconception that we were implying that we believe mass struggles and organizing inside an imperialist power represent a form of “dual-power” with the bourgeois state—we don’t. Prior to revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois state—or a dual power<sup>44</sup>—state power is monopolized by the capitalists. Our reference to developing “proletarian power in individuals and emerging collectives” refers to building the strength of the proletariat and the raising of people’s levels of consciousness, a process that requires work among individuals and collectives before the seizure of state power.

To paraphrase Engels’ *Anti-Dühring*, up to this point we have proceeded from the assumption that RGA’s persistent habit of misquoting arises either from their total incapacity to understand things or from a habit of quoting from memory—a habit which seems to be peculiar to RGA’s mad-dog attack style, but which is usually described as slovenly. But we seem to have reached the point at which, even with RGA, quantity is transformed into quality. When all of these quotes are taken together, it becomes clear that RGA has deliberately distorted our ideas and writings in their unprincipled attempts to portray us as Trotskyists and postmodernists and thus discredit our criticism of their collective.

This chicanery is the essence of their overall approach to politics, and a thorough negation of MLM. We have shown a few particularly egregious examples of misquotation and distortion here, but the reality is that their document *One More Time For Those in the Back* is full of such nonsense. The fact that they are unable to deal with our criticisms in a forthright manner speaks to their inability to deal with political questions in any way other than by portraying themselves as experts. To cover this over, they spew bombastic phrases about revolution, Maoism, and PPW.<sup>45</sup> During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution this

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<sup>43</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>44</sup>Among some groups in the U.S., Canada, and Europe there is often a good deal of confusion about dual power. Many, including RGA often conflate dual power with base areas. For further clarification of the difference between these two unique concepts see our document *Protracted People’s War is not a Universal Strategy for Revolution*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2018-01-19-ppw-not-universal.html>

<sup>45</sup>For more on the topic of revolutionary strategy and our views on PPW as a strategy for rev-

sort of revisionist practice was termed “waving the red flag to oppose the red flag.” Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Lin Biao, and others all used such tactics to hide their anti-people politics and capitalist-roader views. In this regard, RGA’s revisionism is typical.

## 2. A Few Key Points About MLM

When we wrote *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, we had come to the conclusion that RGA was consolidated to a petty-bourgeois anti-people politics. Their response to our polemic further confirms this conclusion. We wrote our polemic not to win RGA over to a principled line—an unlikely prospect given how deep-seated their revisionism is—but rather to clarify the nature of their politics to any who remained confused by RGA’s bombastic phrase-mongering. In this section, we will criticize RGA’s incorrect ideas on dialectical materialism and the united front. Once again, the goal is not to win RGA over to an MLM politics, but rather to show, by way of negative example, the basis for a Maoist approach to these questions.

### Metaphysics and Dialectics

In our original polemic we offered numerous examples of RGA’s metaphysical view of reality. They have consistently demonstrated a lack of understanding of the most fundamental aspects of dialectical materialism, and put forward an idealist and dualistic view of contradiction. RGA chose to ignore these criticisms in their response, while simultaneously doubling-down on many metaphysical positions. In order to clarify this point, so that others can learn by means of RGA’s negative example, we will reiterate some of these points.

In critiquing RGA’s antifascist organizing we stated,

Instead of engaging in a concrete analysis of the situation in the U.S., and working to understand it in relation to past historical struggles in the ICM, RGA reduces the situation to a non-dialectical opposition between fascism and revolution. This metaphysical dualism is a negation of MLM and the dialectical materialist world outlook.<sup>46</sup>

This dualistic opposition is evident in their statements in a number of documents. For example, in *On the Rise of Right Wing Terrorism in the US* RGA states, “The future which they [the fascists] promise is far more horrifying than anything we face today. Take heart and do not let them have an inch. We will win; we

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olution in the U.S. c.f. our document *Protracted People’s War is not a Universal Strategy for Revolution*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2018-01-19-ppw-not-universal.html>

<sup>46</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

have only two choices ahead, resistance or subjugation.”<sup>47</sup> Similarly, in *IT WILL NOT FALL UNLESS YOU HIT IT*, they state “When imperialism is threatened it responds with fascism, the contradictory and antagonistic opposite of communism.”<sup>48</sup>

By analyzing the contradiction between communist forces and bourgeois fascism in isolation, RGA posits that there are only two possible futures for this country, a socialist revolution on the road to communism, or a fascist dictatorship. This is metaphysics.

As we mentioned in our original polemic, “It is possible that fascist rule will become dominant in the U.S. It is also possible that forms of bourgeois democracy may continue for quite a long time, and we should be clear that this form of rule is also capable of producing more and more horrifying futures.”<sup>49</sup> Bourgeois democracy is and can be quite a favorable type of rule for the bourgeoisie. Of course there is also a basis for the U.S. bourgeoisie to transform the state into a fascist dictatorship, and the development of various contradictions, including the growth of mass rebellion, could lead them to conclude that this is a more favorable form of rule. Even now, there are some members of the ruling class in this country who favor more fascist policies. However, in order to understand this process of development, we must understand these contradictions in their complex interrelation, instead of reducing the situation to a dualistic opposition between communism and fascism.

Dualism is quite different than a dialectical approach. Instead of seeing the contradictory unity between the opposites, RGA sees only antagonistic difference. This non-dialectical view of reality leads RGA to practice “if you are not for us, you are against us” logic. From this they conclude that petty bourgeois liberals and social democrats are actually “the left wing of fascism.”<sup>50</sup> Dualistic logic leads RGA to conclude that the existence of some anti-people ideas among petty bourgeois liberals, revisionists, and other members of the petty-bourgeoisie means that these groups are in essence fascist, albeit a “left” wing. Because RGA does not grasp the contradictory nature of reality, they cannot understand the fact that many liberals, revisionists, and members of the petty-bourgeoisie also have pro-people ideas that are in contradiction to their anti-people ideas. What’s more, the contradictions in our society, and internal to the petty-bourgeoisie, provide the basis for change, for the overcoming of the dominance of their anti-people ideas by pro-people ideas. This is a major reason

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<sup>47</sup>RGA, *On the Rise of White, Right Wing Terrorism in the US*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/06/09/on-the-rise-of-white-right-wing-terrorism-in-the-us/>

<sup>48</sup>RGA, *IT WILL NOT FALL UNLESS YOU HIT IT: An analysis of the growing fascist trends in the United States*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2016/11/09/it-will-not-fall-unless-you-hit-it/>

<sup>49</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

<sup>50</sup>See the section “Liberals and Revisionists—the left wing of fascism” from RGA, *IT WILL NOT FALL UNLESS YOU HIT IT: An analysis of the growing fascist trends in the United States*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2016/11/09/it-will-not-fall-unless-you-hit-it/>

why the petty-bourgeoisie have historically been considered potential friends of the people and potential allies of the revolution, even if pro-people attitudes are not dominant among their ranks at present.<sup>51</sup>

Understanding the basis for change is a key aspect of the dialectical materialist world outlook. However RGA is unable to grasp this basic point and instead adopts formalistic bases for unity with the petty-bourgeoisie. For example, in *IT WILL NOT FALL UNLESS YOU HIT IT*, RGA concludes that the main question in unifying with members of the petty-bourgeoisie in antifascist work is whether or not they hold anti-communist views.<sup>52</sup> This stands in stark contrast to the approach of the leading Maoist parties around the world.

A principled approach to anti-fascism and to the question of unity with the petty-bourgeoisie looks quite different from RGA's reductionist analysis. Such an approach requires dealing with contradictory social forces as they actually exist in the world, and not pretending that members of the masses are either "down for the struggle" or in the camp of the enemy. For example, in 2006-7 the social-fascist CPI-Marxist (CPM) attempted to displace 20,000+ villagers from Nandigram, West Bengal, in order to construct a chemical hub for Dow Chemical. Large-scale mass protests erupted in response. Various forces, including the Trinamool Congress, the BJP, the Socialist Unity Center of India (Communist), and Congress party tried to take leadership of the struggle, positioning themselves in opposition to CPM who at the time led the "left-front" government of West Bengal. Bhumi Uchhed Pratirodh Committee (BUPC, "Committee Against Evictions from Land") was founded and the masses' protests and refusal to leave their land were met with armed attacks by cadre of CPM and their hired thugs, who killed and raped numerous people.

Despite the existence of anti-communist ideas, members of the petty-bourgeoisie, and even fascists—who populate the BJP and Congress party—in this resistance movement, CPI (Maoist) saw the need to involve themselves in this work, because of the genuinely anti-imperialist and pro-people character of the mass movement. This character was in contradiction to the petty-bourgeois and

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<sup>51</sup>For example, Mao stated, "The leading force in our revolution is the industrial proletariat. Our closest friends are the entire semi-proletariat and petty bourgeoisie," he also emphasized that the dominance of anti-people ideas among members of the petty-bourgeoisie at one time, does not mean that these ideas will remain dominant forever: "in times of war, that is, when the tide of the revolution runs high and the dawn of victory is in sight, not only will the left-wing of the petty bourgeoisie join the revolution, but the middle section too may join, and even right-wingers, swept forward by the great revolutionary tide of the proletariat and of the left-wing of the petty bourgeoisie, will have to go along with the revolution." Mao, *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society*, MZSW, Vol. 1, p. 13-21. Available online here: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_1.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_1.htm)

Lenin discussed similar themes in his writing. See, Lenin, *The Bolsheviks and the Petty Bourgeoisie*, LCW, Vol. 12, p. 179-183. Available online here: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1907/feb/25.htm>

<sup>52</sup>"Even liberals and petty bourgeoisie can be united with provided they do not harbor anticommunism, which is objectively in the service of the fascists." RGA, *IT WILL NOT FALL UNLESS YOU HIT IT: An analysis of the growing fascist trends in the United States*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2016/11/09/it-will-not-fall-unless-you-hit-it/>

revisionist ideas of some leading forces within the movement, as well as the comprador, feudal, and fascist ideas of others. But in this complex and contradictory situation, the Maoists were able to work out a line to develop proletarian politics, and even to show many members of the petty-bourgeoisie, who harbored anti-communist views, the basis for armed self-defense, and for a revolutionary struggle against the Indian state.<sup>53</sup> This dialectical materialist approach stands in sharp contrast to RGA's formalistic approach to antifascist work.

RGA's metaphysical dualism is not limited to their views on antifascism; it also determines their views on political economy and politics more broadly. This is apparent in their description of the present situation: "The world has been divided into two hostile camps: the haves and the have-nots."<sup>54</sup> This sort of reductionist analysis is in line with an Occupy approach to politics which reduces the contradictions of capitalist imperialism to "the 99% against the 1%." That RGA substitutes the name "the proletariat"—or in this case the "have-nots"—for the 99% is of little consequence; their approach is extremely reductionist, regardless of the names used. This sort of reductionism has no place in Maoist politics. Instead of dealing with the complex reality of contradictions among the people, including the petty-bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie of oppressed nations—neither of whom can accurately be described as "have-nots"—RGA reduces the global situation to a dualistic opposition. This sort of Manichean dualism is typical of religious mysticism and ultra-leftism, but it not part of a dialectical materialist outlook.

This non-dialectical analysis of the present situation has real implications in practice. We have already outlined how RGA's reductionist analysis of the contradiction between communism and fascism leads them to formalistic conclusions about the basis for unity with petty-bourgeoisie in anti-fascist work. The same sort of formalism is present in their understanding of the basis for unity with the petty-bourgeoisie more broadly. For example, RGA stresses the importance of working with "community leaders" in oppressed national-ity communities—who they describe as "elite home-owners and small business owners"—despite the fact that these so-called leaders have a "tendency to push for collaboration with the city, demand reforms of the police, voting reforms, nonviolence, and so on."<sup>55</sup> While some of these people may be considered among the camp of the people, others, based on RGA's own description, actually take a dominantly anti-people stance and support the U.S. state. Focusing on work-

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<sup>53</sup>For a more complete summation of the events at Nandigram and their impact on other mass protests such as Lalgarh, see CPI (Maoist), "No Genocide Can Kill the Rebellious Spirit of the People of Nandigram," *People's March: Voice of the Indian Revolution*, Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 3-6. Available online here: <http://bannedthought.net/India/PeoplesMarch/2007/PM2007-04.pdf> and Amit Bhattacharyya, *Singur to Lalgarh via Nandigram: Rising Flames of People's Anger against Displacement, Destitution and State Terror*. Available online here: <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/Lalgarh/Bhattacharyya/LalgarhBook.pdf>

<sup>54</sup>RGA, *Condemned to Win! Position paper from Red Guards Austin, 2016*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2016/07/05/condemned-to-win-position-paper-from-red-guards-austin-2016/>

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

ing with anti-people forces can and will alienate members of the masses who are not consolidated to a reformist and integrationist approach to the struggle against white supremacy and the U.S. state. Instead of struggling against such opportunist leadership in oppressed nationality communities, RGA claims revolutionaries should themselves become opportunists, or as they put it “remain friendly and have patience and show forgiveness” to these “elite home-owners and small business owners.”<sup>56</sup>

Now, we should be clear, there is a real basis for unity with members of the petty-bourgeoisie and even in certain situations with the national bourgeoisie of oppressed nations. However, this unity has to be based on a dialectical materialist analysis of the contradictions in our present moment and among the people. Instead of seeing the masses as an undivided unity of the “have-nots”—and thus negating the need to struggle against the opportunism of so-called “community leaders”—we need to engage in a concrete analysis of our present moment. The need to struggle against the integrationist and reformist “leadership” of oppressed nationality communities was a point clearly understood by revolutionaries such as the Black Panthers and Malcolm X. RGA’s metaphysical dualism leads them to toss these historical lessons out the window, in favor of a liberal unity with opportunist forces.

In contrast to this nonsense, revolutionaries must grasp that these so-called “leaders” of oppressed nationality communities often function as a primary ideological drain on the revolutionary ideas among the masses. These integrationist reformists very often work to dissipate rebellious ideas, and prevent the becoming antagonistic of non-antagonistic contradictions through funneling the energy of the masses into NGOs, charity work, and Democratic Party initiatives.

RGA’s formalistic understanding of the basis for unity with the petty-bourgeoisie does not end here. Their metaphysical dualism also leads them to conclude that:

When working with students and other volunteers from alien class backgrounds they must be helped and sculpted under working-class leadership. They must be sent down to the countryside. In our conditions we do not literally mean the countryside, but we mean areas of struggle where these comrades can become culturally working-class: neighborhoods and jobs where their soft academic thinking will not allow them to survive, where they will be forced to begin thinking like workers. They should be given hard and physically demanding tasks when possible to break them of their habits of managing others. They should be forced to become one with the people in a process of liberating them from the toxic influence of their class spoils.<sup>57</sup>

While RGA is perfectly fine with an opportunist alliance with the integrationist “leaders” of oppressed nationality communities, they confusingly and contrarily

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

believe that students can only participate in revolutionary work—even on the mass level, as the above quote is from their discussion of their Serve the People programs—if they are forced to do hard physical labor. Supposedly this physical labor is the key to “break them of their habits of managing others,” and other such petty-bourgeois ideas. As RGA puts it, “understanding the transformative nature of work, we can help these comrades rectify through a physical process. We should encourage them to move out of their safe areas and live among those they serve and to break with their former lifestyles and customs.”<sup>58</sup> In reality, this “one-size-fits-all” approach does not deal with the nuanced work needed to overcome the anti-people ideas that people harbor. Instead of the Maoist methods of criticism, self-criticism, democratic discussion, and debate, RGA sees rectification as a “physical process” of forcing former students to do heavy labor and move to proletarian neighborhoods.

A few years ago, our collective broke from a group of people who attempted to portray themselves as radical by living in proletarian neighborhoods and doing sporadic acts that affirmed their radical image. These included organizing occasional potlucks, doing short-term stints in proletarian jobs, and bragging about confrontations with fascists. When it came to the actual hard work of fusing with the masses by investigating mass struggles, methodically talking with people in the neighborhood about oppression and the potential for resistance, and abandoning petty-bourgeois safety nets by doing regular proletarian jobs, they responded antagonistically.

Many members of the petty-bourgeoisie would rather run marathons to affirm their seriousness and correctness than actually deal with the anti-people ideas and internal contradictions that prevent them from fusing with the people. These contradictions are usually exposed very quickly during democratic discussion and debate of political questions. Working to unite the masses in resistance to their oppressors is very difficult work; it entails enduring many defeats, being criticized by the people hundreds of times, and constantly working to find and create new ways forward. Through these struggles and setbacks, revolutionaries transform themselves and the world. This includes the way that we talk, present ourselves, engage with the people, and how we understand ourselves and the future trajectory of our lives. This sort of transformation requires a fundamentally pro-people attitude and demeanor.

In contrast, many members of the petty-bourgeoisie understand politics as a formalistic and academic task of finding “the answer” or following “the correct leadership.” As such, they often prefer obeying orders and digging ditches “Fight Club” style to actual transformation of consciousness. This sort of lackeyism is not a Maoist approach to politics, but it does reflect the dominance of bourgeois ideology in this country. RGA’s commandist approach to the transformation of consciousness of those from a student background not only fails to question, but actually encourages the development of these bourgeois ideas of power and lackeyism. Instead of working to cultivate pro-people ideas among these potential

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

allies of the revolution, RGA seeks to remould them into good lackeys through a “Red” boot camp of sorts. Instead of pushing people to dare to think and dare to act, RGA pushes people to dare to lift heavy things and dare to listen up.

There is a need to transform the consciousness of the masses, including the petty-bourgeoisie. However, in order to do so, we need to unite with members of the petty-bourgeoisie who see the basis for political struggle here and now. These cannot be reduced to those who are at present willing to do heavy manual labor and move to proletarian neighborhoods—although these can be positive steps towards revolutionary transformation. To argue otherwise, as RGA does, is to claim that there is only a basis to unify with those who are willing to “listen up.” This is evident in their ideas about how anti-people ideas can be overcome among the people:

Any anti-people practices, some of which will inevitably occur in our organization, are challenged collectively in organized line struggle or organized struggle sessions. We focus on advancing the masses in class struggle and winning over the most advanced to MLM. Once they have come to accept the ideology, it is through continued struggle that any backward practices or views are brought to light, challenged, and corrected. Contrary to the ill-informed notions of MP, we consider the basis for unity being MLM and not “violence.”<sup>59</sup>

Because of their metaphysical dualism, RGA sees adherence to MLM—or at least what they think is MLM—as a precondition for overcoming anti-people ideas. Relatedly, they see the basis for unity with the masses as adherence to their “leadership.” In contrast to this, Maoists can and should unite with members of the masses—including the petty-bourgeoisie—in various democratic and revolutionary struggles. The basis for unity must be built on a dialectical materialist analysis of the contradictions at play in these situations, instead of a dualistic understandings of the “haves vs. the have-nots” or nominal adherence to MLM.

RGA’s deep-seated metaphysics are not limited to their approach to unity with the petty-bourgeoisie or their understanding of the masses. Dualistic views are fundamental to their politics, and inform their line on all matters. These views lead them to negate the primacy of internal contradictions, as is evident in their understanding of the principal contradiction on the national scale and its relation to our immediate tasks at hand. They state, “there are contradictions among the people, but they are secondary contradictions, not the principal contradiction, which in imperialist countries can only be between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.”<sup>60</sup> From this they conclude that our emphasis on correctly handling contradictions among the people “seeks to distract from the contradic-

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<sup>59</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

tions between the people and the enemy.”<sup>61</sup>

Yes, there is a contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, just as there is a contradiction between the people and their enemies. However, if we are to engage in revolutionary struggle, and work to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat—that is to say to transform the dominance of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat into its opposite—we must do the methodical work required to unite the people. RGA is unable to understand this because of their dualistic outlook. Their view negates the primacy of internal contradictions, and instead leads them to conclude that contradictions with the enemy are primary over and above the internal contradictions among the people and within revolutionary organizations. In contrast to this, when discussing the work of the People’s Liberation Army in *On Protracted War*, Mao stated:

Our three major principles for the army’s political work are, first, unity between officers and men; second, unity between the army and the people; and third, the disintegration of the enemy forces. To apply these principles effectively, we must start with this basic attitude of respect for the soldiers and the people, and of respect for the human dignity of prisoners of war once they have laid down their arms. Those who take all this as a technical matter and not one of basic attitude are indeed wrong, and they should correct their view.<sup>62</sup>

In our document *Protracted People’s War is Not a Universal Strategy for Revolution*, we highlighted how Mao’s ordering of these principles is not arbitrary. The dialectical materialist understanding of primacy of internal contradictions led Mao to conclude that “disintegration of the enemy forces” had to be subordinated to the unity of a political organization and the relationship between this organization and the people. This lesson is relevant to us today, despite the fact that we are not currently in an armed conflict with the state.

RGA’s dualism prevents them from grasping this crucial lesson. They fail to understand the dominance of bourgeois ideology among the people, and the need to overcome this in order to unify the people. This involves cultivating a pro-people

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid. This accusation itself is another instance of RGA distorting what we said to glorify themselves. For, in discussing correctly handling contradictions among the people, we emphasized how this is done in dialectical relation to contradictions between the people and their enemies.

For example, we stated: “Proletarian politics cannot be jump-started with gun-smoke and mirrors; they require working through contradictions among the people. This requires that revolutionaries join and further the daily struggles of the masses in workplaces and neighborhoods. This includes struggle for shorter-term gains which in themselves are not necessarily revolutionary, such as better working conditions, wages, or housing conditions. And it also requires advancing the longer-term interest of the working class in preparing for revolution.” Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

<sup>62</sup>*On Protracted War* was originally a series of lectures that Mao gave at Yen’an in 1938. Mao, *On Protracted War*, MZSW, Vol. 3, p.113-194. The full text is available online here: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2\\_09.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_09.htm)

attitude as well as discussing and debating ideas with the masses in the course of struggles against oppressors. RGA seems to believe that this work is secondary to armed confrontations with the enemies of the people. They therefore seek to replace the dialectical materialist approach to handling contradictions among the people with the method of sloganeering and armed propaganda.

RGA's dualistic outlook stands in sharp contrast to Mao's statement that revolutionaries:

should not only understand the particularity of these contradictions in their totality, that is, in their interconnections, but should also study the two aspects of each contradiction as the only means of understanding the totality. When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction, we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence and in its contradiction with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite, when the two are both interdependent and in contradiction, and also after the interdependence breaks down. It is of great importance to study these problems. Lenin meant just this when he said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teachings; they never use their brains to analyse anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content, thereby creating a very bad style of work in our Party.<sup>63</sup>

Instead of sloganeering and examining a few contradictions in isolation, revolutionaries must work to understand the interrelation of all the relevant contradictions at play in a situation. It is only through this sort of analysis that it is possible to develop a revolutionary political line and unify the broad masses of people in struggle against their oppressors. Images of militancy, revolutionary slogans, and an eagerness for violence are no substitute. To avoid the bog of metaphysical dualism and the very bad style of work that comes with it, revolutionaries must practice concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Otherwise we will be susceptible to the lackeyism which RGA and others promote.

### **The United Front and the Chinese Revolution**

In our original polemic against RGA, we criticized their approach to anti-fascist organizing stating that it "reflects the bourgeois premise that people will not be able to struggle together until they are confronted with an imminent violent threat to their existence."<sup>64</sup> RGA responded to this by claiming that our

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<sup>63</sup>Mao, *On Contradiction*, MZSW, vol. 1, p. 311-347. Available online here: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_17.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm)

<sup>64</sup>Mass Proletariat, *RGA is Not an MLM Organization*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2017-12-26-rga-not-mlm.html>

criticism “flies in the face of the basic Maoist conception of the united front.” Thus, RGA doubled-down on their position, insisting that the basis for unity in a united front is the existential threat posed by a fascist threat or imperialist invasion. Needless to say, this Hollywood-inspired view of political unity is actually a negation of an MLM understanding of the united front. Although we wrote on this topic in our original polemic, additional criticism of RGA’s line can be helpful to further clarify the matter.

To begin with, we will quote RGA’s response in full:

This notion flies in the face of the basic Maoist conception of the united front, which is formed when, due to their mutually being confronted by a greater enemy, the proletariat, peasantry, petite bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie enter into a temporary alliance led by the proletariat. Of course there are conditions which can unite or ally class forces who under normal conditions would not seek unity. In this process, as described by Mao, the principal contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie becomes the secondary contradiction, replaced by the contradiction between the people and imperialism. Apparently MP believes that this Maoist principle is a bourgeois one and no unity can be found on the basis of a rising fascist populism. We suppose they think that Mao too must be considered a bourgeois thinker influenced by Hollywood.

The threat of fascism is something that is not in the mail: it is on our doorsteps—not in the form of *the state being fascist* (and we have never claimed it is) but in the form of a popular movement for fascism which must not be allowed to grow simply because the state itself has not gone fascist. We cannot speculate on conditions in Boston; however, Texas and other parts of the South are hotbeds for far-right and fascist movements. They have been known to attack book fairs, May Day celebrations, and even anarchist bookstores. Essentially MP suggests that we do nothing in the face of this material threat. Perhaps they have the disposition to allow fascists to march in the streets of Boston; however, we are not ashamed that we lack this disposition. **In essence they have issued a polemic which criticizes us for attacking neo-Nazis.** We stand by our politics, which are for unifying as many as we can against fascists, be they in or out of power.<sup>65</sup>

There is a lot to unpack here so we will go point by point to demonstrate how RGA effectively negates the Maoist understanding of the united front. In doing so, RGA again will serve as our teacher by negative example. They start by reducing the basis for political unity between different classes to the fact that they are confronted by “a greater enemy.” As a result RGA sees the united

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<sup>65</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

front exclusively as a temporary alliance of *quid pro quos* between mutually antagonistic classes which is created by the need to defeat a temporarily shared enemy. What RGA fails to grasp is that the broad masses share a real interest in not only overthrowing a dominant imperialist or fascist oppressor *but also in breaking all chains*. This is in contradiction to other interests of the masses, including for example, the interest of the national bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation in exploiting workers, the petty-bourgeoisie in becoming officials and experts, and so on.

Despite these contradictions, the shared interests in overthrowing oppressors and overcoming oppression more broadly form the basis for unifying the broad masses in a revolutionary—rather than bourgeois—united front. A revolutionary united front is forged through the struggle for proletarian stands among the broad masses, a transformation which opens up the path towards continuous revolutionary advance. Through this process, it is possible to coordinate revolutionary mass initiative across innumerable fronts of struggle against oppression. By instead reducing the basis for the united front to the existence of a stronger enemy, RGA sees the situation one-sidedly and views the united front as an alliance of momentary convenience or as an alliance forced by a chain-of-command. This is the bourgeois method of leadership. Such a view sees external contradictions (such as a common imperialist oppressor) as a basis for unity, thereby negating the primacy of internal contradictions among the people. In contrast, a revolutionary view must grasp the need to handle and resolve the particular, internal, and non-antagonistic contradictions among the people in relation to external contradictions and oppressors. This approach unleashes the creativity of the masses by uniting them in struggle against their oppressor. RGA's bourgeois approach to the united front is related to their deeply metaphysical view of reality, which was analyzed in the above section.

In contrast to this mechanical and reductionist concept of the united front, we want to share CPI (Maoist)'s views:

The aim of the united front is to isolate, weaken and destroy the main enemies one by one and win over the maximum possible forces opposed to the main enemies. Hence, the Party has to pay particular attention to build as broad a front as possible by uniting with all those classes, groups, parties, individuals and forces that aspire to achieve the common aim of the UF, however weak and vacillating the constituents of the UF may be.<sup>66</sup>

And

We must always keep in mind that the united front activity in whatever form is a method of drawing the masses into the struggle and to isolate and weaken the enemy classes. The Communist Interna-

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<sup>66</sup>Central Committee (P) CPI (Maoist), *Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution* (2004), p. 78. Available online here: <http://bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Founding/StrategyTactics-pamphlet.pdf>

tional defined the tactics of the united front as the Leninist method of drawing the masses into the revolutionary struggle, as a method of establishing closer ties with the masses. We must find and advance those slogans and forms of struggle that arise from the vital needs of the masses, from the level of their fighting capacity at the given stage of development. At the same time, Communists must not for a moment abandon their own *independent initiative* and work of education, organization and mobilization of the masses. However, to ensure that the toiling masses find the road of unity of action, it is necessary to strive at the same time both for short-term and for long-term agreements that provide for joint action with trade unions of various colours and other organizations of the working people against the class enemies of the proletariat. The chief stress in all this must be laid on developing *mass action*, locally, *to be carried out by the local organizations* through local agreements. At the same time, we must not lose any opportunity of making use of united front tactics also from above wherever and whenever it helps in bringing the broad masses into mass action and in the politicization of the masses.<sup>67</sup>

A key aspect of the MLM understanding of the united front is the need to link up the particularities of peoples' struggles against oppression with the longer-term goals of revolution and communism. This understanding provides the basis to unify the broad masses in struggle against their oppressors. CPI (Maoist) stresses the importance of the dialectical relationship between the independent initiative of cadre and the local action of the masses. Through a principled approach to the united front, the masses can develop political unity in action, that is to say, in the struggles against their oppressors, and in their efforts to correctly handle contradictions among their ranks. While some of these people will develop into cadres, many involved in such struggles will not. But through taking up political struggle in their particular situations, and by linking these struggles to the larger struggle against class enemies and for revolution and communism, these members of the masses can and will make history. A revolutionary united front is not a "temporary alliance" but actually crucial to make revolution, and serves as a basis to unite all the progressive and democratic struggles in a country.

As if their reductionist understanding of the united front was not bad enough, RGA's response to our criticism also demonstrates a lack of familiarity with the history of the Chinese Revolution and the War of Resistance Against Japan. RGA states:

Of course there are conditions which can unite or ally class forces who under normal conditions would not seek unity. In this process, as described by Mao, the principal contradiction between the proletariat

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<sup>67</sup>Central Committee (P) CPI(Maoist), *Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution* (2004), p. 115-116. Available online here: <http://bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Founding/StrategyTactics-pamphlet.pdf>

and bourgeoisie becomes the secondary contradiction, replaced by the contradiction between the people and imperialism.<sup>68</sup>

RGA's claim that objective conditions unite class forces is indicative of their metaphysical views. Certain conditions can provide *the basis* for class forces to unite that otherwise would not, as was the case during the Japanese invasion of China. However, it is only the initiative of revolutionaries which can transform this basis into an actual revolutionary united front.

In the case of the Chinese Revolution, the Second United Front with the Kuomintang (KMT) was only established in 1937 after the CCP worked with Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng to kidnap Chiang Kai-shek and force him to change his policy during the Xi'an incident. This itself was the culmination of extensive work among the Chinese masses throughout the country to develop popular support for a united front against Japan. The objective conditions for a united front against Japan had existed for some time before, as the Japanese imperialists had invaded Northern China in 1931, and rapidly moved southward. Despite the existence of these objective conditions, it took careful and methodical work by the CCP based on a dialectical materialist analysis to turn these objective conditions into an actual united front.

RGA does not grasp this, and seems to lack a basic familiarity with the history of the Chinese Revolution. This is in line with their tendency to examine situations as abstract generalities, which we critiqued in our recent document *Protracted People's War is Not a Universal Strategy for Revolution*.<sup>69</sup> This abstract and metaphysical view of the Chinese Revolution is in part due to RGA's political orientation, and in part do to their lazy and sloppy style, which eschews investigating situations in favor of posturing as "experts."

This is evident in their discussion of Mao's views on the Second United Front in China. RGA claims that Mao argued that "the principal contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie becomes the secondary contradiction, replaced by the contradiction between the people and imperialism." A basic investigation of Mao's writing exposes RGA's failure to investigate the history of the Chinese Revolution. In *On Contradiction*, Mao stated

When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordi-

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<sup>68</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>69</sup>Mass Proletariat, *Protracted People's War is not a Universal Strategy for Revolution*, <http://www.massproletariat.info/writings/2018-01-19-ppw-not-universal.html>

nate position. So it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Yi Ho Tuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War.<sup>70</sup>

Contrary to RGA's view, Mao did not state that, prior to the Sino-Japanese War, the principal contradiction in China was between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Instead he said it was between "the feudal system and the great masses of the people." RGA's confusion on this is a result of their dogmatism, and their metaphysical world view. It also stems from a lack of familiarity with the Chinese Revolution and Mao's writings. It is only from such a position of extreme ignorance, dogmatism, and arrogance that RGA could possibly conclude that their metaphysical musings are a correct MLM understanding of the united front.

Ultimately RGA's views are a reflection of bourgeois ideology insofar as they are based on a surface-level analysis of the present situation and a quantitative approach to politics. This is evident in their statement advocating "unifying as many as [they] can against fascists, be they in or out of power."<sup>71</sup> We should be clear, there are certain situations where fascists and alt-right groups are—or are on the verge of becoming—the primary oppressors of the people. In such situations it is necessary to build armed community self-defense organizations which provide the people with the means to protect themselves from attacks by fascist forces. This work should be linked to other organizing efforts as part of a broad united front.

However, despite significant coverage by the bourgeois media, in the vast majority of situations in the U.S. organized fascists are not the primary oppressors of the masses, or even a relevant force in the daily lives of the masses. In order to draw the masses into political struggle, and overcome the influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois leadership among the people, we must deal with the actual oppression and exploitation that the masses face daily. It is the struggle against these particular forms of oppression and exploitation which allows the masses to develop unity in action and in struggle. To instead do as RGA does, and see building "a popular antifascists [sic] movement" as "our crucial task"<sup>72</sup> is to practice dogmatism, not Maoism. It is to confuse subjectivist fantasies about the present situation—and speculation about its future trajectory—for objective reality.

This is particularly evident in RGA's statement that "the fact is, the rate of profit has steadily been falling since the 1950s, and the intensifying global crisis of profitability explains the deepening crisis of imperialism, which corresponds

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<sup>70</sup>Mao, *On Contradiction*, MZSW, vol. 1, p. 311-347. Available online here: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_17.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm)

<sup>71</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

<sup>72</sup>RGA, *On the Rise of White, Right Wing Terrorism in the US*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/06/09/on-the-rise-of-white-right-wing-terrorism-in-the-us/>

to rising fascism all over the world.”<sup>73</sup> This is not a dialectical materialist analysis of political economy, but rather a vulgar mechanical conception of the development of fascism. RGA’s claim that “rising fascism all over the world” can simply be explained by the falling rate of profit and an “intensifying global crisis of profitability” is a negation of the Marxist principle of concrete investigations of concrete situations. Instead of investigating the particularity of the development of fascist movements around the world, RGA puts forward a quantitative and empiricist analysis of the global situation and calls it Marxist political economy.

We noted in our original polemic how this view of politics is heavily influenced by the bourgeois ideology of Hollywood films. From this ideology, RGA concludes that a quantitative approach to anti-fascist work (“unifying as many as we can against fascists” regardless of whether they are “in or out of power”) is an application of the MLM understanding of the united front to our present national situation. The bankruptcy of this understanding should be evident. Maoists and revolutionaries in this country must cast aside such illusions and work tirelessly to draw ever greater numbers of the masses into struggles against their oppressors, and coordinate these struggles into an emerging revolutionary united front. Through this approach we can overcome the grip of bourgeois ideology among the masses, demonstrate the weakness and shortcomings of petty-bourgeois leadership of mass struggles, and prepare the grounds for a party with an all-country perspective and with deep links among the broad masses.

### 3. Conclusion

While RGA is a teacher by negative example, there are many other related manifestations of similar logic—including others that masquerade as Maoist—which hold back revolutionary developments in the U.S. Our analysis and criticism of RGA’s revisionism and lackeyism is similarly applicable to these forces. RGA is one particular manifestation of the larger trend in this country which uses opportunism and falsely attributes positions to Mao in order to divert potential anti-revisionist forces towards new expressions of revisionism. This is often based on the argument that one must find the correct “balance” between “existing forces,” as is evident in RGA’s quantitative approach to antifascist work. This approach to politics restrains individuals from daring to struggle and daring to win, and is often justified supposedly by the claim that it is “where the masses are at.” This often takes the form of working with various revisionist forces, but it can also entail working with various adventurist antifascist groups based on metaphysical analyses, such as the idea that “most appealing to the

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<sup>73</sup>RGA, *One More Time for Those in the Back*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/one-more-time-for-those-in-the-back/>

working class is physical violence.”<sup>74</sup>

Almost every city in the U.S. has an individual or set of individuals who present themselves as revolutionary but use one mix or another of NGOism, academism, or revisionist individualism to justify essential inaction and isolation. This should be understood as another manifestation of the same trend which RGA represents. Inaction and relative positioning to revisionist forces, whether on-line or in leftist unity circles—or in relationship to careerist and social power plays—is often justified by supposed expert and “scientific” knowledge. These forces work to position themselves as “beyond criticism” by various forms of posturing. They use this twisted logic to claim that they are the “best in town” and thereby justify their isolation from the people and defer the necessary steps of joining with the masses in their daily struggles. The logic of these individuals is just as suffocating as collectives like RGA.

The bourgeois world order conditions people to see no alternative to these forms of chauvinism. The bourgeoisie see no alternative to their relative rise and fall in relation to other capitalists. As such they must constantly curry favor with power-holders as part of their never ending struggle to maintain and advance their position. Without these relationships of support and patronage they risk falling from their class orbit. Such logic is also at play in the bourgeois family and in many personal relationships in our society. It is also the dominant logic of politics on the so-called “left” including among many groups in this country who call themselves Maoist. Commandism and lackeyism go together like two peas in a pod. This approach to politics is in contradiction with the logic of the proletariat, which sees the need and basis to break all chains.

There are some who are disturbed by the persistence of bombastic neo-revisionists like RGA. However, the social force which these neo-revisionists represent is a reflection of the objective contradictions of this moment. As Lenin said, “the period of imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution; that social-chauvinism (socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds) is the utter betrayal of socialism, complete desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie, that this split in the working-class movement is bound up with the objective conditions of imperialism.”<sup>75</sup> The social-chauvinism of RGA and related groups and individuals is not “better than nothing,” but actually serves the interests of the bourgeoisie and represents a betrayal of the interests of the masses. We must be ready and willing to unflinchingly oppose and overcome these forces. Some aspiring revolutionaries may feel that it is “not their place” to play a leading role in advancing people’s struggle, and instead explicitly or implicitly advocate deferring to existing forces such as RGA or other opportunists. But this liberal attitude runs counter to the revolutionary spirit of the ICM, which Mao so accurately described:

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<sup>74</sup>RGA, *Everywhere a Battlefield*, <https://redguardsaustin.wordpress.com/2017/08/27/everywhere-a-battlefield/>

<sup>75</sup>Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, LCW, Vol. 22, p. 185-304. Available online here: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref01.htm>

Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly.<sup>76</sup>

There is no middle way, no balancing act. It is the revisionists and social-chauvinists who pretend that “There is No Alternative” (TINA) to their opportunist maneuvers to cozy-up to the powers that be. These forces ultimately seek to command their lackeys—and the masses—to “listen up and do as you are told.” This logic and overall nihilism is reflected in the approach RGA and others take to the united front. Instead of working to put proletarian politics in command and coordinate various struggles in a principled manner, they see the united front as an alliance of convenience. This manifests in groups and individuals compromising with bourgeois and revisionist coalitions as well as approaches to antifascist work which prioritize quantity over quality.

The lack of a revolutionary pole in the U.S. for decades has made this capitulationist logic appear as the only choice in every established “leftist” circle—from the ISO to DSA to WWP/PSL to RCP to newer opportunists such as RGA. This stands in contrast to places like India where there have been ongoing revolutionary struggles for the past five decades, and where there is also a history of anti-colonial struggles going back several hundred years. Despite these obstacles, the basis for revolutionary advance is right in front of us, even if it is an unfamiliar road to tread. As the Chinese proverb frequently cited by Chinese revolutionaries during the Long March goes, “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

We call upon potential comrades who are stuck in quagmires of revisionism and commandism to seize the time and advance along a different path. So many deeds cry out to be done, and every moment is precious. As the world-wide crisis of capitalist imperialism intensifies there will be even greater openings for revolutionary politics in this country and internationally. We cannot defer necessary work until the situation is more favorable, but rather must work tirelessly now to be in a position to seize upon new openings as they emerge. The people are struggling here and now, and there is a basis and a need to go among them and transform these nascent struggles into mass organized resistance. Only thus can a revolutionary party with an all-country perspective be built. Seize the moment, do not delay, link up, struggle, and do not accept revisionism and charlatanism in place of revolutionary principles.

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<sup>76</sup>Mao, *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, MZSW, Vol. 1, p. 23-59. Available online here: [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_2.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_2.htm)