

## A Response to the RCP-USA's May 1st 2012 Letter

### PREFACE

The Revolutionary Communist Party - USA's [RCP-USA] May 1st Letter (Letter to Participating Parties and Organizations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement) is, after its new *Constitution* and *Manifesto*, the third most important party document regarding "Avakian's New Synthesis." Although this document was initially intended to be an internal letter addressing the members of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement [RIM], the RCP-USA reversed its earlier decision and published the letter publicly without a clear explanation.

We believe this whole game of internally addressing only the participants of RIM was an unnecessary theatrical show from the very beginning. There is no reason to pursue an internal RIM discussion around issues that have been public for several years--issues that were made into a public matter first and foremost by the RCP-USA itself.

The RCP-USA's *Manifesto (Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage, A Manifesto from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA)* publicly broadcasted its new post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line in 2008 and thus not as a document for discussion and debate within the RIM. Then, in May 2009, this same document (as an appendix to a letter whose audience clearly was not only the members and participants of the RIM) was presented "to all the communist of the world." It is worth mentioning that the RCP-USA's new *Constitution*--the first post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist document prior to its *Manifesto*--was also not an internal document.

The fourth plenum of the central committee meeting of the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan [C(M)PA] took a stance against the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line of the new *Constitution* and *Manifesto* of the RCP-USA and shared its position internally in this regard with members and participants of RIM in August 2009. However, this internal discussion had no principled or positive outcome since--in violation of the organizational, political, and ideological commitments of RIM--all of the respective discussions were openly and publicly broadcasted by the RCP-USA.

Subsequently, the central committee of the Communist Party of Iran (MLM) [CPI (MLM)] made public their post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist document "A Call to all Iranian Communists." Approximately around this time, the RCP-USA proposed an internal discussion around our critique of their new *Manifesto* and *Constitution*. We realized, however, the futility of keeping the debate internal after witnessing the open publication of the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist document of the central committee of the CPI(MLM), the RCP-USA's continuous international efforts in propagating their post-MLM line, the harm inflicted by this line upon the existence and activities of the RIM, and finally, at the same time, the consolidation of this line within the RCP-USA that purged opposing views under the label of an "inner party cultural revolution." Thus, we rejected the RCP-USA's proposal, which appeared to be in bad faith, and published the position of the fourth

plenum of the central committee of our party in our organ, *Sholajawid*. Afterwards, we also criticised the CPI (MLM)'s post-MLM document in an article entitled *The Communist Party of Iran (MLM) also fell in the lost road of post-MLM* that was published in the aforementioned party organ.

Now that the struggle for the formation of a new international Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization on a solid political and ideological basis against various forms of revisionism (particularly the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist revisionism and the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism) has clearly materialized internationally, the RCP-USA once again wanted to use the ploy of engaging in internal discussion around their post-MLM line; apparently they immediately realized that their game no longer works.

Nonetheless, the open publication of the RCP-USA's May 1st Letter, published four years after the publication of its *Manifesto*, is its first formal and organized response in regards to the theoretical struggles against the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line by our party and other participants in the RIM. Until now it seems as if the RCP-USA expected opponents of the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line within RIM to only engage in internal debates with the RCP-USA and thus, in our opinion, end up lonely and isolated. However, the publication of documents regarding the Special Meeting of the members of RIM illustrated that this expectation was clearly incorrect and unrealistic.

Without submitting itself to a process of discussion and debate within the RIM, the *Manifesto* of the RCP-USA was openly published, thus presenting its post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line internationally outside of RIM. This single party's unilateral action concretely meant the dissolution and dismantling of the RIM and its committee. Given the effective role that the RCP-USA played in carrying forward the activities of the committee of RIM, as well as the overall activities of RIM, this act practically heralded the collapse and liquidation of this vital international organization. No other party had such a determining role within the RIM. Moreover, this party had a key role in ending the publication of the RIM's internal journal, eliminating the conditions for internal debate and discussion between RIM members. For this reason, the RCP-USA did not have the right to expect internal struggle from other participants and members of RIM.

Now this party, with the publication of its May 1st Letter, accuses us of "sentencing first and putting [it] on trial later!" This claim is the expression of an Afghan proverb that states: "accuse before being accused!" In actual fact, it was RCP-USA that sentenced first and then conducted a trial. For was it not this party that--in the unilateral publication of its *Manifesto* in 2008, along with the defenders and supporters of its political line--sentenced all of the participants and members of RIM with accusations of "revisionism" and "dogmatism" and, above all, imposed a punishment that was the liquidation of the RIM? Why did this party imagine that it alone possessed the right to "sentence first and put on trial later?"

Indeed, the leadership of the RCP-USA, that had purged opposing views within its party through a supposed "cultural revolution", and considered the RIM its "backyard", wanting to restructure this organization--first ideologically then politically and organizationally--so that it would tail the RCP-USA's unquestioned hegemony. This plan, however, could not be executed. Now that other parties, including ours, have begun ideological, political and organizational struggles for the reestablishment of an international Marxist-Leninist-

Maoist organization, the RCP-USA warns against “sentencing first and putting on trial later.”

In any case, the RCP-USA should not expect others to follow a framework that was already decimated by the RCP-USA itself.

We believe that the decision, on the part of ourselves and our comrade parties, to hold a Special Meeting of RIM not only resulted in a successful meeting where particular and important decisions were met, but also forced the RCP-USA to once again clearly present its post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line, thus providing the opportunity to carry out a mainly successful theoretical struggle against it.

But the RCP-USA avoided participating in this Special Meeting and in fact evaded a face-to-face collective debate. This party has, over the past few years, constantly attempted to start one-on-one discussions with different members of the RIM, including our party, while they have been willing to send their members to many countries to pursue these isolated discussions, they have never shown any willingness to visit us in Afghanistan.

Thus we will debate the May 1st document of the RCP-USA in a serialized manner, focusing on different key areas, and publish each separate but connected part of this series upon completion. This first section is specifically related to the discussion against our party in section VIII of the May 1st document.

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## **ONE: ON POST MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM**

The RCP-USA, nearly three years after the C(M)PA took a position against its post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line, defended its stance in its May 1st 2012 letter. This letter, however, does not directly respond to the document of the fourth plenum of our party against the RCP-USA but instead is a response to our document against the statement of the central committee of CPI(MLM). Such vicarious behaviour avoids the responsibility of dealing with direct arguments and thus results in an ambiguous and hazy response.

### **1: the RCP-USA's indefensible defense**

All of the points raised against our party in the RCP-USA's May 1st 2012 letter have been expressed in only a few pages of a 58 page letter, and even these few pages are affected by the lazy decision to deal only with our document regarding the CPI(MLM). Why has the CPI(MLM) itself avoided taking an active role in these discussions? For a while this party has been obliged to not only respond to our critiques, but has been obliged to respond to the relatively lengthy discussions regarding A Group of Iranian Maoists which, in actuality, has been a response to their own call (“...a call to all Iranian communists”) to act responsibly and engage in a debate and discussion with them.

But why is the RCP-USA refusing to respond to the critiques directed specifically against them; why are they addressing the wrong document and addressing only a few particular issues rather than producing a holistic response to all of our arguments and questions? The reason for this kind of behaviour is clear: this party is unable to defend its post-MLM line; this is mainly because this line, in itself, *is* indefensible. Therefore, the RCP-USA engages in a one-sided and ambiguous debate in order to avoid a lucid and clear discussion on the actual issue. The result of this kind of behaviour is that, concretely speaking, post-MLM is defended according to its strategic direction, while

being denied in its tactical orientations.

In 2009, the fourth plenum of the central committee of the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan took a stance against the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line of the new *Constitution* and *Manifesto* of the RCP-USA. Now, after all of this party's delays in responding to us, the onus should be on them to delve into the main issue of the debate, namely the post-MLM character of their line, in a clear manner capable of providing equally clear answers to our questions. In the current situation, the importance of delivering this clear and precise response has gained double importance now that the opposition to the post-MLM line not only comes from, in the words of American blogger Mike Ely, a "sterile place" like Afghanistan (a charge which could be equally levelled at the RCP-USA's behaviour), but now possesses an international character.

In one of our documents we have claimed that CPI(MLM) has fallen "on the lost road" of post-MLM and, in this context, wrote:

*"The strategic direction of the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line of the RCP-USA's new Manifesto and Constitution, and now the document of the central committee of the CPI(MLM) that names this line a 'new synthesis' is obviously clear.* This 'new synthesis' is not a thought like 'Gonzalo Thought', a 'path' like 'Prachanda Path' or an 'ism' like 'Avakianism'-- something that is the continuation and evolution of MLM--but it claims to be a total synthesis, meaning a fundamentally new post-MLM theoretical framework and ideological weapon. It is thus that we consider it a deep and wide deviationist line with a depth and breadth that is deeper and wider than the deviationist line of the Communist Party of Peru that emerged under the label of 'Gonzalo Thought'; it is much deeper and wider than the deviationist line of the Communist Party of Nepal that named itself "Prachanda Path."

But the RCP-USA's document eliminates the first sentence from the above passage, the sentence that we have italicized for the purpose of identification, and has instead quoted the remaining part of the passage in order to dodge a principled debate concerning the issues under discussion. And the main issue was clearly stated in the sentence that has been cut out; we reiterate: "[t]he strategic direction of the post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line of RCP-USA's new *Manifesto* and *Constitution*, and now the document of the central committee of the CPI(MLM) that names this line a 'new synthesis' is obviously clear." Due to the elimination of this sentence, the RCP-USA evaluates the remaining portion of the passage in an ambiguous manner when it writes:

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

But in the initial passage we did not wrongly label Avakian's "new synthesis" as Avakianism, as the continuation and evolution of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, but rather

treated it a total and fundamental deviationist synthesis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and a fundamentally new post-MLM deviationist theoretical framework.

Despite the fact that this party considers it wrong to label "Avakian's new synthesis" as "Avakianism", how does it describe and interpret this sentence from its document: "in reality, Avakian's new synthesis is... a further development of Marxism"? If this is a "further development" of Marxism then it would be a continuation and evolution of Marxism--or, to be more precise, a continuation and evolution of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. And if this is what the RCP-USA is claiming, then why is calling it an "ism" incorrect? Are we supposed to understand "Avakian's new synthesis" as something similar to "Gonzalo Thought" or "Prachanda Path" that has supposedly further developed MLM? In fact, this tactical orientation in the RCP-USA's document, like so many of its tactical orientations, is merely asserted without clearly and precisely demarcating its limits and boundaries.

Is the RCP-USA actually astounded by the fact that we consider the Avakianite post-MLM revisionism much deeper and wider than the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism or are its ideologues merely playing dumb? We believe that their astoundment is proof that they are indeed playing dumb and the reasons for this are also obvious.

In response to the question "[w]ho has aborted a revolution... [t]ransformed the goal of the struggle to perfecting bourgeois democracy?" we assert that the direct factor for this national and class capitulationism was the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism and that, in this matter, Avakianite post-MLM revisionism did not have a direct role in this process. At the same time, however, it must be noted that it was the RCP-USA that directly, and indirectly through the Committee of the RIM (the embryonic cell of the leadership of the entire RIM), encouraged, prepared the ground for, and formulated the entire premature assertions of "thought, path and the new synthesis", leading ideological line struggles around these formulations.

At the same time, however, when there is no revolution in existence in the USA, how could the RCP-USA (or any other party in that country, for that matter) manage to abort a non-existent revolution or transform "the goal of the struggle to perfecting bourgeois democracy?"

Therefore, the deviations of this party should be evaluated in the light of its own theoretical and practical activities and compared in a relative manner to the deviation of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). In this regard, two arenas of the activities of the RCP-USA should be considered: the arena of theoretical struggle and the arena of struggle in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

From a theoretical perspective, it can be firmly stated that the Avakianite post-MLM revisionism is a much deeper and wider deviation than the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism. The Avakianite post-MLM revisionism, from the perspective of its strategic orientation documented in its new *Manifesto* and *Constitution*, in fact considers the totality of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as outdated and obsolete; it rejects this theoretical formulation in its basic party documents. Although the essence of the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism has no fundamental difference with Avakianite post-MLM revisionism, from a theoretical perspective it is not "deep and wide" to the same extent as post-MLM revisionism. As stated in our document against the statement of the central

committee of the CPI(MLM):

“The post-MLM line raised by RCP-USA and the central committee of the CPI(MLM) is the most profound and expanded deviation from a theoretical perspective within the RIM. This deviation is much more dangerous than the deviation in Nepal and the earlier deviation in Peru. Therefore, we think that the framework of struggle against the deviations that have emerged among participants of RIM the struggle against the post-MLM deviation is our principal duty in the current conjuncture.”

The deepness and profoundness of this Avakianite post-MLM revisionism, as compared to the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism, can be observed in the inner activities and performances of the respective parties. The Avakianite post-MLM revisionism within the RCP-USA has so profoundly and totally corrupted the RCP-USA that not even a single individual has been able to take a correct and principled stance, or even a *comparatively correct* stance, against Avakianite post-MLM revisionism. People such as Mike Ely—who have either quit the RCP-USA or have been purged by the process of the so-called inner party cultural revolution—are similar in their deviationism and revisionism to the Avakianites. The inner party “cultural revolution” within the RCP-USA has in reality been nothing more than the struggle between the dominant Avakianite revisionism and a variety of counter-revolutionary, revisionist and liquidationist tendencies.

Within the Unified Communist party of Nepal (Maoist), however, it has been possible for a new faction to form and engage in an actual line-struggle. This possibility, at least, eventually led to an initial stance against this party's revisionism and has been successful in the formation of a new Maoist party—the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist. And though this initial stance is not yet a profound and comprehensive stance against the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism, there is still the possibility that it could transform into such a positionality.

Moreover, the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism belongs in the 18th century—in that it is doing no more than demanding a bourgeois revolution—while the Avakianite post-MLM revisionism is a form of post-modern 21st century revisionism. The former type of revisionism is influenced by the Nepalese and oppressed nations' sense of inferiority and presents its universal claims with shyness and timidity; the latter revisionism is contaminated by the crude hegemony of an imperialist super-power and is thus heady, reckless in its hegemonic universal claims.

“Prachanda path” has even been cast aside and forgotten within the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist); and the newly formed party, the Communist party of Nepal-Maoist, has even announced its struggle against this “path”. Therefore, the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionists do not see themselves as standing against the historical waves of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist struggles for the formation of a new communist international organization—nor do they oppose it theoretically—but the post-MLM Avakianite revisionists lay claim to such a position and this is why they have written and published the current document under discussion.

The crisis in the RIM actually began before the clear and explicit emergence of the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism; it started with the undermining of the overall politico-ideological line of the RIM by the committee of RIM—and the RCP-USA was the primary force behind this development. While it is true that the politico-ideological expression of

the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism (in different realms of practical and theoretical struggles) further intensified and expanded the crisis of RIM, in the final analysis it was the RCP-USA that--due to its leadership role in the committee, through raising a profound and far-reaching revisionist, post-modernist line, and by violating all of its political, ideological and organizational commitments towards the RIM and all of its members--decimated the committee of RIM and thus led to the collapse of the entire RIM, and all of this in order to recast and remold the RIM according to the "new synthesis". Thus, despite the fact that the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism played an important role in the collapse of the RIM, the principal responsibility lies with Avakianite post-MLM revisionism. Thus, in response to this question "which line effectively turned its back on the revolutionary masses?" we can honestly say it was the Avakianite post-MLM revisionist line.

There is no need to refer at length to the discussions in our previous party documents. In fact, the RCP-USA document under discussion, and its particular invective against our party, provides ample evidence of the post-MLM strategic direction of the RCP-USA's political line. Indeed, this document claims that the entire stance of our party against the line of the new *Manifesto* and *Constitution* of the RCP-USA is based on "a wrong understanding of the process through which Marxism (or any science for that matter) develops from a lower to a higher stage." And yet, in the same passage that supposedly proves the "wrong understanding" of our party we can clearly see that it is actually the RCP-USA that misunderstands the process through which Marxism develops as a science.

Here the RCP-USA document quotes other sections from our document, but this time both the first and last section of our passage (both of which that have been italicized below) were ignored and thus, rather than dealing with the entirety of our critique, the RCP-USA again gets caught up in a tangential issue. We wrote:

*"Different natural, social and ideological phenomena, from their occurrence until their turning into other phenomena, go through different stages of development. These different stages of transformation and development can in general be divided into the two types of quantitative and qualitative levels of transformation and development. The process of quantitative to qualitative transformation is an expression of the fundamental law of development of every phenomenon--that is, the law of contradiction. In this process the quantity and quality and also quality and quantity form the unity of contradictions. In the quantitative level of transformation, although the quantitative changes are the principal aspects of transformation in the phenomena, there is also partial qualitative transformation. Also, in the qualitative level of transformation, while the qualitative transformation is the principal aspect of the phenomenon transforming into another phenomenon, there also is partial quantitative transformation as well. Therefore, in the entire process of quantitative transformation, qualitative transformation is also accumulated. This qualitative transformation that has been gradually accumulated in the period of the qualitative transformation of a phenomenon transforms into a qualitative leap that result into the resolution of the fundamental contradiction of the phenomenon and transforming it into a new phenomenon. [...]"*

The theoretical framework founded by Marx is also not an exception in regard to this

law. Since the time of Marx and Engels, this ideological weapon has passed through two new levels of quantitative transformation and development that were Leninism and Maoism. This is not intended to underestimate the importance of the new qualities of Leninism and Maoism. Our intention is to clarify that in Marxism-Leninism, the continuation of Marxism and generality of Marxism-Leninism is the principal aspect transformation. Rupture from Marxism is the non-principal aspect. Also in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the continuation of Marxism-Leninism in Maoism--and the generality of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism--is the principal aspect of transformation. Rupture from Marxism-Leninism is non-principal aspect. This is why the different levels of Marxism, Marxism-Leninism, and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism are fundamentally different levels of development of a single ideological weapon. [...] *We can only talk about a new ideological weapon instead of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism when this ideological weapon has reached a further level of qualitative transformation and development after passing through different stages of its quantitative changes and its life is over after its final synthesizing to be replaced by another ideological weapon. Only in such a situation does the "new synthesis" finds its fundamental meaning and content. [...] Choosing titles such as "new synthesis", "new ideological weapon" and "new theoretical frame" presented by the RCP-USA and CPI(MLM) are exactly expressing this theme that finally Marxism-Leninism-Maoism has reached its ultimate qualitative and quantitative stage of transformation and development, and with its final synthesis to give its place to a new ideological weapon and framework."*

**Therefore, the main issue under discussion about the theoretical reasons behind the choice of the title "new synthesis" for the theoretical works of Bob Avakian, and thus how this title is indicative of the post-MLM character of this entire ideology, is set aside. Instead, the RCP-USA document chooses to address another topic:**

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

communism is an integral philosophy and political theory at the same time as it is a living, critical and continuously developing science."

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

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

"The C(M)PA's mechanical description of quantitative advances in understanding leading to qualitative leaps and its efforts to apply this to the development of Marxism is very much linked to the erroneous viewpoint that the application of Marxism in a specific country will automatically lead to the corresponding advance in theoretical understanding."

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

"The process that the C(M)PA objects to so violently, of reaching and uniting around a new higher understanding of Marxism, is not so puzzling. Indeed, in the process to form RIM itself and in the subsequent adoption of the formulation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism the problem of stage and leap in our understanding was directly struggled out..."

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

an ever firmer foundation of materialism and dialectics... So we should not underestimate the potential of this as a source of hope and of daring on a solid scientific foundation."

The above passages were quoted at length in order to illustrate that the RCP-USA is hiding the post-MLM strategic direction of its new line within a correct MLM tactical orientation. We believe this tactic is being intentionally employed and that is why it is condemnable.

For example let us examine the following quotations from this RCP-USA document:

"In an overall sense, the principal aspect is continuity – that is, the upholding and enriching of the propositions, theses, methods of analysis first developed by Marx and later raised to successively higher levels by Lenin and Mao and today by Avakian."

"Today revolutionary communism has again reached a new stage in its development through the elaboration of Bob Avakian's new synthesis."

"In reality, Avakian's new synthesis is not a departure from Marxism as the C(M)PA suggests but rather a further development of Marxism."

In these passages there is no mention of the end of the period of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the start of another period, as current RCP-USA documents generally imply; rather, there is a contradictory attempt to demonstrate that "Avakian's new synthesis" is a new stage after Maoism that is principally the continuation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and, in a minor sense, also a rupture from the stage of Maoism. If this claim, repeated several times in the above passage, is compared with the claims presented in the *Manifesto* and *Constitution* of the RCP-USA--as well as the statement of the central committee of the CPI(MLM)--and if it becomes the fundamental claim of RCP-USA in these ongoing debates, then while it would still be fundamentally wrong and deviationist, it would seem as if this party, to certain extent, is descending from the ivory tower of post-MLM revisionism and, perhaps in confronting a principled MLM line struggle, might be made to descend further so as to eventually accept revolutionary science and, through this, earthly reality and its concrete positionality. Unfortunately, in the passages cited above, there was an emphasis on three other formulations that, once again, demonstrate the post-MLM strategic direction of the new synthesis. We will examine these three formulations in further detail in the following section.

## **2: three erroneous formulations of the RCP-USA's post-MLM**

.2.1. "A totally new and fundamentally different world" that has been emphasized in the *Manifesto of the RCP-USA*.

But "[a] totally different world" means a world that is different in both base and superstructure--a totally new world even from the time of Mao, and also from the worlds understood by Lenin and Marx. So, if "a fundamentally different world" means a world fundamentally different in its material base from the world of the time of Mao, Lenin and Marx, then is such claim correct? Naturally a party that has asserted such a claim in its *Manifesto*, and has continuously defended this position, would strongly believe its claims. In this case, according to this party, the current world, though it is still an oppressive and exploitative world, is also somehow a world that has moved beyond imperialist capitalism or has moved beyond capitalism as whole. And in such an imaginary world Marxism-Leninism-Maoism cannot be of any utility and should be

considered obsolete.

In fact, such an imaginary understanding of the current world is the objective (and erroneous) basis of Avakianite post-MLM revisionism. A detailed discussion about this revisionist and incorrect understanding of the current world is not possible in the current exchange; hopefully we will be able to have a detailed discussion about this problematic understanding--as well as its politico-ideological developments and consequences on the line, program, tactics and strategies of the RCP-USA in relation to the American revolutionary movement and its international responsibility.

To be brief: the current world, despite the many transformations experienced since Mao Zedong, is still a world under the domination of capitalist imperialism--and in this context the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist system is the contradiction between social production and private appropriation, and the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed nations and peoples, the contradiction between proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and the contradiction between different imperialist powers, are still the major contradictions of the world or the expressions of the fundamental contradiction of the world, even though the contradiction between socialism and imperialism has temporarily disappeared.

Moreover, we should note the following problems: the weakening of the theory of proletarian dictatorship and the weakening of the theory of the continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat; disregarding the strategy of general armed insurrection and replacing it with a strategy of frontism; the lack of emphasis on revolutionary armed forces as one of the three weapons of revolutions; crude humanist theorizing, the lack of emphasis on the role of the working-class, and the lack of emphasis on proletarian internationalism by the RCP-USA is either the total or partial reflection of this incorrect and revisionist understanding of the world.

2.2. *"if [Marxism] is not in this sense continually re-examining and probing its premises, it ceases to be a science at all."*

Let us evaluate this formulation of the RCP-USA in the light of the two preceding sentences: "[i]f Marxism does not rupture with those aspects and elements that are wrong, one-sided and unscientific, Marxism cannot maintain its continuity with its scientific kernel. If Marxism does not weed out its own previous wrong understandings as they are discovered in the course of social practice and the advance of human knowledge more generally, *if it is not in this sense continually re-examining and probing its premises, it ceases to be a science at all.*"

Here we can observe the assertion that "elements that are wrong, one-sided and unscientific" should be discarded; this assertion is immediately employed to "continually re-examin[e] and prob[e] [Marxism's] premises." But rupturing from "elements that are wrong, one-sided and unscientific", and weeding out the previous wrong understandings of Marxism (that is, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) first of all requires emphasizing the foundation of a correct, comprehensive and scientific kernel. Without this axiomatic understanding, Marxism cannot save its scientific kernel. In other words, a firm emphasis on the scientific kernel simultaneously means a firm emphasis on the continuation of this science.

Clearly, both continuity and rupture are part of the process of the evolution of every

science, because this process of evolution--of every phenomenon in the natural realm, society and human thought--is informed by the unity of opposites. Hence, a one-sided emphasis on *rupture* at the expense of *continuity* is incorrect, just as the inverse emphasis on *continuity* at the expense of *rupture* would also be one-sided and incorrect. Therefore, a Marxism that proceeds according to the correctness of its fundamental foundations and is capable of creatively applying its universal aspects in the three arenas of social practice (class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiments) can and should develop. In this context, there are indeed the two related tasks of continuity and rupture--not simply the task of continuously re-examining the fundamental foundations, and not simply the task of continuously weeding out wrongs. If we imagine, however, that the process of development of Marxism is completed, there would naturally not be a discussion about the continuation of Marxism; rather, the discussion would concern post-MLM. This is precisely the point of the RCP-USA's position: that it imagines the process of Marxism to-date completed and that it is "rebooting" Marxism because all it can see is "rupture" and, despite speaking of "continuity-rupture", is not really interested in one side of this dialectical understanding.

### 2.3. "*recasting all elements including previous positive elements.*"

The above sentence has been emphasized several times in the RCP-USA document. Moreover, the document also claims that "previous progress in our science" has also included this "recasting [of] all elements." Phraseology such as "recasting all elements, including previous positive elements" and "these syntheses similar to previous advances in our science, also includes continuity and rupture and recasting it entirely"--which ultimately means "recasting all elements including continuity and rupture"--are different features of post-MLM formulations.

There is no doubt that every rupture and advance--either partially or especially important--in the process of the evolution of the science and ideology of proletarian revolution produces the necessity of recasting our theory. However, this recasting can and should be to the extent that the ideological content of the rupture or advance is appropriate to the particular concrete circumstances; otherwise there will emerge contradictions between the ideological content of the rupture and its theoretical formulation.

The RCP-USA and the central committee of the CPI(MLM) claim that Avakian's new synthesis is the realization of a series of ruptures and advances from the secondary and subordinate unscientific elements in the theoretical corpus of MLM. Thus, due to this realization, Avakian is said to have further developed Marxism. The corollary of this claim should be that Avakian's new synthesis is not a total rupture from Marxism, or Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, but in fact is this theory's further development--that is, only a *partial* rupture. However, based on this new synthesis, they are actually claiming that they are *recasting the entire theoretical body of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism*. Such a claim can only mean a total rupture from the theoretical body of MLM, rather than a partial rupture, and thus not at all the dialectical relationship of continuity-rupture they claim.

Contrary to what the RCP-USA claims, "previous advances in our science" (such as Leninism and Maoism) did not mean the total recasting of the continuities and ruptures in this science's development and, since Marx, has never experienced such a total

recasting. There is no doubt that Leninism was a rupture from Marxism, a rupture from its secondary or subordinate mistakes and inadequacies (including, in specific cases, ruptures from elements that, until Leninism, were understood as basic and fundamental), but at the same time Leninism is also the continuation of Marxism. Therefore, in the stage of Leninism, the ideology and science of proletarian revolution was not entirely recast; it was only recast to the extent required by the ideological content of this development. In this partial recasting, Marxism was not entirely erased and replaced by Leninism; rather, the principal feature of Marxism was summed up in the term *Marxism-Leninism*. Furthermore, there is no doubt that Maoism, while expressing partial ruptures (a rupture from its secondary and subordinate mistakes, inadequacies, and unscientific aspects, as well as a rupture from some of its accepted fundamentals elements) mainly upholds the continuation of Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, it was in the Maoist phase that the science and ideology of proletarian revolution was recast only to the extent that the ideological content of the development of Maoism required within its particular, concrete circumstances. Again, in this partial recasting, Marxism-Leninism was not eliminated in order to be replaced by Maoism; rather, the principal aspect of the continuation of Marxism-Leninism is summed up, and short-handed, in the phrase *Marxism-Leninism-Maoism*.

### **3: the erasure of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism**

Contrary to the previous Leninist and Maoist ruptures and advances, however, the RCP-USA has removed the phrase Marxism-Leninism-Maoism from its *Manifesto* and *Constitution*. It should be repeated that our complaint is not about *literary form*--that is, it is not about the use of words--but that this *literary form* precisely reflects the deviation of its politico-ideological content.

The erasure of the phrase Marxism-Leninism-Maoism from the *Manifesto* and *Constitution* of the RCP-USA, by the orders of Bob Avakian, has occurred without a debate and discussion, and without any significant opposition from within the party. This reflects the fact that within all of the RCP-USA's organizational ranks, after the implementation of the so-called inner party cultural revolution, there was a willingness to accept this openly revisionist action.

As we noted earlier, those who either quit or were purged from this party, including bloggers such as Mike Ely and company, are in a similar or even worse situation than the Avakianite revisionists. For example, Ely expressly supports the erasure of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism from the RCP-USA's documents and has called the C(M)PA's criticism of this problem "dogmatic". Since Ely's condemnation of "Avakian's new synthesis" is primarily because of its cult of personality, he entirely rejects the C(M)PA's criticism of the political line of the RCP-USA's new *Manifesto* and *Constitution*, content to mock it for coming from a "sterile place" like Afghanistan. Thus, while expressing happiness at this criticism of the RCP-USA, he does not forget to openly express his American supremacism without bothering to hide it in a web of words.

The central committee of the CPI(MLM), some time before publishing its post-MLM statement and during an internal discussion with the RCP-USA, had discussed the issue of removing the phrase Marxism-Leninism-Maoism from the RCP-USA's new *Manifesto* and *Constitution*, and had even questioned the contradiction between this literary form

and the ideological/political content of the “new synthesis”. From that time, until the publication of the statement “A Call to All Iranian Communists”, we thought that there were still disagreements between the two parties. After all, since the RCP-USA's justification for the removal of MLM was not only baseless but ridiculous, it was natural for us to think that there might have been disagreements between this party and the CPI(MLM).

One RCP-USA rationale was: “Avakian asked us to remove it and we obliged.”

Another reason was that: “the name would get very long.” Apparently, the phrase “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism-Avakian's new synthesis” was too long and cumbersome, thus they kept “Avakian's new synthesis” and removed the rest!

The third rationale was that: “adding different names, such as Leninism and Maoism, have given the impression of quantitative additions, if we add new synthesis today and another name tomorrow, that impression would be further reinforced.”

Finally, there was also this ridiculous rationale: “we have removed this phrase, but we would not present this as a precondition for others.”\*

There is no need to discuss this baseless and ridiculous reasoning. When we read the statement “A Call to all Iranian Communists” we observed the removal of MLM in that statement as well. We also noticed that between this removal and the post-MLM strategic direction accepted by both the American and Iranian parties there is no contradiction; rather, there exists an overall conformity, despite any contradiction between it and the tactical orientations of the statements. We believe that when the CPI(MLM) notices this strategic consistency between the two statements, they will have no reason to be in disagreement with the RCP-USA about the removal of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

The May 1st Letter of the RCP-USA, unlike its *Manifesto* and *Constitution*, in some cases *does* refer to Marxism or Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. But all references to MLM in this document lack any serious emphasis so as to not disobey Avakian in this regard and thus keep its post-MLM strategic direction intact.

#### **4: a brief summation**

At the end of this part of discussion, we would like to provide a brief summary of the assertions the RCP-USA makes about the C(M)PA in the aforementioned document.

##### *4.1. The document describes our position as “dogmatic” and “left in form.”*

The RCP-USA in its *Manifesto* considers all of the member parties and organizations of RIM “revisionist” or “dogmatic”, without a discussion of each specific case, if they do not agree with the “new synthesis”. Now the RCP-USA, in its May 1st letter, has identified one of the “dogmatic” or more dogmatic parties—the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan. In fact, according to the RCP-USA, the criteria for our “dogmatism” is not Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the positive accomplishments of RIM, but our failure to adhere to post-MLM and “Avakian's new synthesis”—which was, in fact, the main deviationist line that emerged within RIM resulting in its collapse. Indeed, the entire document that the RCP-USA chooses to address—*CPI(MLM) also fell in the lost road of post-MLM*—clearly indicates that our party is neither dogmatic nor left-deviationist.

##### *4.2. The document claims that our critique of Avakianite post-MLM theory is contaminated by “venomous and gratuitous attacks” that the C(M)PA has launched against the RCP-USA and*

*“especially against comrades from the CPI(MLM).”*

It would have been helpful if our “venomous and gratuitous attacks” against the RCP-USA and the CPI(MLM) were indicated clearly rather than simply mentioned in broad general terms. Definitely our critique, as well as the critique of any other MLM party against post-MLM ideology, cannot be—and indeed should not be—a comradely mild and calm discussion; it needs to be sharp and decisive.

4.3. *The document states: “The C(M)PA’s main point is to argue that it is wrong to recognize that a stage of the communist movement has ended and it is necessary to usher in a new one, and similarly it is wrong to believe that the understanding of communists must also reach a new level.”*

Here, once again, the strategic direction of the post-MLM line of the RCP-USA is demonstrably clear. **Announcing the end of one stage of the communist movement without the start of a new stage is to announce the end of the continuation of that stage. This also includes the end of this stage from a theoretical point of view.**

However, it is not the position of the RCP-USA in its new *Manifesto* and *Constitution* that the phase of Maoism—more precisely Marxism-Leninism-Maoism—which follows the phase of Marxism-Leninism has ended and we have to move towards a successive stage. Rather, this party considers all three phases of Marxism, Marxism-Leninism and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to be a single phase that is completed. The *Manifesto* and *Constitution* of the RCP-USA claims that “Avakian’s new Synthesis” is the theoretical foundation for the beginning of a new stage. The publication of another *Manifesto* after the *Manifesto* written by Marx and Engels is this party’s practical step towards pursuing this claim.

Not only do we believe that it is incorrect to accept that one stage of the communist movement has ended, we also believe that it is incorrect to claim that there is a need for a total qualitative rupture from the history of the communist movement in order to begin a new stage of struggle. Nor do we accept that we have reached a fourth phase in the evolution of the science of proletarian revolution. We also reject the notion that the acceptance of this “thought” or “path” or “synthesis” somehow indicate the development of a fourth revolutionary phase. We only accept the qualitatively real, though often partial, steps that the RIM—either as a whole or on the part of certain members—has made in marking the path of development towards a fourth phase; we do not accept frail and unfounded grandiosity, or hegemonic and deviationist tendencies.

We are not opposed to an understanding of communism that claims the science of proletarian revolution should evolve into a higher stage—should reach a fourth revolutionary stage. But in order to reach a fourth phase of political and ideological development, we believe that any advancement towards such a stage must correspond with, and can only be achieved by, the course of revolutionary struggle. As it was stated in our document regarding the CPI(MLM)’s statement, we (that is, the entire MLM international movement) have achieved real and partial steps on the path of ideological and scientific development. We believe that this unfounded and frail grandiosity of the RCP-USA, this deviationist and hegemonic tendency, demonstrates ingratitude to the struggles and sacrifices that have made it possible for us to take real steps towards

concrete ideological and political transformation.

4.4 *The RCP-USA document claims: “[T]here is something important to be considered underneath the C(M)PA’s denunciation [mislabeling Bob Avakian’s new synthesis]: a wrong understanding of the process through which Marxism (or any science for that matter) develops from a lower to a higher stage. In reality, Avakian’s new synthesis is not a departure from Marxism as the C(M)PA suggests but rather a further development of Marxism. But the C(M)PA understands this whole process wrongly.”*

As we discussed in a previous section, we have not simply “mis-labeled the ‘new synthesis’ as Avakianism” but, actually, have examined its much more profound and deeper deviationist essence as post-MLM. However, since it is being claimed here that “Avakian’s new synthesis is not a departure from Marxism as the C(M)PA suggests but rather a further development of Marxism” there are a few points worth considering.

First of all, it should be asked which rupture/departure is being denied here—an “Avakianist” rupture or a “post-MLM” rupture? The RCP-USA’s document fails to directly address this matter, specifically when it totally overlooks the discussion regarding post-MLM; this indicates that the RCP-USA cannot—and does not want to—have a clear and honest discussion about this issue. Indeed, the RCP-USA’s May 1st document, in its very arguments against our claim that “Avakian’s new synthesis” is post-MLM, calls this “new synthesis” a further development of Marxism, a complete rupture from Marxism’s history to date. It is interesting that we are being accused of an incorrect understanding of the entire process by which Marxism (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) develops.

4.5. *The RCP-USA claims that the C(M)PA rejects the fact that “Marxism has gone through leaps in the course of its developments and these leaps also involve rupture with what were previously understood truths.”*

This is an attempt to confuse the critique: rather than a discussion about post-MLM there is instead a discussion about the development of Marxism.

Here we should restate that partial advances and partial ruptures in all natural, social and ideological phenomenon results into partial developments. While the final leap and final rupture results into the ending of the existing phenomenon and sprouting of another phenomenon. Our discussion in the document *CPI(MLM) has also fallen in the lost road...* is about post-MLM, that has supposedly materialized after the completion of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as Avakian’s new synthesis to illuminate and enlighten the world.

4.6. *The RCP-USA states that: “In the C(M)PA discussion, reaching a new stage is a very mechanical process essentially resulting from the accumulation of incremental advances in understanding. This leaves out the central role of synthesis in reaching a higher level of understanding, especially at key nodal points in the development of our revolutionary science.”*

Here again is a mixing up of our discussion regarding post-MLM and “the partial development of our revolutionary science” which we don’t need to repeat in detail. In short, and in regards to the accumulation of incremental advances in understanding, we can say that we believe these advances will result in partial or total advances and ruptures, resulting in a partial or total new quality—not spontaneously but as a result of the final partial or total struggle between contradictions at war with each other, where

after the victory of one side, a new partial or total quality will emerge. The evolution and development of revolutionary science is not an exception to this rule.

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

This allegation, however, is clearly unfounded and baseless. It needs to be noted that, with the completion of the final rupture, the continuation and existence of the previous phenomenon is out of the question; rather, a new phenomenon comes into existence. It is therefore, when there is discussion of the emergence of a new phenomenon that we cannot talk about the continuation of the previous phenomenon from which this new phenomenon emerges. Thus, in the context of post-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist formulations we cannot talk about the continuation of MLM.

4.8. *The document claims that the C(M)PA tries to apply its "mechanical description of quantitative advances in understanding leading to qualitative leaps...to the development of Marxism."*

Again there is confusion in this discussion between the development of MLM and the discussion of post-MLM. Quantitative advances in understanding cannot exist without qualitative partial advances. These partial advances facilitate the emergence of final qualitative advances that push the contradiction towards antagonism. But the fruition of any qualitative advance requires the emergence of an antagonistic struggle between contradictions and the conclusion of struggle--and such an advance cannot emerge spontaneously.

4.9. *The document contends: "In fact, qualitative breakthroughs are not only the result of an accumulation of partial truths, although that is definitely involved. At certain nodal points in the development of any science accumulated experience, further debate, the influence of discoveries and controversies in other fields will require re-examination of some of the postulates and previous understandings."*

Unfortunately, this is yet another example of the mixing up of the discussion between post-MLM and the development of Marxism. We re-emphasize that the accumulation of partial truths prepares the condition for final rupture, which means pushing the contradiction towards antagonism; we repeat, the existing qualitative rupture requires the antagonistic struggle between contradictions and the conclusion of this struggle and thus cannot emerge spontaneously.

4.10. *The document complains that: "The process that the C(M)PA objects to so violently, of reaching and uniting around a new higher understanding of Marxism, is not so puzzling."*

This allegation is extremely unfounded and unjustified. We are not criticizing the process of reaching a higher understanding of Marxism; rather, we are seriously criticizing the futile claims of reaching a higher understanding of MLM (i.e. in Peru and Nepal) and the even worse claim of a higher understanding *beyond* MLM (i.e. the Avakianite post-MLM revisionism).

Moreover, the issue of unity between communists of the world--at the national and international level, meaning the formation of new parties and the strengthening of existing parties, and the formation of a new international communist organization--is

not only emerging from the necessity of reaching a higher understanding of Marxism (MLM) but from the necessity of a wide range of other political and theoretical struggles, which includes the aforementioned necessity, and so the requirement for a higher understanding of Marxism is *not* the principal necessity in the current conjuncture.

We believe that the primary requirement for reaching a new unity on an international level is to properly address the real necessities of struggle internationally and within various and particular countries. The process of reaching a general summation of the struggles of revolutionary communists (Marxist-Leninists-Maoists), including a summation of the positive and negative experiences, over the past three and half decades, of the RIM can and should provide the theoretical framework for this requirement.

In the closing sentences of the present discussion, it is necessary to mention that the RCP-USA in its May 1st document, particularly in the section directed against the C(M)PA is again and again referring to only the phrase "Marxism" and not "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism" or even "Marxism-Leninism". If this party has really become purely "Marxist", then they should add the phrase "Marxist" at the end of their name and call themselves the RCP-USA (Marxist)! But this is not the case for the phrase "Marxism", according to the RCP-USA, actually means that "Marxism-Leninism" and "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism" belong to the past and should be replaced with Avakianite post-MLM.

*To be continued.*

All the quotes taken from the article *CPI(MLM) also fell in the lost road of post-MLM* have partly been retranslated as the previous translation had some significant inaccuracies.

\* The quotations are rough translation, close to meaning from a Farsi-Dari document, not the exact words.