

Dear friends,

Over the last couple of years I've had the great pleasure of reconnecting with a number of old friends, partners and collaborators who have shared in attempts over many decades to address key political issues and problems. We have in a variety of ways worked to prepare a better path for the years and decades to come, free of the oppression and degradation so characteristic of the imperialist world in which we have lived all our lives. Most of us have been pulled forward by the great example and leadership of Mao Tse-Tung and the powerful revolutionary experience of the Chinese people in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. We have been deeply rooted in the attempts of serious revolutionaries to draw from the leadership and experience of Maoism, and grasp and apply and develop the lessons there found, to a world which remains stuck in the orbit of imperialism and yet is changing beneath our feet and all around. These changes are full of both opportunities for revolutionary changes, and dangers of an enticing incomprehension of features either never fully understood or of new features that remain beyond the comprehension of revolutionary science. We have all seen, and undoubtedly been influenced by, the incredible vengeance of imperialism in repressing the lives, the spirit, and the revolutionary understandings of millions. At the same time, we have grown weary of the failure of revolutionary organizations to keep pace with the difficult challenges the world has posed. For many years, we have all felt the necessity to uphold the value and revolutionary leadership of revolutionary internationalist--Maoist--organizations in the world, particularly the RCP USA and the RIM, even though we have all experienced difficulties, sometimes deeply personal difficulties, in the work of these formations. But the necessity of keeping the dynamic edge of revolutionary struggle alive has convinced us, repeatedly, that we must maintain allegiance to the organizations which have been so responsible for another course being forged. Whatever problems we have had with the experience that has developed, we have often shrugged, or thought our inability to accept wholeheartedly various problems was due to our personal failings.

I've had conversations with many of you. Increasingly, we share the view that this situation is unacceptable. There is a growing number of serious revolutionaries, people who have not renounced the goals which have been abandoned by so many, people who refuse to be enmeshed in petty complaints--who now feel that keeping the dynamic edge of revolutionary struggle alive requires an opening of discussion and analysis and struggle, over the issues and obstacles that have caused the organizations which we have worked with and upheld and cherished for so long, to lose their dynamic edge. The extent of our disagreement with the RCP in particular is not clear. How we each feel that the party may or may not be able to rise to the occasion and be able to enable yet another generation of revolutionary struggle, much less stay the course to and through the big R, is certainly unclear. But what is clear is that we feel that Maoism can do better than that, and must do better than that. This is imperative, and we have a responsibility to join that process, even initiate it where the process does not exist. Most of us have raised any number of criticisms, suggestions, even detailed analyses on major questions of political economy, of strategic questions, of philosophy, with the RCP, and have commonly received no response or discussion--what one friend calls "the Black Hole" syndrome.

So what are we to do? Unavoidably, we must take steps to initiate discussion among ourselves, over the very issues which the party has refused to discuss. There are many such issues, from questions about the strategic formulation of the 80's and the America in Decline analysis on which it was based, questions about philosophy and the formulations of dialectical

materialism; questions of analysis about the nature of contradictions in the world today; questions about the problems of strategy and the united front and what have appeared to be so far unsolvable problems with the application of the united front strategy; questions on the quality of the vanguard and its work, and what have been the difficulties of preparing new generations of (broader and stronger) revolutionary leaders. Not to mention serious problems of an issue - by - issue character, such as those involving sexuality and sexual orientation; the significance of the reemergence of indigenous cultures and thought; the long term (pre and post-capitalist) character of patriarchal relations in the world. To state only the major issues that have come up in recent conversations.

And so, in this little letter, I am proposing that we initiate, a bit more openly than before, a process of discussion and analysis and struggle. In this way we will determine more about the process ahead. I, for one, cannot foresee where this will lead. But the process must begin.

For the moment, I will send to each of you an initial document that has recently been given me. I was given this document in the hope that it not be made public at this time, but kept among those who have generally the feelings expressed above. Communication can be done through me initially, but I urge you to consider and suggest both the terms or ground rules for our discussions and how to maintain some degree of control over our security (how to respond quickly and take care in our methods of communication--utilize the Internet?; identity of participants--known to each other?; how to add participants). We need to establish a timetable for discussion of each major document or issue; maintain the discussion on a high and principled level; and be secure in our relations with each other.

So, enclosed is the initial document, on problems of dialectical materialism. I would ask that all participants attempt to digest and formulate their thoughts and questions about it by the end of September, at which time, having received your notes, I will compile them for all to see. Please use a pseudonym until we figure another method or rule for our methods. Also, please suggest or propose rules and methods for the discussion and security questions, also by the end of September. Finally, when you return your notes, please send me some \$3 Priority Mail stamps to enable that part of it.

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