

understood. We have often spoken of the opportunities of this historical moment. We should be aware of the dangers. The main danger is our failing because of liberalism and backwardness. History teaches us that when a revolutionary organization fails, it must wait for the next historical stage before it can try again.

During the 1920s the CPUSA was fundamentally incorrect in its disregard of the Negro question. Its concentration on the trade unions reinforced this error. When the error was recognized, the resistance from the trade unionists prevented any rectification. The CPUSA had another chance during the Roosevelt period of 1932 to 1946. They made a fundamental error in joining forces with the Roosevelt coalition and compromising the demands of the workers to the demands of the Roosevelt grouping. They could not overcome the error. A new period began in 1952. A fundamental misunderstanding of the Nationalist Movement and its relationship to revisionism and capitalism again snatched failure from the jaws of a militant, victorious worldwide mass movement.

A new era is dawning. We dare not fail or err. Liberalism, rediscovery, the inability to keep in mind that we're in the struggle to agitate and propagandize and to think through what that means, are all pieces of the same problem. They keep us spinning inward instead of reaching outward — boldly and confidently taking scientific socialism to the working class. This moment in history will see the working class embrace the social revolution or see it enter a period of consolidation and victory of the most reactionary violent fascist tendencies in our history. Comrades must recognize the seriousness of this moment and our responsibilities in fighting for the Party.

Transforming the Party

The seeming stability of USNA monopoly capitalism has held the Party's activity in check ever since our founding conference. Over these past 14 years, we have not been able to involve ourselves in much more than the hangovers of 1960s politics — activities of specific groupings amongst the people. It isn't as if we didn't try or that we wanted it that way.

There are qualitatively different types of communist parties in periods of class peace and of class struggle. During the periods of class peace our party was a party of socialist sectarianism. How can a Marxist Leninist communist party be an organization of the leaders of the proletariat when that proletariat is bribed over to the support of imperialism? In such periods a communist party has two choices. It can revise the doctrine of Marx, maintain its connection to the practical leaders of the class and the party becomes the organization of reformists and do gooders. Or, it can uphold the doctrine of Marx in isolation from the practical leaders.

A party can drift into one or the other of these paths or it can make a conscious decision to take the path that will do the least damage and allow for the most rapid reconstruction as conditions change. We consciously chose to take the path of socialist sectarianism as opposed to revisionism.

Engels was correct in his advice to use the periods of class peace to strengthen the organizational, ideological and theoretical aspects of party life. The path of embracing revisionism is the death of a revolutionary party. Acceptance of revisionism is the rejection of Marxism, of science. It is not a wrong style of work. It is wrong ideology which creates the wrong party base and the wrong politics. Socialist sectarianism, though, is a wrong style of work. It can be corrected if it does not become ideological.

The Party's struggle against sectarian ideology, through the proper educational programs and planned practical activity, encompasses the entire history of the Party. It has not been entirely won. Now that we are at the end of the process it is possible to examine the reasons for our lingering sectarianism — not only as a style of work, but as an ideology that has a firm grip on a large number of comrades.