03 Science Prevents Us From Rowing in Circles

05 The Soviet Wave: summations and accomplishments

13 Maoist Wave in China: summations and accomplishments

22 Introduction to leaders, misleaders, and others

24 Leaders in the revolutionary tradition

29 Misleaders

40 Other questions about leadership
Making revolution in the real world is not a collective house or commune in the middle of the First World. It is very easy to build a little utopian island in the middle of a sea of value stolen from the Third World. It is very easy to build a little commune on stolen indigenous land, under the protection of imperialist armies. Building a little, perfect life in the bubble of the First World is hardly an accomplishment. To be able to embark on such a project is a sign of extreme privilege in the global picture. Revolution is not a dinner party. It is class war. Imagine if your collective house in the First World was being bombed by NATO. Imagine if you had fascists shooting at you from the kitchen into the living room of your collective house. Imagine if the police were on all sides about to raid your collective house. While all of this is going on, as you fight for your survival, you have to carry out social revolution. You must try to satisfy everyone’s basic needs. You must try to educate everyone. You must try to empower everyone. You must try to eliminate oppressive divisions of labor and hierarchy. You must try to be sustainable. You must try to liberate everyone. You must try to advance science. All of this must be done, as you are attacked on all sides. The lives of real human beings are on the line. Tough decisions have to be made in an instant. This is a more accurate picture of what revolution looks like in the real world. Revolutions are born and sustained in crisis. They must be defended. Real revolutions will not look like the dream world that utopians imagine. They will have to fight to survive. They will become militarized to survive. They will need science and leadership. They need Leading Lights.

— Leading Light
Science prevents us from rowing in circles

Stalin once stated incorrectly that the proletariat will eventually row the boat to the shore of communism even without communist leadership. This kind of statement is an expression of a very teleological and metaphysical conception of progress and revolution. However, when we look at the past, we see that socialism did exist, yet it has been lost. There was a time when socialism existed in the Soviet Union and China. What is to prevent the proletariat’s boat, the revolution, from rowing in circles forever? This is why it is important to understand that Marxism is one thing and one thing only: revolutionary science. The most advanced form of revolutionary science is the new breakthrough of Leading Light Communism. Science learns. Even though socialism has been lost everywhere, the knowledge of that experience survives in the form of the highest stage of revolutionary science, Leading Light Communism. Even though we lost the Soviet Union, China and other other progressive experiments, Leading Light Communism has preserved the lessons of the revolutionary experience of the last century. The next time we take power, the proletariat will be able to march further toward communism. This is one reason it is so important to struggle against revisionism, especially First Worldism. This is why it is so important to elevate the highest revolutionary science. The last two big, sustained revolutionary waves were defeated. The Bolshevik revolution was defeated after
World War 2 and the Maoist revolution in China was defeated in the 1970s. We stand like Lenin before 1917. There are no socialist states. We stand before the next upsurge, the next wave of revolution. We need to continue the breakthrough of the Leading Light. If we do not understand history, we will be condemned to repeat it because we will face many of the same issues that past revolutionaries faced. We will face many of the same difficulties and problems. We must adapt, learn, find new solutions, and go further. Leading Light Communism upholds what was correct about past revolutions, but drops what was wrong. Leading Light looks backward, but also forward. All Leading Lights should familiarize themselves with the quick history lessons. This issue of Leading Light is not the last word, but it is the beginning of knowledge.

Misconceptions

“One of the most common misconceptions out there is that socialism should be understood simply as a mode of production characterized by a large state sector, nationalization of industry or large welfare programs. All of these characteristics have been part of socialism in the past, but they are not exclusive to socialism. Fascist states, European social democracy, the liberal welfare state in the United States, the state capitalism of the revisionist-era Soviet Union and China, and the bourgeois-nationalist states of Venezuela, Libya, Cuba, and the Islamic Republic of Iran have shared these characteristics to one degree or another, but they are not truly socialist. Socialism must understood through the lenses of power, of class struggle. Socialism must be understood as a transition to communism. Socialism is after the proletariat has seized control of society. The proletariat plays a leading role. The proletariat has taken and built state power. In other words, socialism is when society has been reorganized to serve the long-term interests of the proletariat. This means that society has been reorganized to advance to communism, the end of all oppression. Socialism means we have not arrived at the final goal of communism. Socialism is a transitional stage where class struggle still needs to be waged by the proletariat against reactionary classes. Socialism is when there are still class enemies that need to be defeated. There still are antagonistic contradictions that need to be resolved even though the proletariat has seized state power. Socialism can exist in one country, communism must be worldwide. The North Korean and Cuban states are not socialist for the same reason that Obama’s regime and Sweden are not. None of these regimes are headed for communism. None of them are out to radically reorganize society in order to eliminate all oppression. Socialism can only be understood as a transition to communism — to be advancing toward communism is what it means for society to be organized around the most farsighted and long-term interests of the proletariat.

Communism is the final goal of our revolution. The end of all oppression. The end of exploitation. No rich. No poor. No racism. No national oppression. No sexism. No gender oppression. No more oppression of the youth. Communism is total liberation. No groups have power over others. As Marx and Lenin taught, the state is a weapon for one group to oppress another. Since no group has power over another, there is no need for a state in communism. Communism is equality. A society organized around human need. No greed. No individualism. No longer will people see themselves merely as individuals under communism. Communism is collectivism. The common good. Sharing. Private property is eliminated under communism. Communism is altruism. As Marx say, ‘from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.’ The ethic of ‘serve the people’ will govern all human interactions. The people will be one under communism. No more me, me, me. Communism is sustainability. No longer will people destroy the earth, our common home. We have an obligation to future generations. Antagonistic contradictions no longer exist under communism. Communism is peace. Under communism, the revolution is self-perpetuating. Total communism has never existed.”

— Leading Light
The Soviet Union and those revolutions and movements that flowed from it represent the first great wave of truly sustained revolution into socialism and toward communism. The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, along with other forces helped overthrow the corrupt, Czarist monarchy. They then overthrew the social-democratic, social-imperialist regime of the Mensheviks. Soviet socialism’s birth was Red October in 1917. This revolution occurred during a capitalist crisis, in the middle of World War I. German forces had invaded part of the Russian empire on the “Eastern Front.” After overthrowing the reactionary Czar and Mensheviks from state power, the communists had to fight to survive. The reactionary forces regrouped and launched a civil war (1917 to 1923) against the new socialist regime. The imperialists invaded parts of the country to aid the reactionary “white” armies. The Red Army, with the power of the people, beat back the reactionary forces. However, the country was left in ruin. World War I, the revolutionary insurrection, and the civil war had taken their toll. In addition, the reactionaries forces made a conscious effort to loot, plunder, and destroy the country’s wealth and productive forces. Reactionaries consciously sought to destroy the country rather than allow the revolution to succeed.

The Bolsheviks inherited a devastated country. They were surrounded on all sides. In order to rebuild the country, Lenin implemented the New Economic Policy, which lasted from 1921 to 1928. This was a limited retreat from communist ideals. It was a policy that allowed limited markets and small-scale private production alongside socialization of major industry. However, problems arose. New capitalist groups were forming. Grain was being exported and sold on international markets while the cities went hungry. In addition, there was not enough grain being sent to the cities to go forward with industrialization. Originally, the Soviets hoped their revolution would spark a worldwide revolution. When the Soviet revolution did not immediately spread, some advocated capitulation to capitalism. By contrast, Stalin, following Lenin, advocated going forward to build “socialism in one country” instead of capitulating. As a result of the push to construct socialism, agriculture was collectivized. Stalin famously said that they would be crushed by the imperialists if the Soviet Union did not go forward to modernize. The grain crisis and the problem of modernization were solved together. The First Five Year Plan, a massive plan to rapidly industrialize, was implemented. This involved a massive social dislocation. In the countryside, the remaining capitalists and rich peasants resisted. They slaughtered their animals and destroyed fields rather than hand them to the collectives. They sabotaged production. They physically fought against the communists. The result of this struggle was crisis and death. Eventually, collectivization was completed. Industrialization rapidly advanced. However, the process could be harsh at times. The human toll was high. Mao later criticized Stalin’s approach as too hard on the peasants. However, it is hard to see how Stalin could have done otherwise. Domestic enemies within. Imperialists and fascists waiting to invade. Stalin needed to industrialize rapidly to give the Soviet Union the ability to defend itself. The Red Army needed tanks and arms. Tanks require industry. In order to create industry, they needed austerity measures. When the Nazis invaded, Stalin was proven right. Over 27 million Soviet peoples died as a result of the terrible war. The Nazis planned to exterminate and enslave all the Soviet peoples in order to clear land for their racist, fascist empire. Stalin’s regime, and the austerity and sacrifice that it entailed, saved the Soviet peoples and the world from fascism. Sometimes there is no perfect choice. Stalin represents the hard choice. He did what was necessary to survive. The Soviet Union emerged victorious. The Red Army had liberated most of Eastern Europe from
fascism. “People’s Democracies” were established in most of Eastern Europe. Germany was divided. Eastern Germany became a client state of the Soviet Union. Stalin had spread the Soviet reach far beyond “one country” by the end of the war. However, even though the Soviet Union had been devastated again by a world war, it emerged as a modern superpower. Under the leadership of Lenin, then Stalin, the country went from a backwater with feudal characteristics, with little industrialization, to being a modern, industrial, atomic superpower with a healthy standard of living. Socialism had created public education for all, literacy, doubled life expectancy, gave women political rights, gave workers and the poor political power, gave power to national populations that had been traditionally discriminated against and oppressed. All of this social revolution and technological revolution was carried out in a crisis situation, under very harsh conditions. It was carried out during and in the middle of two of the worst wars the world had ever seen. It took the West about 200 years to industrialize and emerge as major powers. The West’s development was accomplished, in part, by plundering indigenous civilizations and enslaving Africans. By contrast, the Soviet Union developed into a modern power in only a few decades without plundering or exploiting any other countries as the imperialists had. And the Soviets accomplished this while they were under siege on all sides by imperialists and fascists. All in all, socialism proved a better modernizer than capitalism.

Even with all these accomplishments, Soviet socialism did not last. Social revolution had to be scaled back in order to wage war. Survival during the war meant that social experiment and revolution was pulled back. This turn continued through reconstruction after World War 2 up until Stalin’s death in 1953. Many mark the death of Stalin in 1953 or the rise of Khrushchev in 1956 as the final blow to Soviet socialism. Others trace it to the end of the World War 2. The exact date is not important. It was in this general period that the Soviet revolution stagnated and failed to reinvent
itself to advance. It began to revert to state capitalism and social imperialism. Stalin’s support of Zionist Israel in 1947 is an example of the Soviet Union no longer behaving as a revolutionary state, but as a self-serving one. Although Stalin backed the Zionists in an effort to set up another “people’s democracy” that would break up the imperial encirclement on the Soviet southern flank, such a move reflects a lack of trust in the Arab masses to depose imperialism and the lackey, comprador Arab regimes by themselves. Trying to establish a settler, puppet state on Arab land is a betrayal of the Arab peoples and the proletariat. Even so, Stalin is still seen as a great hero in the ex-Soviet countries. Even so, Stalin was a communist leader.

The Soviet approach to socialism was influenced by the Theory of Productive Forces. It overemphasized the role of technology. It tended to see society as a kind of machine to be organized according to a strict central plan. This approach was too “top-down” and vertical. This machine paradigm tends to discount spontaneity, locality, and the human factor. Along with this, they failed to understand the problem of counter-revolution scientifically. They saw the problem through the police paradigm. When the system ran into problems, they did not blame the social machine. The problem wasn’t socialism as a transition, but, rather, the problem, in their view, came from outside. They saw preventing counter-revolution as mainly an issue of better policing. They saw problems as the result of old class enemies, agents and wreckers. They failed to fully understand that society should not be organized as a machine. They failed to realize that socialism itself, as a transitional period, generates new inequalities in privilege. These inequalities can crystallize and result in the emergence of a new bourgeoisie that will turn back socialism. This new bourgeoisie came into being before the Soviet system could reinvent itself and correct these problems. The Maoist model and the Cultural Revolution in China was an attempt to reinvent socialism to avoid these problems. After World War 2, the Soviet Union began behaving as an imperialist power to an extent. In the post-Stalin era, all hope was lost. The Soviet Union had become just another capitalist and imperialist power. However, before its degeneration, the Soviet Union had inspired the world. It was a red beacon of hope to the oppressed everywhere.

How long did the Soviet Union’s revolutionary phase last?

It began in October, 1917. Its end can be marked around the end of World War 2, Stalin’s death in 1953, or the consolidation of Khrushchev’s power in 1956. Basically, we can say the revolutionary period was the Lenin and most or all of the Stalin era.

What were Soviet socialism’s accomplishments?

1. The first proletarian state. Lenin said that without state power, all is illusion. For the first time in history our class was able to consolidate its hold on state power. Rather than being a tool of the reactionaries to oppress the people, the state was used to suppress the counter-revolutionaries and advance the revolution. From the commanding heights of state power, we were able to begin to remake all of society.

2. First successful planned economy. The Soviet Union was the first attempt by the proletariat to create an economy organized to serve the people. It was the first attempt to create an economy where the oppressed were not at the mercy of cold market forces. The proletariat and the oppressed escaped the anarchy of production that is capitalism. Instead, production was brought under the control of the state and the party of the proletariat.

3. Great leap. Under proletarian leadership, the Soviet Union went from an undeveloped backwater to a modern superpower able to challenge imperialism on the world stage. Under the Czar, only a few cities were industrialized. Under the leadership of our class, a whole country was modernized. Even the atom was conquered. The Soviet Union became the second most powerful country on Earth.

4. Defeat of fascism. During World War 2, the Soviet peoples suffered over 27 million
deaths, more casualties than all other countries combined. The Great Patriotic War against fascism was a people’s war against fascism. It was the Soviet people who were the front line fighters in this struggle against Hitler and his vile racist ideology. Had the Soviet Union not existed, Hitler’s troops would have marched to the Pacific ocean. They would have won World War 2 and done to Eastern Europe and Asia what the United States did to its Indigenous peoples. In fact, Hitler took the genocide and “Manifest Destiny” carried out by the United States as his model. The Soviet Union, its Red Army, our Party led by Stalin stopped Hitler’s genocidal armies in their tracks.

5. New proletarian culture. The old culture was one that promoted racism, chauvinism, sexism, privileges, and inequality. For the first time in history, the oppressed and exploited were in control of art and media. A new proletarian culture was born to promote the values of peace, equality and self-determination. Our art and our song were seen and heard across the world.

6. Advancing and spreading revolutionary science. The Bolshevik revolution advanced our understanding of revolutionary science. It was out of the Bolshevik revolutionary experience that Lenin developed his theory of the state, of dual power, of the vanguard party, of the self-determination of nations. Lenin’s contributions have become a key part of Marxism today. Leading Light Communism. A country spanning one sixth of the world’s land mass was now liberated, serving as a base area to spread our science and revolution around the world. It was through the Bolshevik experience that Marxism became Marxism-Leninism. Revolutionary science was advanced to a whole new stage. Marxism-Leninism was the second stage of revolutionary science. The revolution spread revolutionary science across the globe; it spread Marxism-Leninism.

7. A higher standard of living. Soviet peoples lived under terrible conditions under the Czarist empire. Terrible starvation. Terrible poverty. Terrible oppression. Under the socialist regime, the standard of living increased. Although there were some problems, eventually the food problem was solved. Everyone had food, shelter, and healthcare. Everyone received the right to an education. The Soviet Union went from a backwater to being a modern, atomic power. Life expectancy doubled. Child mortality rates fell. The Soviet people were grateful to socialism, and to their leaders, especially Lenin and Stalin, for the improvements in their everyday life. Even today, opinion polls consistently rank Lenin and Stalin as two of historic leaders most admired in Russia.

The Soviet Union was not perfect. Our revolution in the Soviet Union was lost to counter-revolution. A new capitalist class emerged and reversed our great accomplishments; they finally consolidated their counter-revolution after World War 2. All was not lost. The first great wave of sustained revolution inspired a second. Under Maoist leadership, the Chinese revolution advanced even further. We must learn and improve on the past, so we can do better next time. Even with its errors, the Soviet experience has much to teach us today.

What were the problems of Soviet socialism?

There were several interconnected problems. Soviet socialism was too influenced by the Theory of Productive Forces. It put too much emphasis on the role of technology in creating socialism. Along with this, economic development and society itself was seen through a kind of machine paradigm. When problems occurred, it was not the fault of the model, but too often attributed to foreign agents and wreckers. Thus they tended to see problems, including the problem of counter-revolution, through the police paradigm rather than a material, structural paradigm or power paradigm. The result was a Soviet regime that erred on the side of commandism at times. It was too commandist, especially with regard to the peasants. A large police and prison apparatus emerged. These features affected the whole tone of the regime. The regime was also workerist. It failed to adequately understand other forms of oppression. Soviet socialism failed to fully understand the relationship between
humanity and the ecosystem scientifically. Many of these criticisms were made by the Maoists who later tried to correct these tendencies during their own socialist experiment. However, the Maoists did not go far enough in their critiques. They ended up repeating some of the errors. This summation of the Soviet experience is one of the advances of the Leading Light.

Another error was that they never broke with First Worldism. This deformed their socialism by measuring it against the imperialist, Western economies. Leading Light Communism has repudiated and corrected this error.

Did the Bolsheviks and Stalin kill millions?

Anti-communists make all kinds of outrageous claims about the deaths caused by communism. There is no consensus on the number. Estimates vary greatly. Many did surely die in the Soviet experiment unnecessarily - social experiments are not perfect, errors get made. It is very difficult to say how many of these deaths were avoidable or unavoidable. However, almost all of those who died unnecessarily would have been victims of famine. Famines had existed long before the Bolsheviks. These deaths were not intentional. In fact, the intention was to increase life, not exterminate it. We need to look at the good along with the bad. Life expectancy was doubled. The child-mortality rate dropped. Literacy spread. Woman and workers gained power over their lives. Stalin’s regime was far from the ideal in terms of its harshness. At the same time, it was that quality that produced the organization, discipline, and ideological unity to defeat the Nazis. And the Nazi’s stated goal was to enslave and exterminate all of the Soviet peoples. Stalin’s regime foiled the fascist plan. Overall, the Soviet peoples did far better under socialism than capitalism.

We have to remember that capitalism kills far more than socialism ever did. Looting of the Americas greased the wheels of early capitalism. Genocide and plunder of the Americas helped kickstart capitalism. An entire continent was exterminated. Millions of Africans were killed and enslaved in plantations resembling concentration camps. Even today, capitalism kills millions every year around the world in the poor countries. American imperialism wages wars all over the globe. Capitalism is leading us toward an ecological catastrophe that will kill everyone. The victims of capitalism are far greater. Socialism and communism are the only real solutions. To not fight for socialism and communism perpetuates the current murderous system.

What about the Gulag?

Not all prisons were gulags in the Soviet Union. Gulags were camps in the Soviet Union for hardened criminals (rapists, murderers, etc.) and hardened political enemies (spies, saboteurs, die-hard enemies, fascists, etc.). They were camps where people were forced to do hard labor under difficult conditions. In certain periods and locations, mortality rates in the camps were especially high. Living conditions in the camps got worse as conditions worsened for society as a whole. Prisoners in gulags were hit hard by famines in the country and by World War 2. The limited resources were directed to those who were laboring outside in the factories and fields or to the front lines.

The gulags were another symptom of the same harshness and commandism of the Stalin era. Although we should not overtstate the horrors of the gulag, we should not dismiss them either. The Maoist approach in China was one that put much more emphasis on ideological education through labor and less emphasis on squeezing labor out of prisoners. We should, as much as possible, find ways of winning over and neutralizing class enemies so that we do not have to rely on incarceration.

Let’s look at this in perspective. The United States incarcerates more people than the Soviet Union or China. And, the United States also forces them to work. In addition, non-whites are disproportionately incarcerated in the United States. In addition, within the imperial system, prisons exist, forced labor exists, which is far worse than the gulags. The US economy was built on the extermination of indigenous peoples and on the slavery of Africans. Slavery was not abolished in the US economy, it was just moved halfway around the world to Third World factories where child and slave labor produces goods for First World costumers. These prisons, plantations, and factories are part of what keeps the current, capitalist system operating. Many of the criticisms of the Soviet system are hypocritical. However, we should avoid this error, of harshness and commandism, in the future.
What about the purges?

The role of the Communist Party is to guide society to communism. If there is a line within the Communist Party that is leading society back to capitalism, then it should be eliminated. Either the line should be corrected or the faction should be purged. If a group within the Communist Party is destroying the revolution from within, then it has to be rectified or purged - they should be kicked out. Purging, when done correctly, strengthens the Communist Party.

The Soviets over-relied on purges as a way to fight counter-revolution. By contrast, Maoists adopted a more “bottom up,” mass approach. Maoists encouraged more education, debate, mass mobilization, and reform through labor. Maoists always gave people who had made mistakes more chances if they came to admit and understand their mistakes. Purging should be one tool in the tool box. It should be used as a last resort. Correction through education is always preferable. Purging is not the only way to address the problem of counter-revolution.

What about the “Moscow Trials”?

The Moscow Trials were a series of show trials in the Soviet Union during the 1930s that were used for propaganda purposes. Many powerful leaders fell in these high-profile trials, including Bukharin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev. The trials were the outcome of a bloody power struggle between the Communist Party represented by Stalin and their opponents. While many of the fallen leaders were guilty of various crimes, the sensational claims of the trials seem far-fetched to many. Some of the confessions were probably based on coercion of the defendants. These kinds of trials are a symptom of the police paradigm approach to line struggle and counter-revolution. The revisionists in China later tried the Maoists in a show trial.

What about the Hitler-Stalin Pact?

As World War 2 approached, the Soviets had tried to make an alliance with the West against Hitler early on. The West refused. Stalin knew the Nazis were going to go to war. The question was whether they would go west or east first. Stalin needed time to build up his industry, his tank and arms production. Stalin entered into a temporary pact with Hitler as a tactical move to get the Nazis to attack the West first. This gave Stalin more time to build up his defenses. Stalin made the hard choice needed to win. The Soviet forces did the bulk of the fighting against the Nazis. The Soviet Union saved the world from fascist night.

What about Lysenko?

What about him? Lysenko was a Soviet biologist who rejected Darwinism. It is widely held today that he was a hack whose ideas were advanced for their political merit within Soviet biology, not their scientific merit. Pseudo-science can exist in socialism just as it does in capitalism. All things considered, there is probably more pseudo-science passing itself off as legitimate under capitalism than there was under socialism. Capitalism promotes all kinds of ridiculous pseudo-science: astrology, phrenology, pop psychology, numerology, and on and on. In any case, Lysenko’s rise represents a real problem. Let’s look at the context though. Darwinism, at the time, was associated with racism and imperialism. It was associated closely with fascism and the rise of the Nazis. It was associated with Social Darwinism and racist eugenics. The Soviets sought another alternative that was politically compatible with socialism and communism. Unfortunately, the Soviets threw out the baby with the bathwater. The problem wasn’t Darwinism, but the reactionary political forces who were appropriating it. Marx was a fan of Darwin. In other words, although Darwinism was true, it was being misused to justify the worst forms of racism and genocide at the time. The Soviets made a mistake, but an understandable one.

What about Stalin’s cult?

The times required strong leadership. People admire strong leaders. While elevating individual leaders runs contrary to the ultimate goals of communism, it is necessary to elevate outstanding leaders under certain circumstances. People project their hopes and dreams onto leaders. Leaders can empower. Focus on the leader is a pre-scientific way of showing support for socialism by the masses. The rule
with any cult is that if the cult is helping the revolution go forward, it is a good thing. If it is hindering it, it is a bad thing. The cult of Stalin was part of forging discipline in society. This discipline was necessary to carry out development at a breakneck pace and it was necessary in order to defeat the fascists. There is nothing wrong with elevating outstanding people who make outstanding contributions.

Criticism of the cult was a tool used by the revisionists to implement a capitalist overhaul of the system. We should try to elevate as many leaders as possible. We should not be afraid to give credit where credit is due. Great revolutionary heroes, great revolutionary leaders, great revolutionary geniuses deserve praise. Nobody is perfect. Even our best have flaws. We are works in progress. However, we should not be afraid to extol and emulate the best among our ranks. Today, the Leading Light represents our best.

We should also point out that it is better for people to latch onto a communist leader than a Paris Hilton or Obama. Capitalism produces cults of personality that are totally destructive. Far better to latch onto a leader who is leading us to communism than a party girl or imperialist war criminal.

What about abortion?

Abortion was outlawed in the Soviet Union in the Stalin era. This is for several reasons. First off, they had population issues. They expected a cycle of world wars to continue, as it did when the Nazis invaded. They needed population to fight Nazi Germany. They later needed to replace the 27 million who were killed as a result of the World War 2. Plus they expected more wars. Secondly, at the time, we have to remember that abortion was associated with racist eugenics. It was associated with national oppression and racism. Historically, the medical and political establishment used abortion to lower birth rates of oppressed peoples. Margaret Sanger, a famous bourgeois-feminist advocate for abortion, for example, used to go on speaking tours with racist ideologues and eugenicists. Bourgeois feminism has often been a tool used by imperialism against the most oppressed and the revolution. Abortionists advocated its practice as a way to reduce the Black, Indigenous, Latino, and other populations deemed undesirable in the United States. Russia was historically a racist and chauvinist empire.

Stalin was from a people who had been historically oppressed by the Russian empire. Abortion was seen as a tool of national oppression at the time. Even today, abortion is used as a tool to lower birthrates of oppressed peoples -- especially in parts of the Third World. Thirdly, Soviet socialism lagged on certain gender issues. Leading Light Communism addresses this lag. The Leading Light supports the right to abortion in general, but Leading Light also recognizes how abortion can be used as a weapon of genocide. Leading Light recognizes there might be times when it is correct to oppose abortion.

What about homosexuality?

Homosexuality was originally legalized in the Soviet Union under Lenin. The Soviet Union was originally one of the most advanced states in its outlook toward queers. However, they later re-criminalized homosexuality under Stalin’s regime. Homosexuality was incorrectly associated exclusively with bourgeois decadence and fascism. It was perceived as part of Western cultural corruption. It was seen as the concern of a very bourgeois, individualistic, and privileged strata. Homosexual culture was seen as decadent, individualistic, self-centered and contrary to the collectivist values of the revolution. The criminalization of homosexuality in Stalin’s Soviet Union was a mistake. Elsewhere in the world, however, the Communist movement was a refuge for homosexuals. For example, it is well-known that the Communist Party USA, in its revolutionary days, was a safe haven for queers. Many homosexual artists flocked to communist fronts at the height of the Communist Party’s influence in the United States.

Communists of the past did not address gender and sexuality adequately. There was the problem of guilt by association. Bourgeois feminists and gender activists have positioned themselves as part of the imperialist system and set themselves up against the most oppressed. Bourgeois feminists and gender activists represent some of the most privileged strata globally. They have often attacked the revolutionary movement while pretending to be progressive. Past communists mistakenly threw out the baby with the bathwater. However, some of the predecessor movements to Leading Light were on the forefront of the queer rights struggle. Leading Light stands for the rights of all.
Leading Light repudiates the mistakes of the past by communists regarding gender and sexuality. Leading Light says nobody is free until everyone is free.

We also have to realize that all sexuality in the First World is marked by class. First World gender and sexual struggles usually take on imperialist forms. Heterosexuals and queers in the First World want more life options often at the expense of others in the Third World. Even though we should support the rights of all, we need to understand that gender and sexual struggles in the First World can adversely affect Third World peoples, including Third World queers and women. We need to be aware of this. The link between feminist, gender and sexual movements in the First World and imperialism is not simply the overactive imagination of communists.

The bourgeois media lies about the world all the time. Why would bourgeois history be any different? Anti-communists practice the big lie -- the bigger, the better. We must open up our minds. Apply revolutionary science. We must look past the lies. We must learn history over. We must learn true history. We have made mistakes, but even our mistakes are better than their successes. We must dare to defend the real history of revolution.

— Leading Light
The Maoist revolution in China was part of the second great wave of sustained revolution. This revolutionary wave occurred during an economic crisis and after World War 2. The European imperialist powers had weakened each other by going to war with each other. This created an opening for making revolution in the colonies and neocolonies. National liberation movements seeking independence from European and American imperialism popped up all over the world. Often, social revolution, including communist-led social revolution, piggybacked on top of these national liberation movements. Of all of these, the Maoist revolution in China was the most significant. It involved a quarter of the world’s population. And its social revolution was the most radical. The Maoists sought to reorganize society at the deepest levels in order to actually reach communism. The Maoist revolution in China was a long and bloody one with many twists and turns. It lasted over half a century. At its peak, during the Cultural Revolutionary years, the Maoist revolution represented the furthest advance toward communism in human history.

In the early part of the twentieth century, China was in chaos. Semi-feudalism was the dominant mode of production. Poverty was everywhere. The majority of Chinese were destitute, impoverished peasants. Slavery was still practiced. Many Chinese lived as European serfs once had. Famines were common. Epidemics swept the country. There was little or no healthcare for the majority of Chinese. Women were treated as property. Women’s feet were often crippled in order to make them more easily controlled by men. China was in a dark age. China’s coast had been carved up by competing imperialist powers who had occupied its ports. The central government was weak. Warlords and opium traffickers were in constant civil war with each other. The imperialists fueled these wars in order to divide and conquer. In 1937, imperial Japan invaded and occupied China. The Chinese communists were attacked on all sides. They were attacked by the anti-
communist state. They were attacked by the warlords and feudalists. They were attacked by the imperialists, especially the Japanese. It was by taking up the national banner that the communists were able to rally the people to their cause. The communists raised the national banner against the “two mountains” of imperialism and feudalism. The communists organized a people’s army and seized power in the countryside. They created New Power. They created their own society and state in the remote countrysides and mountains. They created red zones. The communists fought the imperialists. They fought the feudal warlords. The communists carried out land reform. They began the liberation of women. They carried out New Democratic revolution, the first stage of China’s revolution. They created a new system everywhere they went. They slowly expanded their New Power. The people’s war went from the countryside to surround China’s cities. It was in 1949 that the communists drove the imperialists and their lackeys from the mainland. It was on October 1st, 1949 that Mao declared “China has stood up” at Tiananmen. Mao declared the birth of the People’s Republic of China.

China’s revolution went through many phases. The first phase was the New Democratic revolution. This phase aimed at getting rid of the “two mountains” of feudalism and imperialism. It focused on land reform, national development, national unity, creating a functioning society, creating the beginnings of democratic control, creating a central state, beginning the liberation of women, public education, healthcare, literacy, etc. Limited capitalism, as a method of national development, still existed during New Democracy. The New Democratic Revolution laid the groundwork for further, socialist social transformation. The New Democratic Revolution began to phase into socialist construction after 1949, into the 1950s. Socialist construction meant even greater collectivization of the productive forces. It meant collectivizing agriculture and industry. It meant putting the workers in command. It meant creating more and more revolutionary culture in place of old culture. It means more class struggle. It means trying to move toward communism. The two major efforts at trying to push to a higher level of socialism were the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution.

The Maoists sought to reorganize Chinese society at the deepest level. They saw the mistakes that the Soviets had made by putting too much emphasis on technology, the productive forces. Maoists saw revolution as a train on two tracks: development of the productive forces and reorganization of power. Of these, the latter was principal for the Maoists. They adopted a more “bottom up,” people-power approach. They sought to unleash the masses to build socialism by using mass campaigns and mass line. The Maoist model was one that allowed for more mass spontaneity and more creativity. They sought to reorganize all of society into people’s communes. These communes would be the basic unit of society, eventually replacing the central state apparatus. These communes were to be as self-sufficient and as sustainable as possible. They would produce their own food and they would have their own industry. Housework and traditional women’s work was to be phased out. For example, the people’s communes sought to have community meals in public dining halls, thus shifting “women’s work” onto the collective. In the communes, people strove to be equals. Even most teens could participate politically in communes. Thus the communes sought to encourage youth liberation and youth participation in politics. Later, during the Cultural Revolution, even young teens and children participated in politics at various levels. Education was combined with work in the communes just as the People’s Liberation Army combined its training with economic work and ideological work. These communes were created during the Great Leap, but they ran into problems due to opposition, sabotage and mismanagement. A food crisis resulted from human errors and natural disasters. This resulted in a temporary defeat for the Maoists. After the Great Leap, Maoist power waned. A new capitalist class, a revisionist group, began to rise to displace the Maoists. They sought to reverse socialist construction and dismantle the people’s communes. As a result, the Maoists launched the Cultural Revolution in 1965. Mao’s general Lin Biao took control of the People’s Liberation Army and turned it into a bastion of communist thought. Lin Biao advocated a global people’s war from the global countryside to surround the global cities, from poor to rich countries. Mao then called on the students to rise up and rebel against their teachers and overthrow those in the Communist Party and state who were betraying the revolution. Red guard students and rebel workers took to the streets. They took over whole cities. They formed huge armies to protect socialism. For a moment, they were able
to consolidate socialist power at even a higher level with the help of Lin Biao’s People’s Liberation Army. The communes were defended. More collectivization occurred. A whole new culture of revolution was promoted. Big philosophical debates were carried out in the streets and in the media. All of society was aspiring to reach communism. Unfortunately, it did not last. Mao shifted rightward and allowed the revisionists to launch their offensive against the left. Mao, who was old and sick, began slipping ever rightward. The revisionists struck back hard. The revisionists were able to kill and discredit Lin Biao, who had been the voice and face of the Cultural Revolution and global people’s war. The revisionists seized command of the People’s Liberation Army. Throughout the 1970s, Mao presided over a regime that systematically moved toward the restoration of capitalism. The regime in the 1970s even began aligning with the United States in world affairs. Mao hoped to have a negotiated settlement between the revisionists and the remaining Maoists, but the revisionists were easily able to sweep away the remaining Maoists, the so-called “Gang of Four,” shortly after Mao died in September of 1976.

Today’s capitalism in China was born when the right and revisionists struck against Lin Biao. Today’s China is thoroughly capitalist. The economies of China and the United States are intertwined. The China of today puts its children in sweatshops to produce toys for children in the United States. It guns down its striking workers so that value continues to flow out of China to the United States and the First World. It guns down its students who stand up to question its course. The Chinese state is an integral part of the capitalist-imperialist system. The so-called Chinese Communist Party recently made a pronouncement that it is no longer a “revolutionary party,” but a “ruling party.” Mao said that it will take many revolutions to reach communism in China. He is correct. China needs revolution today. China needs Leading Light Communism.

What were the accomplishments of the Maoist revolution?

There were many accomplishments of the Maoist revolution in China. Think about it: A quarter of the world’s population was mobilized to build a new world. The Maoist revolution was vast and profound. The Maoist revolution sought to reorganize all of society to root out all oppression and exploitation, to actually reach communism. It was the greatest feminist movement of all time. A quarter of the world’s women stood up to say “we will no longer be property!” Patriarchal, feudal relations were ended across a quarter of the world. Even with the food crisis during the Great Leap, China solved its food problem overall. China went from a country with regular famines to a country that could feed itself. An illiterate population became literate. Life expectancy doubled. The infant-mortality rate declined. China became strong. Like the Soviet Union before it, China went from a feudal state to a modern atomic power. A whole new culture was developed. Egalitarianism was promoted. Altruism, “serve the people,” was promoted. New socialist art and culture emerged to replace the old, reactionary art. The Chinese matched the accomplishments of the Soviets, but went even further. They created a more advanced model of socialism that was more mass oriented and “bottom up.” They sought to begin phasing out the

Why did Mao zig-zag at the end of his life?

Mao did not always uphold the revolutionary line in his last years. Even though he was a great revolutionary, even Mao began to slip into revisionism at times. This is why it is important to understand the importance of line. We need to follow revolutionary science, not simply a leader. Some leaders can come to embody revolutionary science in a concentrated way, but as soon as they deviate, they must be called out. Even Mao should have been called out when he rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping, for example. We should also take into account that Mao was old. He was showing signs of deterioration. He should have considered stepping down earlier. Ultimately, we should focus on broader questions of social forces instead of individual leaders. Even though great leaders emerge who play pivotal roles, we always need to have an eye on the social forces. The defeat of the Chinese revolution cannot simply be that Mao turned rightward in the 1970s. Mao would not have been able to do that if the social forces weren’t there pulling him in that direction. The defeat cannot simply be that Mao died in 1976. The reasons for the defeat of the Chinese revolution are deeper than any individual.
state in order to actually reach communism. They began to understand the nature of counter-revolution and the need for continuous cultural revolution to fight it. The Chinese revolution went further than all previous attempts to reach communism.

What about Mao’s violence?

Revolution is no dinner party. Revolutions are acts of violence. To deny this is to deny revolution. The system is far more violent than revolution. We always have to remember this. The violence of the revolution pales in comparison to the violence of capitalism and imperialism. Mao said we wage war to end war. However, Mao also said that heads are not like leeks; when you cut them off, they do not grow back. Maoists have always tried to avoid bloodshed when possible. Instead, Maoists have emphasized persuasion and education of enemies. While there were executions, the Maoist regime tried to avoid violence by the state against its enemies. Most of the Maoist violence that did occur was spontaneous. Jacobin violence by red guard youth and rebel workers against gangs of revisionists. They had running-street battles with each other. However, the Maoists were often on the receiving end of the violence. Maoists were often the ones being put down by the revisionist wing of the security forces and local revisionist Party bosses. For example, according to one scholar, most of the deaths during the Cultural Revolution were Maoist red guards themselves, especially when they were put down by revisionists. As a rule, Maoists avoid violence. As Mao said, we wage war to end war. Leading Lights use persuasion and education as much as possible.

Did Mao kill millions? What about the famine?

Anti-communists claim that Mao killed millions. Most of the deaths attributed to Mao by anti-communists are deaths that resulted from the food crisis that occurred during the Great Leap. These critics ignore the fact that Mao doubled life expectancy. They ignore that, despite the single food crisis, famines were ended under Mao’s reign. They also fail to compare it to famines that occur under capitalism. They also fail to look at the context or details. China had always had periodic famines. Mao put an end to that, even though a food crisis occurred during the Great Leap. Under Mao, China finally solved its food problem. All of this is ignored by anti-communists. There was a food crisis during the Great Leap that in all probability killed some. The estimates of deaths are all over the place — some high, some low. Many of the numbers are pulled out of thin air. Whatever the numbers, remember that China accounted for a quarter of the world’s population at the time, probably over 800 million. A quarter of the world’s population lived in China. There are no accurate records from the time. The archives of the Communist Party were altered several times to suit political agendas. So nobody really knows how many died. Some people claim that there was a food crisis, but no real famine. Others claim there was a famine, but they disagree on its size. The famous Black revolutionary and communist W.E.B. Dubois reported not seeing famine conditions when he toured China. Joshua Horn, who lived there, reported seeing no famine. Australian economists Wheelwright and MacFarlane who toured China at that time, state that famine was averted in Great Leap period China only because of egalitarian food distribution. However, China is a big place. And there are many accounts that confirm the crisis also. The revisionists and the anti-communists have an interest in exaggerating the deaths in order to smear the communist project. We need to be very cautious here. The anti-communists have a long track record of lying and exaggeration. Even so, we can say “where there is smoke, there is probably fire.” We do not deny that there was a great food crisis during the Great Leap that probably killed many. The crisis was big enough to seriously reduce Mao’s position in the leadership. However, the question is what caused the crisis. The crisis was not mainly caused by communist policies, although there was mismanagement — sometimes extreme mismanagement. There were terrible natural disasters in that period that significantly affected the food supply. There was extreme Cointelpro-type sabotage by opponents of Mao. A US embargo meant China could not purchase grain from abroad. Also, the Soviets, in a conscious wrecking effort, withdrew their aid, thereby leaving projects stagnant and in disarray across China. The egalitarian policies saved lives overall, in the long-term. However, there was extreme mismanagement in cases. Maoists ended up saying the crisis was 70 percent natural disasters and 30 percent human error.
What we have to keep in mind is that these deaths were unintentional. They resulted from a crisis in the food supply. All over the world far more people die from the American-dominated capitalist-imperialist system than ever died from the crisis years during the Great Leap. The Maoists tried to save people, but they failed. They made mistakes in an effort to liberate. By contrast, the capitalist system itself is designed to starve millions every year. Every year, millions starve due to capitalism. There is always a crisis with the capitalist food supply. The capitalist system kills far more and there is no end in sight to the horror. We have to remember that reorganizing society is very difficult. We will not get everything right. The key is recognizing our errors and learning from them. The first big Maoist push toward communism, the Maoist side of the Great Leap, ran into difficulties. The second push, the Cultural Revolution, went much better. During the second big Maoist push, the Cultural Revolution, there was no food crisis. In fact, those years were some of the most productive. The point is that socialism may not be perfect, but because it is scientific, it learns. And even socialism’s errors are better than capitalism’s “successes.”

What about the backyard furnaces?

During the Great Leap, small steel blast furnaces were constructed in the backyards of the people’s communes. They used local materials in an attempt to produce steel. When they could not access iron ore, they melted down tools to make steel. However, because of poor technique, the steel was mostly useless. This resulted in a loss of capital due to poor planning and implementation. This instance is often held up as an example of lofty socialist goals leading to ruin. The reality is that the entire program was not a disaster. The results varied from region to region. In some places, the steel was usable. The results were mixed.

The backyard furnaces were an effort to substitute large-scale industry concentrated in industrial centers with small and medium-sized industry distributed more evenly across the countryside. Traditionally, in China, the cities enjoyed a privileged status over the countryside. In many ways, the cities were parasitic centers of management and export. These were efforts to breakdown the traditional division between the countryside and city. In many other instances shifting production from large industrial centers to smaller and medium-sized industrial sites in the countryside proved a success. The overall strategy, especially in other industries, was successful even if the effort to relocate steel production failed. Anti-communists fail to see the forest for the trees. The critique of the backyard furnaces is a case of what Mao called “one finger against the many.”

What about the sparrows?

Today, it is commonplace for the bourgeoisie to mock anti-pest campaigns in China. The biggest target is the anti-sparrow campaign during the Great Leap Forward. In fact, the anti-sparrow campaign is rightly criticized. It backfired and resulted in very bad consequences because people did not adequately understand the role the sparrow played in the ecology. Sparrows killed pests that attacked crops. Lowering the numbers of sparrows hurt agricultural production. The anti-sparrow campaign is an example of poor planning and over-enthusiasm. However, we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Mistakes will always be made on the long road to communism. To expect no mistakes is utopian. Unlike other pest campaigns, the anti-sparrow campaign was not scientific. It is wrong to dismiss the Maoist approach, to dismiss mass mobilizations, because of mistakes and
excesses. The anti-snail fever campaign, for example, was another anti-pest campaign that greatly benefited the Chinese people. Snail fever is one of the world’s greatest scourges. At the time of the campaign, it affected 250 million people, almost all in the Third World. As late as 1955, there were 50 million sufferers in China alone. Among parasitic diseases in tropical and sub-tropical regions, it ranks only behind malaria in terms of socioeconomic and health importance. Even today it affects 200 million. Twenty thousand die from snail fever every year. Twenty million suffer serious consequences from the disease. An estimated 600 million people worldwide are at risk from the disease. China’s socialism launched a war against this scourge. Snail fever was all but eliminated in much of China. The Communists claimed an 85% to 95% cure rate among afflicted people. The disease was all but wiped out in areas that had been previously afflicted on an epidemic scale. The Communist Party declared that it could “cure what the powers above have failed to do.” However, when capitalism returned to China so did schistosomiasis. Today, the epidemic is back. And, with global warming it could be worse than ever. The point is that the anti-sparrows campaign is not representative of the Maoist approach or even the anti-pest campaigns in general. It was a mistake that better science did correct. Leading Light Communism puts much more emphasis on the importance of ecology.

What about re-education? What about persecution of intellectuals?

For thousands of years, people have been taught that some are better than others. Inequality, hierarchy and privilege is ingrained in the culture. We all need ideological remolding. We are all works in progress. Nobody is perfect. We need the help of our comrades to perfect ourselves in order to better serve the people. However, some people will need more remolding than others. Communists, especially in China, always prefer using education and persuasion on people, even on class enemies and counter-revolutionaries. The Maoists tried to find the good in people, even in class enemies. The Maoists gave enemies a chance to redeem themselves.

Traditionally, in China, intellectuals were servants of the system. They were mostly a parasitic strata that served as functionaries of the feudalists and imperialists. Intellectuals thought of themselves as better than the people. Traditionally, intellectual work was valued over physical work. The communists in China sent many intellectuals, including Communist Party functionaries and state bureaucrats, to the countryside and factories to experience what real work was like. This was a method to fight corruption. They believed that if intellectuals, functionaries, and bureaucrats experienced life alongside the masses, then they would be less inclined to exploit and oppress them. In addition, the communists tried to promote the masses into positions of authority and into intellectual work. This was part of an effort to breakdown the traditional division between mental and manual labor. It was an effort to breakdown traditional hierarchy. Of course, many intellectuals opposed the attack on their traditional privilege. When the communist revolution was defeated, they wrote “horror stories” about how they were made to labor alongside the masses.

We see Maoist efforts to equalize society as a positive thing. Intellectual strata and technocrats should not exist over and above the masses. They should labor alongside them. Even leaders, even great leaders, should get their hands dirty. There is nothing wrong with education and re-education. Education is inherently good. We need to create as many educated leaders as possible. We need an educated population to reach communism. In China, in the revolutionary period, they spoke of society being a school of revolution. Leading Light Communism will transform all of society into a school of revolutionary science. We should aspire to this ideal.

What about the cult of Mao?

Mao was a great leader. Mao was the greatest revolutionary of the last wave of revolution. People project their hopes and dreams onto leaders. Focus on the leader is a pre-scientific way of showing support for socialism by the masses. The rule with any cult is that if the cult is helping the revolution go forward, it is a good thing. If it is hindering it, it is a bad thing. Mao’s cult was mostly used in progressive ways as a battering ram against the revisionists who wanted to restore capitalism. The cult was used as a way for the masses to knock down those with bureaucratic power. The cult
was used against the revisionists concentrated in the Party and state apparatus.

Criticism of the cult was a tool used by the revisionists to implement a capitalist overhaul of the system. We should try to elevate as many leaders as possible. We should not be afraid to give credit where credit is due. Nobody is perfect. We are all works in progress. However, we should not be afraid to extol and emulate the best among our ranks. Great revolutionary heroes, great revolutionary leaders, great revolutionary geniuses deserve praise. They should be emulated. In these dark times, we are filled with joy and hope since Leading Lights have risen to guide humanity back to the path of communism, to guide humanity out of the external night of exploitation and oppression.

Again we should also point out that it is better for people to latch onto a communist leader than a Paris Hilton or Obama. Capitalism produces cults of personality that are totally destructive. Far better to latch onto a leader who is trying to lead us to communism than a party girl or imperialist war criminal.

Why are they all dressed the same?

The Zhongshan suit (also known as “the Mao suit”) was not required dress. People embraced it as a style of dress because it reflected the spartan, egalitarian ideals of the revolution. Traditional Chinese society was a feudal one where dress reflected social rank. The Mao suit eliminated signs of outward difference. It also eliminated some of the traditional gender distinctions reflected in dress. Lin Biao eliminated outward displays of rank from the People’s Liberation Army. This was an effort to extend the revolution’s ideals even into the realm of dress. In a society where great social hierarchies were reflected in dress, it makes perfect sense for revolutionaries to want to overcome those by adopting such an egalitarian style. As the revolution became more and more openly capitalist in the 1980s, the Mao suit fell from favor. Revolutions of the future may generate their own styles of dress that are very different from the past. We do not have to be limited by the past.
What about art and literature?

The Maoist regime tried to encourage those who produced art and literature to serve the people. Art, literature, and other culture is part of social programming. In China, traditional culture was used to justify gross inequalities within society. The traditional art served feudalism and imperialism. It taught the poor that they were not as good as the rich. It taught the rich that they were better than the poor. It encouraged racism by Han Chinese against other nationalities in China. It encouraged the oppression of women and the young. Lives are lost. People starve. People are enslaved because of inequality and the culture that encourages it. Artists who encourage injustice and inequality are not innocent victims. To really transform society, it is necessary to transform the social programming of people. It is necessary to transform culture. This was a big part of the Maoist Cultural Revolution. The Maoists sought to revolutionize the whole way people looked at the world. They encouraged the masses to take to the streets to strike out against those who were oppressing them. Some artists and intellectuals were made to answer before the oppressed. Some were made to labor with the peasants to experience what life was like for those they had oppressed. Revolutions are messy. Sometimes the Maoists and the masses overreacted. However, their overall effort to make art serve the people was a righteous struggle.

In addition, there was another problem. The old culture, the old art forms, which were based on oppression had developed over thousands of years. The Maoist revolution was trying to replace all that social programming in a relatively short period. The Maoists tried to preserve as much of the old art as possible by “making the old serve the new.” However, much of it was too reactionary, classist, racist, sexist, etc. A void was left in the culture. This void had to be filled in a relatively short period. This is why much of the communist art of this era, while very creative and stunning, sometimes looks the same. They were trying to replace thousands of years of reactionary art in a few decades.

What about Tibet?

Prior to the revolution, Tibet was a terrible place. It was a theocracy ruled by the Dalai Lama and an elite class of feudalist priests. Women were denied rights. Slavery was still permitted. Most of the people were impoverished. The monasteries, run by priests, owned all the land. The vast majority toiled away, barely surviving. When Mao led the revolution in China, Tibetan serfs and slaves began to rise up against their overlords. The Tibetan revolutionaries invited China to intervene to aid their struggle for equality and dignity. The Maoist revolution in Tibet brought social welfare, literacy, healthcare, modernization, political power for the poor, rights for women, the end of slavery, etc. Mao tried to strike a balance between allowing Tibet autonomy and allowing the social revolution to continue. The Dalai Lama and the old overlords wanted to turn back the clock. They opposed the Tibetan people. They opposed Chinese involvement. They even initiated a CIA-funded guerrilla war against the people and their Chinese allies. They based themselves in India, even enslaving local Indian peasants to work for their military efforts. The Dalai Lama’s CIA-backed forces were easily defeated. At times, the Maoists went too far in Tibet. And, under Deng Xiaoping, the Han Chinese began to colonize Tibet. Even so, the Tibetan revolution with Chinese help was a good thing for the Tibetan people. Whether or not the Tibet remains part of China today is something for Chinese and Tibetan Leading Lights to decide.

What were the problems of the Maoist revolution? Why did it fail?

If a revolution is not going forward to communism, then it is going backward toward the restoration of the reactionary social order: capitalism. If a revolution does not continually revolutionize culture and power, if it does not continually eliminate inequalities, then those reactionary ideas spread, inequalities solidify, a new ruling class, a new bourgeoisie arises and reverses the revolution. A new bourgeoisie rose within the organs of power in China because the revolution failed to continue to move forward. It failed to reinvent itself. It failed to stay creative. It stagnated. Unless inequality, privilege and hierarchy are continually reduced, revolutions reverse. Unless revolutions continue to reinvent themselves, stay creative, they perish. Part of this was connected to a return to overemphasis on the
role of the productive forces. After the height of the Maoist period, the height of the Cultural Revolution years from 1965 to 1971, the revolution compromised and stagnated. The revisionists returned, in practice, back to the productionism — even though they continued to push Maoist rhetoric. They began tacitly adopting the Theory of Productive Forces again. They began reversing the Maoist gains in domestic policy. They ceased social experiment and ceased mobilizing the masses. They also began moving into the orbit of the imperialists as they began to de-emphasize power struggle and the masses in the 1970s. They began to put narrow Chinese interest above the global proletariat. They began to put nationalism above internationalism. They began to cut deals with the imperialists. In the end, the imperialists had the last laugh.

First Worldism also contributed to the reversal. Like the Soviet revolution, the Maoists never fully broke from the Theory of Productive Forces. They continued to measure socialism against the imperialist countries to an extent. Because they failed to see the true nature of the global class structure, they continued to aspire to surpass the West on the West’s terms. At times, they measured socialism against the imperialist countries because they failed to realize that the First World no longer contained a proletariat. They failed to realize that the West’s continued wealth was wholly dependent on continued imperialism, not on exploitation of Western workers. Thus it created an unattainable bar for socialism in the Third World to match. Thus capitalism became to look attractive to some. In addition, even though they critiqued the police paradigm in some ways, in other ways they never fully broke from it. Their practice lagged. They failed to carry the Cultural Revolution all the way through to the end. They failed to put the most advanced line fully in command of the revolution. Their understanding of the interaction between humans and the environment was inadequate. Their understanding of gender and other forms of oppression lagged. Their vision of communism and their science was not as advanced as the Leading Light’s. There were other errors also. They failed to reinvent the revolution, to continue the forward motion, to push the revolutionary wave forward on the global level as Lin Biao had advocated. They failed to stay creative. We must not repeat their errors.

A note on past revolution and the environment

Past socialist experiments were not green enough. They sometimes saw nature as something to be conquered. In this respect, they inherited capitalist notions about modernization and the conquest of nature. Science now tells us that our planet is not an endless reservoir of resources. We must design a system that works with nature. We must see ourselves as part of nature, not something above it.

In the past, revolutionaries did not fully understand the role that environmental revolution played in socialist construction. Socialist societies have a mixed record on the environment. Socialist societies had successes as well as failures. Like capitalism, past attempts at socialism were dominated by a productionist outlook that pitted humanity against nature. This outlook saw greater and greater production, and the domination of nature, as the key to human happiness. This outlook is connected to the revisionist Theory of Productive Forces that sees socialism as mainly a matter of development of productive forces, particularly, advances in technology. The Theory of Productive Forces is also the theory behind First Worldism, the various theories that claim that there is a First World proletariat. Leading Light Communism rejects the Theory of Productive Forces, including the view that human happiness is connected to dominating the natural world. Instead, Leading Light Communism understands human society as a part of the natural world, not something that is separate, above and opposed to nature. Leading Light Communism understands that protecting natural systems, sustaining the natural world, will be a part of any future socialist construction. The dictatorship of the proletariat involves sustainable development, and protecting and preserving nature. After all, the survival of the human species, including the proletariat itself, is linked to sustaining our environment.
Introduction to Leaders, Misleaders, and Others

Revolutions happen in waves. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels lived as the modern communist movement was just beginning, mostly in the mid and late 1800s. At that time, Europe was filled with social contradictions waiting to explode. Cities erupted in revolution. The Paris Commune of 1871 is the best known. It was the first time the proletariat seized power, although it was not really sustained. It only lasted about two months. Marx and Engels were the first to really apply the methods of science in a rigorous way to the task of revolution and reaching communism. Many others around the same time rejected their scientific approach. There were utopians, anarchists, and social democrats competing to lead the movement for social justice. The next major breakthrough occurred with the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 led by Lenin. This revolution was the first sustained, prolonged attempt to reach communism. Lenin studied past attempts at revolution. He studied the works of Marx and Engels. He adapted and went beyond their work. He studied the Paris Commune. Lenin’s scientific work led him to guide the first sustained revolution that aimed for communism, the Soviet Union in its revolutionary phase. Other revolutions flowed from this one. Like in Marx’s day, some had rejected Marx, in Lenin’s day, some misleaders rejected Lenin’s course. They rejected the best science of the time, which was represented by the Marxist tradition as advanced by Lenin. Some of these misleaders became social democrats and social imperialists of various stripes, including Trotskyists and Khrushchevites. While, the Soviet revolution, Soviet socialism, began to decline after World War 2, capitalism was being restored there, especially after Stalin’s death. Even so, World War 2 had weakened the imperialist system. A wave of national liberation and anti-imperialist movements had begun to sweep the world. Often social revolution, including communist-led revolutions, piggybacked on top of nationalist
and anti-imperialist struggles. The most significant of these social revolutions was the Maoist revolution in China that encompassed almost a quarter of the world’s population. The People’s Republic of China was declared in 1949. This revolution went through many twists and turns. Just as in the Soviet Union, a new capitalist class arose within the state and ruling party in China. This new class of exploiters sought to reverse the revolution. The Maoists launched several offensives to try to eliminate the new exploiters and to take society even further toward communism. The most significant was the Cultural Revolution period, whose peak was from 1965 to 1971. Even though the Maoists sought to go further toward communism, they were defeated. Capitalism was restored. There is no socialism now. The last waves of revolution have ended, but a new wave is growing on the horizon. The Leading Light has elevated revolutionary science to a whole new stage in order to initiate the global people’s war to advance all the way to communism. The Leading Light points the way forward, to create the next great wave.

The history of the modern revolutionary movement is a long and complex one. Many great and important leaders have emerged from these struggles. These leaders, in one way or another, have come to represent the exploited and oppressed. They have been theorists who have helped the oppressed understand their world in order to change it. They have been women and men of action who have stepped up to put their lives on the line, to lead. They have embodied the hopes and dreams of the wretched and downtrodden. They were some of the best, the shining stars, the Leading Lights of their times. They sacrificed for a better day. On the other hand, there are also those who have emerged from within our movements who have, whether consciously or not, betrayed it in very destructive ways. These misleaders were people who did not just deviate, but turned into counter-revolutionaries. Just as there were great leaders, there have been great misleaders who have emerged within the movement. These are revisionists of various stripes. These misleaders may have been people of good conscience or they may have been liars, but they delivered and continue to deliver terrible blows to the oppressed in the name of revolution and progress. Some misleaders have played a more mixed role, playing a progressive role at certain times and a reactionary role at other times. Others are completely reactionary. Others are petty egoists and wreckers. To make revolution today, it is important to know this history. We must not repeat the errors of the past. Knowledge is power.

This history mostly focuses on the development of revolutionary science from Marx’s day to the Soviet revolutionary wave to the Maoist revolution. Although other, more limited social revolutions have occurred, the Soviet and Chinese represent the most important ones. Just as they opened up new stages in the history of revolution, so to does the global revolution of the Leading Light.
Who were Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels?

Karl Marx (May 5th, 1818 to 14 March 1883) and Friedrich Engels (November 28th, 1820 to August 5th, 1895) were both born in Germany, but lived in many countries throughout their lives. They were authors who collaborated on many works of philosophy, history and political economy. Most importantly, they were revolutionaries and the founders of “scientific communism.” They were the first to apply the methods of science to the project of reaching communism, total liberation. They wrote in the nineteenth century. They witnessed the rise of early capitalism. They examined how capitalism arose from feudalism. And they understood how capitalism was crisis ridden, that capitalism generated its own contradictions that would, eventually, lead to revolution, socialism, and communism. They began to understand how scientific laws govern society, social change and history. They experienced the early revolutionary movements against capitalism, including the Paris Commune of 1871, which Marx identified as the first instance of proletarian New Power. They advanced important theories of social transformation, value production, exploitation, alienation, class and revolution.

Marx wrote that the point of intellectual work is not simply to interpret the world, but to change it. Not only were they theorists, but also revolutionary organizers. They participated in the revolutionary movement of their day. They participated in the First International founded in 1864. They understood that communist revolution is an internationalist revolution. They are giants. More than any other figures, they founded the modern revolutionary tradition.

Who was Lenin?

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was born in Russia on April 22nd, 1870. He died of natural causes on January 21st, 1924. In 1917, he led what was to become the first sustained socialist revolution, the Bolshevik revolution that created the Soviet Union. He expanded on Marx and Engels’ theories. At the time, revisionist social democrats had twisted Marx. The social democrats at the time advocated reformism, not revolution. Lenin criticized these revisionists. Lenin said capitalism could not be reformed into its opposite. Capitalism must be destroyed. The old state, the Old Power, must be destroyed. Lenin supported revolution as the principal means of reorganizing society, not gradual, social evolution and reform. New Power must be created in its place. One of his main theoretical achievements was that he began to explain the rise of imperialism and how imperialism had transformed capitalism and the worker’s movement of his day. He saw
that revolution would first happen in the weak links of the imperialist system, not the more modernized countries of Western Europe. He began to speak of a growing labor aristocracy in imperialist countries. Lenin began to see that many workers in the imperialist countries had ceased to be proletarian. They ceased to be revolutionary. Instead, many were counter-revolutionary due to super-profits received by imperialism. His main contribution, however, was in practice. He advanced theories of communist organizing, the vanguard, democratic centralism, the party, dual power (i.e. New Power) and the state. He led the Soviet Union through a reconstruction period after 1917. The Soviet Union had been devastated from World War I, imperialist incursions, famine, revolution and civil war. He led the first revolution that aimed for communism that really had a chance of winning. The Soviet Union became a beacon of hope to all the world’s peoples.

Who was Stalin?

Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin was born on December 18th, 1878 in Georgia, which was an oppressed nation within the Czarist empire at the time. He died on March 5th, 1953. Some people suspect that he was poisoned by his enemies. Stalin was a man of action. In his early years, he was a Robin Hood figure. He robbed banks to fund the revolution. Stalin was a union organizer and Communist Party leader. He wrote many articles which popularized the ideas of Marx and Lenin throughout the world. Stalin was a man of his times. It was under Stalin that the Soviet Union modernized at an incredible pace to become a modern superpower. Under Lenin’s, then Stalin’s, leadership, the Soviet Union went from a broken society to becoming one of the most powerful, healthy countries on Earth. At the same time, Stalin’s regime was heavy handed and ruthless because that is what the times called for. Hard times call for hard measures. Stalin represents the hard choice. He made the choices necessary to defeat the imperialists, especially the fascists. Had Stalin not gone forward as he did to build socialism in the Soviet Union, “in one country,” it is likely that Hitler would have won World War 2. Stalin’s rapid industrialization, with the austerity measures and social dislocation that resulted, was necessary so that the Soviet Union would have the resources, the weaponry, and the ideological unity to defeat the fascists. World War 2 claimed the lives of 27 million Soviet people. This number would have surely been higher without Stalin. Stalin came to represent the revolutionary anti-fascist movement globally. Even though Stalin existed in difficult times, he still still carried out social revolution. This social revolution included the emancipation of Soviet women. He fought against national chauvinism and Russo-centrism. Those who criticize Stalin need to ask themselves: what would they have done in his place? Enemies within. Fascists and imperialist invasions. Backward industry. A devastated economy. Surrounded on all sides. As Mao pointed out, Stalin made mistakes. Some of his mistakes included his conception of counter-revolution. Stalin saw the problem of counter-revolution through a police paradigm instead of the power paradigm. He overestimated the effects of agents and wreckers and underestimated the role of social forces in causing counter-revolution. Preventing counter-revolution is not simply a matter of better policing. His errors include his methods for dealing with counter-revolution, overestimation of the importance of the productive forces, putting narrow Soviet interest above the proletariat in foreign policy. As with all things, uphold the good, toss the bad. It is politically irresponsible to simply dismiss the Stalin era as one big mistake as anti-communists do.
Who was Mao?

Mao was born in China on December 26th, 1893. He died on September 9th, 1976. Mao was, in some ways, the greatest revolutionary leader of the past. Mao's revolution was vast, encompassing a quarter of the world's population. In October, 1949, Mao declared that China had stood up. A quarter of the world's population, for a moment, dared to attempt to find a way out of the madness of feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism. Mao's revolution ended poverty. Mao sought to reach communism, to end all oppression and exploitation. Mao was the greatest feminist of all time. A quarter of the world's women went from existing in feudalist patriarchy to having real political power. 

He led the New Democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism in China. The two mountains were lifted off of the backs of a quarter of humanity. Later, he led the Chinese masses to socialist construction. Hundreds of millions of peasants and workers gained political power and a real say over their world. Mao learned much from the shortcomings of previous revolutions. He saw how the Soviet Union had deteriorated into another capitalist empire. He foresaw that capitalism would be restored in China as it had in the Soviet Union after Stalin. Mao studied the counter-revolution there. In an effort to prevent counter-revolution and move closer to communism, Mao helped initiate the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Mao sought to unleash the creative energy of the masses to try to create a new model of socialist transformation. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao helped initiate mass movements to attempt to reach communism. Later, Mao would turn against those very forces he had unleashed. Even so, Mao expanded Marxism to a new stage. He advanced theories of New Democracy, People's War, the United Front, Mass Line, new economic development, and, most importantly, Cultural Revolution.

Who was Lin Biao?

Lin Biao was born on December 5th, 1907. He died on September 13th, 1971. Lin Biao played an important role in the people's war that liberated China from the imperialists and their agents. He came to be known as "China's greatest general," Mao's "closest comrade-in-arms," and Mao's "best student." He, along with Chen Boda, systematized Maoism as a new stage of revolutionary science. Lin Biao popularized the idea that Mao's theories constituted a new stage of Marxism. Many of the key documents of Maoism were attributed to him, such as Long Live the Victory of People's War! and the Report to the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China. He was one of the main Maoist leaders during the Cultural Revolution. He pushed for Maoist economic policies, collectivization, and a barracks-style egalitarianism. He placed great emphasis on the transformation of culture and the creation of a new socialist humanitarian. All of society was seen as a school of revolutionary science. Lin Biao's ideal socialist man was, in many ways, exemplified by the guerilla fighter or the people's warrior. He pushed for an international line that advocated a global people's war that advanced from the global countryside to the global city, from the Third World to the First World. He saw both the Western and Eastern bloc imperialists colluding against the Third World. Lin Biao, whose base was the central military, tried to knock down Zhou Enlai and the "adverse current" made up some of the provincial military, which, in some places, was dominated by revisionists and rightists. He had a falling out with Mao when Mao shifted to the right in both domestic and foreign policy. He was accused of plotting a coup against Mao. He died under mysterious circumstances. No real evidence was ever presented against him. He was framed as part of the police narrative of the Chinese state. The coup story is part of a police narrative to justify the purge of the Maoist left.

Lin Biao was one of the main Maoist leaders during the Cultural Revolution.
Who was Chen Boda?

Chen Boda was born in 1904 and died on September 20th, 1989. He was an academic and intellectual. He participated in academic debates in literature and history in his early political life. Eventually, he became Mao’s personal secretary and research assistant. He was one of those who advocated moving away from the dogmatic version of “Marxism” coming from Moscow at the time. Along with Mao, he was a major intellectual in the Communist Party who advocated the “Sinification” of Marxism, the adaptation of Marxism to Chinese conditions. He published the first collection of Mao’s writings as part of an official Communist Party history in 1937. He was one of the main architects of what would eventually become known as “Mao Zedong Thought” or, later, Maoism. He was one of the first to systematize Mao’s theories. His book Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution is an important step toward the development of Maoism. Later, Lin Biao would declare that Mao’s theories represented a whole new stage in the development of Marxism. Chen Boda was one of the main architects of the Maoist aspects of the Great Leap. He also headed up the Maoist Cultural Revolution Group that was charged with leading the Cultural Revolution. During the peak of the Cultural Revolution, the Cultural Revolution Group became the top arbiter of power alongside Lin Biao’s People’s Liberation Army and Mao himself. He represented a line that advocated Maoist economic policies, especially communization. And he represented a line that advocated Jacobin, anarchistic mass action against the institutions of governance in order to solve the problems of bureaucratization, corruption, bourgeoisification and counter-revolution within the Party and state. He represented that trend in the Cultural Revolution that sought to unleash the masses as a solution to the problems facing the revolution. He was allied with Lin Biao against Zhou Enlai. Chen Boda also came into conflict with Zhang Chunqiao (a member of the “Gang of Four”) who had allied with the rightists and revisionists to remove him. His younger associates — Wang Li, Qi Benyu, and Guan Feng — had fallen at the end of 1967 and into 1968 as the red guard movement was ended. Their line was opposed not only by the right and revisionists, but also by other Maoists as “too left” at times.

Who were Wang Li, Qi Benyu, and Guan Feng?

Wang Li, Qi Benyu, Guan Feng were a group of young radical Maoists in Beijing around Chen Boda and Jiang Qing. They represented the so-called “ultra-left” of the Maoist Cultural Revolution Group. They tended to support Lin Biao and attack Zhou Enlai. They also had conflicts with some members of the Shanghai group that would come to be known as the “Gang of Four.” Zhou Enlai represented the rightwing and revisionists. Wang Li, Qi Benyu, and Guan Feng also had conflicts with some members of the Shanghai group that would come to be known as the “Gang of Four.” Wang Li, Qi Benyu, and Guan Feng were part of the trend that sought to solve the problem of counter-revolution and revisionism by unleashing the masses, by unleashing a Jacobin “bottom-up” purge. They represented the more anarchic and Jacobin tendency of the Cultural Revolution. They represented the more spontaneous side of the Cultural Revolution. They fell from power at the end of 1967 and into 1968 as the red guard movement was ended. Their line was opposed not only by the right and revisionists, but also by other Maoists as “too left” at times.

Who were the so-called Gang of Four?

The so-called Gang of Four were Maoist radicals from Shanghai who rose to national politics during the
Cultural Revolution. They became the main Maoist opposition after the fall of Chen Boda’s group from 1967 to 1970 and Lin Biao in 1971. They were the last remaining top leaders of the Maoist left to fall. Jiang Qing (March 20th, 1914 – May 14th, 1991), Mao’s last wife, wielded the most power among the Four. She initiated the cultural battles against conservative art. She revolutionized Peking Opera and other art forms. Zhang Chunqiao (1917- April 21, 2005), Yao Wenyuan (1931- December 23rd, 2005), and Wang Hongwen (1935 – August 3, 1992) were other top Maoists after the fall of Lin Biao in 1971. They survived the purge of Maoists that resulted in Lin Biao and Chen Boda’s fall. They survived by opportunistically allying with the rightists and revisionists. Even so, it cannot be denied that they led the opposition to Deng Xiaoping in Mao’s last years. After Mao died in September 9th, 1976, the Gang was soon routed by a revisionist alliance of Hua Guofeng’s and Deng Xiaoping’s forces. The Four had little support among the masses at the time they fell. They also had little institutional support. After the fall of Lin Biao and the restoration of the rightists and revisionists, the Four had only remained in power due to Mao’s prestige. As soon as Mao died, the Four were easily swept away by their enemies. They were imprisoned by the post-Mao regime.

Where does the Leading Light stand in relation to this history?

Leading Light Communist Organization (LLCO) has elevated revolutionary science to a whole new level. The Leading Light has advanced new theories of global class analysis, new theories of exploitation, the proletariat, New Power and global people’s war. Leading Light has expanded the understanding of the transitional period to communism, of New Democracy, socialism and New Socialism. The Leading Light has studied the past and summed up that history. As science, Leading Light Communism embraces what works and tosses what does not work. We must study the past so that we can go further toward communism next time. The Leading Light has expanded our understandings of epistemology and revolution as science. The Leading Light is re-organizing the international communist movement along true, elevated scientific lines to initiate the next great wave of communist revolution. Leading Light has created a global organization, a global New Power, and a global people’s war to go all the way to true communism, Leading Light Communism. All true communists today are Leading Light Communists. Leading Light Communism is the future.
After we have conquered state power, if a revolution is not going forward toward communism, it is going backward toward reaction. When a revolution ceases to move forward, when there is no more forward momentum, then the new bourgeoisie have seized power, the proletarian line, communist science, is no longer in command. Revisionism is then victorious."

—Leading Light

What about anarchists?

Anarchists have opposed scientific leadership of the revolutionary movement in various ways since Marx’s day. Their impact has been mixed. Historically, anarchists and communists have the same goal, but they differ on how to get there. There is a Leading Light saying: communists are anarchists with a plan. Anarchists often claim to oppose state power in general. But, they, like communists, usually agree with some kind of organized New Power when pressed. Anarchists are usually very vague about the shape it takes. They usually desire a more disorganized type of New Power. Their rhetoric often rejects any kind of transition period from capitalism to communism. They often reject scientific planning for emotion and intuition. They have sometimes, out of desperation and lack of strategic planning, turned to random, petty, pathetic acts of violence, which are mostly ignored by everyone but themselves. Many anarchists consider the breaking of windows a heroic act. In these regards, they are infantile and utopian. They often want to go too far, too fast. They are irresponsible and unaccountable. Historically, they have not accomplished much. They have usually sat on the sidelines criticizing those forces that are more effective, including proletarian, communist forces and anti-imperialist forces. However, Lenin once wrote that he would rather ally with the anarchists than the revisionist social-democrats, the liberals of his day.

Today, anarchists are a mixed bag. There are First Worldist anarchists who narrowly emphasize “the workers.” There are First Worldists who fail to understand the reactionary nature of the First World as a whole. There are those anarchists who emphasize community building and mutual aid. There are anarchists who emphasize returning to nature.
and tribalism. Even though many profess anarchism, most practice a kind of movementarianism that is indistinguishable from the First Worldist social-democratic forces around them. Many practice a paralyzing and unscientific identity politics as an incorrect answer to chauvinism. Some are more concerned with their personal lifestyles than with changing the world. Their politics come from a very privileged place where they are not accountable to the masses. Their politics tends to be individualist and egotistical at times — more than other trends. Anarchists are unable to understand the balance of social forces scientifically. So, they are unable to prioritize struggles. They fail to understand the need to unite against imperialism. They often do not uphold the united front. They are often anti-theoretical; they often demand blind action. Their politics are often based on emotion and individualism. Green and primitivist anarchists have some unity with the Leading Light on the critique of the global capitalist system, especially First World consumption. Some of them may be important allies in the First World. Some of them may be more open to advancing to Leading Light consciousness. Other anarchist trends tend to be First Worldist. Even so, many anarchists can still be good allies and friends at the level of front work, at the tactical level, and on the streets.

What about other utopians?

Anarchists are not the only utopians. There are plenty of people who have imagined a radically better world, but have proposed no serious way to get there. They refuse to address the issues of power and transition. They refuse to look at social forces. These utopians are a mixed bunch. There are technological utopians who imagine a world where all problems are simply solved by increasing the level of technology without concern for ideology, culture or reorganization of power. “Robots will save the day” is their mantra. This is a primitive version of the Theory of Productive Forces. There are also primitivist utopians, including some anarchists, who think that all problems are solved by returning to the ways of earlier, “primitive” societies. These people rarely state how the transitions are supposed to happen except in the vaguest ways. “Raising consciousness,” “education,” until reaching “a critical mass,” etc. are their empty mantras. They tend to have the Christian outlook that everyone can be reached so long as they hear the “Good News.” Other utopians cease to focus on the world at all, they instead focus on simply creating their own little utopia in the here-and-now through co-ops and communes of various kinds — often based on and situated within the imperialist economy. “Tune in, turn on, drop out.” When it really comes down to it, these efforts do little to change anything by themselves. Endless feel-good “community building,” without tying it to the global struggle, is their mantra.

What about social democrats? liberals? Democrats? the Labor Party?

Social democrats have various faces. Some advocate very mild social democracy; others advocate more extensive social democracy. Some call themselves socialist or democratic socialist. Some even call themselves communist. Some call themselves anarchists. Some call themselves liberals. Some call themselves Democrats. Some call themselves the Labor Party. Social democrats think that capitalism can be gradually reformed toward so-called “socialism” (by which they mean welfare-state capitalism). Most think that the system can be transformed into their conceptions of “socialism” through legal means. Although most social democrats advocate legal means, some do not — armed revisionism in the Third World, for example. Social democrats are not out to reach communism. They want limited reform, a welfare state, a social safety net, some protections for the lower strata, etc. In the First World, social democracy takes an imperialist form. They often support imperialism when it benefits their own populations at the expense of others. In the Third World, the patriotic pole of the national bourgeoisie can take on a social-democratic face as part of an alliance with the lower classes against imperialism and its comprador agents.

Around the time of World War 1, the social democrats of the various imperial countries voted to support the imperialist war. They reasoned that a victory for their country would help their people, their nation’s workers. In this respect, they were not unlike the Nazi regime in Germany that sought to benefit the German people as a whole, including the workers by plundering others through genocide and war. Similarly, social democrats in the First World
often support imperialism against the Third World because it helps the people of the First World. They advocate for their imperialist populations at the expense of the vast majority of humanity. Almost all social democrats are First Worldist. Lenin opposed the social democrats in the Second International. Lenin refused to support imperialist war. Lenin advocated on behalf of the global proletariat, not the population of a single country or group of imperialist countries. Lenin held that those in imperialist countries ought work for the defeat of their own countries in order to transform such a defeat into a revolutionary situation, i.e. revolutionary defeatism. The split between the revolutionary Marxists, best represented by Lenin, and the social democrats was one of the major historic battles between revolution and revisionism. Lenin advocated a revolutionary road to power. The social democrats of his time advocated reformism.

Who was Trotsky? Who are Trotskyists?

Trotsky sought to lead the Soviet Union after the death of Lenin. He challenged Stalin’s leadership after Lenin’s death. He went into exile after he was defeated politically. He was later assassinated, probably by those loyal to Stalin. He came to be seen as a traitor because, as World War 2 approached, he saw Stalin as the main danger in the world, not fascism. Thus Trotsky sought to destabilize the Soviet Union as it prepared for war against fascism. He toyed with the idea of using World War 2 to lift himself to power, which would have meant a de facto alliance with the Nazis. He was politically irresponsible. He urged his followers to oppose Stalin on the eve of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. In a time when it the world needed unity against fascism, Trotsky urged division. He became a wrecker and counter-revolutionary. He often sat on the sidelines sniping at those who were working to build the Soviet Union. Trotsky worked with imperialists against the communist movement. His followers sought to work with the imperialists to hunt down communists loyal to the Soviet Union. George Orwell, who was associated with Trotskyist tendencies, for example, snitched out communists to the British police. Trotsky changed positions many times during his lifetime. Trotsky was a big advocate of the Theory of Productive Forces, the idea that economic development is the main task to achieving socialism and communism. He was very metaphysical and teleological in his approach to revolutionary change. He thought that before socialist revolution could occur, capitalist society patterned on Western Europe had to already exist. Thus when revolution happened in the “backward” “weak link” of Russia, a problem was raised by Trotsky: how to go forward? Trotsky veered between poles. Sometimes he thought revolution could not go forward — that a gradualist social-democratic approach is the best that could be achieved in such an undeveloped country. Other times, he thought that because the Soviet Union was so backward, the best option was to go full-speed ahead, forcing austerity on the population and compelling development through militarization of all of society. At times, Trotsky advocated a more forceful and “top-down” approach than Stalin. Trotsky was, at times, for development at bayonet point. Thus Trotskyist criticisms of Stalin as an autocrat smack of hypocrisy.

There is also his Theory of Permanent Revolution. This was a theory that entailed the following: a revolution in a less developed country (like the Soviet Union) could only succeed if it spread into a more developed one (like Germany). Once a revolution occurred in Germany, the
German revolution could then help the Soviet peoples overcome their backwardness. So the theory goes. Thus, for Trotsky, the key revolution is the revolution in the imperialist and more modern countries, not in the colonies and less modern of the time. Also, Trotsky, contrary to Lenin, predicted the world revolution would move toward the West. Lenin said the center of world revolution was heading eastward. Lenin proved to be correct. The next round of revolutions happened in the colonies, not the imperialist homelands. Trotsky’s theories are extreme First Worldism for various reasons. First, Trotskyists often rely on an outlook that simply assumes the First World is “more developed” and the Third World is “less developed.” The reality is that in today’s world both the First World and Third World are mal-developed. The First World has, in many places, become de-industrialized. So, it remains to be seen how the First World could simply come to the rescue of the Third World. Today the productive forces are more concentrated in the Third World, not the First World. Second, it also remains to be seen how First World revolution could come about first since the populations there have no material interest in socialism, at least not in the short and mid-term. Third, Trotskyists tend to be very Euro-centric. They tend to write off anti-imperialist struggles and progressive movements in the Third World as unimportant while elevating social-democratic and social-imperialist struggles of First World populations. Some Trotskyists openly support imperialism because they see imperialism as a modernizing force in the world. They think the imperialists help the poor peoples by modernizing them, thereby paving the way for the make-believe Trotskyist revolution. This is why some Trotskyists became neo-conservatives who supported US wars against Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. Many Trotskyists support efforts by the imperialists to depose the Islamic Republic of Iran. Trotskyists today are a mixed bunch. Some Trotskyists stick more to the letter of Trotsky’s works. Others are barely indistinguishable from run-of-the-mill social democrats and liberals. Other crypto-Trotskyists uphold Trotsky’s theories while claiming not to do so. All Trotskyists are social-imperialist and First Worldist.

Many people embrace Trotsky because the incorrectly perceive him as a less harsh, more democratic option than Stalin. The reality was very different. Even though criticisms of Soviet socialism can be made, as they were by Maoists, it is incorrect to see Trotskyism as the solution.

Who are other “Marxists”?

There are many claiming to uphold one form of Marxism or another. Some even claim Lenin or Mao. Those who hold First Worldist ideologies are moribund today, even if they uphold some aspects of the revolutionary tradition. At one point, some of these ideologies were leading the communist movement. Those who uphold these ideologies today are dogmatic fragments and echoes of the last great waves of revolution. Today, they have been surpassed by Leading Light Communism. While those holding these ideologies sometimes play a progressive role in the anti-imperialist struggle, just as other social democrats in the Third World can, these ideologies are not the ideological vanguard of the world communist movement. They are not the basis for the re-constitution of the communist movement nor for initiating the next great wave of revolution. They are ideological relics, even though they may sometimes have fighting strength. These movements still uncritically uphold the dogma of First Worldism. If a movement cannot understand the basic social dynamics shaping the world, then it will not have the scientific ability to advance us to communism. Those holding these kinds of ideologies have internalized many important lessons of the past. In some respect, they are more advanced than other misleaders. However, because they have not understood the advances of revolutionary science, of Leading Light Communism, they remain dogmatically stuck in the past. The Leading Light is the way forward.

Who was Khrushchev?

Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev was born on April 15th, 1894 and died on September 11th, 1971. After Stalin’s death, a power struggle ensued. Khrushchev was a revisionist, a social-imperialist, and new bourgeois who came to power in a coup against Beria, who many also consider a revisionist, on June 26th, 1953. Beria was an important police and intelligence chief under Stalin. He had consolidated power after Stalin’s death for a brief time. Beria was arrested at night by military men loyal to Khrushchev. Beria was then shot. Khrushchev had consolidated his position by 1956. It was during Khrushchev’s reign that it became very obvious that the Soviet Union had ceased being revolutionary. It was during this period that the Soviet Union openly acted like a big imperialist power. Khrushchev advocated the
doctrine of “peaceful coexistence” with the Western imperialists. This doctrine divided the world into spheres of influence: the Western Bloc and Eastern Bloc. Both the Western imperialists headed by the USA and the social imperialists headed by the Soviet revisionists worked together against the rising masses of the Third World. The Soviet Union advocated Moscow-centered economic policies within its sphere. They made their satellite countries and allies dependent on them just as Western imperialists did with their colonies and neocolonies. Khrushchev advocated a return to market mechanisms over collectivization. He favored technocracy over mass struggles and mass line. In addition, Khrushchev denounced Stalin's legacy at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. While Stalin had made real errors, Khrushchev's denunciation was a mix of lies, liberalism and anti-communism. Khrushchev's regime pushed aside and deposed the remaining Stalinists. Mao criticized these turns. Mao came to the conclusion that a new bourgeoisie had arisen in the Soviet Union. Mao's conclusion was that the Soviet Union under Khrushchev had become capitalist and social-imperialist: socialism in words, imperialism in deeds. Many people mark the end of socialism in the Soviet Union with the consolidation of Khrushchev's power in 1956. However, others mark it with the death of Stalin in 1953. Others think that the fall of Soviet socialism, the end of the social revolution's progress, can be traced to the latter years of Stalin's regime. In any case, Khrushchev was seen as too weak for some of his generals. Khrushchev was deposed by another group of revisionists led by Leonid Brezhnev in 1964. The Soviet Union was thoroughly revisionist, capitalist and imperialist during and after Khrushchev's regime.

The so-called international communist movement split during Khrushchev's regime. Most groups slavishly followed Moscow. These groups mostly morphed into social-democratic, revisionist groups, although some remained armed. In the United States, these forces integrated into the leftwing of the Democratic Party. They continued to take orders from Moscow until the collapse of the Soviet state. However, an “anti-revisionist” movement arose to oppose the direction of the revisionist Soviet Union. These organizations often affiliated with Mao's China or Hoxha's Albania. They often called themselves “Marxist-Leninists” or followers of “Marxist-Leninist Mao Zedong Thought” or “Marxist-Leninist-Maoists.” Some advocated Mao-inspired lines. Other advocated “back to Stalin” and “Marxist-Leninist” approaches. This split between China and the Soviet revisionists is sometimes called the “Sino-Soviet split.” Today, the only real communism is Leading Light Communism.

Who was Brezhnev?

Leonid Brezhnev (December 19th, 1906 – November 10th, 1982) came to power in the Soviet Union after Khrushchev. He was a social-imperialist, new capitalist, and revisionist. He pushed to expand Soviet military power and influence. He was more aggressive in his policies against the Western imperialists, but also toward the Third World. Today there are some that exist in the political space of “Brezhnev.” These revisionist forces are usually good at opposing Western imperialism, but turn a blind eye to other imperialism. They uncritically tail after anti-Western regimes; they even call them “socialist.”

Who was Gorbachev?

Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev (born March 2nd, 1931) was a social-imperialist, revisionist, and new capitalist. He was a follower of Khrushchev. Gorbachev was the person who presided over the official dismantling of Soviet state capitalism. Soviet socialism had been dead for decades. However, Gorbachev finally tossed the red flag. The Russia that emerged is an openly imperialist and capitalist one. He is still involved in social-democratic politics in Russia today.

Who was Liu Shaoqi?

Liu Shaoqi (November 24th, 1898 – November 12th, 1969) became a senior, revisionist leader within the Chinese communist movement, eventually becoming the Chinese head of state. He came into opposition with the Maoists during the Great Leap from 1958 to 1962. He opposed the efforts to communize, revolutionize culture, unleash the masses, eliminate material incentive, eliminate the distinction between urban and rural, eliminate the distinction between intellectual and material labor, and so on. He opposed the Maoist attempts to move further toward communism during the Great Leap. After the problems of the Great Leap, his faction ascended while the Maoist faction waned
in influence. Liu Shaoqi favored gradualism, use of market mechanisms, material incentives, emphasis on technological development over class struggle. He favored bureaucracy and technocracy over revolution. Implicitly, Liu Shaoqi favored the reversal of socialism and restoration of capitalism. He was one of the proponents of the Theory of the Productive Forces, a theory that advocates technological development and technical expertise over re-organization of social forces and culture. The Maoists saw him as “China’s Khrushchev,” “the top capitalist roader,” “a new bourgeoisie,” etc. The Maoists launched the Cultural Revolution to oppose the restoration of capitalism and to advance further toward communism. Liu Shaoqi was deposed in 1967, but his followers were able to regroup. After Lin Biao fell in 1971, Liu Shaoqi’s followers made a big comeback, which Mao enabled. Even though Liu Shaoqi died in 1969, his followers, led by Deng Xiaoping, were triumphant. They fully restored capitalism. Liu Shaoqi is the grandfather of the current capitalist system in China. Liu Shaoqi was a revisionist and new bourgeoisie.

Who was Zhou Enlai?

Zhou Enlai (March 8th, 1898 – January 8th, 1976) was a rightest turned revisionist who remained loyal to Mao while at the same time protecting and enabling those who opposed the Maoist policies of the Cultural Revolution. He represented the right and revisionist wings of the Communist Party of China. His power was based in the institutions of the state, especially the Foreign Ministry and those parts of the People’s Liberation Army that opposed Lin Biao and the Cultural Revolution. He was part of the alliance that knocked down the red-guard leftwing and Lin Biao’s People’s Liberation Army leftwing. He helped elevate Deng Xiaoping and his allies into power in the 1970s. He also helped orchestrate China’s shift toward the West in the 1970s. Unlike Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai managed to stay in power throughout the entire last decade of Mao’s life. Mao never worked to depose Zhou Enlai.

Who was Deng Xiaoping?

Deng Xiaoping (August 22nd, 1904 – February 19, 1997) was part of Liu Shaoqi’s revisionist faction of the Communist Party of China. Deng Xiaoping emerged as the leader of the most counter-revolutionary wing of the Chinese Communist Party after Liu Shaoqi’s death. He was an important top leader under Liu Shaoqi. During the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping was identified as the second top capitalist roader. Mao undermined Deng Xiaoping at times, but always intervened to protect him from being fully purged. In the 1970s, he led the most rightwing and revisionist grouping against the severely-weakened leftover Maoists known as the “Gang of Four.” After Mao’s death in 1976, the revisionists, Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping, orchestrated the arrest and imprisonment of the leftover Maoists. Deng Xiaoping then orchestrated the marginalization of Hua Guofeng. Deng Xiaoping became top leader in the late 1970s. He denounced the Cultural Revolution and Maoist economics. While still recognizing Mao as a national hero and military leader, he rejected Mao’s radicalism. Deng Xiaoping was an advocate of the Theory of the Productive Forces like Liu Shaoqi. He advocated a reversal of collectivization and a return to free markets. He also advocated an alliance with the West against the Soviet Union. It was under Deng Xiaoping that Liu Shaoqi’s plans were implemented. Socialism was dismantled. Capitalism went full speed ahead. China’s capitalism is Deng Xiaoping’s baby. Deng Xiaoping was a revisionist and new bourgeoisie.

Who was Hua Guofeng?

Hua Guofeng (February 16th, 1921 – August 20th, 2008) was a rightest turned revisionist and new bourgeoisie who briefly ruled as China’s top leader after Mao’s death in 1976. As Mao aged, a successor was needed. In Mao’s last years, a power struggle was brewing between the Gang of Four and the followers of Deng Xiaoping. Hua Guofeng was chosen by Mao as a compromise candidate. He, along with Deng Xiaoping’s forces, deposed the Gang of Four quickly after Mao’s death. Then Hua Guofeng was quickly outmaneuvered by Deng Xiaoping. During his short reign, Hua Guofeng advocated a return to retrograde, Soviet-style economics. Hua Guofeng’s policies were dropped in favor of Deng Xiaoping’s free market ones.
What about other progressive movements, other social experiments, and historical figures?

There have been many social experiments, social revolutions, in the past century, especially after World War 2. There were many Eastern European “people’s democracies” that were put into power with the help of the Soviet Red Army. There were many national liberation struggles, many claiming to be socialist. Many of these struggles were progressive in some respects, even though they were not always properly socialist or communist led. Beside genuine communist movements, this century has seen anti-imperialist movements that were very diverse: Pan-Arabist, Pan-Africanist, Bolivarian, Islamist, and some revisionists. Note that this doesn’t mean all forces claiming these titles were or are anti-imperialist. When these forces are progressive, most of these forces represent an alliance of some part of the national bourgeoisie with the lower classes against other segments of the bourgeoisie, feudalists or imperialists. Most of these movements had a progressive element, even if they were not truly communist. Often, these are regimes of national development, social-democratic reform, and limited anti-imperialism. We cannot go through every movement and leader in the world here. However, we will focus on the more influential ones.

Who is Ho Chi Minh? What about the Vietnamese revolution?

Ho Chi Minh (May 19th, 1890 to September 2nd, 1969) was the leader of the Vietnamese independence movement from 1941 onward. He led the Democratic Republic of Vietnam established in 1945. His forces defeated the French Union in 1954 at Điện Biên Phủ. France was forced to give up its empire in Southeast Asia. The Geneva Accords partitioned the country. Ho led the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the northern part of the country. The United States and other imperialists established a client state in the southern part of Vietnam. According to the accords, there was to be an election to reunify the country in 1956, but the imperialist-backed regime rejected it because most voters would have favored Ho in an election. A war of national liberation against imperialism followed. China and the Soviet Union supported the North. The United States and other imperialists supported the South. The United States
invaded and occupied the South to prop up the unpopular regime there. In total, 3,403,100 United States military personnel served in the Southeast Asia theater (Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, and Thailand) over the course of the conflict. Against overwhelming technological superiority, the Vietnamese were able to defeat the imperialists and liberate their country. People power won out. The cost was high. Millions unnecessarily died from the conflict in Southeast Asia. "Uncle Ho" became a symbol of the righteous struggle against imperialism worldwide. However, the revolution in Vietnam was stillborn. Even though they defeated the Western imperialists, they came into a close relationship with the Soviet imperialists. Ho represented a more radical, communist, Maoist-leaning line in the Party. Ho’s more radical policies got sidelined by Le Duan’s revisionist group. Le Duan was a big proponent of the Theory of Productive Forces. This thwarted communist social revolution. Advancing the productive forces became the main aim to the detriment of social revolution. The regime also sought to establish its own dominance over the old French colonies in Indochina. Vietnam exerted influence over Laos and invaded and set up a client state in Kampuchea in 1978. The regime in Vietnam today is revisionist and capitalist and has integrated itself into the global economy. Even though the struggle of the Vietnamese people was heroic, the regime was neither communist-led nor socialist for very long after victory if at all. The regime was not out to reach communism, but, rather, like other leftist, anti-imperialist, patriotic-bourgeois regimes sought to establish a course of national development and negotiate a better partnership with imperialists (Soviet and later Western) to this end. At the same time, the regime carried out important democratic reforms, including education, social-democratic reform, the liberation of women, etc.

Who was Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge? What about Cambodia/Kampuchea?

Pol Pot (May 19th, 1925 to April 15th, 1998) was the leader of the “Khmer Rouge” from 1963 until shortly before his death in 1998. He led the forces that ousted the imperialists from Kampuchea (Cambodia). He was leader of Democratic Kampuchea from 1976 to 1979, when his regime was ended by the invasion by Vietnam. Pol Pot’s forces ousted the imperialists out of Kampuchea. Then the Vietnamese invaded and deposed the Khmer Rouge in 1979. The Khmer Rouge continued to wage a guerrilla war, sometimes with American support, after they were ousted. In 1991, the pro-Vietnamese Kampuchean state and the rebel alliance, which included the Khmer Rouge, signed a treaty calling for elections and disarmament. However, conflict resumed. Factional strife led to Pol Pot’s arrest and trial by the Khmer Rouge. His former followers turned on him. He died under house arrest.

The history of Kampuchea is a bloody one. Like much of the Third World, Kampuchea was ravaged by a century of colonialism. It was and continues to be mal-developed. Extreme poverty was imposed on its people. This poverty was enforced with bayonets, bullets and bombs. Colonialism was replaced by neocolonialism in Kampuchea after World War 2. Direct imperialist rule was replaced by indirect rule. For a time, Norodom Sihanouk and more patriotic elements held power and tried to prevent the United States from using Kampuchean territory against Vietnam during the Vietnam war. For this, the United States deposed his regime and installed the puppet regime of Lon Nol. The United States began bombing Kampuchea “back to the stone age” when president Richard Nixon expanded the Vietnam War into Kampuchea. The carpet bombing of Kampuchea’s countryside caused massive death on a genocidal scale. It caused a major refugee crisis. It caused massive starvation and shortages as peasants were forced to cease producing and flee to cities to survive. The brutality of the imperialist policies led the people to flock to the Khmer Rouge who were waging a guerrilla struggle against Lon Nol and the imperialists. The Khmer Rouge were able to seize power fully in 1975.

The country they inherited had been ravaged by a century of imperialist exploitation. It was ravaged by the bombings and social dislocation caused by the United States. They inherited a country on the verge of total famine and social collapse in many areas. United States intelligence agencies predicted that no matter who came to power in the chaos that millions would die. Pol Pot led the Khmer Rouge in an attempt to make some social revolution in the middle of a massive crisis. They dislodged the genocidal
regime of the imperialists. The Khmer Rouge regime was a harsh and commandist one. Millions died. These deaths were mainly a result of imperialism and its aftereffects. But the Khmer Rouge regime’s actions and mismanagement also contributed to the crisis. Sometimes, the Khmer Rouge claimed to be communist, even embracing communist slogans. Other times, they said they were not communist. They simply claimed to be nationalists. Their attempts to reorganize society were very radical in some respects, but not based on revolutionary science. They veered toward utopianism and narrow nationalism. They were erratic. They made alliances with all kinds of forces, including the United States after they were dislodged by the Vietnamese. They took up various ideological banners and slogans in a superficial way in an attempt to find patrons. They allied with the Chinese and United States in the 1970s in the geopolitical struggle against the Soviet imperialists and Vietnam. Even as the United States was funneling aid to the Khmer Rouge, the bourgeois media often sought to use the Khmer Rouge as way to try to discredit communism. Even though they were not real communists, their rhetoric emphasized the need for self-sufficiency. Yet they sought patronage from those who would offer it.

By the time they took power, the wave of social revolutions and national liberation that followed World War 2 was ending. The Khmer Rouge can be seen as the tail end or aftereffect of that wave of revolution that was best represented by the Maoists in China. The Khmer Rouge came to power as the Maoist revolution was ending China. They were more associated with the geopolitical outlook of the Chinese revisionists, not the global people's war outlook of Lin Biao and the Maoists. The rise of the Khmer Rouge can be understood as the rise of various popular classes, not led by communist science, trying to find aid from a recently Maoist, now revisionist China in order to prop their regime up in an extreme crisis situation.

Who was Fidel Castro? What about the Cuban revolution?

Fidel Castro (born August 13th, 1926) is the leader of the Cuban revolution and continues to play an important role in Cuba’s affairs today. On the whole, he was a Cuban patriot and anti-imperialist who led Cuba’s struggle against United States imperialism. Although, at times, he capitulated to Soviet, and later, European imperialisms. He and a small group of guerrillas, the 26th of July Movement, finally toppled the corrupt, imperialist-backed Batista dictatorship in January of 1959. Castro’s regime began to implement social-democratic reforms. They also continued to heroically fight off United States aggression, such as the attempted invasion at the Bay of Pigs. In response, the United States tried to isolate and destabilize Cuba’s power and economy. The United States placed an embargo on the island country that continues to this day. Rather than building up an independent country, the Cuban regime turned toward the Soviet imperialists. They integrated themselves into the Soviet “international division of socialist [sic.] labor.” Sugar remained king in Cuba as in days when Western imperialism dominated the island. Thus the Cuban economy once again became dependent on imperialists. Even so, the regime always remained more independent than other Soviet-backed regimes during the Cold War. At times, they even went against the wishes of their Soviet patrons. Che Guevara opposed the drift in Cuba toward the Soviet imperialists.

Cuba was never socialist in a real sense. Cuba was never really aiming for communism. Fidel Castro himself has said he is not a communist. He has said the “age of armed struggle is over in Latin America.” He was also critical of the militancy of the Maoist movement, which represented the communist movement at the time. Even though he was not a communist, he often represented the patriotic, progressive wing of the national bourgeoisie in Cuba. As the national bourgeoisie often does in the Third World, he sometimes veered toward the comprador pole, sometimes toward the more patriotic. Sometimes he was very progressive, even adopting Marxist rhetoric. He enacted many good programs that benefited Cubans. The Cuban healthcare system is known to be one of the best. However, other times, he was comprador to the Soviet imperialists. At times, Castro was their willing servant.

The Cuban revolution has been in decline for a long time. They want to integrate back into the capitalist world system. They have been dismantling their public sector in favor of markets. However, the United States and the Cuban fascists in Miami still have a grudge against Castro. Eventually, the Cuban regime will dismantle what remains of its social-democratic and nationalist power. The imperialists will open up the
world market to the Cuban regime. The regime is already trying to move into Europe’s orbit. Castro’s death will most likely allow Cuba to reconcile fully with the United States and imperialism generally.

Power in Cuba has passed along familial lines. As Fidel has become too old to rule, power has passed to his brother. This kind of monarchical, nepotistic transfer of power is typical of other revisionist regimes.

Who is “Che” Guevara?

Ernesto “Che” Guevara (June 14th, 1928 to October 9th, 1967) was originally from Argentina. He became a Latin American freedom fighter, an anti-imperialist and communist. He was trained as a medical doctor. He traveled Latin America as a medical student. He was radicalized by his travels. He witnessed the CIA overthrow of the social-democratic regime of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. He met Raul and Fidel Castro in Mexico. He joined the 26th of July Movement and became a prominent figure of the Cuban revolution. Although the Cuban revolution was not communist, it was still an important anti-imperialist and democratic revolution. For a time, Che became a top leader in Cuba. However, he wanted to see the anti-imperialist movement spread. He famously called for “two, three, many Vietnams” against imperialism. With Cuban support, he fought in the Congo against imperialism for a time. He returned to Cuba to regroup. His final expedition was to Bolivia. Che was going to use Bolivia as a starting point for a war of liberation for all of Latin America against imperialism, especially US imperialism. Che organized a small guerrilla force in Bolivia. The Soviet imperialists and their revisionist clients in Bolivia worked to sabotage him. After many defeats, he was surrounded, captured, and executed on CIA orders. Che became a famous symbol of revolutionary struggle around the world. Che was a prolific writer, although his writings are not nearly as deep as those of Marx, Lenin or Mao. Che is known mostly as a man of action and for his bravery. Che straddled the split between the Maoists and the Soviet revisionists, although he expressed more sympathy for the Maoists. His writings are more consistent with the Maoist trend than with the revisionists of his day. He died before the Cultural Revolution. However, Che once stated that the Chinese had a higher degree of socialist morality. He leaned toward China. Che has come to be associated with the erroneous military strategy of focoism — a military strategy that overemphasizes the role of small bands of guerrillas as opposed to one that emphasizes the construction of New Power. Focoism is rejected by Leading Lights. Leading Lights advocate global people’s war. Even so, Che was a heroic communist who lived and died for the people.

Who was Kim Il-sung? What about Juche? What about Korea?

Kim Il-sung (April 15th, 1912 to July 8th, 1994) was an anti-imperialist fighter who came to lead the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea or “North Korea.” He was a guerrilla fighter against Japanese imperialism in the 1930s. He worked inside the Communist Party of China in those years. His military prowess gained him notoriety. Kim played an important role in the liberation of Korea from imperialism. After World War 2, before elections could be held across Korea, the imperialist-backed regime in southern Korea canceled them and founded the imperialist-backed Republic of Korea. Kim would come to head the northern Korean state, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Provocations continued between the two states. Hostilities broke out again. This civil war and anti-imperialist, national liberation struggle became known as the “Korean War.” It lasted from June 25th, 1950 to the armistice signing on July 27th, 1953. Northern Korean forces would have
won, but the imperialists invaded and turned back the Northern armies. The Soviets provided aid to northern Korea. The Chinese put troops on the ground to counter the imperialists. Eventually an armistice was signed. Millions died and the country remained divided by the imperialists.

Kim tried not to take sides in the split between the Soviet imperialists and the Maoists in China. Kim straddled the division. His government sought aid from both the Soviet imperialists and Chinese. He sought a “Korean” path distinct from the Soviet or Maoist models. Over time, the regime dropped its pretense of Marxism, instead endorsing Kim’s ideology of Juche, self-reliance, as the nominal state ideology. Juche blended bourgeois and nationalist notions of social unity with traditional, feudal, Confucian ones. Socialism and communism were replaced by nation and family, with Kim and his male heirs taking the roles of patriarchs/matriarchs of the nation-family. Power in Korea transfers from father to son. Power is inherited there.

The Maoist students criticized him as a revisionist during the Cultural Revolution. They criticized his regime for its failure to launch its own Cultural Revolution against the bureaucracy, against the new bourgeoisie. The regime is stagnant. The regime can be characterized, at best, as a patriotic and anti-imperialist one, but not socialist.

Who was Evner Hoxha? What about Albania under Hoxha?

Evner Hoxha (October 16th, 1908 to April 11th, 1985) was, at least for a time, a communist and anti-fascist fighter. Hoxha was one of the seven members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania, later named the “Albanian Party of Labour,” founded in 1941. When the Nazis and their allies occupied and controlled Albania, Hoxha and his party fought for national liberation against the fascists. Hoxha fought as a partisan against the Nazis and their allies throughout World War 2. Unlike “people’s democracies” of Eastern Europe, Albania was not directly liberated by the Soviet forces, but rather by the partisans. Hoxha and his party came to lead Albania after World War 2. Hoxha modeled Albania on the Stalin-era Soviet Union. When Khrushchev openly broke with Stalin, Hoxha, like Mao, broke with the Soviets. Hoxha also criticized Soviet attempts to make Albania a dependent colony. Like Mao, Hoxha exposed the rise of Soviet social imperialism, revisionism, and capitalist restoration. Unlike Mao, the critique by Hoxha and his followers remained superficial. Instead of analyzing the material reasons for the counter-revolution in the Soviet Union, Hoxha and his followers said the problem was that the Soviets had deviated from Stalin and failed to purge more people. Thus the answer, in the view of the Hoxhaists, was eternal return to Stalin and more purges. Hoxhaists see the world through the police paradigm. The Hoxhaist answer to counter-revolution is to elevate a dogmatized form of Stalin-era Marxist-Leninism to the level of religion. They are stuck in the past. By contrast, the Maoists began to look at the question scientifically. Rather than returning to the past, the Maoists of that era looked forward. They advocated class struggle, continuing the revolution, mass line and cultural revolution. The Maoists expanded the science of revolution. When Mao was alive, Hoxha allied with the Maoists. However, it was an alliance of convenience against the Soviet imperialists more than one of ideological unity. When he received aid from the Chinese, he opportunistically embraced them. After the revisionists in China began cutting support to Albania, Hoxha revealed that he thought the Maoists had been revisionists all along. After Hoxha’s death, Albania quickly began reversing its Stalin era policies. It began to integrate back into global capitalism.

Without constant innovation and revolution, capitalism is restored. Hoxha’s regime, even though part of or allied with the socialist bloc, did not show any dynamism. And once the Maoists had elevated the science, those who did not go forward with them became retrograde from the standpoint of reaching communism. If you are not going to communism, you can only be leading back to capitalism or other reactionary social systems. Hoxha’s regime stayed true to a course that had already been shown not to lead to communism on its own. He did not innovate as the Maoists did. At one point, Hoxha and his movement can be seen as proletarian, when they are pushing forward against the Nazis and when they are going forward. At a certain point though, we can see the regime as simply representing popular classes, but not proletarian-led nor communist-led, of Europe’s poorer areas, resisting both the Western and Soviet imperialists, but not really advancing to communism.
Other Questions About Leadership

Real revolution is a long and hard road. We are on our own long march. We must go among the exploited and oppressed. We must expand globally. We must use mass line. We must infiltrate. We must subvert. We build New Power. Global people’s war. We live and die for a better world. Never surrender. All the way to Leading Light Communism, by any means necessary.

— Leading Light

Why aren’t there more women communist leaders in our history?

The communist movement has always been at the forefront in the struggle for women’s liberation. This draws many people, both women and men, who are interested in gender equality into our ranks. Mothers and daughters have been revolutionaries alongside fathers and sons. Women have fought on the front lines during the Paris Commune, during the Soviet revolution, the Maoist revolution in China, and many others. In the Soviet Union, women entered the workforce and gained the possibility of autonomy from their husbands for the first time. They made efforts to communize the domestic sphere. Women entered areas of work traditionally dominated by men. Whole genres of Soviet film glamorized tough women, women tractor drivers or partisans, for example. Maoists in China followed the Soviet example, even going further at times. Maoists in China raised the slogan “women hold up half the sky.” The Maoist revolution was the greatest feminist movement of all time. A quarter of the world’s women went from being slaves to having power and rights. In a society marked by the profound inequalities of Chinese feudalism, Maoists raised the revolutionary slogan “men and women are the same! Whatever men can do women can do!” Traditional Chinese society, with its brutalization of women, was smashed. Brutal practices such as foot-binding were ended. A quarter of the world’s women gained power for the first time. Jiang Qing, a woman, ascended to almost lead China itself. Anti-communist propaganda has always accused communists of creating “dangerous women” or “terrorist women.”
There are many great communist and anti-imperialist women, including great communist intellectuals and leaders who were women. In the 1970s, as Mao degenerated, Jiang Qing was the best leader the communist movement had. Karl Marx’s wife, Jenny Marx, was a theorist in her own right who Leading Light has quoted. Although many of her theories were incorrect, Rosa Luxemberg stood with Lenin on some issues against the revisionist social democrats. Although incorrect on much, she was a first-class theorist in her day. Nadya Krupskaya, Lenin’s wife, was one of his trusted advisers, one of the most admired “Old Bolsheviks” and a revolutionary in her own right. She was a founder of Soviet education system. Clara Zetkin was a great revolutionary, communist, and feminist. Alexandra Kollontai was another famous communist and feminist. In World War 2, there were many Soviet war heroes who were women. They were snipers, pilots, and partisans. In the last fifty years, some of the leading anti-imperialists and communists have been women. Edith Lagos was a 13 year old girl who led a raid on a prison in Peru. Leila Khaled was a Palestinian anti-imperialist who led several high-profile attacks against Zionism and imperialism. The most advanced revolutionary organizations of today have always had women in their leadership. Some of the Leading Light’s most advanced leaders are women. Great women are emerging as Leading Lights. This is their time to boldly step forward and shine. To list all the outstanding women leaders of the revolutionary tradition would simply take too long. It is time for women to step up and lead the communist movement. Hold aloft the banner of the Leading Light.

Even so, we do recognize that many of the greatest leaders of the past were disproportionately men. Marx, Lenin, and Mao are examples. The reason for this is patriarchy, gender oppression. Gender oppression has created a situation where men are given the opportunity to advance and lead in ways that are more difficult for women. The playing field is not level. This is an empirical fact about our world that we are trying to change. In any case, we will take great leaders from all genders and orientations. Eventually, all women and men in the communist future will be Leading Lights. Everyone will be equal and great. There is a revolutionary saying: “Unleash the fury of women as a mighty force of revolution!”

Why are so many of the great leaders of the past from intellectual, non-proletarian backgrounds?

This is because science arises among the leisure classes. Many of the greatest leaders of the past were people who had a foot in both worlds. They had a foot in the world of the bourgeois intelligentsia and a foot in the world of the people. They became conduits for science to reach the people. It was through them that the methods of science, the tools of science, could be handed to the people to be wielded as weapons for revolution. Great leaders are conduits, but they also transform. Through their person, through their work, bourgeois science gets transformed into revolutionary, proletarian science. Today, this is the role of the Leading Light.
WE HAVE THE SCIENCE, THE ORGANIZATION, THE LEADERSHIP TO REALLY WIN.