

A Statement on the Former Maoist Movement in the United States (2020-2022)

Written by "R." (Austin, Texas)

“Communists must be ready at all times to stand up for the truth, because truth is in the interests of the people; Communists must be ready at all times to correct their mistakes, because mistakes are against the interests of the people.”

- Chairman Mao Zedong, *“On Coalition Government”* (April 24, 1945), *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 315

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Preface

Since March 2022 work has gone underway in all parts of the United States to rectify the former Maoist movement in this country, which during its time was spearheaded by an underground organization known as the Committee to Reconstitute the Communist Party of the United States of America (CRCPUSA), which had grown out of the previous Maoist organization Red Guards Austin in a vain attempt to, as its name suggests, reconstitute, or re-establish, the Communist Party of the USA under the proletarian ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, or often simply known as Maoism, and consolidating leadership among the advanced elements of the working class into a single, militarized vanguard political party aimed to achieve socialist revolution and construction in the US and ultimately achieving the final goal of Communism across the entire globe.

The following are the accounts of my own experiences within this movement, which begin roughly in the late summer and early autumn of 2020 in Austin, Texas and continue until the collapse of the CRCPUSA in March 2022. These do not necessarily include the experiences of other cadres within, before, or after this timeframe but only accounts for those of my own. During this time I mainly served in two organizations of the CRCPUSA, which were Mike Ramos Brigade (joining officially September - October 2020) and Red Aid (joining officially January 2021 - March 2022). Mike Ramos Brigade was founded by the CRCPUSA in April 2020 on the night of Mike's murder at the hands of Austin Police Department's Officer Christopher Taylor. Its purpose was to combatively stand for justice for Mike Ramos, provide material support to his family, and to fight for Black lives and all victims of police and pro-police violence overall. Red Aid would also be founded by the CRCPUSA in January 2020 as a means to support progressive and revolutionary prisoners and their families in the US and, in some cases, raise awareness for international political prisoners such as Georges Abdallah and Dr. Abimael Guzman, AKA Chairman Gonzalo.

Some comrades near and across the country have suggested that I write this summation of my experiences of being in the former US Maoist movement for the better understanding of the errors, and, in some cases, crimes committed in the past that have harmed innocent people who simply wished to fight for a better world and to prevent such errors and crimes in the future. I also write this to share with my friends and family so that they know what my perspective was of being in what I essentially assert as being a political cult and to share with other communist organizations and parties around the world to hopefully shed some light on the former Maoist movement in the US. To protect the identities of the innocent I refer to in this memoir, I will initially give them each a fake name with quotation marks. Those who I had immediate contact with who had wronged the movement, I will refer to them by their actual street names without quotation marks.

I want to emphasize that this memoir should not be accepted as any sort of adventure story, but rather simply as a first hand account of a nationwide cult led by the political influence of a small, intellectual, and abusive clique. I affirm that all which I write here is done so to the best of my knowledge and memory.

Early Days and Mike Ramos Brigade (May - October 2020)

My political work began on the streets of Austin, Texas, on Saturday, May 30, 2020 after the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Officer Derek Chauvin and the Minneapolis Metropolitan Police Department. Like so many other ordinary people, I was imbued with the insatiable fury to fight back against the brutal system of oppression that ended the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Mike Ramos, Tamir Rice, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin and far too many more names than I can list. The protests of 2020 were my first taste of not only activism in general but also witnessing the absolute might of the masses as being an unstoppable force that makes history. I witnessed poor, working class, everyday people bravely endure and fight against brutal police tactics, and we listened to the symphony of hard rubber-jacketed steel balls whizzing past our heads. I was only feet away when then 16 year old Brad Ayala was shot in the head by one of these “non-lethal” rounds on Interstate 35, causing him brain trauma. Another young woman to my left jolted her head back as a rubber bullet struck her in the face, and her hands clutched her wound while blood rapidly flowed down her cheeks and between her fingers as she fell onto her back. Two medics kneeled down behind me working tirelessly to dress the wounds of a person lying flat on the ground. Canisters of teargas were launched by the police and ignited all around us. The crowd I was in that blocked off I-35 was eventually forced to retreat toward the entrance of the Austin Police headquarters building. Some others were shot in their backs as they made their withdrawal. As I made my way down the slope of the highway, I looked back and saw one young man laying on his back in the grass with his hands covering his eyes after being infested with teargas. The police lined the edges of I-35 with their guns at the ready. I and one other person went back and collected the man and guided him back down the hill toward safety using our posters as cover. Once we returned to the base of the slope, a group of medics administered whole milk to our eyes to alleviate the effects of pepper spray and teargas. The militancy of the masses during the George Floyd protests of the summer of 2020 inspired me to continue fighting alongside them throughout that summer.

In the first few months, I followed the locally notorious Twitter account @atxprotests to keep tabs on political actions in the downtown area and participated in as many Black Lives Matter protests as I could hosted by various groups and organizations. I was especially drawn to the more combative actions. This would go on until about September when I encountered a young woman called “Maggie”. We met at the end of a particular Black Lives Matter march where she gave me a ride home. During our drive she and I went back and forth talking about topics such as what brought us out to the march, where we’re from, as well as our political views. Maggie explained to me that “imperialism (late stage capitalism) requires racism in order to sustain itself”. Never hearing the word “imperialism” before, I was instantly intrigued and

wanted to dig deeper into her argument. She then told me that she was a member of Mike Ramos Brigade (MRB), a group that I had marched and protested with a few times prior and admired their militancy, and she asked me if I had gone to any of their study groups or training sessions, which I had not. I was then invited to join them in their next physical training exercise the following week.

It was a warm and sunny day when I met up with Maggie and other members of MRB the week after at Rosewood Neighborhood Park in Austin. There were maybe about 12-15 active members there total, all of whom were about my age. I was elated to even recognize two baristas there who worked directly across the street from my own place of employment. During this training exercise we mainly worked out and practiced street marching maneuvers. Maggie, who was leading the training session, gave lessons and guidance on confronting police during future actions in organized fashions. One other member at one point, lifted up his shirt and revealed an upside-down Sharpie written phone number, although smudged after being written just a night or two prior, of a group called Red Aid on his lower abdomen. He explained to me that activists were largely encouraged to keep this phone number written on their bodies in the event that they should be arrested, and that Red Aid was essentially a legal support organization aimed toward assisting arrested protesters. At the end of the training, Maggie humbly asked if I would be interested in either continuing to come to MRB's events or if I would maybe even be interested in pursuing membership. Overall, after feeling such a sense of both genuine camaraderie and disciplined militancy from MRB, I remember telling her plainly, "I'm in, sign me up. I want to be a member." Unbeknownst to me at the time, this was my entrance into a much larger political movement.

I was in MRB for about a month until it fell apart in late October 2020. During my membership, MRB was still able to bring in fairly sizable amounts of people to their actions, especially to those which struggled for the cause of defending Black lives. However, there were numerous cases of needless arrests of members and non-members during high-risk actions that could have been prevented. For example, MRB would, at this time, often hold combative marches in downtown Austin after dark when the police practically owned the night and were prone to kettle protesters wholesale. The combative and sometimes violent nature of some members of MRB were continuously justified and even encouraged by the necessity of revolutionary violence against reactionaries as a mere theoretical means of smashing away at the old order of oppression, or so we were told. But quite frankly, MRB members, albeit steeled in their youthful resolve to face any enemy, were very ill-trained and ill-equipped in combat, tactics, and strategy, especially against organized police forces, whereas the everyday protesters who tagged along at our events were completely untrained in our showy tactics, and we often led them into extremely dangerous situations against police and other forms of organized and civilian reactionaries. The memory of watching a young woman scream horrifically in panic as she was being dragged by her long, brown

hair across the pavement by APD officers during one of such actions will forever be burned into my memory until the day I die. At times even, I remember coming across much younger and less seasoned protesters, either by lack of experience and training or so frozen in fear and confusion that they would begin to either stand idly alone or lag behind, making them vulnerable to vicious police arrests and brutality. I and other MRB members had to take it upon ourselves to keep them moving briskly from street to street, block to block, shoulder to shoulder. “*Stay together! Stay safe!*” was our mantra to best ensure everyone’s safety. According to Red Aid, approximately 2/3 of all official members of MRB had been arrested at least once during 2020, as well as scores of non-members who followed them into action, but for whatever reason I was fortunately not one of them. At one point, leading members of MRB recommended to me that I should protect my true identity by assuming a sort of pseudonym to go by instead of my legal name, to which I agreed, though I refuse to reveal here what that pseudonym was. This is a very common practice done by active revolutionaries for years.

Aside from the marches and protests, MRB introduced me to Maoism. At first, being a libertarian, I was very skeptical about studying any form of revolutionary theory, but they thoroughly taught me the basics, such as the concepts of two-line struggle, Marxist philosophy (dialectical materialism), scientific socialism, political economy, the unity of contradictions, and especially the theory of protracted People’s War. I never felt judged for asking beginner questions, and quite honestly it was not long before I became a student of Maoism. The first literary piece that truly set forth my personal political radicalization was On Contradiction by Chairman Mao Zedong. My whole world outlook was radically transformed over the course of perhaps a month, and I henceforth considered myself a communist to this very day.

Though mainly serving in MRB as part of their social media and outreach committees creating posts and content for their social media platforms and canvassing local neighborhoods to raise support for our cause, I was introduced to various other Maoist organizations in the Austin area, such as Tribune of the People, Popular Women’s Movement - Movimiento Femenino Popular (PWM-MFP), Red Aid, United Neighborhood Defense Movement (UNDM), Fourth Sword Publications, Struggle Sessions, and others, all of which focused toward the common goal of reconstituting the Communist Party of the USA capable mobilizing the masses toward socialist revolution and eventually the realization of Communism. At this early point in time however I did not know the existence of the CRCPUSA and its central and leading role in the US Maoist movement. I simply saw the Maoist movement in this country as being that of humble grassroots origins exclusive to Austin and Austin alone with all these organizations working almost seamlessly in tandem with each other with no real centralized leadership. I understand now that this was certainly not the case, but I suspected that Tribune of the People, a so-called “revolutionary news service” laid much

of the theoretical roadwork for the Maoist movement across the country. That much was clear.

One of the aforementioned organizations, Red Aid, was a group established by the CRCPUSA as a sort of illegitimate “legal team” for the movement. This meant that Red Aid, working closely with other lawyers from the National Lawyers Guild and other non-profit organizations, both communist and non-communist, was to provide legal aid toward arrested and incarcerated progressive activists across the US, especially those who were arrested during the 2020 protests. MRB was, as I had earlier mentioned, a goddamn meat grinder for arrest rates and therefore kept Red Aid plenty busy. Red Aid even had a designated liaison to MRB who went by the name Simone. She took a political interest in me from the very beginning and helped me grow in my knowledge of Maoism, often conducting one-on-one study sessions of various Marxist literary works with me. Simone was deeply influential in my participation in the movement as a whole. I will return to talking about Simone later.

In addition to its participation in the Black Lives Matter movement, Mike Ramos Brigade was originally designated to fight for justice for Mike Ramos’s brutal and needless murder at the hands of the Austin Police Department that occurred earlier that year. MRB sought to work closely with the Ramos family and the families of the apartment complex Mike lived in and was murdered at, but the organization quickly gained a negative reputation as being a violent and radical group by the local media, oftentimes getting red-baited and labeled as “Antifa” or “Red Guards”. This, along with the lack of real connection with the masses and Ramos family, led to the contradictions that ultimately caused MRB to dissolve. When the media asked the Ramos family about their connections to MRB, they publicly stated that they denied having any connection to us despite our ongoing efforts to support them. Although I think that most MRB members meant well and ardently wanted to serve the cause and the people, our practices not only didn’t help those we tried to serve, but those who we were trying to serve did not want our help or want to be affiliated with us. Even those protesters we led after the death of George Floyd didn’t stick around for long, mainly because we failed to connect with them on a deeper level. MRB proved to be, among many things, a tailist organization that essentially used Mike Ramos and his family as political props. Even in my case, I remember having a minor foot injury one day that prevented me from walking well. I had told Maggie that I was not able to attend a particular two-line struggle one evening. Ignoring my need to stay home and recover, she insisted that I attend and sent another comrade to come pick me up. For those who are reading this who don’t understand what a two-line struggle is, it’s a form of Marxist debate between two political stances, or lines, where there is only one correct Marxist line that advances an organization, party, and the working class, and the other holds them back. The goal of a two-line struggle is to find the line that applies Marxism correctly to a given situation, question, overall topic, or to resolve particular contradictions within an organization. This

specific two-line struggle was over MRB's political line on electoralism, as we were in the midst of the US presidential elections of 2020. Looking back on this two-line struggle, I have realized through it that bourgeois elections only serve the capitalist class and offer the working class only the illusion of "democracy", but also at the same time I saw how the CRCPUSA did not at all consider the lines of the more politically liberal members and followers, which were absolutely rampant around us at the time. Therefore by doing so, they also failed to properly struggle with these people to find higher unity. I later learned that MRB had held such two-line struggles previously, some of which were so unorganized and contentious that they caused members to outright quit and leave altogether, never to return. I believe most of these two-line struggles carried out in MRB were borne out of the CRCPUSA's bureaucratic and dogmatic tendencies toward revolutionary theory over practice.

The internal contradictions of MRB grew to their highest peak during the march commemorating the biannual anniversary of Mike Ramos's murder in October 2020. This march was purely performative and accomplished nothing for Mike or his community. The march was cut short after a skirmish broke out between members and a local livestreamer named Hiram Garcia, who we had told to leave many times prior to the skirmish, though he ardently refused each and every time. Hiram had virtually no regard for the safety of progressive activists throughout 2020 and 2021 and was notorious for filming them on his livestream, which was known to be monitored by police officers of APD. Once the physical altercation between Hiram and members of MRB ignited nearby homeless people arrived to defend him, seeing us as being a violent hoard of thugs. Some members, such as myself, received minor injuries during this altercation, and the situation quickly fell out of control. We were forced to fall back and disperse. After this event and all things considered, MRB held one final general body meeting where we unanimously voted to dissolve the organization, understanding that it had completely lost all touch with the community.

When this particular meeting was adjourned Simone came to me and offered me a ride home. Even though I had ultimately voted to dissolve the organization, I still felt shocked by it all. But I suspected that Simone, being deeply involved in the CRCPUSA, knew in advance that it was going to happen anyway, because she told me that she had been meaning to invite me to join Red Aid for the past few days. No matter the case, I was initially hesitant about joining. I saw myself as a fighter, I craved the adrenaline of being on the streets and in the fight, whereas Red Aid was exclusively a support organization meant to stay behind the front lines. Simone explained that she thought I would perform very well in Red Aid, but today I realized that her real reasoning was because of my high visibility in MRB, and those who were made visible like me were encouraged to move away from the frontlines and join support organizations such as Red Aid. Some comrades even later referred to it as "the graveyard org". I told Simone that I would consider it, but that I really wanted to join another combative organization.

Sometime between November and December 2020 Simone helped me link up with United Neighborhood Defense Movement, an organization centered around the housing struggle and organized tenants around the country against their landlords, oftentimes having to struggle against landlords and the police directly. For whatever reason though I never felt like I fit in that group. The connection wasn't there despite my support for them and their work.

After a few weeks of reflection, I had realized that the combative nature of groups like MRB was causing much internal distress and anxiety. I still had a burning passion for the cause for socialism, but I realized I could still do so under more administrative and supportive means. In January 2021, I officially joined Red Aid.

Red Aid and the CRCPUSA (January 2021 - March 2022)

When I joined Red Aid in January 2021, the combative protests of the summer before had greatly dwindled after the election of the swindling, phony “progressive” rat Joe Biden as President of the US. It was a prime moment for support to those some 14,000 people across the US who were either imprisoned or were still facing charges for their participation in the Black Lives Matter protests. Red Aid was one year old when I joined, and it was at the height of leading its Drop the Charges (DTC) coalition, which was a nationwide campaign in conjunction with various other progressive groups and organizations to demand that all charges against BLM protesters from 2020 be dropped.

Straight from the beginning, I met a woman in her early thirties who went by the name Victoria, who was considered to be the political lead of Red Aid, although the duties of that position were never made totally transparent other than she would “politically guide” Red Aid with the understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in our work and that she would serve on the organization’s steering committee. In its fundamental documents, the organizational leadership claimed to adhere to the system of democratic centralism, which is considered to be paramount to the construction of a communist party. Bear in mind that any position of the steering committee, let alone that of political lead, was considered to be a democratically elected position. This means that any member of the steering committee had to be elected by the majority of Red Aid members, and that any member of steering could be recalled at any time for any given reason so long as it was democratically voted by members of the organization. However, the courses of action proposed by steering were to be discussed among the whole organization, whatever decisions steering made in the end were to be carried out by all members in unity. I had later learned after the collapse of the CRCPUSA that her position as “political lead” was not elected by any member, but rather given to her by a woman named Lisa “Avanti” Hogan, the wife of Jared “Dallas” Roarke, who was one of the primary leaders of the CRCPUSA. Victoria was a greatly charismatic, charming, and deeply intelligent person. I now know that she was a high-ranking member of CRCPUSA, though I do not know exactly what her position in that organization was other than she is the partner of a member of the editorial board of Tribune of the People. At both member and steering meetings, she would show up, sometimes late, and talk about everything **she** wanted to see happen in the organization for anywhere between an hour and a half to two hours without really hearing the thoughts of other members unless they suited her own agenda and that of the CRCPUSA. Whatever she said was almost absolute. The lengths at which she talked were so long yet rhythmic that I began to keep a record of how long she spoke at individual meetings versus certain words or phrases she would begin each meeting with, such as “This shouldn’t take long” or “I don’t have a whole lot to talk about today”, but I digress. Again, Victoria would always hear what I needed to say to her, but she would always try to bend my thoughts and

criticisms in a way that would serve her and her role as “political lead”. Victoria, along with the help of Simone, would be instrumental in grooming me to become their pawns and conditioning me to eventually be an official member of the CRCPUSA.

Just like anyone else before officially beginning membership, I started in Red Aid in a simple manner. I would attend membership meetings regularly, in which I would do my utmost to participate, and veteran members would pick my brain about what I was good at and what talents I could offer the organization, much like in MRB. Essentially, as a relatively new activist, some leadership members seemed to look toward me for a “fresh, new perspective” on things and having experience with being on the frontlines of MRB as a formerly combative activist.

By March 2021 I had been trained and certified by National Lawyers Guild as a legal observer, and on March 8, Red Aid assigned me to be the designated legal observer to cover the International Working Women’s Day March hosted by Popular Women’s Movement - Movimiento Femenino Popular (PWM-MFP), which took its name from an organization originally formed by the Communist Party of Peru, in the case any of their marchers would be arrested. The US version of PWM-MFP was another organization founded by the CRCPUSA as a militant working class women’s organization whose purpose was to organize proletarian women as a force for socialist revolution. When I showed up, I noticed their members, who were almost all women, were dressed in combat boots, olive drab cargo pants, black long sleeve shirts, red bandanas covering their faces, and military style fatigue caps. They carried a large banner that read *“Unleash the Fury of Women as a Mighty Force for Proletarian Revolution!”* and another with *“Make the Ruling Class Pay for Their Own Crisis!”* along with posters with the images of prominent proletarian women such as Comrades Rosa Luxemburg, Augusta “Norah” La Torre, and others, and their defense detail carried heavy axe handles adorned with red flags. When they were all in formation and marching lockstep through the streets of downtown Austin, they appeared as a fiercely intimidating fighting force. As a legal observer, it was required of me to remain impartial to their activities that night and to remain at a safe distance, where I would mainly find myself walking along the sidewalk while they took to the streets. Accompanying the march were members of Tribune of the People, who handed out Tribune articles to people the march passed by which contained information about the march and why International Working Women’s Day is so important. I noticed that some people seemed interested in taking these articles and flyers, but others did not. “Y’all are using bad optics for your cause” I overheard one onlooker say. Some members of PWM-MFP and Tribune of the People later discussed this among themselves, but instead of listening to the opinions of the masses many of these comrades just brushed them off saying, “Oh, well, their politics are just wrong!” This was a repeating trend within the former US Maoist movement, many cadres simply assumed that they knew better than the stupid masses. This is a completely backwards and reactionary way of thinking that I believe

has poisoned the minds of revolutionaries in this country for years and is deeply rooted in revisionism, which is false Marxism. As revolutionaries armed with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, it is our unyielding duty to go to the exploited masses and listen to them and deliver to them what they want and need. This is the basis of forming a genuine proletarian party. This march was a classic example of how the old movement led by the CRCPUSA failed in that regard. It was mostly performative and offered the people nothing.

Red Aid established its name as homage to the International Red Aid, which was founded by Felix Dzerzhinsky of the former Soviet Union in the 1920's. As part of its ongoing efforts to support political prisoners, Red Aid celebrated every year on March 18, which is considered by communists all over the world as International Day of Aid to Political Prisoners and Revolutionary Fighters, although Red Aid continuously and ironically claimed that it was not necessarily a communist organization but rather a progressive one. In 2021, celebration for that day would be hosted by Red Aid, mainly oriented toward morally and financially supporting persecuted BLM protesters from the summer prior and to raise awareness of various persecuted revolutionary fighters from around the world. We hosted a panel of other activists from other parts of the country such as Minneapolis to talk about the ongoing efforts to support leftist political prisoners. At this event, I gave a brief speech regarding the overall need to support these political prisoners, which received a highly positive reception. After this, the current members of Red Aid's steering committee decided that I was to be a spokesperson of the Drop the Charges coalition.

In the following month one of the three members of Red Aid's steering committee decided to leave Red Aid due to reasons regarding her personal life. Our steering committee was organized to have only 3 due-paying members be elected to this position by other due-paying members of Red Aid. Being in a steering committee was something that I had been interested in since my days in MRB, so naturally I decided to toss my hat in the ring. As I have very briefly mentioned earlier, the leadership model that Red Aid and its steering committee supposedly took up was democratic centralism. Chairman Mao summarized the discipline of this leadership model:

“We must affirm anew the discipline of the Party, namely:

- (1) The individual is subordinate to the organization;
- (2) The minority is subordinate to the majority;
- (3) The lower level is subordinate to the higher level; and
- (4) The entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee.

“Whoever violates these articles of discipline disrupts Party unity.”

- Chairman Mao Zedong, “The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War” (October 1938), *Selected Works*, Vol. II, pp 203-04.

Under this revolutionary style of leadership each member of the steering committee needed to first be elected to the position by the majority of votes of all Red Aid members, and they could subsequently be voted out of the committee at any time and for any given reason. On the other hand, one of the main tasks of the steering committee was to continuously collect the thoughts and ideas of members, and by utilizing the lessons learned through the scientific ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to create a plan to move the organization forward. Members were allowed and encouraged to voice their criticisms at all times against steering, its members, or its plans and methods at any time, however once a decision was reached by steering all members were required to follow through in unity.

On April 7, 2021 I was elected unanimously into our steering committee by the general body of Red Aid. When I began my post as a member of steering, the workload was relatively light. But as time went on, the work placed on me, especially from Victoria, increased exponentially. During my time I served as Red Aid's treasurer and was active across multiple subordinate committees, mainly their DTC and propaganda committees. I could go on about the endless lists of tasks, event planning, outreach, fundraising, networking, public speaking and press conferences, canvassing, propaganda creation and distribution, legal observing, babysitting, administrative duties, and far too many other responsibilities and duties to include in this memoir, but I will do my best to try to condense my experiences concisely. In addition to these responsibilities and duties, it was also expected of me to attend as many study groups as I could, reading and understanding Marxist-Leninist-Maoist texts and being able to apply revolutionary theory with the practices of the movement and the daily operations of Red Aid, or so they told me. Many of these study sessions and other underground tasks assigned to me by the CRCPUSA were led mostly by Simone and Victoria, essentially making them my points and guides of the CRCPUSA.

By mid-April 2021, Red Aid's nationwide Drop the Charges campaign was at its highest peak. Despite the fact that DTC was exclusively led by Red Aid, it strategically did not brand itself as such, but rather that Red Aid would be a signatory of the coalition it built with other progressive networks around the country. We ran various forms of what we deemed to be mutual aid toward the people across the country bravely facing criminal charges for their involvement in the George Floyd protests of 2020, such as fundraisers, community letter writing events to prisoners and those prosecuted, rallies, etc. I even remember personally handing over a petition with more than 2,000 signatures to the Travis County District Attorney Office demanding that all charges against BLM protesters in the county be dropped, which I think did help once we started seeing more and more charges being dropped thereafter. Our propaganda committee was almost exclusively designated for creating content in support of the DTC campaign

and very little effort went toward promoting Red Aid as an organization. This would go on for the remainder of the year.

At some point during the spring of 2021, Victoria had assigned me to go speak to a man I will call "Tony". Tony was an aspiring emergency medical service worker who was acting as a medic during the particular BLM protest in downtown Austin at which Garrett Foster was viciously gunned down and murdered by active US Army sergeant Daniel Scott Perry in July 2020. He had gotten arrested that summer at a protest and was facing bogus trumped up charges and his court date kept getting pushed back. I asked him if his attorney was a member of Austin Lawyers Guild, the local NLG chapter Red Aid worked closely with, to which he said yes. He was one of many people who were facing such bogus charges with no evidence to back them up. I explained to him that he wasn't alone, and because many of the judicial courts were still backed up due to the COVID-19 lockdowns and the sheer number of cases from the George Floyd protests that cases like his were being brushed to the side. I advised him to check in with his attorney since it had been a few months since their last correspondence. He had also at the time shared with me his own written account of the night of Foster's murder in which he explained in graphic detail the last moments of Foster's life and the events afterward that night. He confided in me that he did not want his story to go public just yet due to the current charges being held against him, and I agreed. I asked him if he was comfortable if I shared his document with other members of steering, which he was fine with. I knew though that the accounts written by him could have very well helped in the fight for justice for Garrett Foster, and I encouraged him to eventually go public once his name was cleared. I told Victoria about this since we had comrades in other organizations who were currently fighting for justice for Garrett, she wasn't at all interested. She just wanted me to make and keep as many contacts like Tony as I possibly could, yet there were often people like Tony who I truly wanted to help, but all I could tell him was to just sit and wait while he stressed over his charges.

We later invited Tony to come speak at a rally outside the federal courthouse in Austin to talk to the public about what it's like facing state repression. He said he was honored to be invited and sent me a very brief draft of his talking points for the rally. I passed them over to Victoria, who then told me, without further investigation, that because she thought his points essentially failed to meet her own sense of political purity and standards to basically revoke our invitation to him, which pained me horribly having to tell him just a couple days prior to the event that he was still invited to come, but because we "had too many speakers and not enough time", as Victoria advised me to say to him, we couldn't fit him in the lineup. He did show up to the rally, but we never heard from him again. Tony was just one example of how the leadership of the old movement neither met the needs of people or ever really bothered to care unless it benefited them politically.

Around late March and early April 2021, I was taken to the side by Simone where she told me that she and Victoria wanted me to take on more “underground and secretive work”. Deeply inspired by Lenin’s theory of combining legal and illegal work to advance socialist revolution, I was sold to the idea without hesitation. Keep in mind though, I was aware at the time that there was in fact underground work within the movement that was going on, but I still had yet to learn of the existence of the CRCPUSA. My first assignments were to prepare for the annual May Day march that was to take place on May 1, International Workers Day, which commemorates the anniversary of the working class of Chicago who fought for and won the 8-hour workday in 1886 and is considered to be the most important holiday for communists and the working class all over the world. For several years at that point, communists in Austin and other cities around the country, especially those who were led by the CRCPUSA, gathered and organized themselves in the streets for a combative march. By “combative march” I mean that it was generally expected that comrades in the march, especially in places like Austin, would at some point have to physically fight reactionaries that crossed their path. Throughout the entirety of the movement, all comrades were expected to communicate to each other only either by word of mouth or through an end-to-end encrypted email service known as Proton Mail. Simone informed me that she was to start an email thread for “Gardening and Hiking”. “Gardening” was the term she used for constructing flags and banners for the march, whereas “hiking” referred to the physical and marching training. Simone explained to me that she wanted me to “be on tall flag”, which was an expression used to describe someone who would carry one of the numerous 12’6” flag poles which were to each display an approximately 4x6 foot red banner with the yellow emblazoned hammer and sickle mainly modeled after the style of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), which the old movement took great influence from especially the work and writings of Chairman Gonzalo and the PCP from 1980-1992. Taking the teachings of Chairman Mao and applying them to the material conditions of Peru, the PCP under the leadership of Chairman Gonzalo had gained prestige during the final decades of the 20th century after developing Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as being the third and highest stage of Marxism. Maoism has greatly been adopted by communists all over the globe, and has since been effectively applied by the working class of not only Peru, but also of countries like Turkey, India, and the Philippines.

Our “hikes” always took place at the Krieg Athletic Complex here in Austin once or twice per week. There were maybe about eight to ten of us, most of whom were members of Red Aid. Our first task at these “hikes” was always to search for the bundle of bamboo poles which were, as Simone explained, “laid nearby by someone else”. These poles were used to practice with holding and marching with the actual flags that we would use during the May Day march. Eventually we would find them bundled together by tarps and bungee cords close to a nearby creek. Without the actual 4’x6’

flags that would be attached to them, we would practice marching and executing maneuvers with these poles, which would often attract the attention of people passing by, often with puzzled expressions on their faces. Simone mentioned to me that in preparation of the May Day march the year prior in 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdowns and large-gathering bans, they had practiced in that very same field where there were over 100 comrades in their group, which had attracted police attention, but this year they wanted to decentralize the preparation efforts. So why are we even returning to the same location, I had thought to myself. In addition to our practicing marching, we would study various pieces regarding International Workers Day, and sing communist and socialist songs as we would physically exercise such as “The Internationale”, “The Red Flag”, and an English variation of “Salvo el Poder”.

Our “gardening” nights were another recurring task I had to help with once or twice per week and took place at my neighbors’ house who was also a member of the movement. We had converted their laundry room, kitchen, living room, carport and backyard into what I jokingly called a makeshift yet “literal red flag factory”, though I was told to keep my voice down to avoid the neighbors to know what we were doing. We draped tarps around the carport and set up a cabana in the backyard to keep the more open workstations hidden. In the laundry room and kitchen, cadres worked to produce large printed headshot portraits of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Chairman Mao, and Chairman Gonzalo that would be carried by hand by one person each during the march. They would also take 4’x6’ red flags and paint large hammers and sickles in the upper corner closest to where the flag would meet the pole in the same design as that of the Communist Party of Peru. The comrades in the living room worked to create the march’s leading banner that read “*PROLETARIANS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE! MAY 1 - INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY*”. My job, however, was mostly done in the carport and backyard where I and other comrades would take the finished large flags by the ends and attach them to the tall 12’6” bamboo poles. We also produced a series of much smaller flags that were meant to be handheld but did not carry the hammer and sickle. In total, I would estimate that we produced maybe 100 of each size of flags over the course of the month of April. Throughout our flag production, Simone made it very clear that she wanted us to maintain very high standards of quality. Even the smallest mistakes and flaws needed to be corrected. We even color labeled each flag pole based on its straightness and overall quality. The best poles were to be carried at the front of the May Day march, whereas the lower quality flags were to be carried in the rear.

On the evening of April 30, 2021, the night before May Day, at around 8:00 pm we finished up our last hiking session. A few comrades and I began walking to our cars, ready to get a good night’s sleep before the big day. It was then that Simone pulled up to us in her SUV and got out in perhaps the most frazzled state I think I have ever seen her in. “Y’all,” she said flusteredly yet in her signature humble manner. “There’s still a lot

of work to be done with the banners. Do any of y'all have some spare time tonight to help get it done?" I could never turn Simone down with anything she needed, especially in this case, so of course most of us including myself agreed. We carpooled back to the "gardening" house where a U-Haul truck awaited us. Simone opened the truck's trailer where a set of banners that laid on the trailer's bed awaited us. Each one of these banners bore the hand painted portraits of murdered victims of police violence committed by Austin Police Department such as Mike Ramos, Javier Ambler, and Alexander Gonzales Jr., all of which read "*PRESENTE EN LA LUCHA*" at the bottom. There was another banner with the hand painted portrait of a local progressive hero, Garrett Foster, which read "Garrett Foster - Servant of the People, Defender of Black Lives". These banners were to be formed together as the "People's Bloc" during the May Day march, which were to represent those Austin and Travis County locals who lost their lives to police and pro-police violence. Our task that night was to construct proper frames for each banner. We drilled, cut, glued, and taped out of extra bamboo poles to create the frames we needed. We did this until approximately 11:30 pm that night.

After this task was finally completed, and we only had a few hours of sleep ahead of us, we gathered around in the kitchen and reaffirmed our commitment to not only honoring International Workers Day, the most important day of the proletariat, but also to the international cause that bound us all together as a class. There were those of us in this room who were extremely poor with very little to lose, and as Marx and Engels so famously stated in the final paragraph of The Communist Manifesto, "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. **The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.**" Some comrades held each other's hands, and tears streamed down their faces as they professed their love for the cause and desperate desire to build a better world for not only themselves, but for their families, their communities, and the whole world based on rational scientific principles, a world free of class society, oppression, and exploitation. To us, the combative march that would take place the following day would be a testament to this unshakable resolve.

On the morning of Saturday, May 1, 2021 I woke up peaking with revolutionary optimism and ready to fight whatever enemy stood before us. I grabbed my protective helmet and goggles as well as other forms of combat equipment in my bag and rushed out the door. I arrived at Simone's apartment, and we eventually departed with a few other comrades in her SUV for a small park west of downtown Austin.

We looked around, and she said, "I wonder if we're getting close." We then see a group of four or five people crossing the street, all wearing crimson red bandanas across their faces.

“Yep, we’re in the right place.”

Simone pulled her car around a couple blocks in search of a vacant parking spot. As she did so, we started to see more and more of these red-cladded figures. When we found a parking spot, we had to dig through her car to look for any loose change we could because none of us had brought enough money for parking. While this was happening, we continuously saw red-masked groups of two to five people walking around past us. It was clear they were all here for the same reason we were, but few of them said a word to each other or to us, and we said nothing to them. The purpose was to keep things quiet. Once we found enough change to park, we moved on foot to a point just across the street from the staging area for the march and situated ourselves behind an apartment building with a wooded creek behind it. We waited there for maybe half an hour. We sat on the edge of a trail that ran between the apartment building and the woods behind it. Down in the creek bed below us I could spot maybe three or four other “squads” of cadres huddled around. We were all waiting for the signal to move out. As we sat, we looked around and found more and more pockets of comrades in small groups. Some hid in the bushes, some down by the creek, others walked around casually. It was Saturday and people of the community were all out walking their dogs, riding their bikes, and simply enjoying the beautiful day.

After some time, Simone checked her watch. “It’s time,” she said. “Let’s move out.” The five or six of us gathered our things and took off across the street toward an open area known as Duncan Neighborhood Park. All throughout this small park were scores of other marchers, all wearing red bandanas and casually standing around trying to pretend to not know or have any affiliation with each other. At one point, I remember a man who was out walking his dog and looked around completely bewildered, trying to figure out what was going on.

Finally, the call was made for all cadres to fall into formation. In total, it was estimated that some 180 Maoists from all parts of the country, some coming from as far as Oxnard, California, were present for this march. I and about 80 other comrades grabbed tall flags. The color labeled on my particular flag pole indicated that it was of the higher quality, placing me at the very front of the march. However, I first had to train many others how to properly hold and carry the flag and how to execute certain flag-carrying techniques and orders. I essentially had to teach them four weeks worth of training over the course of maybe four or five minutes before we had to fall in line.

Once we were in formation, we truly were a spectacle to behold. Those of us holding tall flags formed the innermost layer of the perimeter of the march standing in two columns of forty flags each, forty on the left hand of the march, the other on the right. The outer perimeter of the march was composed of a certain detachment simply known as “Defense”. Although all comrades in this march were expected to fight if need be, Defense was to be the premier fighting position and our first and outermost line of protection. Their job was to quite literally defend the march from all opposing

reactionary forces, both police and civilian, and they were expected to be the first to fight and to fall to arrest if the situation called for it. Members of Defense were forbidden to participate in any of the march's chanting or singing as their primary focus was to be watching for any and all threats that could compromise the safety of the other marchers. Their standard issued weapon was none other than the "short flags" I had helped produce the weeks prior. The center of the march comprised of various elements of the main body called the "People's Bloc", such as rank-and-file marchers, medics, the shot caller, drummer, chant lead, those carrying banners commemorating Javier Ambler, Mike Ramos, Alex Gonzales Jr., and Garrett Foster, and behind the march was a hoisted red banner that read *"CAST IMPERIALISM INTO ITS GRAVE, THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION ADVANCES THE WORLD OVER!"* And at the head of the march, was the previously mentioned banner that read *"PROLETARIANS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE! MAY 1 - INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY"* with marchers behind holding up portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Gonzalo directly behind it.

Folks gathered from nearby communities to gaze at us. Many held out their mobile devices to snap pictures of us and some even cried out cheers of support. Speeches were made by leading members of the march to remind us of our duty to the cause that day and that it is the great historic task of the working class to rise in combative struggle, much like the working class of Chicago did in May 1886 that fought for and won the eight-hour work day. It was expected of us all to follow their heroic example.

This was followed by a brief period of silence and anticipation. The only sounds that could be heard were the subtle fluttering of the flags above our heads, the grackle birds screeching in the trees, and the occasional cars passing by. I prepared myself mentally for what could come. Would I get arrested? Would I face personal injury? Would a car driven by a crazed reactionary ram into the march? I couldn't stop these questions from filling my mind, but nonetheless, they didn't matter. "Blood does not drown the revolution," I was told. "It waters it."

The order was finally given, *"March!"* The drum was struck and we headed out from the park and immediately onto the street. *"In the streets! In the fight!"* the chant lead called out. With all the strength our lungs could muster, we roared back, ***"WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!"***

"Sweep this rotten world away!"

"IT'S INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY!"

"The working class will have our day!"

"LONG LIVE THE FIRST OF MAY!"

The drum thundered, our boots stomped on the pavement beneath us, and our chants echoed off the houses around us. People would soon peek their heads out of their windows to find the source of the commotion. During the march, it was common for

working class people to cheer us on by waiving their hats, rushing out of their homes to provide us with as many bottles of water as they could carry, and others raised their fists in solidarity. The more wealthy bourgeoisie typically booed us from their high castles built by the workers. Against them we marched triumphantly and relished in their disdain.

At one point a woman riding a scooter rode past us appalled screaming, *“Oh my God! Communism?! Are you serious?!”* and her boyfriend, who obviously did not read too many books in his lifetime, followed closely behind her on his scooter and stopped to confidently and incorrectly state, “If we were in a communist country, you would not be allowed to do what you’re doing.” I kept shouting to him to “go back to brunch.” A leading member of the march’s Defense then sharply ordered that I “maintain discipline” and to pay no attention to this pudgy, luau shirt and cargo shorts wearing ignoramus, who soon disappeared to what I assume to be some sort of gluten-free, ketchup and vodka enthusiast luncheon where I am sure he tipped his server absolutely no more than maybe 12%, but I digress.

The first forty-five minutes of the march went undisturbed by the police, who were completely unprepared and had no fathom of where this march was located. Our march was at first largely met with positive community support. Finally, though, we found one cop car pull up to a stop sign ahead of us. Being at the front of the march I could see him stopping, looking down at his phone, then looking up and performing a double-take at our march in surprise. He then drove away. I knew then that he must have surely informed the rest of APD of our location.

“We won’t hide! We won’t cower!”

“TAKE UP GUNS! SEIZE STATE POWER!”

We were marching eastbound on West 5th Street past the US Federal Courthouse here in Austin when we made our first encounter with APD’s response to the march. A unit of perhaps twenty or thirty bicycle-mounted police rode casually past our vision southbound on Guadalupe Street. These Austin “bike police” or “bike cops”, however you want to call them, had gained notoriety over the years as being especially brutal and sadistic against progressive activists. They casually rode across our field of vision mostly, in my opinion, as an intimidation tactic before they would play their games with us. But we were ready for them.

“Tell me what you’re fighting for!” our chant lead called.

“REVOLUTION! PEOPLE’S WAR!”

The march moved past a group of construction workers. The workers boldly and supportively raised their fists in solidarity, and we called out to them encouraging them to join us. APD bike police had swung around and began to move in against our rear and were tailing us closely.

“Marx! Lenin! Mao Zedong!”

“THE FIGHT! THE FIGHT! THE FIGHT GOES ON!”

The march progressed deep into the downtown Austin area, where it eventually came to make a brief halt at the intersection of South Congress Avenue and 4th Street, the very same spot where Garrett Foster was gunned down and murdered by the elusive coward and reactionary US Army sergeant Daniel Scott Perry. A speech was made commemorating the heroic actions of Garrett on the night he was murdered as he selflessly defended Black Lives Matter protesters. Even Garrett's widow, Whitney Mitchell, was present to support the fight for her late husband's name.

The cops continued to follow us until a concrete mixer truck driven by supportive construction workers pulled up behind the march and slowed their speed to block the cops from following the march. We were thrilled and raised our fists and hollered wildly in solidarity for their actions. Eventually, however, the cops would move around the mixer truck and catch up with the march. "Get out of the street and onto the sidewalk!" APD officers would call out to us over loudspeakers. When the police would order us to move onto the sidewalk, we understood our legal rights. We would wait for them to give the order to move three times before taking to the sidewalks, any more after three orders at a time the police were authorized to begin making arrests for disobeying their orders. We would march on the sidewalk for a few minutes before retaking the streets when the strategic advantage presented itself. This tactic continued all throughout the march.

"Goddamn it! Get onto the fucking sidewalk!" a certain cop demanded, losing his nerve.

"Salvo el Poder," our chant lead led our response.

"TODOS ILUSION!"

"Asaltar los cielos!"

"CON LA FUERZA DEL FUSIL!"

Word went up and down the line that somebody in the rear of the march had been arrested. Others mentioned the police using tear gas, though I did not witness such crowd control agents being used that day.

The march was moving northbound along the sidewalk on Red River Street until it reached East 11th Street where it turned right. As we merged onto East 11th Street, the march's shot caller ordered us to resume taking the street. Being at the front of the march, my boots were some of the first to take the street behind the leading banner. The narrow lines of demonstrators along the sidewalk fanned out file by file onto 11th Street, where we were one block away moving toward the imperialist artery I-35. Fearing that we were to take over I-35 much like the Black Lives Matter protesters did nearly one year prior, APD went on the offensive, flanking us from the left, which was the side upon which I was positioned. A violent clash erupted between us and the police. I watched as one particular pig, with his teeth gnashing bitterly together, attempted to pull the front banner away from the demonstrators holding it as they fought to defend it. The members of Defense to my left were fully engaged with the police,

whereas the members of Defense on our right quickly pivoted to rush ahead and reinforce our left flank. Police sprayed many of us with pepper spray and arrested as many as they could, oftentimes kneeling forcefully on the backs of their prey. As Defense made their combative stand, the main body of demonstrators made an immediate withdrawal to the sidewalk where our bodies crashed against a stone wall. Amid the confusion about ten or so other comrades foolishly jumped over the wall where they fell some seven or eight feet down onto a stone surface. Though I and others called for them to rally and return to our ranks, they picked themselves up and limped and retreated down a stream throwing their red flags into the bushes. I stood atop the stone wall huddling closely with my flag pole and looked back at the chaos in the street. Although the scuffle had ended, I saw eight people scattered face down on the ground in the streets with their hands cuffed behind their backs and their hair tangled messily across their faces. Red flags and banners laid every which way and the pigs picked them up one by one and carelessly tossed them in a pile. A line of pigs barricaded us from assisting our arrested comrades.

“My heart is beating!” one comrade shouted over a megaphone. “Not with fear, but with joy! We do not fear arrest! We do not fear *any* of this!”

“That’s right!” some other comrades cheered.

“We are *communists!* We know this rotten world is going to be swept away! It can’t stay like this! Capitalism is crumbling before us! It is in decay!”

The revolutionary spirit seemed to return to us, and we then gathered ourselves and resumed by marching away from I-35. Clouds had darkened the skies above, and it wasn’t long before a torrential rain fell upon us until we found ourselves practically ankle deep in rushing rainwater in some places. At one point, we were marching along a sidewalk lined with trees. Our flag poles were so damn tall that I accidentally snagged it in a tree’s branches and could not move forward. As comrades tried to march past me, about three or four of them tripped and fell over my pole before I could free it. Embarrassed, I offered them my hand to pull them up.

The group eventually made its way to Wooldridge Park where we gathered standing upright around a pavilion to listen to another comrade’s speech as he described the current revolutionary situation across the whole globe. “Today we count our advances, honor our martyrs, and celebrate alongside the international proletariat, under the red flag. We are called to go to the deepest and most profound masses and educate them in revolutionary violence, a difficult and dangerous road, but this is what we are made for, proclaim it proudly: imperialism marches steadily into its grave; the proletarian revolution advances the world over!”

I stood there at attention with my flag parallel to my body. I earnestly wanted to listen to this speech, but I had gotten so drenched and cold that all I could think about was the poncho I had packed in my backpack, but I couldn’t break formation, and heavens knew that I could not drop my flag and let it touch the ground for even a

second to dig out my poncho from of my bag and put it on. I simply had to stand there with rainwater pooling in parts of my body where the sun dared not shine.

“Look to the May Uprisings (George Floyd protests of 2020) where the militancy of the masses shook the world,” the speech went on. “Look to the poor peasants of Brazil, where the peasants’ blood stains the land conquered in heroic struggle against the big landowners and the bureaucratic capitalist state, lackeys of US imperialism... We salute the People’s Wars which rage today, bright and undeniable beacons of proletarian revolution which through military deeds surge toward New Power in their countries, and which struggle to impose Maoism as the command and guide of the World Proletarian Revolution.” The speaker concluded that the Communist Party of the USA “must be reconstituted amidst the storms and fires of the class struggle. This is our duty!”

Once the speech ended after about twenty minutes, leaders of the march decided to exact revenge for our previously arrested comrades. They set their sights directly across the street upon the Travis County Jail, where eight of our comrades were being detained. The pigs lined themselves outside their precious jail, but this time we had *them* up against the wall. They had nowhere to go as we surrounded them from all sides. We pushed forward and stood face to face with these parasitic scumbags. My mind was filled with the memories of watching the families of Alex Gonzales Jr. and Mike Ramos mourn the loss of their irreplaceable loved ones to the horrific violence these animals brought to our communities. Every one of us in the crowd viciously berated these cops. Every bit of profanity my lungs could muster escaped my tongue. I savored every moment I could and indulged in watching the scared, vulnerable, humiliated, and weak hearted expressions come across the cops’ shameful faces. Many of us called to the comrades inside the jail, hoping to remind them that we had not forgotten them and that we stood in solidarity with them. “*Dare to struggle! Dare to win,*” we chanted. We berated these filthy pigs until we had our fill and left the scene satisfied on our own accord.

After three hours of marching, we returned to Duncan Park and returned all remaining flags, banners, and propaganda to the U-Haul trailer and dispersed. Red Aid spent the remainder of the next two days organizing what we called “jail support”, which was where we would send members and volunteers to stand outside the Travis County Jail’s exit and wait for each arrested comrade to leave. We would then offer them rides home, food and water, and even in many cases packs of cigarettes and lighters if they craved them. There was one particular comrade who had been arrested during the May Day march who was a young 17-year-old girl from Oxnard, California who was being charged with assaulting a police officer, which is a felony charge, after simply spitting at one of them once they had arrested her, but she seemed to keep a high spirit and we made sure she received proper legal representation. Red Aid was delighted when she eventually got her bogus felony charges dropped.

The remainder of the summer of 2021 was spent by Red Aid continuing its efforts to support the political prisoners of the George Floyd uprisings and those still facing charges through the Drop The Charges campaign. On May 26, 2021 exactly one year after the start of the protests, Red Aid spearheaded “National Day of Action Against State Repression”, which was joined by organizations in cities across the country to demand their respective local officials to drop all charges against Black Lives Matter protesters. We would also organize and encourage protests, rallies, and letter writing events across the country where people would write supporting letters to people either imprisoned or faced imprisonment such as Eric King, Jessica Reznicek, and others to give them words of encouragement and support. The Drop The Charges coalition largely worked with not only other communist organizations across the country but also non-communist progressives. This was in accordance with one of Chairman Mao’s “Three Magic Instruments” needed to make revolution in any given country 1.) A Party 2.) A People’s Liberation Army or Red Army that is commanded by the Party and not vice versa, and **3.) A United Front**.

The United Front is an alliance of all progressive forces led by the working class, and is to be built around both the Army and Party. In essence, the United Front that Red Aid sought to build and lead was to support progressive political prisoners and, in this case, prisoners and others facing state repression for their involvement in the George Floyd uprisings of 2020. We pushed organizations in cities across the US such as Austin, Detroit, Minneapolis, Tallahassee, and many others to form their own fundraising campaigns and regular letter-writing events to send letters of encouragement and care packages to political prisoners who were currently incarcerated. We also worked to connect prisoners and other people facing state repression with attorneys we knew were sympathetic to progressive and revolutionary causes. Every so often, there would be certain persons of interest that Red Aid would prioritize, such as Montez Lee, Eric King, Jessica Reznicek, etc. Later in the year, we would begin to focus our attention on an incarcerated man who we simply knew as Dallas. I will return to talk about Dallas later.

By August 2021 the swindling, phony, “progressive” rat Joe Biden, who had recently been elected President of the US and helmsman of US Imperialism, had increased the US prison population for the first time in seven years. His administration had also released the “National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism”, which although mentioned how it was going to target right-wing political movements such as those that attacked the US Capitol building on January 6th of that year, it also explicitly outlined that left-wing and anti-capitalist activists and movements would also be hunted down. As a means to defend the Maoist movement in the US, Red Aid, under the bureaucratic command of Victoria and other leading elements of the CRCPUA, was to respond to this situation at a breakneck speed. During a particular general body meeting of Red Aid, Victoria outlined that we were to organize a political agitation

outside the Travis County Democratic Party Headquarters here in Austin. This was to be completed within less than a week.

Victoria had assigned me to be the lead agitator of this event, given that I had some of the most public speaking experience out of most members of the group. There were about seven of us out there, everyone else held up a banner while Victoria ran around recording this small protest. It lasted for maybe an hour, but it felt like an eternity while I had to talk in circles over the megaphone to fill in each and every second. Victoria had given me a list of maybe three chants to use, and that was all. The protest failed to draw hardly anyone in save for one pickup truck driver who stopped and very politely asked me what our stance on prisons were. He asked if we were in support of either prison reform or abolition. One of the many internal contradictions within Red Aid, in my opinion, was that Red Aid was expected to both A. study Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and hold correct political lines, and B. we were to not fully express our Maoist lines to the public, but rather allude to them in very vague ways. Generally, Red Aid's political line regarding prisons was that we understood them to be an apparatus of the state that, although it is not a profitable institution, it is used to maintain control and oppression over the working class by the ruling class. We united that even under socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, classes and their contradictions will still exist. And because classes exist, so does the state. It is only during Communism, the historical time period after socialism, when all classes and therefore the state and the need for prisons will wither away. But under socialism prisons would be operated by the working class as they control the state, and corrections of capitalists, reactionaries, and all other enemies of the people would be achieved through criticism and self-criticism rather than through misery and isolation depending upon the severity of their crimes and willingness to correct their behaviors. Red Aid's political lines versus what we were allowed to say to the public were often difficult to navigate. For example, we weren't allowed to say things like "We're communists, Maoists, etc." or "We believe that we should fight for socialist revolution", and so on. I don't believe we were trained or even educated on how to properly connect with people on these exact issues. Moreover, I think that such training and education weren't realized based on the lack of unity needed to get to that point. A lot of our political lines weren't struggled over and discussed as a whole, but rather told to us by people like Victoria and Simone.

Again, going back to this gentleman in the pickup truck who asked me about our thoughts on prison reform or abolition. I really didn't know how to explain our political lines in such a "not-so-red" way, so I stammered and even froze up a bit. It was then Victoria stepped in and gave her own rendition of how to answer his question. He seemed to be in a hurry and eventually had to drive away, thanking us for our time as he left. Once the protest was finally over, I walked away feeling defeated. I felt like I had failed the organization, but in reality the protest was wildly unprepared and rushed

within a matter of a few days. We were set up for failure from the start. I later tried to explain to Victoria time and again that events like these should be planned out further in advance. To which she replied, "Well, sometimes things come up in the spur of the moment, and we have to respond to them immediately." Which can be true sometimes, but in cases like this particular protest, we weren't obligated to such a short timeframe. We easily could have pulled off a better event had we been given maybe at least two weeks of preparation. I later learned that it was the bureaucratic and asinine influence of the CRCPUSA that compelled such a quick decision to protest. In fact, not even entry-level members of Red Aid initially began the discussion of protesting outside the Travis County Democratic Party Headquarters, but rather it was solely the decision of Victoria and the CRCPUSA which prompted it.

At some point during the late summer of 2021 I attended a weekly meeting with the other two members of Red Aid's steering committee, Victoria and "Annie". Annie was one of the first members of Red Aid when it was founded in January 2020 and had served on its steering committee since then. Although she was a few years younger than me and was a member of the CRCPUSA's "Young Communists" (As I would later learn), she held much more organizing experience than me. The overall task of the Young Communists of the CRCPUSA, as Annie would later explain to me, was to influence and bring other youths and young adults into the International Communist Movement. She not only served on Red Aid's steering committee but was also head of Red Aid's Drop The Charges committee. She was someone who took on an immense workload, and although she would sometimes allow some assignments to fall through the wayside I never felt that she couldn't improve, and in fact I would at many times look to her for guidance, politically and practically. Before I continue, I would like to reiterate that Red Aid's model of leadership was intended to be democratic centralism. That is, each member of Red Aid's steering committee was to be elected democratically by the majority of its members. And each member of the steering committee could be recalled at any time for any given reason so long as it was decided by the majority of Red Aid's members. With all things considered, Victoria, Annie, and I met at this particular steering meeting to follow up with each other on our political work and plan out our week's agenda for ourselves, other members of Red Aid, and the subordinate committees. During one such meeting, Victoria glared coldly at Annie as Annie announced that she was to step down from steering due to complications it supposedly imposed on her professional job. Months later, Annie confided in me that the real reason behind her resignation from the committee was rather forced upon her by our so-called "political lead" Victoria because they had gotten into a very minor disagreement, the subject of which I have since forgotten. Victoria, who at this time was quickly earning a notoriety for being a bureaucrat and commandist, had ordered Annie to step down from steering. There was no trial, hearing, or two-line struggle for this impulsive and anti-democratic decision. I would later tell Annie that what happened to her was something that I had

deep down feared would happen to me during my tenure on the committee. During the very same meeting as Annie announced her resignation from steering, Victoria declared “steering’s endorsement and nomination of ‘Mary’ to step up to the position of steering committee member”. This decision was not at all discussed nor agreed upon at all among the steering committee. Annie’s position in the committee would later be elected by the general body to another young woman who was about her age and also a member of the Young Communists called “Mary”. Mary had also previously served as a member of the steering committee of Mike Ramos Brigade until its dissolution in late 2020 and had presented herself very publicly and politically during the course of that same year.

On September 11, 2021 a new era of the Maoist movement in the US, as well as the whole world, had begun. I remember having spent that evening with other members of Red Aid by participating in a running/walking event hosted by a group called Austin Anarchist Black Cross (Austin ABC), which also ran campaigns to support leftist political prisoners but was obviously not affiliated with the CRCPUSA due to ideological differences. Us Red Aid members went to this event in hopes of building a stronger relationship with Austin ABC. The next day, I was notified that Chairman Gonzalo, chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Peru and leader the World Proletarian Revolution, after being in captivity for nearly 30 years in inhumane conditions, was finally assassinated the day prior by the old comprador capitalist state of Peru through intentional torture and neglect. An international call to action was put out for communists all over the world to “Defend the great leadership of Chairman Gonzalo and his all-powerful Gonzalo Thought”. The CRCPUSA wasted no time answering this call.

At the end of a general body meeting Simone pulled me to the side away from the earshot of others and asked me to help her with some additional “underground” work. Of course I naturally agreed. From time to time thereafter Simone would come to my house late at night and we would go around to various neighborhoods with masks covering our faces as we committed all sorts of vandalism across the city of Austin. We spray painted various messages, such as “*ELECTIONS, NO! REVOLUTION, YES!*”, hammers and sickles, and she also taught me the practice of wheatpasting, which consists of using a white and wheat flour base mixed with water to create an adhesive for posters to be posted on walls, street lamps, etc. Although illegal in cities like Austin, it’s really quite fun, and I do recommend it for posting revolutionary propaganda, artistic street art, or just simply keeping your rent down. Other cadres posted messages around town for the public to see such as “*Long live the People’s Wars in Peru, India, Turkey, and the Philippines!*”, “*Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!*”, and most famously “*Eternal Honor and Glory to Chairman Gonzalo!*” which was painted on Austin’s Railway Graffiti Bridge over Lady Bird Lake.

During the late summer and early autumn of 2021, Victoria had introduced me and other Red Aid members to a woman in her early thirties named Lisa “Avanti” Hogan and her then three-year-old daughter “Debbie”. Avanti had been arrested the year prior during a Black Lives Matter protest that was held outside a local Target store where she live streamed the protest on her phone. Her and three other protesters were then arrested and faced trumped up felony charges such as burglary, even though they never entered the store or caused any direct damage. Avanti and the other two arrestees became known across the country as the “Targeted Three”. Red Aid worked tirelessly until we were finally able to get all their charges dropped. Avanti was also the wife of the previously mentioned political prisoner named Jared “Dallas” Roark, who had been a long time far-left wing political activist in Austin, Texas and had previously led the organization Red Guards Austin during its existence. Dallas had a nearly lifelong track record of being a leading organizer of the US Maoist movement until his arrest sometime between 2019 and 2021, where he would remain behind bars until 2022. Victoria had then declared that Red Aid was to devote more attention and effort to aiding Dallas and his family. I would later learn that Dallas was the primary leader of the CRCPUSA.

Along with Avanti and her daughter, members of Red Aid were also introduced to a young woman I will call “Rachel”. Rachel had spent a considerable amount of time in the Maoist movement before I had joined. She was a very gentle, kind-hearted person who spent much of her time looking after Debbie and performing general housekeeping duties for Dallas and Avanti. I didn’t know this at the time, but Rachel was forced to be an indentured servant to Dallas and Avanti. Despite her love for the cause, Rachel was not allowed to organize at all but rather remained at the home of Dallas and Avanti to care for Debbie. Hell, Rachel wasn’t even allowed to have a job of her own until she was required by Dallas and Avanti **in order to help pay for their own bills**. Without knowing these hidden secrets save for Victoria and Simone, Red Aid then began to organize child care of its own to support this family as well as running small scale campaigns to assist in releasing Dallas from prison. Some members of Red Aid would spend their only days off from work to spend hours taking care of Debbie. Other members would travel many hours to and from Three Rivers, Texas where Dallas was being held to speak with locals and those who were traveling to and from the federal prison in town to visit loved ones about the conditions within the facility.

In October of 2021, I attended an *ofrenda* in one of Austin’s east side working class neighborhoods hosted by a CRCPUSA organization known as Families and Supporters of Garrett Foster and Alex Gonzales, or simply “Supporters” as it was synonymously called. Its purpose was to raise awareness and support among working class people in Austin and around the country toward the families and friends of Garrett Foster, who was murdered at the hands of US Army sergeant Daniel Scott Perry in the summer of 2020, and Alex Gonzales, Jr., who was brutally murdered by off-duty cops of

the Austin Police Department in January 2021. The event was held at a small street corner where candles were lit, pictures of Garrett Foster and Alex Gonzales were framed, free hot meals were served to the public, and other activists within the Maoist movement were in attendance. This *ofrenda* also displayed a prominent portrait of the late Chairman Gonzalo and chalk written messages such as “Long live the People’s War in Peru!” Members and reporters from Tribune of the People were also present. The leading organizers lead speeches about how imperialism is what ultimately caused these people’s deaths as well as all deaths of police violence. Despite the revolutionary spirit of Supporters, extremely few local residents came to attend. I don’t believe however that it was because the community didn’t care about the deaths of Foster and Gonzales, as this was in a neighborhood where both Gonzales and Mike Ramos had been killed and the community had expressed strong feelings against police violence. However, I believe that the supposed “red nature” of this *ofrenda* really alienated the community away from the cause of justice for these fallen heroes. I would also like to make something else clear: the majority of Americans do not know who Chairman Gonzalo was or the work he did, and they don’t understand words like “imperialism”. Most Americans do feel disdain for capitalism, but the way organizations like Supporters and other Maoist groups would try to perform outreach was very limited to their own textbook ideological dogma rather than applying Maoism to actually look to the masses to learn their struggles and what would truly resonate with them and progressively serve the people. This was a mistake which ran rampant throughout the movement. We spotted maybe three or four members of the community at this event, but after some time they each would voluntarily depart back to their homes. I would later meet with the political lead of Supporters to express my criticisms about this utter failure. She agreed wholly yet frustrated. In the same manner, I also felt that Red Aid was losing touch with the masses, especially after the failed agitation outside the Travis County Democratic Party headquarters back in August. She mentioned that the assignment to organize this *ofrenda* was set to her merely days in advance. I empathized with her and told her that I was experiencing similar problems within Red Aid’s own leadership under Victoria.

As I had mentioned earlier, the CRCPUSA and the US Maoist movement had a sort of mouthpiece known as Tribune of the People, or just “Tribune” as we would call it. Tribune had grown out of the late Incendiary News Service once it had collapsed in early 2020 and had local support committees all throughout the country. It constantly branded itself as being a so-called “revolutionary news service” that followed various working class struggles from tenants organizing against landlords, to combative actions against police brutality, to workers organizing for better wages and working conditions, and every other class struggle the American and international proletariat faced. “There is virtually no region in the United States,” one member of Tribune had explained to me, “that Tribune of the People has no presence in. We are everywhere.” Every cadre in the movement, at some point, were required to regularly read articles written by Tribune in

order to be “properly and politically educated”. Aside from posting regular publications and newspapers, Tribune actively held various forms of cultural events and study sessions to connect with and educate working class communities in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. At one such event, I had interviewed a member of Tribune who casually mentioned to me that one of the many struggles that Tribune was involved in was the struggle for reconstitution of the Communist Party of the USA.

I would later make a connection with another longtime member of Tribune who I will call “Randy”. Randy had been very active in the former US Maoist movement for a number of years at that point. For the remaining last few months of 2021 and first couple months of 2022 Randy and I would liaison on a monthly basis where I would purchase Tribune newspapers from him to distribute among Red Aid members, and we would talk at length about the current work and campaigns of each of our organizations. We both wanted to build a stronger cohesive relationship between Red Aid and Tribune in order to support each other and advance the movement. He would ask me things such as what work and campaigns Red Aid was currently focusing on, where our members generally found themselves on the political spectrum, what Tribune could do to better support Red Aid and promote our work, etc. I was happy to answer his questions, and in turn I would also ask questions regarding the work of Tribune and where they were headed. One day Randy came to me full of excitement saying that after four months of struggling with the editorial board of Tribune, they finally agreed to devote a portion of their newspaper and website to covering the growing labor movement in the country, among the various other social, economic, and political struggles going on at that time they were already covering. This struck me as a bit bizarre, because as Marxists much of our ideology is greatly founded and practiced in the labor struggle, and I wondered why it took so long for members to convince the leadership of Tribune to cover the labor struggle.

I further asked him questions in regards to Tribune’s efforts to reconstitute the Communist Party of the USA, as I had previously heard about. Throughout the entire time I’ve known him, even to this day, this was by far the only question he seemed to shy away from answering. “There are certain things that are being done,” he replied reluctantly, tilting his head. “But I am not at liberty to go into detail about them with you, comrade.” Though I would eventually find my answer within a few months’ time.

As the autumn months of 2021 progressed so did the international struggle to commemorate the life and legacy of Chairman Gonzalo. Once again, Simone came to me in private and asked if I was able to assist with more underground work. As usual I agreed. She informed me that I, as well as other cadres in Austin, were to create a solidarity video to honor the Chairman. Throughout the former US Maoist movement cadres were at times required to film solidarity videos to support various sites of struggle. They were usually pretty relaxed, and even local members of the community were invited to join as they would hold up signs and give speeches to support a wide

array of causes they were trying to stand in solidarity with, such as certain activists who were facing state repression, or even international sites of struggle. I actually found the creation of most of these solidarity videos to be fun and wholesome, and I enjoyed the moral support they would offer to oppressed people. However, this particular solidarity video was different. No one outside of those who were directly invited were allowed to participate or assist in any way with this video or even know about it. Over the course of a couple of weeks, I and about twenty other cadres in Austin would convene at a particularly dark house. The vibe immediately stiffened once a man who went by the names Kyle or Angel arrived on the scene. In this memoir I will simply call him Kyle. Kyle maintained a perfectionist attitude throughout this whole project. Our first job was to completely strip and gut the entire living room area free of all furniture and personal belongings. On one end of the living room multiple cameras and lighting equipment were set up, which were manned by Simone, her husband Scout, and Kyle, and on the other was a massive portrait of Chairman Gonzalo draped in roses which took up almost the entire wall. The other cadres who were to be in the video, such as myself, were instructed to wear dark green shirts, black pants, and matching black face masks. Much of the video contained footage of us stomping and marching in lockstep formation around this living room hoisting up red flags and chanting revolutionary slogans. Speeches were made in front of the camera elaborating the life, legacy, and leadership of Chairman Gonzalo, and the necessity to impose Maoism to advance the World Proletarian Revolution. Somewhere in the world today, deep within the confines of someone's hard drive there is footage from this project of me awkwardly stomping and marching around and thrusting out a portrait of Chairman Mao in front of the camera. This was the first time in the movement when I deeply thought to myself, "*This feels like a cult...*" But I ignored it because I felt that those who were in charge of this project simply knew better than I did. I therefore allowed my inner liberalism to take over and I went along with it.

At the end of one shoot a minor logistical error was made by a comrade. "That comrade will be dealt with *severely*," Kyle asserted.

This project went on over the course of multiple weeks, sometimes lasting up to 6 hours at a time. To this day I still have never seen the final draft of this video, but we were told that it was to be shown at an international conference with other Maoist parties and organizations.

Later between November 12-15, 2021, Mary and I were assigned by Victoria to fly out to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to accomplish a variety of tasks, some of which included meeting up with other comrades in Pittsburgh to discuss the formation of a Red Aid chapter in the local area and to meet with other activists to learn from their tactics and strategies in organizing. When we arrived in Pittsburgh, our first task was to go to a protest that was being held downtown in front of a local courthouse to demand justice for Jim Rogers, who was a local homeless Black man murdered by Officer Keith

Edmonds. The Pittsburgh chapter of Tribune of the People was the first group to uncover this murder, identify Keith Edmonds as the culprit, and report about it, making it nationwide news. The fight for justice for Jim Rogers was one of the primary sites of struggle comrades in Pittsburgh were engaged in.

Over the next few days Mary and I met with journalists and organizers of Tribune and even held a public panel with other activists with about 40 people in attendance to further understand the struggle against state repression toward revolutionary and progressive activists since this town had a long history of class struggle dating as far back as the Battle of Homestead in 1892 and beyond. Additionally we met with two relatively inexperienced comrades in private who wanted to start a Red Aid chapter in Pittsburgh. Their knowledge in Maoism and organizing was extremely limited, but despite this obstacle Mary and I were determined to give them as much help as we could and explained the long and short term operations of Red Aid as an organization and the methods we used to organize people.

One of the things that had long been disturbing me at this point during my tenure in leadership in Red Aid was the feeling of being left in the dark about certain things. For example, every week during our meetings as steering committee Victoria would show up, sometimes late if she didn't have her shit together, and go into great lengths about new information that came up in the movement. *"Where the hell is this person getting this information from,"* I often wondered to myself. Usually though, I would brush it off, considering that she imposed herself as being my sort of boss who had much more experience and connections than I did, and that most everything she said seemed to be legitimate and factual, so I would sometimes just roll with whatever she had to say. At times though I would press her for the sources of information she would bring to us. She would quickly either shut me down or offer very vague explanations. In the weeks leading up to this excursion to Pittsburgh, it was rather frequent for Victoria to order me to step out of the room during steering committee meetings while she discussed with Mary in private. I sometimes would voice my frustration with this. After all, I was an elected member to leadership, and naturally I was in fact exposed to all sorts of highly classified materials, information, and documents, but sometimes I would still be left out of certain discussions. This secrecy especially manifested itself in Pittsburgh when Mary left for nearly an entire day to go speak with comrades about who knows what explicitly without the permission of my presence. I'm only assuming that this was under the directive of Victoria and the rest of the CRCPUA, though I am not sure what the exact nature of Mary's side activities in Pittsburgh were other than they were strictly political. I wasn't bothered enough to throw a fit, but I do believe that this was a failure in Victoria's and Mary's conception of democratic centralism.

In the month following my trip to Pittsburgh, demonstrations and marches continued across the world, including the US, to pay tribute to Chairman Gonzolo. It was sometime around his birthday on December 3rd that a march would be organized in

Austin. At the very last minute I was invited to participate in the training and rehearsal for the march in a field at Dove Springs District Park. I didn't think much about it, and naturally I went.

Before the training began I noticed one woman, who I had known and would later find out that she was a member of the "Party Embryo" of the CRCPUSA, took another young woman "Trisha" to the side. There I overheard her giving a list of names to Trisha, my name being one of them. Trisha then pulled me to the side. I had known her ever since our days together in MRB, but Trisha herself was also a member of the "Red Army Embryo" of the CRCPUSA and had served on Defense during the May Day march that summer where she herself was arrested. "Comrade," she explained to me, "You have combat experience from the May Uprisings and MRB. I'm placing you on Defense." I knew I was scheduled to work immediately the day after the march, so the idea of getting arrested concerned me, but I had always craved to learn the discipline of such a combat role and I was always willing to fight. I picked up a short flag and fell into line.

The next day about 50 to 75 Maoists from across the state of Texas convened at Hemphill Park outside the University of Texas at Austin where I also ran into Mary. She asked what my position was in the march, and I said Defense. Believing that I was not ready to take on such a role after only one day of Defense training Mary then spoke to the lead organizers and I was reassigned to the Tall Flag position, the same position I took up during May Day.

I don't feel it's necessary to go into great detail about the march itself other than how people reacted to it. As one might assume, the reception of the people at UT Austin's West Campus was certainly mixed. Some people would raise their fists in solidarity as they drove or walked passed, others would heckle and call us commies, Red Guards, pinkos, tankies, and every other pejorative word in the book. One group of maybe five teenagers nearly drove their car through the march out of retaliation. And most people who didn't react to it just didn't give a shit altogether.

In all, one of the most common trends during these "explicitly red" actions and events that the movement carried out in public was that these were entirely performative and didn't incorporate the masses in any way. Despite our intentions, it was almost as if we were simply yelling at them about our politics. This trend of trying to impose ourselves as being some sort of know-it-all ideological badasses manifested itself all throughout the CRCPUSA and the overall work it performed.

It was in December 2021 when Red Aid held its last general body meeting of the year that criticisms against Victoria and the overall leadership of the organization finally came to light. All members unanimously united that Victoria had been proving to be a bureaucrat and a commandist who would fail to consult the ideas and criticisms of the general body. It was also brought forth that leadership in Red Aid had been falling toward economism, which is a right-opportunist trend that prioritizes short term goals

and problems rather than the long term goals as an organization, which for us the long term goals were the reconstitution of the Communist Party of the USA and the realization of socialism and eventually Communism. At this time, Victoria seemed to accept these criticisms in good faith and offered that she would work to improve her behavior and actions in the following year. Red Aid as an organization would henceforth take a two to three week hiatus until after the holiday season and would resume its work later in January.

By December 26, 2021 Simone had handed me a slip of paper that announced the 128th birthday of Chairman Mao Zedong and that there would be a special meeting called for Maoists in the Austin area and provided a map of where to locate it. She told me that I needed to burn this slip after it served its purpose.

A group of maybe twenty or so Maoists, myself included, met at an Airbnb far out in the countryside outside Austin. Our phones were checked before setting foot on the property, and upon entering the living room I was greeted by an ornate display of red flags, hammers and sickles, roses, portraits of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, as well as decoratively framed photographs of some of the more explicitly red events in the movement over the past year, such as May Day and the most recent march that took place earlier that month. I was already acquainted with at least maybe half the people in attendance, in fact my date I went with had joined Red Aid at the same time as I did. As I mingled with people, especially those who I had never met previously, they would ask me, "So what kind of political work do you do," or "What 'org' are you in?" Whenever I would respond by saying Red Aid I would almost always get an impressed reaction. Our organization had made qualitative achievements over the past nearly two years, especially with the Drop The Charges Coalition. Though Red Aid operated behind the frontlines, we had gained a reputation in the movement as being so-called "professional revolutionaries". Quite frankly at the time, I viewed myself to be a proud member and leader of Red Aid and the work we did.

"Comrade," someone beckoned from the kitchen. I came closer. "Food's almost ready. Will you find out if 'Alex' wants a plate?"

I nodded faithfully and passed by two men discussing on a couch.

"So how do you know them," the first one asks the other.

"Oh, I know them through the *Committee to Reconstitute the Communist Party of the USA*," the second explained so casually that the first thought I had about what I heard was that it didn't surprise me that an organization with such a name would exist. I didn't know then what it actually was though and how central it was in the movement. In fact, for some reason I thought it was some random *org* based in New York of all places. Don't ask me why.

When Red Aid resumed its work between January and February 2022, Victoria, still as bureaucratic as the year before, decided it was time that our organization was to scale back its work with the Drop The Charges campaign and instead take up more

prison reform work, and that Dallas was to be the primary political prisoner we were to support as well as his family. These decisions were neither discussed nor struggled over in either the steering committee or the general body of Red Aid. Her edict outlined that Red Aid was to establish a rapport with the locals of Three Rivers, Texas, especially with people traveling to and from to visit their loved ones at the same federal prison Dallas was locked away in in order to further understand the increasingly grueling conditions within the prison facility under these lockdowns, and that Red Aid was to launch a new nationwide campaign to demand an end to the federally mandated COVID-19 lockdown of prisons, which greatly reduced inmates' communication, like that of Dallas, with each other and the outside world, even with their own families. In addition, Victoria set her sights on a poor, working class apartment complex in Austin called Booker T. Washington Terrace to establish a base of community support for this new campaign. On top of all this, Red Aid was to also establish a sort of "childcare support committee". Since there were two out of three of us who were in steering who were direct members of the CRCPUA, myself not included, this "proposal" was ratified immediately.

This new campaign engineered by Victoria and the higher levels of the CRCPUA was met by members of Red Aid as wildly unprepared to the point where most members couldn't even recall what the actual purpose of the campaign was. In February, a meeting was held between members of the steering committee and the general body to discuss once more what the objectives of the campaign were. And once again the same criticisms held against Victoria were brought to light that she was not leading the organization in any sort of democratically centric way. Victoria again "heeded" these criticisms, reaffirmed her commitment to the organization, but still pushed for this new campaign to assist Dallas. The rest of the steering committee and the general body were briefly persuaded by Victoria into complying with this order, but that we were to carry out this order "more democratically". Whatever that meant.

As I had mentioned earlier, a new "childcare support committee" had been organized among members of Red Aid, which was principally tasked with the overall childcare of political prisoners and community members who brought their children to general assemblies and events. However, in practice though, this committee was primarily dedicated to assisting Avanti care for her child while her indentured servant was away working to pay Avanti's and Dallas's bills. For weeks, most members of this committee had to sacrifice their only days off from their professional jobs to look after this child and maintain the household without any compensation whatsoever other than maybe food and shelter.

On the morning of February 15, 2022 I hosted a press conference on behalf of Red Aid between local media, Grassroots Leadership, and the Texas Center for Justice and Equity to encourage the public to push the US Federal Bureau of Prisons to end the lockdown. This was the final political and public action of Red Aid before its death.

On February 28, 2022 Victoria sent a message to Mary and me stating that “due to personal reasons” she needed to temporarily step away from her political work. On March 5, 2021, I had received additional messages from multiple other comrades across Austin to meet to discuss a matter of importance in private.

The Fall of the CRCPUSA and the Death of the Revisionist Movement (March 2022 and Present)

Over the course of about 12 hours on March 6, 2022 comrades came to me in private explaining how the US Maoist movement had ended overnight. According later to one anonymous comrade in this movement:

“[The spring of 2022] is when the [Committee to Reconstitute the Communist Party of the USA] experienced major upheavals which led to splits between the rest of the organization. From the outside, it can be difficult to assess the nature of this crisis and to understand its ins and outs. But on March 1, 2022, comrades voted unanimously at an expanded plenary session of the Central Committee to oust elements hostile to the organization who were part of that historic leadership in the Political Bureau (Politboro), and to replace this executive body of the Central Committee with a reorganization committee led by the only ‘leftist’ who was thought to be part of the Politboro. This ejection was fully justified but the endorsement of this supposed ‘leftist’ was a critical error. The next day, in response to this event, the opportunist clique that dominated the Central Committee instead openly defended the hostile elements through this ‘leftist’ and attempted to order the isolation of those who led the recall of the previous day not on the basis of the organization’s line struggle but on the various organizational and procedural offenses, for ‘having an agenda,’ with this reorganization committee leader ordering for members who were in good standing and recognized for their exemplary militancy in the months prior to the meeting to be expelled.”

It was later revealed on March 8, International Working Women’s Day, by the women of Pittsburgh in a courageous act of defiance that Dallas, with the help other high ranking members of his clique such as Victoria’s partner of ten years and member of the editorial board of Tribune of the People, Chris Ledesma, had harbored a man known as Sydney who had raped one other comrade in Austin, and Ledesma did nothing with this information. Sydney would later move to another city where he went on to rape at least two more people. Simone’s husband Scout, who was head of Fourth Sword Publications, was also facing allegations of possible sexual assault against another comrade. Dallas, Victoria, Simone, Scout and many others within this clique did everything they could to cover up this abusive monstrosity.

A special meeting occurred at Tom Lasseter South Lamar Neighborhood Park of approximately 50 cadres, myself included, in attendance. The legal names of all members of the CRCPUSA’s Central Committee and Politboro were read aloud, including those of Victoria and Simone. Mary and Annie were also in attendance, and they were harshly struggled against due to their membership as Young Communists. It was through this struggle that it was revealed that although they were active members

of the CRCPUSA, they had for months tried to struggle with their own leadership to voice their own criticisms. Mary and Annie were largely innocent and had endured much of the same neglect and abuse from leadership many others had faced.

On top of that, other rank and file members of the CRCPUSA had faced harsh punishments for very minor infractions during their tenure with the organization. In some cases members had to swim laps at Barton Springs at 5:00 in the morning. Others were subject to harsh verbal and mental abuse and isolation. At times, shadowy figures would appear at the homes of members in the dead of night to intimidate them. In one case, a comrade had confided in me that he was pistol whipped at one point. Expulsion from the organization was also a common and frequent punishment. Trisha had repeatedly described her experience in the Red Army Embryo as being a “human meat grinder”.

Rachel would later release a statement of her own as being the former indentured servant to Dallas and Avanti explaining how her whole life was dictated by this abusive clique. It was only under the cover of night and secrecy that other comrades aided her to finally escape from Dallas’s home and went into exile for her own protection under a completely new identity.

During this time Victoria and Simone actively hid from the rest of Red Aid and avoided all contact with members, especially with Mary, Annie, and me as we persisted to try to reach out to them to struggle against them. As Victoria went into hiding she changed all the passwords to Red Aid’s official Cryptpad and Proton Mail accounts. Once she did this, I in turn changed Red Aid’s bank account information to secure the several thousand dollars I was in charge of. Because I was the treasurer, I knew that Victoria was responsible for at least \$10,000 of Red Aid’s treasury. That money has since been long gone. The remainder of the money under my name was later redistributed evenly among local activists who were currently facing state repression.

Mary, Annie, and I called for one final meeting with Red Aid’s general body to discuss the situation and how we would move forward, if at all. During this meeting, those who did attend showed a great amount of shock and disbelief at everything that had unfolded and been brought to light. Some members didn’t even show up because of how disillusioned they felt. Members who were present agreed that if Red Aid was to move forward, it would continue its work on an exclusively local scale as opposed to its more national basis of work, but nothing was voted and ratified into effect. Ultimately, this was to be the final meeting of Red Aid.

On March 10, 2022 Victoria finally reached out to meet with me. At this meeting she approached me so casually as if nothing had happened at all. She smiled sweetly, asked me how my day was, and quietly sat down and retrieved from her bag copies of *“A Basic Understanding of the Communist Party of China (English version translated by Norman Bethune Institute Toronto, 1976)”* and *“Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung”* and placed them neatly in front of her. From my bag I pulled out a notebook

and pen. As she began talking about her own supposed side of the story, I took notes of everything she was saying. The tone of puzzlement arose in her voice. "Uh... May I ask what kind of notes you are taking," she asked.

"I'm collecting a statement from you. You are currently under investigation," I responded bluntly.

She scoffed, "Well I would hope that this is to be more of a personal discussion than an investigation." I continued writing notes. Eventually, in a very assertive tone she ordered, "Okay, I really need you to stop taking notes here. Also, who are you working for?"

"I am working for virtually every remaining organized Maoist in this country. I need you to understand something, Victoria: there has been a massive upheaval within our movement, and some very serious allegations are being brought against you and other members of leadership. My job is to collect a statement from you in an effort for everyone to understand this situation holistically and to eventually bring about justice where it is deserved. Let me be clear that you and I have worked together for over a year now. I am not conducting this investigation to personally attack you, because I have no reason to. I am doing this because I am a communist. My duty is to the majority, and to find the truth is what will best serve them."

She blinked her eyes as a scowl formed across her face. "Have you ever heard the old saying, '*No investigation, no right to speak*'?"

I rolled my eyes and dismissively said, "Yeah, sure," shrugging my shoulder.

"Sure? *Sure?! Do you even know who said that?*"

Annoyed and pinching the bridge of my nose I said, "No, but I bet you're gonna tell me."

"*It was Chairman Mao,*" she screeched in her ballistically condescending tone.

I paused as I waited for her to elaborate. "Okay... *and?*"

"And he taught that communists must investigate and understand every aspect of every contradiction. This is why you need to listen to me."

"Victoria," I folded my hands across the table. "Why do you think I am here then?"

The investigation continued for another hour and a half as she virtually denied every accusation brought against her and the rest of her clique, and she would try to gaslight me wherever she could. I had asked her beforehand to bring forth any self criticisms to this meeting she might have had. It was clear though that this woman was not about to admit any sort of fault or failure. At one point she even resorted to labeling me as a "male chauvinist" for simply confronting her about these issues.

I glanced at my watch. "We are now reaching the hour and a half mark," I stated. "Is there anything else you would like to say before we wrap this up." She shook her head. "Well then," I stood up. "I will keep in touch."

"Thank you for meeting with me," she awkwardly smiled.

"To you as well."

I never saw or spoke to Victoria ever again.

The following is an excerpt from an email I had sent to Mary and Annie later that same night recalling my interview with Victoria:

"I did meet up with V today. Here are a couple of notes I took during the interview (which, by the way, she opposed to me taking notes):

1. *She feels that dogmatism and male chauvinism are at the root of the problem in the movement.*
2. *[Rachel] left in the middle of the night on Wednesday.*
 - *According to Victoria, [Rachel] was tired of all the responsibility of taking care of [Debbie] all by herself.*
 - *Victoria mentioned that [Rachel] had heard a lot about Dallas and that he was abusive, etc, and that supporting him went against her principles.*
3. *Victoria said that she went to y'all's place on Thursday and talked with [Mary].*
4. *Victoria stated that she never confirmed to meet us on Monday at El Chilito.*
5. *Victoria stated that she changed the passwords on Proton and Cryptpad because she is the political lead and that it was within her right to change the passwords.*
6. *Victoria claims her partner is innocent of all allegations against him, especially regarding his harboring of a rapist.*
7. *Victoria claims that Dallas is not abusive to Avanti.*
8. *She claims that there are rumors that 'Scout is a predator' but she doesn't know anything else or if he has sexually assaulted anyone. She mentioned people with Fourth Sword [Publications] are leaving the organization over these allegations, but she doesn't know why.*
9. *She claims that it was her who declared that there [would] be a pause of work in Red Aid.*
10. *She says she wants to meet [with] people in Red Aid collectively and together to talk about this, and I pushed that she should initiate that on her own [accord].*
11. *She says that Simone hasn't been communicated with in terms of the allegations against Scout.*
12. *She says she doesn't understand why people are leaving the movement, and that these allegations are baseless.*

I have reason to believe that she isn't telling the full truth, and whenever she was hit with a hard question she would simply respond by saying 'I don't know'."

After realizing that the entire political basis of Red Aid as an organization was deeply rooted in the revisionist lines of Dallas's clique, it was with the overall consent of the general body of Red Aid that Mary, Annie, and I would dissolve Red Aid indefinitely as an organization as we tendered our resignations. The three of us wrote this following document in mid-March 2022 regarding Red Aid's position on the former Maoist movement:

“DENUNCIATION OF THE FALSIFIED MAOIST REVISIONIST GANG

From the perspective of former Red Aid members

We are former members of Red Aid. We say "former" because with this letter, we are announcing our resignation from the organization. Red Aid is a part of the apparatus of the old, decrepit "Maoist" movement in the US, and it has no place in the new, genuinely revolutionary movement that is being born from the fierce struggle going on in Austin and across the country.

Red Aid is an organization that is not built to serve the people, but instead to serve the interests of a revisionist gang. The head of this gang [Dallas] has been the main political prisoner that Red Aid has supported, and for the past 10 months, almost all of our efforts have gone into supporting this man. As has been already discussed in the denunciations written by former members of Tribune, [Dallas] is abusive towards his comrade and wife. The political lead of Red Aid, Victoria, and one of our veteran members Simone knew about this abuse and deliberately kept it from the rest of the organization. They are now choosing to deny the truth through manipulation and bold-faced lies.

To be clear, as Marxists, we can divide one into two. We are not against supporting reactionary prisoners because we understand that supporting them and helping them get through their prison sentences is a MEANS TO AN END, the end being support for the families that they left behind. No matter what a prisoner has done, the principal contradiction in this work is still between the state and the people. The family members of prisoners, who are often working class, do not deserve to shoulder the financial strain and psychological torment of having an incarcerated loved one on their own. Prisons are one of the most egregious manifestations of imperialism in the US. Those contradictions must be navigated with care so that the working class communities that are torn apart by the prison system can be politicized and mobilized against the state, which thrives off of their suffering.

However, [Dallas's] reactionary nature was covered up by his friends in Red Aid. He was hailed as a revolutionary political prisoner, as someone that members of Red Aid should look up to. But the truth is out: he is a revisionist political prisoner, not a revolutionary one. We refuse to regard him as such, because he is an enemy of the people and has proven this not only his horrific treatment of his wife, but his treatment of his comrades as well.

[Dallas] is not the only person who has been exposed in this national struggle. [Chris Ledesma], the former head of the Tribune editorial board and Victoria's partner, has also been exposed for harboring a rapist named Sydney. Sydney admitted to [Chris] that he tried to sexually assault his ex, Luke, and [Chris] did nothing with this information. Sydney went on to rape two young activists, and when this came to light, [Chris] had the audacity to be callous and cold towards the people that he failed to protect and support.

As of now, Victoria is running around talking to a handful of activists one-on-one to manipulate them into supporting [Dallas] at all costs. In these one on one meetings, she is going back on her statements of [Dallas's] abuse towards his wife and proclaiming that her partner, [Chris], is innocent of any accusations against him. She makes contradictory statements, inflates gossip, and lies through her teeth. These manipulation tactics are not unusual either. Ever since her appointment to political lead in Red Aid, despite having no experience in revolutionary mass work, she has been known to be impatient and callous towards membership, including other members of steering. Her commandist, dogmatic, and anti-people tendencies were hidden well underneath a facade of niceties. She has varied her approach, depending on the member that she is meeting with. She has attempted to keep up this facade with most members, but failed to do so when she met with [R.], the now-former steering member. Her anti-people tendencies and frustrations towards genuine struggle were on full display when she met with him just days ago.

We mention that she is only meeting with a handful of activists because she is refusing to meet with former steering members who have decided to break ties with this revisionist organization, [Mary and Annie]. Victoria is using the excuse that [Mary and Annie] went behind her back to gossip to activists about her. To be clear, we did meet with members of Red Aid to inform [them] about the two-line struggle in the Austin movement (where activists had already labeled the movement as revisionist), and to talk about the allegations against [Dallas and Chris]. It was not as simple as us gossiping and being unprincipled. In fact, our reason for doing this was rooted firmly in our politics. We decided to tell Red Aid members the truth about [Dallas and Chris] because Victoria and Simone had proven themselves to be avoidant and suspicious in this sharpening two-line struggle against revisionism and male chauvinism. Victoria is treating [Chris's] issues as if they are interpersonal, solely confined to their relationship, rather than political. She is making sweeping statements about [Dallas and Chris] being

innocent of the allegations against them, even though she herself is not investigating the truth. This is exactly why we decided to talk to Red Aid members ourselves. Despite what Victoria is saying about us, we had no intentions of not being aboveboard with Victoria and Simone about what we had been doing. But they decided instead to stop responding to our multiple requests to meet in-person, change the passwords to multiple Red Aid accounts, and continue meeting with activists so that Victoria could paint us as wreckers and liars. She is the gossip, not us. We are not afraid of the truth and making our positions crystal clear.

Victoria wants members of Red Aid to continue babysitting for [Dallas's] family for free. We, along with this child's former nanny, reject this completely. [Dallas's] revisionist clique is populated with college-educated men who have petty bourgeois backgrounds, who could get well-paying jobs, but instead have chosen to be unemployed and leech off their female partners. If they used their credentials to get a damn job and support their comrade that they supposedly care about, these men could help [Dallas's] family afford daycare, so that young women from Red Aid would no longer have to babysit for free. For several months, activists in Red Aid, most of whom are young women with full-time jobs, were giving up their only days off to babysit for free, while these men did not have jobs and couldn't be bothered to take care of a child that considers them family. These young activists had their political development put on the back burner so that they could serve a revisionist gang that would never see them as the political leaders they truly are. One young woman, [Rachel], has been living with [Dallas's] wife since he was incarcerated, and she has been treated horrifically by this revisionist gang. They weaponized her genuine love for this child and for the people to push her back into the home and make her an indentured servant. [Rachel] wants to make it clear that the reason why she does not want any of the young activists in Red Aid to continue babysitting for this family is because she knows from personal experience that their love for this child can and will be used against them, to suck them dry and demand reproductive labor of them that adult men can't be bothered to provide for the daughter of their friend.

Victoria and Simone are also protecting Scout, the head of Fourth Sword Publications and Simone's husband, from the people's anger. Victoria in particular is lying to Red Aid activists and downplaying his decrepit history. Scout is a predator who [Dallas] himself protected from the wrath of the people, who was put into leadership less than one year after he was predatory towards a young woman under his command. We will not get into the details of this, but if anyone does not have the full story, we would be happy to share it with them. The most important point is that Victoria is belittling the trauma that this young woman dealt with as a result of this affair.

We are sharing this because we want people to know that Red Aid, and by extension the Drop the Charges coalition, is under the control of the revisionist gang. During the

struggle in Austin, the activists in Red Aid have been put in a particularly difficult situation because two of their members, including their so-called political lead, have been actively working to conspire against the people and harbor enemies. In every two-line struggle, there are only two lines: the bourgeois line and the proletarian line. Victoria and Simone have decided to take [the] bourgeois line, and we have no choice but to take up the proletarian line. Red Aid was built to serve [Dallas], not the people. It cannot be transformed from within, but instead must be destroyed.

It is true that Red Aid has done some good work, particularly in getting charges dropped from the George Floyd Uprisings. Though its members have been deliberately underdeveloped by Victoria, our members have still managed to grow due their own initiative, and have proven that they have actual love for the people, which is more than this revisionist gang could ever say. But Red Aid needs to die, and it's our duty to make sure that it happens. Red Aid claims to support political prisoners and those who could become political prisoners, along with prisoners' families. But Victoria has shown that she is more concerned with holding onto her position of leadership, and that she does not have the people's interest in mind. Instead, she is in service of her clique, and will only use Red Aid to serve them, even at the expense of the people.

The struggle against revisionism taking place across the country fills our hearts with revolutionary optimism, class hatred, and overflowing love for the people. We believe that through struggle, a genuinely revolutionary organization that fights against the prison system will emerge, because such an organization is necessary. Red Aid is not that organization, but that is okay. We have the utmost faith in our comrades who are choosing to leave this rotten corpse behind, because they have proven that they put the masses above everything else. We look forward to helping our comrades build something new, and we will never stop struggling to ensure that the revolutionary line is in command of all that we do.

DEATH TO THE REVISIONIST RED AID!

(signed) - [Mary, Annie, R.], 'Goldie'™

Conclusion

For better or worse, my participation and experience in this cult taught me lessons that have greatly impacted the person I am today. On the one hand, I learned to be better organized and disciplined in not only my political work but in all other areas of my life. I learned to be more patient and attentive, yet also more assertive and outspoken. On the other hand, the practices I either led or was involved in did not completely serve the people but rather the political influence of a small clique of maybe six or seven horribly abusive people. But above all, I learned to love the people and sympathize with and listen to them.

In spite of everything, I still consider myself a Maoist. I will continue to do so until the day my heart stops pumping red. However, I will not turn this memoir into a rant of my political views but rather an overall explanation of what I witnessed during this time in history by use of my politics. I believe that it is primary to assert that it was through the manipulation of the revisionist clique that steered the selfless and loving nature of the majority of us involved into devoting our lives to the service of selfish and self-absorbed people like Dallas. And yet, it was the same selfless and loving hearts of my comrades commanded by the principles of Maoism which toppled Dallas and his gang of revisionist roadsters.

With every ounce of respect within me, I salute the brave and innocent comrades I stood alongside through not only the Maoist movement under the leadership of Dallas but also during the Maoist rebellion against him. The very nature of this struggle against Dallas can be summarized wholly when Chairman Mao said, "Marxism comprises many principles, but in the final analysis they can all be brought back to a single sentence: ***it is right to rebel.***" Wherever there is oppression, there ***will be*** resistance, and this rebellion helped solidify this principle.

I am lucky that I get to look at myself in the mirror. To this day, whenever I see my reflection, a spark of pride ignites within me as an inner voice reminds, "*You survived. You are free.*" I find it to be a privilege so sweet, I choose to make the most of it by doing all that I can to enrich not only my own life but hopefully of those around me. I choose to continue to unite with all who I can to fight for a better world. The human race deserves at least just that.

I look forward to the new era of the US Maoist movement. Into it I hope to bring a fresh new sense of humility and honesty. With the removal of the revisionist clique blocking the red sun, the future stands so brightly. The future is ours and ours alone.

Let us workers fight to decide for ourselves.

Until luminous Communism,
"R."