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Red Flags: Before You Join *That Org...*

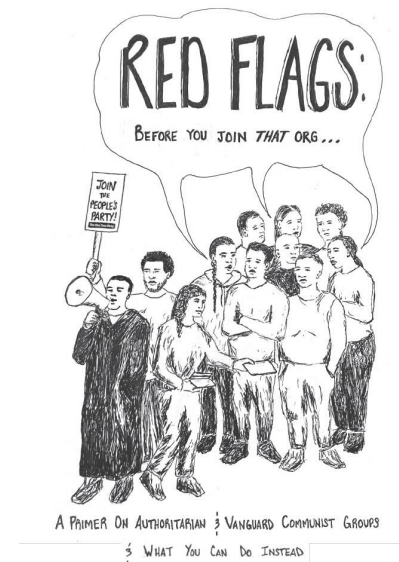
A Primer on Authoritarian & Vanguard Communist
Groups & What You Can Do Instead

Unsalted Counter Info

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A Primer on Authoritarian & Vanguard Communist Groups &
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June 3, 2024

Retrieved on 10 August 2024 from
unsalted.noblogs.org/files/2024/06/RedFlags_Web1.pdf

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Red Guards

CR-CPUSA Exposé

<https://maoistcultexposed.wordpress.com/cr-cpusa-expose/>

Black Hammer

Ex-Black Hammer members detail Gazi Kodzo's abusive 'cult'

<https://www.dailydot.com/debug/black-hammer-gazi-kodzo/>

Revolution isn't a game of follow-the-leader.

— Andrew Sage



Intro

When we pay attention to the amount of injustice in the world, we find ourselves wanting to *do* something about it. And we don't want to do just anything. We want to participate in what can most strategically stop those injustices. We need to organize together to confront what is killing us and the planet.

If you go looking for others involved in this resistance work, you might stumble across some organizations that seem to have all the answers. They say they know exactly how to bring capitalism to its knees. And they're often recruiting new members like you to take part in the Revolution.

But when organizations offer easy answers and tell you all you need to do is step in line with their orders, it should raise some red flags.

Before we get swept away by their revolutionary aesthetics, one-size-fits-all plans, and lefty lingo, we should talk about authoritarian and vanguard communist groups. They often search for young, enthusiastic people who haven't been warned about them yet or don't know the warning signs. All the major ones we know of have long histories of abuse. As anarchists, we understand that their embrace of authoritarianism is exactly what makes them so susceptible to being abusive.

This zine outlines red flags to look out for, provides some history of the most well-known authoritarian communist groups' harmful behavior, and offers a few alternatives to joining them.

We believe that the most strategic way to fight systems of oppression is by fighting collectively. We don't need to recreate the very power dynamics we're struggling against to win. But we do need you in the fight.

Common Tactics, Patterns, and Tendencies to Watch Out For

Here are some red flags to watch out for. You'll probably also see some of these in non-profits, advocacy groups, or other top-down organizations that operate like a business. However, it's the ideological motivation that sets the vanguard apart and leads to some of their worst harms. We use "vanguard" to mean a person or group who deems themselves the necessary leader of the masses toward "revolution." If you're noticing these red flags, it's best to stay away and ask others about their experiences with the group.

- **Heavy Emphasis on Recruitment:** Vanguardist groups constantly need new members: to pay dues, volunteer their

spaces by encouraging anti-authoritarian practices in them. Helping people who don't identify as anti-authoritarians see the practical value of supporting a diversity of tactics, not falling into the trap of following charismatic leaders, making decisions collectively, and forming deep relationships of trust and mutual care can be really beautiful outcomes of our involvement.

But above all, we recommend finding a few comrades whose values you fuck with deeply so you can roll with and learn alongside them. Having these people in your life as you confront the hydra of fascism and injustice will make your efforts more sustainable, dynamic, and help bring us closer to true liberation.

Resources

General

The Cardinal Rules of Not Getting Cult'd

<https://www.tumblr.com/timemachineyeah/646587752285077504/my-hy>

Ideological Intransigence, Democratic Centralism and Cultism: A Case Study

<https://www.whatnextjournal.org.uk/Pages/Back/Wnext27/Cults.pdf>

How to Form an Affinity Group

<https://crimethinc.com/2017/02/06/how-to-form-an-affinity-group>

A Step-by-Step Guide to Direct Action

<https://crimethinc.com/2017/03/14/direct-action-guide>

Means and Ends

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/anarchist-affinity-means-ends>

Party for Socialism & Liberation (PSL)

Documentation of Corruption, Institutional Bigotry, and High-Control Group (Cult-Like) Behavior in the Party for Socialism and Liberation

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240130021959/https://medium.com/@>

with your group and talk about what the group's approach to authoritarians attempting to join the group could look like.

Ensure that new members are on board with your points of unity. If your group has been around for a while, consider having older members reflect on these points together with newer members. Being able to explain why your group is committed to its anti-authoritarianism can be impactful in newer radicals' own journey of discovering their values.

Saying "no" is an important skill for any organizer to have, both to avoid your own burnout, but also to keep your group sustainable by preventing "mission creep." Being comfortable saying no to someone trying to get involved in your effort can be difficult. But being prepared to stand up for your group's values will help keep it on track toward its liberatory goals.

Beware the authoritarian who's comfortable using the language of anti-authoritarianism to advance their position in a group. We've seen them argue that opposition to their approach or involvement is authoritarian and isn't consensus based. One counter to this is to point out that protecting your group and its values is your collective responsibility.

So should I ever work with authoritarian communists?

It depends on the proximity. The writers of this zine won't intimately organize with them because we have seen too many efforts go sideways once authoritarian communists flood the membership. And at the end of the day, we're ultimately working toward different goals with very different tactics. But our aim isn't to be purists, and we don't want to silo ourselves into obscurity.

A lot of movements and mass efforts are composed of leftists with all kinds of political affiliations. It's very possible to participate in coalitions and broad organizing efforts with liberals and authoritarian communists alike without losing sight of our liberatory values. In fact, we can have a really positive impact in those

labor, recruit for the group, and replace burnt-out members. Lots of effort goes into social media and marketing, and actions are heavily influenced by how they can serve as a recruitment tool: the flashier the better. Waves of new people and energy help make a group feel active and relevant, and mask the steady trickle of people leaving.

- **Ambulance-Chasing & Coopting:** Seeking energy and recruits, these groups will suddenly appear around "crisis of the moment" events. As we write this zine, their current target is Palestine solidarity efforts that have increased in response to Israel's recent escalation of genocide in Gaza in 2023/2024. Watch for groups who appear at events uninvited and focus on distributing newspapers and collecting e-mail list signups. They'll often bring things like mass-printed signs with their group's name and website or a large banner advertising the group they can prominently display in photos of events to advertise. They may even hijack open mics and chants.
- **Front Groups & Front Coalitions:** Creating a front group or coalition is another way vanguards try tapping into movement energy to re-direct to their own ends. The front is dominated by members of the vanguard without clear connection to the vanguard group, to better allow the vanguard to hide their politics and intentions. Its purpose is to find recruits for the vanguard, and to be a vehicle for the vanguard's activities that appears to be separate from them.
- **Entryism:** Taking over groups or coalitions that are independent of the vanguard. This is most easily done to groups that are new, that haven't settled on goals and values, or who haven't witnessed these tactics before. Frequently, this is done by abusing and manipulating internal decision-making processes, like seizing positions of authority or

having vanguard members join in large numbers. Instead of creating a brand new front group, an existing group is hijacked.

- **Deceptive & Dishonest Practices:** The authoritarian politics of vanguards generally aren't liked, so they'll be kept below the surface. Vanguards publicly claim values that can attract people—like police abolition, supporting labor rights, and horizontal power—while hypocritically supporting police attacking workers in authoritarian nation-states they support, like Cuba, Iran, or China. How can you value someone's consent and autonomy if you lie to them?
- **Shutting Down Dissent:** Member obedience is necessary if a vanguard's orders are to be obeyed. This sometimes appears as “Democratic Centralism,” often with some kind of central or executive committee making decisions for the group. This can also appear in group social dynamics, where members self-censor or modify behavior when they dissent from the group's “party line.” Historically, this has led to a cascade of purges within notable Marxist-Leninist, Trotskyist and Maoist organizations.
- **Party Lines in General:** Vanguardist ideas of discipline and a “scientific” revolution that must be followed to a “T” require conformity, obedience, and strict binary thinking. The world is more nuanced than that, but this nuance isn't allowed in vanguardist politics.
- **Centralization:** A vanguard needs a power structure they can exert control from. If it doesn't exist, they may try creating it to place themselves or their close associates at the center.
- **Redirecting Autonomous Efforts into Spaces They Control:** Autonomous efforts and independent projects can be

A lot of the logistical tasks of starting and running projects have been written about. It's worthwhile to do research on existing groups doing similar things, and determining what practices and organizational structures and methods match up well with the values and goals that were collectively arrived at for your project.

Be humble! Odds are you're entering an ecosystem of radical projects that already has many different skills, experiences, and knowledge. Different kinds of projects require all kinds of different skills, and there may often be people doing the same or similar work that you just don't know about. You can learn lots of things from other people without having to sacrifice all your values; take what aligns and works.

Protecting You and Your Projects with Healthy Boundaries

You have anti-authoritarian values and have started a project. What do you do?

Radical groups with a “come one, come all” approach to organizing might see vanguardists showing up to their meetings and efforts. We've seen authoritarian communist cliques and reading groups decide to start collectively integrating themselves into a given project. They can discreetly build a power block within a group, and we know of many examples of such members taking control over projects.

Building points of unity and talking explicitly about your group/project's values is an essential way of protecting your group from not just authoritarian, but also liberal cooptation. Collectively writing out an explicitly anti-authoritarian point of unity provides an opportunity to discuss why that value is important to a group and how it's intertwined with your other values and goals. This would be a great time to share this zine

be helpful, but joining groups in search of values or beliefs can be dangerous.

Trust your gut. A group can claim anything in their mission statement, platform, points of unity, etc., but what really matters is how they move and operate in reality. Referencing the list of red flags from earlier can be helpful, and this is also where relationship comes in. You can ask people who aren't in the group their experiences with them to help sniff out warning signs.

You may find yourself in a group that, while not explicitly vanguardist themselves, has some vanguardist members or tendencies. You may not see it right away, or it may be a shift that happens over time. You could try to push back against this, but it may be too embedded in a group's culture to change. It's ok to leave! It may feel disappointing or sad, but a commitment to revolutionary action and change is not the same as a commitment to a group. Having relationships outside the group you're active with can help you not feel trapped.

Start Your Own Project

You might decide that you don't even want to work with an existing group. Maybe you're seeing a need that isn't being filled in your area—for example, maybe the only free meal distribution happens at your local Catholic church and they make you listen to a Bible story first. Or maybe you wish existing work fit your politics better; for example maybe the only immigration support group frequently works with cops, or the main anti-gentrification group in your neighborhood has been hijacked by a vanguard group. You can try something new!

This can be daunting and require a wide variety of skills, but it can also be as simple as starting an effort with some friends and learning by doing. It's very smart to work together among the people starting a project to figure out common values and initial foundation and direction for the project.

enticed into spaces a vanguard controls, often with promises of resources, a plea to not “duplicate efforts,” or “left unity.” The intent is to gain influence over the project. Like a mixture of Entryism and Co-optation.

- **Hyper-Focus on Bureaucracy:** Getting the group stuck in loops of committee forming, decision-making, writing points of unity, establishing cadre leadership, etc. Most likely during power struggles and Entryist takeovers. Often causes non-vanguard members to leave in frustration.
- **Never-Ending Tasks:** Revolutionary change will require lots of effort, but within vanguardist organizations the pressure to fulfill duties and demonstrate commitment and discipline often lead to members committing most of their time to the vanguard group. This can lead to relationships outside the group weakening from neglect, becoming socially dependant on the group, and eventually burning out without a support network to help them leave the group.
- **Charismatic Leader:** Vanguard groups often center around a charismatic leader or founder who is elevated to a level of importance. This can be a leader/founder of the group itself, or an ideological figurehead.
- **Sheltering Abusers:** Patriarchal violence is a serious recurring problem basically everywhere. But vanguardist groups often treat attempts at accountability as an attack on the group and their ideology, or a distraction from “the cause.” They become defensive, and in practice shield abusers while dismissing survivors of abuse.
- **Taking Credit for Others' Work & Actions:** Vanguardists may take credit for events, actions, and work organized by other groups. This is particularly true for things that are flashy or popular, but other things may be claimed by

the vanguard group if it seems like it will be useful for recruiting.

- **Lack of Care for Members and Vulnerable People:** The thirst for attention-grabbing actions can lead to vulnerable people and the group's members being used as means to an end, resources to be exploited. Many "flashy" actions, such as an occupation, require extensive preparation, consideration, and care to manage various risks of harm (to the extent that we can). Nothing can be made perfectly safe, but a vanguard's sloppy approach to actions can put people through unnecessary harm for what is ultimately a PR stunt.
- **Coercive "Self-Criticism":** Space for intentional reflection and evaluation is necessary for anyone trying to have an impact on the world. However, "self-criticism" (sometimes called "crit and self-crit" or "struggle sessions") can be deployed to coerce group members to dedicate more time and resources to the group, shut down dissent, and re-mold members into more obedient followers. Puritanical efforts to root out "bourgeois" sentiments/mentality/social influences are a serious indicator of manipulation.
- **Defending and Glorifying Authoritarian Leaders and Governments:** For ideological reasons, vanguards in the "Western world" (our experience is from the "US") often uncritically support authoritarian governments and leaders in the name of "anti-imperialism." In extreme cases, this ends up being a sort of conservative patriotism. The actual practices and values of the nation-states they defend don't matter, only their geopolitical relation with the US. This comes from the history of authoritarianism in left-wing politics, and specifically the influence of a tendency called "Marcyist" or "Campist," which encourages uncritically supporting governments the "US" opposes. The result

Building Honest Relationships

Interpersonal relationships and communities are at the root of any group. It's the substrate the group is built on, its foundation, and what resilient groups come out of. Sometimes a focus on the formal structures and internal processes of a group hides this fact, leading to neglecting interpersonal relationships or ignoring power dynamics between members.

Don't stress about jumping into a group and "getting active" right away. Building relationships with others in ways that align with your values will lead to action. This is also how trust is built between people, which is necessary for almost any action aiming for social change.

The informal networks of well-tended relationships can be very resilient, and a fertile foundation for radical action, change, and life. Often the communities and complex webs of relationships that formal radical groups throughout history sprang from and relied on get invisibilized, but they made these groups possible. History is bigger than powerful organizations and charismatic leaders.

Find Existing Groups or Projects

This can be tricky if you're totally new to this scene, and there's no one way to do this. The writers of this zine all got involved in completely different ways. One way to start can be by poking around in social spaces. Local radical, indie, and DIY spaces sometimes have fliers and zines that might tell you about upcoming events where you can meet people. Ask around and reach out. Learn to see things that aren't "leftist" as radical. There are powerful social spaces that aren't legible to the state—like auntie networks—that will always be the backbone of social life. Build relationships on the fringes!

Keep in mind your values. You likely won't find a perfect fit, but you can find good ones. Using groups to search for people can

in importance for you, while other values are important and long-lived.

We can learn from our elders who used to be committed to Marxist values and participated in militant formations like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Black Panther Party, and Black Liberation Army. Black radicals like Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, JoNina Abron-Ervin, Ashanti Alston, Kimathi Mohammed, Modibo Kadalie, Donald L. Cox, & Kuwasi Balagoon each spent years throwing down in the struggle before developing values that were at odds with the top-down theory of change imposed by authoritarians—some eventually became anarchists later in life.

Never Stop Learning

The societies we live in also drive our action. If we want to act against the injustices we see like houselessness or transphobia, we need to understand how our societies produce them. That's radical change: getting to the root of things!

This is often where people turn to political ideologies and schools of thought: Marxism, Socialism, Feminism, Anarchism, and so on. These can provide useful, new ways to analyze and think about our world. But beware of easy, totalizing answers. The world is a complex and chaotic place. No single political theory can capture it all and become the eternal, correct view of all human society. Political theories also have histories of impact that we can study together and learn from so we don't repeat the same harms and blindspots.

Learning is best with others! You can enrich each other with your different perspectives and experiences. Our direct experiences are at least as useful as abstract political theories.

can be ugly. During uprisings, they'll callously attack dissidents under a regime the vanguard supports, calling them CIA spooks and calling their autonomous revolts "Color Revolutions"—if those same dissidents were in the US ironically, the vanguard group would try to recruitment them.

- **Expecting Queer People and People of Color to Assimilate:** Vanguards may try to make themselves more acceptable to "the masses" by sidelining the concerns of marginalized people, or pushing those people to be less visibly "different." This can sometimes go as far as the vanguard adopting conservative stances like transphobia! This can also be ideologically driven, with vanguards claiming problems like racism and sexism are actually just created by capitalism, and fighting them is a distraction from the more important "class struggle."
- **Use of "Left Unity" Rhetoric to Demand Inclusion in Spaces:** Some imagine "Left Unity" as creating a friendly and powerful movement, but in practice it suppresses diverse opinions and approaches in favor of a false "unity," frequently giving authoritarians power within movements they otherwise wouldn't have. You don't have to sacrifice all your values and autonomy to work with others on tangible, shared goals.
- **Local Organizers Controlled by a Central Committee:** For example, a vanguard's central committee may order organizers to get involved in a particular struggle like Palestine solidarity work. At worst this launches a destructive wave of front groups and entryist takeovers. At best these organizers honestly aid in an effort, only to vanish when the organization's whims change to a different hot new movement.

This incomplete collection of red flags is gained from experience. Vanguardist groups may only show a few of them, likely not many of them, and almost definitely not all of them. These red flags aren't the strict definition of vanguardist behavior, but a collection of behaviors that coalesce around vanguardist groups and practices.

These practices are very destructive for the individuals involved, the communities targeted for recruitment, and grassroots efforts to fight for a better world. Vanguard groups churn through members, squeeze them for labor and cash, burn them out, disregard their safety and autonomy, and can even serve as a pipeline into harmful conspiracy thinking or high-control groups. They turn people who are enthusiastic about radical social change into people who are better at taking orders from leaders, rather than acting autonomously and cultivating bottom-up power with others. These formerly passionate organizers' self-directed revolutionary potential, and their development as people, is sabotaged as they dedicate countless hours to building an organization's membership list, bank account, and social presence.

Why Are They Like This?

This isn't simply bad habits learned in an authoritarian society re-asserting themselves. Vanguardist groups and individuals have an intentional, ideological commitment to authoritarianism. This is a large part of what drives these toxic practices, and why such groups will not change.

Political ideologies play a big role in the world of radical politics, activism, and revolutionary organizing often called "the left." Vanguardist thinking generally (though not exclusively) comes from Marxist schools of thought. There are some corners of Marxism that move in anti-authoritarian directions, like anti-state Marxists. But today's vanguardist largely inherits from the

tices and red flags. (Revolutionary Communists of America, Socialist Revolution, Communist Party USA, Party of Communists USA, Socialist Equality Party, International Youth and Students for Social Equality, Young Communists League, League of Young Communists, International Socialist Organization, Socialist Alternative, Socialist Workers Party, ...)

What Do I Do Instead of Joining a Vanguard Group?

Think About Your Beliefs & Values

What do you value? What do you find beautiful? Your values and beliefs guide your action. They shape the goals you have, and how you try to achieve them. Having some idea of this is a crucial first step. You don't need to have everything figured out, and you don't have to pick an ideological label, but you should have a basic idea of yourself before you start. This helps direct you, helps you find others, and helps guard against joining a group in an impressionable state where you could be taken advantage of.

Activities and groups that align with your values are where you can be most impactful, build authentic relationship with others, find some fulfillment, and grow as a person. Groups and activities that don't align won't be as rewarding and can have impacts on the world that are actually against your values and the changes you want.

The world is in motion and so are you! Your values don't have to be permanent! You don't have to figure out every one of your values before you can do something. You can see how they work out in practice, discover new beliefs and values from others, see if they make sense, and how they fit or conflict with beliefs and values you already have. You may find some things come and go

SWAT standoff to their door. Most group members surrendered to police, but the dead body of member Amonte T. Ammons was found in the house. Gazi and others were arrested, and with Gazi still held in jail pre-trial without bond as we write this, the group has apparently dissolved.

- **RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party) aka Revcoms (1975-):** Founded as a Maoist organization after a years-long attempted Maoist hijacking of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. By 1979, Bob Avakian was chairman of the Central Committee and national leader. To this day, the RCP is centrally organized around Avakian, focusing heavily on evangelizing his particular Communist theories. They organize front groups and front coalitions such as Refuse Fascism and Rise Up 4 Abortion Rights, taking advantage of moments of crisis to recruit members and direct grassroots energy into ineffectual actions and Avakian evangelism.
- **FRSO (Freedom Road Socialist Organization) (1985-):** Formed by the combination of various remnants of the Maoist-leaning New Communist Movement, the FRSO is yet another ideologically Marxist-Leninist party. Known to operate front groups focused on various social justice causes, FRSO members hold leadership positions in the front groups to maintain control of its decision making processes and political direction. They use fronts to recruit leaders into FRSO, and to control the direction of other groups. When asked directly about FRSO involvement, they will likely deny it—sometimes by members who simply are unaware.
- **RCA, SR, CPUSA, PCUSA, SEP, IYSSE, YCL, LYC, ISO, SA, SWP, ...:** Many vanguardist organizations aren't as prolific or abusive as the above examples. But spend some time searching and there's no end of Marxist, Leninist, Trotskyist, and Maoist groupings that share many of the same prac-

ideologies of Leninism, Trotskyism, Stalinism, or Maoism, and may explicitly identify as an adherent of one. Generally, these ideologies are all considered kinds of Authoritarian Communism, in contrast against other ideologies like Anti-Authoritarian Communism, Socialism, or Anarchism. These authoritarian ideologies ignore that the methods you use for radical change influence the radical change that you wind up creating. You make the path by walking. If you want a liberating society, you need to use means that are liberating, not ones that depend on subjugation and domination.

At its core, the vanguardist's self-assigned task is to decide what is "revolutionary," craft a blueprint for all of society, and seize the power necessary to impose this blueprint on the world. The word "Vanguard" itself expresses the idea that this select few is the necessary leader of the unthinking masses toward "revolution," rather than the "masses" themselves. They justify this with ideological concepts like "democratic centralism" and "historical materialism." This highly theoretical view of human society and history puts the machinations of the vanguard above the concerns of individuals and whole societies, creating a rationalization for harming colossal numbers of people. The underlying power dynamic is hidden behind a smokescreen of ideological necessity: they claim to know the only true path to revolution, and to stray from it is to betray the struggle and lead us all to certain doom. This is great for them and bad for the rest of us, both in theory and practice.

Specific Groups & Examples

- **PSL (Party for Socialism and Liberation) (2004-):** Founded as a split from the otherwise incredibly similar WWP (Worker's World Party) (1959-). Ideologically a Marxist-Leninist party, they are present in many larger cities. Well-known for predatory behavior like swooping

into rallies for victims of police violence to recruit for their group, or leveraging popular causes to fundraise for themselves. Notoriously protected and defended a sexual assaulter in their Philadelphia branch, going as far as involving national leadership to remove members who criticized how things were handled, and coordinating harassment of the assault victim. Reports from former members of sexist, bigoted, highly controlling and physically abusive behavior being protected go back over a decade across various chapters. Known for entryist practices to hijack other groups, collaborating with police, and for significant involvement in the anti-war ANSWER coalition, itself originally a WWP front. Also known for leading unsuspecting marchers into police kettles without forewarning or jail support, then using the ensuing arrests to fundraise.

- **BAMN (... By Any Means Necessary) (1995-):** Primarily active in California and Michigan with deep historic ties to the Detroit-based Trotskyist group Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), suggesting it was originally a front group. Initially focused on defending affirmative action but have since expanded their focus. Notorious for targeting young people of color for recruitment and squeezing as much as they can get out of them, often thrusting them into risky situations without providing jail support when arrests happen. Known to hijack open mics and events to recruit, and posture as the only correct and legitimate organization for whatever issue they are currently focused on, trying to sideline any existing groups. Uses front groups.
- **Red Guards (2015–2022):** Currently defunct Maoist (specifically Gonzaloist) group, taking their name from the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution in China. Notorious for physically attacking other leftist groups and hijacking other

projects, such as the anti-gentrification coalition Defend Boyle Heights in LA. Heavily centralized under founder Jared Roark. Used flashy high-profile actions and militant aesthetic to attract attention, and recruited using fronts like study groups, food distribution, and tenant organizing. Members were subject to psychological abuse through “struggle sessions” and “self-criticism” to encourage conformity, dedication, and obedience to Jared’s conception of “revolutionary politics” and group decisions. “Dissolved” in 2019 to actually go underground and later form the group Committee to Reconstitute the Communist Party of the United States of America (CR-CPUSA), which would perpetuate similar abuse before itself disbanding. One of the more extreme examples of vanguardist politics, many former members describe themselves as survivors and the group as a cult around Jared.

- **Black Hammer (2019–2022):** Founded in part by Gazi Kodzo (legal name Augustus Romain) who had just left their position as Secretary General of the African People’s Socialist Party (APSP). It instantly became centrally focused around Gazi who operated the group as a personal grift with a black nationalist aesthetic, controlling the group and its members through extreme manipulation and abuse. Heavy social media activity and viral shock-jock stunts (dressing as the Joker, slandering Anne Frank, announcing an alliance with the Proud Boys) were used to attract attention, recruits, and donations. Members were kept subservient to Gazi through psychologically abusive “self-criticism,” ideals of revolutionary discipline, indoctrination, physical violence, and much more. After a land purchase in Colorado to establish “Hammer City” fell through, Gazi turned to “recruiting” houseless people in Atlanta. In 2022, a kidnapping call from their rented home and de-facto headquarters brought a