

MLM Line Struggle on new internationalism

Political Puritanism Collection

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[N.B. Some linguistic English alterations may have been made but the argument and facts employed remain unchanged]

Red Guards Austin – the end

Posted on 29. December 2018 6. January 2019 by maosite1917

This is an article about political puritanism, and why it leads to liquidation of organizations.

First of all: I have great sympathy and respect for Red Guards Austin (RGA). It was a young organization started by young activists who did a great job for some time. Despite their young age and lack of experience they achieved much from their work and gain lot of respect internationally. They have also been writing insightful articles related to MLM theory – which also have gain international interest. I don't necessary agree with all of their writing, but much of it is good and interesting.

I don't know very much about RGA. There might be other reasons for why this organization died. Unfortunately there is at the moment no self-criticism or any other good analysis from others about why this organizations died. I will therefore here just use the facts I know about the organization to describe reasons for why it would die sooner or later as long as they continued on the line of political puritanism as they developed.

Normally when a little communist group dies – it doesn't get much attention. The reason for why I write an article about the death of RGA is because they have been an inspiration for many. MLM groups internationally has read their writings and copied much of their line of struggle. It's therefore important to expose the gross errors they committed, to avoid other communist groups and organizations to do the same mistakes. I'm afraid other groups also have adapted the same errors as RGA and as a result also are getting smaller and smaller instead of the growth we need for building the necessary powerful organizations.

There are already a lot of speculations and rumors about the death of RGA. This are of no value for us. As Marxists we use science to get correct information. This is of special important in a matter of finding errors which destroys communists' organizations. Pure and revolutionary theory have no value if there isn't strong communist organizations to put it in to action. Critic of wrong lines for building communist parties are there for a matter of highest priority. This is not a matter for one person to make this criticism, and through this critically correct to a better line. This is a matter for the whole communist international movement.

This article is a work in progress. Criticism, information and corrections are welcome. I will update the articles with corrections and more information and explanations as I get input from readers.

Are they really dead?

There are rumors or theories outside RGA that they are not really dead, but just organizing to a higher level. I don't believe this. First of all: If they had – they would have told so – not just a sort message about that they "*are no more*". Second, I received information from a comrade who has been in contact with a former RGA members that confirmed they had not moved up to a higher level of organization. This is second-hand information, so it is not good evidence, but at least for me it makes it less likely that they are just reorganizing.

Some of the members are probably continuing their activities in Struggle sessions. It's big error (and very un-maoist) of them to not make an self-critic about the work in RGA. – Hopefully they will make in not to long time.

Correction 06.01.2019: *My assumption regarding their activities in Struggle sessions are probably wrong – I don't know if they ever where active in Struggle sessions, and got information that this probably are wrong.*

What are puritanism

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA defines puritanism as:

"Puritanism, a religious reform movement in the late 16th and 17th centuries that sought to "purify" the [Church of England](#) of remnants of the [Roman Catholic](#) "popery" that the Puritans claimed had been retained after the religious settlement reached early in the reign of Queen [Elizabeth I](#). "

This is off course a little different from what I mean by "puritanism" in this context. In this context it is about purifying Maoism.

Why is it wrong?

Puritanism results in:

- People will feel they are not "good enough" to join (and often also the members will not find anybody "good enough")
- The organization will write and say things that people finds strange and unappealing (formulations like: "*Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism*". This is a typical "pure" formulation which looks strange for people who are not 100% on the inside. You can write what you actually mean without using such "pure" and strange formulations).
- The result is sectarianism: You will become an unappealing sect which will recruit less people then the people who leaves the organization.
- A to strong security policy will make it impossible or at least difficult to recruit.

Evaluate your organization critically

Is your organization growing or shrinking?

If your organization is shrinking – then you got to find out why it is shrinking. What do you do different from before when the organization was growing? If your organization over time is shrinking you got to evaluate why it is shrinking and do something about it. If you don't – your organization will eventually die out. What do you do different from when you were growing? Probably you should revert some changes in the way you are working back to more like you did when you were growing.

Don't excuse the situation, and blame external factors. Find out your errors and correct them. Don't think you should do something internal changes first, and then think you can grow later – your biggest weakens are that you have an organization that are not fruitful.

The simple are often the best. Go out and talk to radical and/or proletarian youth. Explain for them the necessity to build a communist party and ask them to join. Don't make the process to become a member to long – you will eventually lose people on the way when you do. You have to have contact to person in a recruitment process often – more than one time per week.

If you have a security policy which make recruitment slow – then change that security policy. It's better to have an organization with an in-perfect security policy, than not an organization at all.

You should have this evaluation in all levels in the organization – from top to the local chapters. If one chapter is growing while another is shrinking – then learn from the errors of the one that is shrinking and from the right things from the one who are growing. Apply the right way of working in the whole organization. This is a question about national leadership also. But if you national leadership is weak (or not existing) the local chapters or groups have to do this by themselves.

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5 thoughts on “Red Guards Austin – the end”

1. 30. December 2018 | **A comrade** says:

Mass Organizations initiated and lead by RGA, such as Stonewall militant front, Defend our Hoodz and Popular Women's Movement are still active. Please check their work out at <https://pwm-mfp.org>, <https://stonewallmilitantfrontatx.com/>, <https://defendourhoodz.tumblr.com/> along with reading RGA's 2016 summation to understand the work of RGA and give an assessment of their weaknesses based on facts not speculation. It is likely that because these organizations are continuing that RGA is probably still alive in some form, although it may not be confirmed for some time.

2. 30. December 2018 | **maosite1917** says:

The main point in my article is the error they committed. Not speculation about whether they just reorganized. The facts are that they have closed down the organization. If they just reorganized – why doesn't they tell it?

Do you know if they still are leading in this mass organizations? I would say its likely that they continue without RGA – as they have grown other leaders. Maybe also leaders which formally was members of RGA, but now are not member of RGA or any other new mlm organization transformed from RGA.

3. 30. December 2018 | **A comrade** says:

You claim that they have committed the error of puritanism, and provide as evidence that they are no longer. But if they have moved onto a higher form of organization, then your evidence is not valid. All of your evidence is based off this speculation that this was in fact an announcement stemming from failure in their work and not success, but there's no evidence either way.

I don't know why they were vague with that message and why they did not release any further clarification. Only RGA will know that, and I'm sure we will eventually know the truth, but currently it is not known.

4. **30. December 2018 | maosite1917 says:**

I don't provide as evidence that they are no longer. On the contrary I write: "There might be other reasons for why this organization died". My point is that this error would make them die sooner or later (if it isn't this error who are the root of their failure).

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I hope you are right that the former members will clarify and give more insight in their errors so we can learn more of it. I hope my article helps to put some pressure on them to actually do that. If they still are maoists – they should make a self-critical article explaining their errors and reasons for giving up the organization.

I guess you as me are sad about what happened with RGA. We better hope some of them manage to learn from it and build a new and stronger MLM group.

5. **16. January 2019 | Creek says:**

Hello hello, from Earth to the Far Away Red Planet : for every people having followed the course of last years events, and having some contacts in the USCM, that's notorious RGA has failed in about any and every of its attempts of mass work and that's why "the project is no more".

Obviously, as stated in this article, having reached a higher level of organization, any organization would have soon claimed it *urbi et orbi*. No small local group, in the World, becoming a CP or a Construction Committee for CP or something like that, would state "we are no more".

Gonzalo and ultra-left deviation

by the Norwegian blog "MLM Thoughts"

Posted 2nd January 2019 by maosite1917 | This article has a Norwegian version

<https://mlmt.home.blog/2019/01/02/gonzalo-and-ultra-left-deviation/>

Correction January 3, 2019: I would like to clarify that the post was printed as a discussion post on the pages of KF and not as an editorial article.

<http://kommunisten.nu/2018/03/10/en-klass-en-ideologi-ett-parti-en-revolution/>

(**A little comment on this English translation:** – The original article which my article is a reply to was originally written in German. It was then translated to English, and then again translated to Swedish. Unfortunately I don't have the English translation, so the quotes are translated by me back to English again. It should not be far from the original through all this translations, but it might not be perfect... and since I'm not a native English speaker – the rest of the text are probably no better).

I think this carries the mark of puritanism as well as have a serious ultra-left deviation. It seems like a trend in the past that several Maoist groups are trying to purify Maoism. It seems that they forget that the most brilliant with Lenin and Mao was their ability to apply and adapt Marxism to the reality they lived under. Marx and Engels did not primarily think of Russia and China when writing their theories. As little as Lenin and Stalin wrote for China.

Those who tried to mechanically use Marxism in Russia failed. The same applies to those who tried mechanically to use Marxism-Leninism in China. In fact, the author of the article argues in favor of mechanically introducing Gonzalo's thinking in Germany. The Peruvians themselves wrote that Gonzalo's thinking was MLM for Peruvian conditions, but the article writes:

"... but the basic condition is that we strictly apply the "three with", as President Gonzalo taught us: Work with, live with and fight with the masses. Communists should live according to the needs of the revolution. Generally, comrades should live with the widest and deepest masses, sharing every aspect of the lives of the masses. Communists should have a personal production in the sector where they must develop their respective mass work."

The reality in Germany, Sweden and Norway is quite different from Peru. The masses in Peru are on another level and are far more susceptible to communist theory and propaganda, than the case is with us. In Germany, Sweden and Norway, there is much longer between everyone who is receptive to being able to organize themselves. There are also fewer large industrial workplaces today in these countries – it is therefore not possible for everyone to come to a workplace with many employees. When you work with few people, the recruitment basis becomes too small. My experience is that the largest recruitment base is with proletarian youth and most of all with politically engaged youth. Work through progressive front organizations that attract a lot of youth is where it is easiest to recruit. Alternatively, talk to many proletarian youths. We must prioritize our forces so that we get the most out of them. Lenin was right when he wrote that it is unimportant whether students or workers are recruited to the Communist Party (in "What Is To Be Done?") – the important thing is to build a most powerful Communist Party. The workplace is with other words rarely the place one should put most effort into recruiting new communists to the movement.

It gets extra difficult when the author also thinks:

Furthermore, we need professional revolutionaries who give their whole life to the party, to face the power created by a multitude of people to meet the people's power, which serves the existing order professionally. Living simple and struggling hard is a principle that leads us. We do not need leisure "communists" or parties that are not parties of militants.

This is not an analysis of how Maoism uses the specific conditions in Germany, but expresses the desire to mechanically follow a theory adapted to Russia in 1901. Lenin himself adjusted the theory to the reality he lived in, and already in 1905 he favored major changes regarding the recruitment work for the party.

What is the consequence of a line to only build organization for professional militants in countries such as Germany, Sweden and Norway in 2019? The reality for us is that the time for most young communists is greatly reduced when they come into the establishment phase of work and children. In reality, most experienced cadres will have to choose between work and family towards continuing as organized communists. The result is that we will be left with a small group consisting of militant students, schoolchildren and unemployed people. Most likely, the organization will die out by itself due to lack of experience and too little recruitment related to the number that will disappear over time. It will be especially difficult if one is to combine the goal of being both a professional militant revolutionary and working in an ever-decreasing national industry. How many are there that will pass this narrow requirement?

What we need, however, is a sea of different people who contribute differently in building the party. We need the experienced comrades who no longer have the same amount of time or desire to join all kinds of militant actions. There are many tasks that need to be solved to

build a party, and everyone does not have to be involved in everything. People are different – the party cannot be built, and the revolution cannot be led by a small group of militant youth with limited experience and insight into how the proletariat actually has it. In 1905, Lenin realized that the party had to relax the demands for admission to the party to get one big enough and strong enough party to lead the revolution.

Those who talk about “too much Peru”, “too much about other countries and too little about Germany” and even trying to use Liebknecht’s revolutionary defeatistic slogans “The main enemy is at home” to actually negate the proletarian internationalism are exactly that, demagogues and, as such, they are “the worst enemies of the working class” and it is the duty of all comrades to fight such criminals.

It is impossible to build a Communist party without doing mistakes in the process. It is impossible to correct mistakes without having a climate where people can criticize without being branded as “the worst enemies of the working class”. That the author here believes that comrades who criticize that there is too much angulation on foreign affairs at the expense of domestic issues should be branded in this way is an alarming signal. Even worse, this article is translated into several languages and spread like good Maoism. It does not make it any better for the author here that he tries to legitimize himself behind the fact that Lenin used such harsh words against actual demagogues in his day.

[What does this have to do with Gonzalo?](#)

This article is not one attack on Gonzalo. Gonzalo is a skilled Maoist theorist and the one who more than any other has summarize Maoism. This article is part of an combat of puritanical Ultra-left deviation spread by several MLM organizations labeled with Gonzalo’s banner. Ultra-left deviation is just as reactionary as right-wing deviation, and must therefore also be combated.

Ideological struggle is a good thing. Without it – we would never had any Maoism at all. Constructive critique, comments etc. are therefore warmly welcome!

UPDATE January 15,2019: Struggle Sessions have made a [reply](#) on this article, which I again have [commented](#).

Kommunistiska Föreningen i Sverige (The Communist Association in Sweden) has translated and posted the (original German) text.

A Crackle of Hens (StruggleSessions)

A response to the attacks on our German Comrades by the Norwegian blog “MLM Thoughts”

“[...] of course, in the backyard of the working class movement, among the dung heaps, hens will cackle over the mistakes committed by the great Communist”- Lenin

The second post from “MLM Thoughts” continues its opportunist attacks against the red line in the imperialist countries; while the first assault on the concluded Red Guards Austin project is not worth public comment, we have chosen to return fire at the article “Gonzalo and Ultra-left Deviation”.

This article, by attacking the website Dem Volke Dienen is making an attack on MLM in an effort to water it down with hollow populism. The author insists that the German comrades seek to mechanically apply the teachings of the great Chairman Gonzalo; in reality the German comrades put forward a fairly uncontroversial universal position which he quotes:

“... but the basic condition is that we strictly apply the ‘three with’, as President Gonzalo taught us: Work with, live with and fight with the masses. Communists should live according to the needs of the revolution. Generally, comrades should live with the widest and deepest masses, sharing every aspect of the lives of the masses. Communists should have a personal production in the sector where they must develop their respective mass work.”

This quotation expresses three principles, which are summed up in one Maoist principle: do not distance oneself from the masses! While the rightist blog attempts to liquidate the role and function of the vanguard Party by encouraging mass recruitment at the expense of ideology and security he has no qualms with objecting to being among the masses. All of Maoism entails living among the people you hope to organize, working in production alongside them and fighting by their side. There is nothing “mechanical” in this position; the rightist simply despises the masses, showing a preference for petty bourgeois comfort. Having personal production in the sector within which one develops their work does not limit oneself to the factory; if one is organizing the women’s struggle one must be among working women, and if we are to organize working class students we must do so as students and from the outside both.

His misreading of their position exposed:

“In Germany, Sweden and Norway, there is much longer between everyone who is receptive to being able to organize themselves. There are also fewer large industrial workplaces today in these countries – it is therefore not possible for everyone to come to a workplace with many employees. When you work with few people, the recruitment basis becomes too small. My experience is that the largest recruitment base is with proletarian youth and most of all with politically engaged youth”

There are a few issues with this analysis: he mentions three imperialist countries and attempts to use the role of finance capital to argue that there is no worthy proletariat to organize, while simultaneously arguing there is a large amount of proletarian youth! “Fewer” large industrial workplaces do not and never have been a pardon to avoid point of production struggles among the proletariat. There were fewer factories in China and Russia during their revolutionary upsurge, none the less this class and its forces were at no point neglected. Norway, Sweden, and Germany all have a sizable proletariat, with sizable proletarian enclaves in all their major cities. Even if large factories are not an option, living among, working among, and fighting alongside the proletariat are still necessities. We are offered no political economic analysis of factory recession from the author, so further engagement on this is limited. The German comrades state that we must organize the widest and deepest masses, while the right opportunist only hears “working with few people”.

While student and youth organizing are necessary, they do not outweigh the importance of organizing actual workers. Rightists in imperialist countries—following the line of this author—have more or less reduced themselves to little more than campus clubs for protest-hopping young people, isolated from the working class. While our German comrades speak from a position of real life organizing in their conditions, our Norwegian blogger simply is promoting his own personal opinion. Once students are recruited into a Communist Party the distinction between worker and student becomes irrelevant; this does not excuse orienting only toward students and excluding workers.

To puff up his argument against the Party of professional revolutionaries the blogger tries to dust off an article from Lenin: here he is using Lenin in 1905 to attack Lenin's classic *What Is to Be Done?* (Trying to copy Ajith, but distorting his work in the process). Using Lenin to negate Leninism is as tired and old a trick as using Marx to attack Marxism. While *What Is to Be Done?* has been required study material for Communists around the world as the principle source where Lenin developed his theory of the vanguard Party, and the 1905 text "New Tasks and New Forces" has not been elevated to anywhere near such stature, it is not without its merits.

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Far from being an attack on any sort of "ultra-leftist" Lenin's "New Tasks and New Forces" actually promotes methods of mass work as an attack on right opportunists:

"Once again, excessive (and very often foolish) repetition of the word 'class' and belittlement of the Party's tasks in regard to the class *are used to justify the fact that Social-Democracy is lagging behind the urgent needs of the proletariat*. The slogan 'workers' independent activity' is again being misused by people who worship the lower forms of activity and ignore the higher forms of really Social-Democratic independent activity, the really revolutionary initiative of the proletariat itself." —Lenin "New Tasks and New Forces", emphasis ours.

Lenin, far from opposing his early theories contained in *What Is to Be Done*, is speaking of the Party lagging behind the mass movement, *a movement which already exists*. He is not insisting that the Party be opened up to just anyone and accept a lower standard than that of professional revolutionary. Most importantly Lenin is speaking of the way in which *professional revolutionaries lead the masses in existing mass struggle and train them to become members of the Party*.

Lenin puts forward the titular New Tasks as: "to extend our agitation to new strata of the urban and rural poor; to build up a broader, more flexible, and stronger organization; to prepare the uprising and to arm the people; and, to these ends, to conclude agreements with the revolutionary democrats."

Lenin, being a dialectical materialist understood that the relationship of legal to illegal could only go so far:

"The present situation has done more than merely 'legalize' much of what was formerly banned. It has widened the movement to such an extent that, regardless of government legalization, many things that were considered and actually were within reach only of revolutionaries have now entered the sphere of practice, have become customary and accessible to the masses."

Due to developing conditions, the masses of Russia had now advanced to the point of grasping many things that formerly only professional revolutionaries could reach—this speaks to a quality among the masses and is clearly a conditional quality which determines a quantity of the masses being recruited and trained by the Party:

"we must considerably increase the membership of all Party and Party-connected organizations in order to be able to *keep up to some extent with the stream of popular revolutionary energy which has been a hundred fold strengthened.*" (Emphasis original)

Norway, Sweden, and Germany—the example countries given by our rightist—have no Communist Parties and are in reality making great strides in the reconstitution of their Parties. Reconstitution of these Parties is the principle task of the Maoists there. This is lost on our rightist who assumes that the legal status of these groups determines that they must, right now, develop broad parties which draw in masses who are decidedly less class

conscious than those who were in daily rebellion in 1905 Russia—his opportunist reading of Lenin only tells him what he wants to hear; it cannot however trick actual students of Lenin. Lenin did not see his 1905 work as a rupture with his 1902 work:

“We must remember that our ‘doctrinaire’ faithfulness to Marxism is now being reinforced by the march of revolutionary events, which is everywhere furnishing *object lessons to the masses* and that all these lessons confirm precisely our dogma.” (Emphasis original)

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Unlike our right opportunist blogger, Lenin did not favor opening Party doors wide just because the masses had reached a higher level of class consciousness in response to the upsurge of 1905:

“Their mood of protest and their sympathy for the cause of international revolutionary Social-Democracy in themselves suffice, provided the Social-Democrats work effectively among them, for these circles of *sympathizers* under the impact of events to be transformed at first into democratic assistants and then into convinced members of the Social-Democratic working-class party.” (Emphasis original)

Lenin outlines stage-like recruitment, that is to say, the cultivation of cadres through class struggle, through contact with revolutionaries, and then (and only then) can these be recruited to the Party where their training continues. Lenin’s position was that the period required wartime standards of enlistment.

Our argument is fairly simple; it conforms to both the Lenin of 1902 and of 1905 which are consistent. The Party of professional revolutionaries trains new Communists in class struggle and prepares them ideologically to become its cadres—the Party grows through People’s War and grows the People’s War in turn with its mass work. Our German comrades do not differ from us in this respect, for it is not them who complain of a lack of capable cadres. Our blogger on the other hand finds himself without an organization to speak through and must resort to making his attacks from personal blogs. Maoists have always understood, and have numerous historical examples of, Parties growing this way—through class struggle and principally though war. The size of a Party (or Party reconstitution effort) by itself with no regard to its quality is no way to make an analysis, as it only sees half of the contradiction. Mao expressed great optimism in this regard by insisting that with the mass line and with given conditions all things become available including recruits:

“a leading group should be formed in each unit in the course of the movement, made up of a small number of activists and with the heads of the given unit as its nucleus, and that this leading group should link itself closely with the masses taking part in the movement. However active the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses. On the other hand, if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level.”

He continues:

“A leading group that is genuinely united and linked with the masses can be formed only gradually in the process of mass struggle, and not in isolation from it. In the process of a great struggle, the composition of the leading group in most cases should not and cannot remain entirely unchanged throughout the initial, middle and final stages; the activists who come forward in the course of the struggle must constantly be promoted to replace those original members of the leading group who are inferior by comparison or who have degenerated. One fundamental reason why the work in many places and many organizations cannot be pushed

ahead is the lack of a leading group which is united, linked with the masses and kept constantly healthy. A school of a hundred people certainly cannot be run well if it does not have a leading group of several people; or a dozen or more, which is formed in accordance with the actual circumstances (and not thrown together artificially) and is composed of the most active, upright and alert of the teachers, the other staff and the students. In every organization, school, army unit, factory or village, whether large or small, we should give effect to the ninth of Stalin's twelve conditions for the bolshevization of the Party, namely, that on the establishment of a nucleus of leadership. The criteria for such a leading group should be the four which Dimitrov enumerated in his discussion of cadres policy—absolute devotion to the cause, contact with the masses, ability independently to find one's bearings and observance of discipline. Whether in carrying out the central tasks—war, production, education (including rectification)—or in checking-up on work, examining the cadres' histories, or in other activities, it is necessary to adopt the method of linking the leading group with the masses, in addition to that of linking the general call with particular guidance.” —Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership”.

Our rightist insists:

“In reality, most experienced cadres will have to choose between work and family towards continuing as organized communists. The result is that we will be left with a small group consisting of militant students, schoolchildren and unemployed people.”

By placing ourselves among the proletariat we do not see a contradiction which requires us to choose work, family, or organizing as Communists. We organize our workplaces and our families as Communists! If these were to come into irreconcilable contradiction for other reasons, all Communists would choose Communist organizing over any other consideration. What is more, there is no choice here for the worker; he or she is bound by their class, their only interest is in revolution and making revolution, once this necessity is grasped they are on their way to becoming Communists. It is the petty bourgeois class and its class stand which ponders the choice between work, family, and organizing—this is a hallmark of their lack of discipline which places individual and familial pursuit over organizing or even in direct opposition to it. Our blogger's conclusion here is particularly disturbing: only unemployed people have the time to be communist organizers!

What is more, the blogger has a mistaken idea of the word “militant”: in his subjectivism he only views one role for the militant:

“What we need, however, is a sea of different people who contribute differently in building the party. We need the experienced comrades who no longer have the same amount of time or desire to join all kinds of militant actions.”

Being a militant is not reduced to always participating in “all kinds of militant actions”. There is such thing as militancy in ideology, in theory, in leadership etc. By considering militant only to be frontline fighters engaged in at-risk activity he excludes some of the greatest Party militants in the whole ICM. Lenin led much of the revolution from exile with ideological militancy; he led other portions from meetings and offices—no one dare claim that Lenin was not a militant. Gonzalo, like Lenin, was seldom seen on the frontlines of the war with gun in hand, in fact there is no report of either of these great leaders taking such a post—they were nonetheless the most shining examples of militancy. Militancy means fervently fighting for a cause; this is a standard that all Communists should hold when developing cadres.

Continuing his attacks on the comrades in Germany our blogger states:

“Even worse, this article is translated into several languages and spread like good Maoism. It does not make it any better for the author here that he tries to legitimize himself behind the fact that Lenin used such harsh words against actual demagogues in his day.”

The German comrades, with their blood and their tireless internationalism, have earned the love and respect of Maoists around the world. Their fight is ours. While they are well equipped to respond to this blogger themselves, we take this attack as an attack on the ICM and will return fire. The articles from Germany reach the world through translation due to the quality of their work and their analysis, unlike the musing and speculation of this gnat who issues his personal opinion from a personal blog; these are lighter than air, and obviously international activists are not clamoring to make translations.

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He concludes his article with a sham disclaimer:

“This article is not one attack on Gonzalo. Gonzalo is a skilled Maoist theorist and the one who more than any other has summarize Maoism. This article is part of an combat of puritanical Ultra-left deviation spread by several MLM organizations labeled with Gonzalo’s banner. Ultra-left deviation is just as reactionary as right-wing deviation, and must therefore also be combated.”

The article may not be a direct attack on Gonzalo the person, but it serves as an attack on his teachings and some of his best students, which is, of course, an indirect attack on Gonzalo. Like his first article, our blogger makes speculation that there exists in the Maoist movement “puritans” but cannot specifically identify them in concrete terms. This is a scare tactic which must be demystified. Gonzalo, furthermore, did not simply “summarize” Maoism; he synthesized it and in doing so brought the whole of the ICM out of increasing darkness. Through the application of this synthesis he developed greater analysis which pushed MLM even further. While it is possible that this word choice is due to translation there is a principle difference between summary and synthesis which must be fleshed out.

Maoists nowhere consider a Party to be a monolithic “pure” organism, and instead focus on the methods which a Party seeks to purify itself as a process, removing the capitalist roaders. Maoists without exception believe in the existence of two-line struggle, that there is always combat between the bourgeois and the proletariat in any given Party and this is precisely why we engage in internal two-line struggle to better ourselves. Communists organize this two-line struggle with the same goal as they organize class struggle—in the interests of the proletariat overcoming the bourgeoisie. For external matters there is no question of purity but of ideological struggle, not only to protect and ensure the revolutionary quality of our ideology but to ever improve it (gaining a new quantity for organizations).

Ultra-leftism is not as commonplace or as dangerous to the work in imperialist countries as the default right opportunism expressed by this blogger—with that in mind we seek to combat his ideology. The right opportunist is always plagued by “ultra-leftists”; he sees them in every shadow on the ground. He will tell us that being among the masses is too much to demand of Party members, but at the same time we must recruit the masses en masse. Those who favor reconstitution of the Communist Parties along loose lines neither understand the Party nor the Masses, and they most certainly do not grasp the principle that the leading core must have flexible but durable links to the broadest, deepest and most profound masses.

Article by Kavga

1. MAOSITE1917

15. January 2019 at 21:18

SS writes: “encouraging mass recruitment at the expense of ideology and security he has no qualms with objecting to being among the masses.” Both of this is wrong. I did not encourage mass recruitment – I was encouraging recruitment, and to apply the vanguard party theory to the reality you live in. If your way of working makes your organization smaller and smaller – then you got to see that you got an error which you must fix.

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SS: “Having personal production in the sector within which one develops their work does not limit oneself to the factory; if one is organizing the women’s struggle one must be among working women, and if we are to organize working class students we must do so as students and from the outside both.”

I agree on this. But if you want to recruit f.x. students – you don’t have to been a student yourself.

SS: “...he mentions three imperialist countries and attempts to use the role of finance capital to argue that there is no worthy proletariat to organize...”

No I don’t. Your statement is false. Rest of your arguments about something I have not written, and doesn’t think.

SS: “While our German comrades speak from a position of real life organizing in their conditions, our Norwegian blogger simply is promoting his own personal opinion.”

SS know perfectly well that I have many years of revolutionary experience in successfully building Maoist organization in Norway. I disagree with the leftist trend promoted by this German comrade, SS and others. This trend is making the organizations smaller and smaller. If this doesn’t change – soon there will be not much left of them to discuss with. I’m afraid this persons are more concerned about their political purity then about how to build a communist party. They are therefore happy with an organization which isn’t growing. Marxism must be used creatively on the reality you live in. You can’t just do exactly the same that worked many years ago in a completely different situation. Lenin and Mao are great examples on how to creatively apply Marxism to the reality you live in.

SS: “Lenin, far from opposing his early theories contained in What Is to Be Done?, is speaking of the Party lagging behind the mass movement, a movement which already exists. He is not insisting that the Party be opened up to just anyone and accept a lower standard than that of professional revolutionary. Most importantly Lenin is speaking of the way in which professional revolutionaries lead the masses in existing mass struggle and train them to become members of the Party. ”

Lenin changed the theory because of changes in reality. SS tries to talk about something else, since they themselves strictly keeps dogmatically to what Lenin wrote in “What Is to Be Done?”. SS writes that I “Trying to copy Ajith, but distorting his work in the process”. So let’s here from Ajith himself:

“Did the later day international communist movement loose Lenin’s exemplary, dialectical, handling of the vanguard concept and organisational methods formulated by him? It would be far more profitable to pay attention to such differences rather than running after individual traits of leaders as Pearson does. Lenin was concerned about the dangers posed by universalising Bolshevik party statutes, regardless of time and place. In a report to the Communist International (Comintern), Lenin observed that its organisational principles have a strong Russian flavor, and doubted whether comrades from other countries would be able to grasp it properly (Report to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Volume 33, pages 415-432).”

<http://thenaxalbari.blogspot.com/2013/05/on-maoist-party.html#more>

Does SS “grasp it properly”?

SS: “Norway, Sweden, and Germany—the example countries given by our rightist—have no Communist Parties and are in reality making great strides in the reconstitution of their Parties. Reconstitution of these Parties is the principle task of the Maoists there. This is lost on our rightist who assumes that the legal status of these groups determines that they must, right now, develop broad parties which draw in masses who are decidedly less class conscious than those who were in daily rebellion in 1905 Russia”

Again: I don’t argue for “broad parties”. I argue for applying the vanguard party theory to our condition – as we have done in Norway successfully for many years. I’m proud of what we have done in Norway, and I worry about leftist mistakes making such great organizations as Tjen Folket smaller.

It’s hard and takes long time to build a communist party with educated cadres. It’s fast and easy to destroy it. Don’t take easily on it when your organization isn’t growing. Your ideology is of no value if it doesn’t help you build a communist party.

Tjen Folket Media: "Answer to Blog Post Against Gonzalo" | January 25th 2019
 | <https://tjen-folket.no/Sentralt/view/12889>

Recently, a debate article written by comrade Kavga from the US - “A Crackle of Hens” written by associated website of the Red Guard movement, <https://struggle-sessions.com/2019/01/13/the-cackle-of-hens/> - rejecting the attempt of smuggling rightist positions in the ICM through the blog of MLM-Thought which was made in both Norwegian and English. Now, comrades from Tjen Folket have published their own criticism of this statement:

Debate: Answer to a Blog Post Against Gonzalo

An article entitled “Gonzalo and left-deviation” has been published on a new blog site called “MLM thoughts” written in both English and Norwegian. This is an English translation of an article earlier published in original Norwegian form here on Tjen Folket Media.

Tjen Folket Media wishes to be a platform for debate and ideological struggle. We have received articles from individuals, both within Tjen Folket Media, as well as from outside, who wish to answer a blog post (MLM Thoughts) that levied heavy criticism against Maoists

in the US and Germany. These comrades are a part of the same movement as Maoists in Norway, and Norwegian activists are eager to counter the criticism. One may send editorials to post@tjen-folket.no. If one wishes to send articles anonymously and securely, we recommend sending it from a public computer with an email address one has created for the occasion. Tjen Folket Media reserves the right to make corrections to any articles received if needed.

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Written by Øystein Iversen, one of Tjen Folket Media's contributors. Translated by another contributor.

An article entitled “Gonzalo and left-deviation” has been published on a new blog site called “MLM thoughts” written in both English and Norwegian.

This article criticizes another article that is in turn translated from German into Swedish, which is published on the page kommunisen.nu. Initially, it has been incorrectly stated that it was Kommunistiska Föreningen that translated and published the article. The author has since edited this statement after it was pointed out that it was only sent in and posted for debate.

The article is originally from the German periodical “Klassestandpunkt” and writes about Maoism, Chairman Gonzalo, and more. One class – One Ideology – One Party – One Revolution.

The answer from the Norwegian blog against the German text represents a rightist line and contains a very typical revisionist criticism of Maoism.

[Allegations of Puritanism](#)

The author of the blog post writes: *“I think this carries the mark of puritanism as well as have an serious ultra-left deviation. It seems like a trend in the past that several Maoist groups are trying to purify Maoism.”*

The claims of “purification” and “puritanism” smack of the same form of anti-communism of countless opportunists and others who are against communism. It is an attack that is simply not based in reality and it takes an old myth as its premise. As communists, we do not speak in terms of ideological “purity”. Our political line comes from 200 years of class struggle. Countless line struggles have separated correct lines from incorrect lines: from Lenin’s break from the Second International and the Mensheviks, to Stalin’s struggle against Trotsky, to Mao’s great polemic against Khrushchev-revisionism. In all these cases, communists met with the same type of allegations. But to fight against revisionism and revisionist errors is not “purification” or “puritanism”. It is a matter of life or death for the red line.

[Is Gonzalo being applied mechanically?](#)

The author writes: *“It seems that they forget that the most brilliant with Lenin and Mao was their ability to apply and adapt Marxism to the reality they lived under. Marx and Engels did not primarily think of Russia and China when writing their theories. As little as Lenin and Stalin wrote for China.”*

Much, but not all of what these theorists wrote was written for their own countries. All of them offered great contributions to Marxism. Why should Mao have discounted Marx and Engels’ universal contributions to Marxism simply because “they didn’t write for China”? All

the great contributions of Lenin and Stalin were put to use and fought for by Mao. In the same way, we do not reject Gonzalo's correct and universal contributions for the reason that he "wrote for Peru." Furthermore, all of these theorists fought as active participants in an international movement. They traveled to other countries, exchanged experiences and positions with other communists. Some of them were political refugees and activists for several years in other countries than the ones where they were born.

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The Communist Manifesto is not first and foremost about Germany, the birthplace of Marx and Engels. They do not write that "a spectre is haunting Germany". To apply Marxism is the most important thing, but what should be applied? What is the Marxism (or Maoism) that is to be applied? What is universal? Is it not the case that that which was applied by history's foremost communists can be applied by those who make revolution today?

"MLMT" further writes that "In fact, the author of the article argues in favor of mechanically introducing Gonzalo's thinking in Germany."

The article in Klassenstandpunkt does not argue for this. On the contrary, the article applies these teachings to German conditions creatively. Yet the contributions taken from Gonzalo, the "three with", are universal.

The "Three With"

The Swedish translation of this German article reads:

"...But the fundamental condition is that we strictly apply the "three with" as Chairman Gonzalo has taught us: Work with, live with, and struggle with the masses. Communists ought to live according to the demands of the revolution. In general, comrades should live among the broadest and deepest of the masses, sharing every aspect of the lives of the masses. Communists ought to have a personal production in the sector where they have to develop their respective mass work."

"MLMT" replies with the following criticism: *"The reality in Germany, Sweden and Norway is quite different from Peru. The masses in Peru are on another level and are far more susceptible to communist theory and propaganda, then the case is with us. In Germany, Sweden and Norway, there is much longer between everyone who is receptive to being able to organize themselves. There are also fewer large industrial workplaces today in these countries – it is therefore not possible for everyone to come to a workplace with many employees. When you work with few people, the recruitment basis becomes too small. My experience is that the largest recruitment base is with proletarian youth and most of all with politically engaged youth. Work through progressive front organizations that attract a lot of youth is where it is easiest to recruit. Alternatively, talk to many proletarian youths. We must prioritize our forces so that we get the most out of them."*

This criticism identifies just two concrete differences between these countries: large workplaces and the masses' receptiveness towards communist propaganda. When it comes to the masses being less receptive, this is simply not a good reason for not following the "three with" teachings of Gonzalo. On the contrary, it simply means that we can reach those groups that are most receptive towards communist propaganda in our respective countries. These can be found among the working proletariat. They can be found in proletarian neighborhoods. And they can be found among the proletariat that is already struggling. The article furthermore does not take into consideration that workplaces and the industrial floor are the main bases for recruitment. That the proletarian youth forms a large basis for recruitment is correct, but this is just more reason to follow Gonzalo's "three with".

“MLMT” writes: *“What is the consequence of a line to only build organization for professional militants in countries such as Germany, Sweden and Norway in 2019? The reality for us is that the time for most young communists is greatly reduced when they come into the establishment phase of work and children. In reality, most experienced cadres will have to choose between work and family towards continuing as organized communists. The result is that we will be left with a small group consisting of militant students, schoolchildren and unemployed people. Most likely, the organization will die out by itself due to lack of experience and too little recruitment related to the number that will disappear over time. It will be especially difficult if one is to combine the goal of being both a professional militant revolutionary and working in an ever-decreasing national industry. How many are there that will pass this narrow requirement?”*

Maoists, unlike what is claimed, do not attempt to only build organizations for professional militants. Communists wish to build the party, the people’s army, and the united front in concentric circles. The party is the core and consists of the most studious, experienced, and dedicated activists. And here is where one may apply Lenin’s line on professional revolutionaries being the backbone of the party. Not the entire party, but the backbone of it. A professional revolutionary is one who has revolution as their profession. One who treats revolutionary struggle as their career and as a science. It is a pure idealism if one believes that it is possible to make revolution without a party lead by professionals.

Through the work in the united front, one builds fronts that organize the fighting masses. It has been said that experienced cadres must choose between work and family on one side and continuing to work as organized communists on the other. “MLMT” seems to imply that dedication and self-sacrifice are anathema; something odious that people tend to avoid. But communists recruited from the proletariat often show a great willingness for dedication and self-sacrifice. We wish to build organizations for revolution and people’s war. We must therefore also foster a culture of dedication and self-sacrifice, for a life dedicated to the struggle. Our class is forced in a life of capitalist exploitation, and therefore many of us will recognize a duty to dedicate our lives to struggle against it. And we must live simply and struggle hard. It is correct to say that if we are to succeed, a number of people must turn down petit bourgeois careers within the system. But a number of the foremost communist leaders in history have had families, children, and even periods where they have had other careers than party work.

When all this is said, a movement that maintains that the proletariat’s liberation must be the proletariat’s own work, that the masses are the true heroes, and that the revolution must be a people’s (masses) war must be a movement that has space, room, tasks, and opportunities for development for all types of revolutionaries in all stages of life. There is no room for arrogance towards those who have not dedicated their lives to the struggle in the here and now; for each dedicated and professional cadre, the movement must organize tens, hundreds, and eventually thousands of people. But neither before, during, nor after the revolution is the communist party a party for all or even a party for the majority. The party is to be the general staff of the revolution, a professional leadership of the struggle. The great masses that are mobilized and organized around the party will in general not be members of the party. This is not some new insight of Maoism, even if Maoism provides us with tools to understand and practice it. The essence of this is found in a red line running throughout Lenin’s *What is to be Done?*, where Lenin writes:

"We can never give a mass organisation that degree of secrecy without which there can be no question of persistent and continuous struggle against the government. To concentrate all secret functions in the hands of as small a number of professional revolutionaries as possible does not mean that the latter will "do the thinking for all "and that the rank and file will not take an active part in the movement. On the contrary, the membership will promote increasing numbers of the professional revolutionaries from its ranks; for it will know that it is not enough for a few students and for a few working men waging the economic struggle to gather in order to form a "committee", but that it takes years to train oneself to be a professional revolutionary; and the rank and file will "think", not only of amateurish methods, but of such training. Centralisation of the secret functions of the organisation by no means implies centralisation of all the functions of the movement. Active participation of the widest masses in the illegal press will not diminish because a "dozen" "professional revolutionaries centralise the secret functions connected with this work; on the contrary, it will increase tenfold. In this way, and in this way alone, shall we ensure that reading the illegal press, writing for it, and to some extent even distributing it, will almost cease to be secret work, for the police will soon come to realise the folly and impossibility of judicial and administrative red-tape procedure over every copy of a publication that is being distributed in the thousands. This holds not only for the press, but for every function of the movement, even for demonstrations. The active and widespread participation of the masses will not suffer; on the contrary, it will benefit by the fact that a "dozen" experienced revolutionaries, trained professionally no less than the police, will centralise all the secret aspects of the work – the drawing up of leaflets, the working out of approximate plans; and the appointing of bodies of leaders for each urban district, for each institution, etc. (I know that exception will be taken to my "undemocratic" views, but I shall reply below fully to this anything but intelligent objection.) Centralisation of the most secret functions in an organisation of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and enhance the quality of the activity of a large number of other organisations that are intended for a broad public and are therefore as loose and as non-secret as possible, such as workers' trade unions; workers' self-education circles and circles for reading illegal literature; and socialist, as well as democratic, circles among all other sections of the population; etc., etc. We must have such circles, trade unions, and organisations everywhere in as large a number as possible and with the widest variety of functions; but it would be absurd and harmful to confound them with the organisation of revolutionaries, to efface the border-line between them, to make still more hazy the all too faint recognition of the fact that in order to "serve" the mass movement we must have people who will devote themselves exclusively to Social-Democratic activities, and that such people must train themselves patiently and steadfastly to be professional revolutionaries."

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This relatively short excerpt from Lenin's book in 1903 clears up the misunderstandings that the MLMT blog spreads. Lenin's meaning comes forth clearly here in regards to the correct method of organizing the party (the revolutionary organization) and how it does not stand in contradiction to the broad mass movement, but on the contrary is a precondition for being able to create it in this fashion.

Proletarian Internationalism

"MLMT" writes: *"It is impossible to build a Communist party without doing mistakes in the process. It is impossible to correct mistakes without having a climate where people can criticize without being branded as "the worst enemies of the working class". That the author*

here believes that comrades who criticize that there is too much angulation on foreign affairs at the expense of domestic issues should be branded in this way is an alarming signal."

It has been argued that harsh words have been used against people who approach with a particular type of criticism (people who talk about “too much Peru” and similar, criticism against focusing on the international question). But one should not see this as an isolated criticism of the prioritization of angles. This type of criticism with the focus on foreign affairs and Peru has often been used as an attack against Maoists. And this type of attack on proletarian internationalism has a function. It deals with removing the communist movement from its most advanced international leadership. When interest, studies, and teachings from Peru’s Communist Party and Gonzalo lead to great advancements in the line struggle and to the defeat of right opportunists, they answer with attacking Maoists for looking internationally for leadership. The fact that communists in Norway historically looked to Lenin and SUKP(b)’s ideological leadership and struggle against revisionism advanced the line struggle in Norway towards the establishment of NKP. The fact that communists looked to Chairman Mao and the CCP led to the establishment of AKP(m-l). Studying and following the PCP and Chairman Gonzalo’s example is necessary and important for communists in all countries that wish to reconstruct communist parties today, because these must be constituted as Maoist parties. This is central and necessary for the line struggle in Norway, Sweden, and Germany today, and for the line struggle in the entire international communist movement. Revisionists and capitalists did not want us to look to Lenin, they did not want us to look to Mao, and now they do not want us to look to Gonzalo, or at the least attempt to downgrade him to “one of many” revolutionary leaders. This is because they do not want a real communist party, a militarized Maoist party organized for people’s war.

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Difficult Words?

"“Gonzalo stressed Maoism’s meaning in MLM. Puritanists take it further and will consequently use it mechanically by using the lengthy, dense, and non-pedagogical ‘Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism’ rather than simply writing ‘Maoism’.”

Using correct and precise language in speech and writing can only be a good thing. How specific one is depends on what one is writing on and the context it is being written in. Concepts like ‘Marxism’, ‘Marxism-Leninism’, ‘Marxism-Leninism-Maoism’, ‘communism’, ‘bolshevism’, and ‘Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism’ have all been established or developed in struggles that have demanded making clear lines between oneself and revisionists and in order to describe one’s own political theory. It is not part of agitprop in a flier. The terms are not made with the goal of being simple to understand for absolutely everybody. The terms being used in theoretical texts, discussions at a higher level, the international line struggle, the documents describing party lines, and so on, are not always the same terms one will use on fliers, posters, slogans, and so on. These concepts have their place. The concept of ‘principally Maoism’ distinguishes the international right-opportunists from the Maoists in an important line struggle today. The concept creates an unambiguous distinction between, for instance, PCP and Gonzalo versus revisionists like Prachanda and his “Maoist” party.

By underlining that MLM is today principally Maoist is completely in line with Mao’s claim that all things have a primary side. Of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism’s three stages, Maoism is the most recent and the highest level of development; it starts with its predecessors and raises them to a new level, and it must therefore be the primary side. Today, when we wish to understand Marxism and Leninism, we must do so by understanding Maoism. But the claim

that it is being used mechanically is simply untrue. It does not take many Google searches to see that most Maoist organizations will simply write “Maoism”, contrary to what the author claims that the (unnamed) “puritans” are unable to do.

Nonetheless, these concepts are not particularly difficult for the masses to grasp. Our task is to spread Maoist theory and study with the masses. To attack good Maoist theory for this is typical for revisionists, but we simply place more faith in the masses and know that they can teach us everything. If the theory is correct, the masses will be able to learn it.

Reply to Øystein Iversen, tjen-folket.no

Posted on 20. January 2019 by maosite1917

tjen-folket.no has published one post from Øystein Iversen entitled “Reply to blog posts against Gonzalo”. This article is aimed at my article: “Gonzalo and ultra-left deviation“

There are a number of actual errors in the post from Øystein Iversen ($\text{\O}I$) that I would like to point out, as well as some statements and views I believe are incorrect:

Allegation of purification and puritanism gives more or less the same sound as anti-communism to countless opportunists and others who are against communism. It is an attack that does not match and is an old myth.

This argument can be used against all arguments against left-wing deviations that have been made, including those by Lenin, Stalin and Mao. This is an argument as if left-wing deviation does not exist, and consequently all claims of this are “anti-communism”. In the best case, this is rhetoric, in the worst case, $\text{\O}I$ does not realize that there is a ditch called left-wing deviation since he himself walks in it.

We Communists are not talking about ideological “purity”. Our political line comes from the 200 year class struggle. Countless line battles have separated straight lines from erroneous lines. From Lenin’s break with other international and Mensheviks, to Stalin’s struggle against Trotsky, to Mao’s great controversy against Khrushchev revisionism. In all these cases, communists were met with the same kind of accusations. But combating revisionism and revisionist errors is not “purification” or “puritanism”; it is a matter of living or dying for the red line.

Combating revisionism is not the same as puritanism – where we agree, but when one no longer settles for the fight against revisionism, but mechanically and dogmatically relies on the texts, then it’s no longer fight against revisionism, but a result of left-wing deviation which I think we also can call puritanism.

Otherwise, I wonder a little about what $\text{\O}I$ means by “Mao’s great controversy against Khrushchev revisionism”? Is it the great controversy between the CCP and the CPSU he is aiming for? In the case, there were more contributors than Mao from the CCP’s side here.

Why should we reject their universal contribution to Marxism by “not writing for China” or similar?

I have not written that we should reject the universal contributions. This is to argue against a straw man.

What is the Marxism (or Maoism) to be used? What is universal? Can’t that used by history’s premier communists be used by anyone who wants to make a revolution today?

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The universal must be adapted to the peculiar conditions. If one takes special action that suits one place at one time and will mechanically copy it into a completely different time somewhere else then it will fail. This is some of the point in my article that ØI writes criticism of.

The Maoists do not go as it is claimed to only build professional militant organization. The Communists will build the Party, the People’s Army and the Unity Front in concentric circles. The party is core and consists of the most educated, experienced and dedicated. And applying Lenin’s line that professional revolutionaries are the backbone of the party. Not the whole party, but the backbone of it.

I agree that the “Maoists” don’t want to “only build organization for professional militants”. It seems like ØI here forgets that I do not polemize against Maoism, but against a very specific article, and on this question more specifically against the following:

We do not need leisure “communists” or parties that are not parties of militants.

<http://kommunisten.nu/2018/03/10/en-klass-en-ideologi-ett-parti-en-revolution/>

ØI writes:

“MLMT” writes as if self-sacrifice and dedication are something stupid that people don’t want.

It’s wrong – I don’t.

This relatively short paragraph from Lenin’s 1903 book cleans up the misunderstandings that the MLMT blog is spreading. Here it is clear what Lenin thinks, and what is the right way to organize the party (the revolutionary organization) and how this does not contradict a broad movement, but on the contrary is a prerequisite for being able to create one such.

What “misunderstanding” is it that I spread? Is it eg. the fact that the party model Lenin describes in “What to do” cannot be mechanically copied into our countries in our time?

I criticized the following written in “One Class – One ideology – One Party – One Revolution” for creating a climate where it becomes impossible with open discussions:

Those who talk about “too much Peru”, “too much about other countries and too little about Germany” and even trying to use Liebknecht’s revolutionary defeatistic slogans “The main enemy is at home” to actually negate the proletarian internationalism are exactly that, demagogues, and as such, they are “the worst enemies of the working class” and it is the duty of all comrades to fight such criminals

This ØI defends with:

... This type of attack on proletarian internationalism has a function. It is about removing the communist movement from its most advanced leadership internationally.

I think this reason is pretty hair-raising. In the best case, ØI has not read or understood what our German Puritan companion actually writes. If we focus too much abroad, and instead of agitation that concerns the country in which we live, we will become uninteresting for the vast majority who struggle to make ends meet in the reality they live in. The result will be that the organization shrink to a small sect. Probably it was a well-founded criticism of a virtually liquidationist line that the German author describes as “the worst enemies of the working class”. Ie irreconcilable attacks on people who make a very timely criticism.

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ØI writes:

The Revisionists and the Capitalists don't want us to look to Lenin, they don't want us to go to Mao and now they will stay away from Gonzalo or degrade him to “one of many” revolutionary leaders. This is because they don't want a real communist party, a militarized Maoist party for the war.

With this, in reality, ØI describes most people who engage in public war for communism on the Philippines and in India to be revisionists, since most people consider Gonzalo as “one of many revolutionary leaders”. In other words, the right teaching is a very narrow path. There are not many deviations that are needed before one is stamped as a revisionist and thus an agent for the capitalists.

I have no desire to keep people away from studying Gonzalo. On the contrary – Gonzalo has written a lot of sense and should be studied. But not uncritical. Not everything he writes is good (see, for example, my article on “Great Leader or Collective leadership?”).

We cannot leave the ideological discussions to one or more great leaders. We must not imagine that we are infallible. We will all make mistakes. If we had to have perfect theory and be the perfect cadre for the success of the revolution, then there would never have been any revolution. Incorrect ideas are addressed through discussion and practical experience. Mao wrote that contradictions are good, because this is what leads the development forward. The Puritans agree with this in words, but in practice they stamp out anyone who is not 100% in agreement with themselves as revisionists and thus creates a climate where contradictions become irreconcilable and where one cannot get discuss to a higher unity.

Great Leader or Collective leadership?

Posted on 13. January 2019 by maosite1917

The cult of the individual is a rotten carry-over from the long history of mankind. The cult of the individual is rooted not only in the exploiting classes but also in the small producers. As is well known, patriarchy is a product of small-producer economy...

Mao: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/mswv7_467.htm

The Communist Party of Peru (PCP) has a theory about “Jefatura” – which Struggle Sessions (SS) translates to “Great Leadership”. I have written “Great Leader” in the title of this article, because as I understand what PCP and SS mean is that they stress the necessity for each party in each country to have one Great Leader. “Great Leadership” can – if we just look at it isolated from the theories by PCP and Struggle Sessions – be something every communist should strive for.

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Our work as communists is to build a strong communist party which can lead the masses in an revolution. Our task is therefore to build communist leaders. Every member of the communist party needs to be a leader.

Mao writes about collective leadership many times. I think that Maos theories and thinking about leadership is totally different and incompatible with what PCP and SS writes on the topic. The reason is that while PCP and SS writes about one great leader – Mao writes on collective leadership – that groups of people forms leadership everywhere and it is the quality of such leading groups who are the core question for building strong and good communist leadership.

In the excellent article “SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING METHODS OF LEADERSHIP” by Mao he writes:

... a leading group should be formed in each unit in the course of the movement, made up of a small number of activists and with the heads of the given unit as its nucleus, and that this leading group should link itself closely with the masses taking part in the movement.

However active the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses.

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_13.htm

In this article (which I think every communist should study) we see how Mao writes about the need for leadership made by a group or collective of leaders. He doesn't write about The Leader, but about the group, and heads (in plural) of leaders. This is the correct way of building communist (or “Great Leadership”) – not trough making a cult round one specific “Great Leader”.

When we uses the pictures of our 5 most influential communist leaders in history – we don't do this for making a cult around those persons, but we use it as a picture symbolizing the modern communist theories that we are following and learning from.

What is collective leadership?

All leadership is concrete leadership:

In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily “from the masses, to the masses”. This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an

endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.

Mao: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_13.htm

Leadership is to listen to knowledge, experience etc. from cadres you are leading. Make suggestions of solutions of concrete problems, to give support, advise, rise questions they have to a higher level if required, and in every other way to follow up cadres you have a leading role over.

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Every task needs leadership. It's therefore everybody needs to be a leader. But to be a good leader, you have to get input from others with knowledge about the task you are trying to solve. It's therefore necessary to form groups of leaders who divide the tasks among each other, discuss and give advises on how to solve the task etc.

No single leader, whatever how "great" can lead an organization by his own. He needs the whole collective to do the task. No matter how great he is – he don't know everything, and he will also needs advises, critics of errors he make etc.

The masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding, it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge.

Mao: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch11.htm>

Collective leadership is also about making a climate where discussions among comrades can be done in a way where everybody learns and corrects when they are mistaken. A climate where some tries to make himself "great" through making others small is toxic for the organization. The task is to make everybody better – not to make one individual leader greater than the rest.

A leading core where everybody strive to make the leading groups better is a much stronger core, than a core compositing of only one leader. "Together we are stronger" – is also correct when it comes to leadership. One leader is after all just one person.

Every leading groups should have at least one leader, and one second in charge in cases where the leader is unavailable. The task for the leader in the group is to organize meetings, check that the other leaders is doing their tasks and give them help, guiding, suggestions, lift their problems to the whole core, or to higher level if required etc. if they need.

Quotations relevant to this topic

All leaders are experienced. But Great Leaders unify the militarized Party around themselves and embody the revolution through correct navigation of two-line struggle.

<https://struggle-sessions.com/2018/07/20/on-the-maoist-principle-of-great-leadership/>

But Communism is not humanism or some ideology based on peace and love. It is a machine of hatred against the bourgeoisie. It is a highly-centralized and authoritative militarized body from generals to privates, the lower-body members subordinate to leadership, and both subordinate to the ideology of the proletariat and its specific application in PPW through a central figure as a guiding thought.

SS: <https://struggle-sessions.com/2018/07/20/on-the-maoist-principle-of-great-leadership/>

Stalin erroneously exaggerated his own role and counterposed his individual authority to the collective leadership, and as a result certain of his actions were opposed to certain fundamental Marxist-Leninist concepts he himself had propagated....

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Marxist-Leninists hold that leaders play a big role in history. The people and their parties need forerunners who are able to represent the interests and will of the people, stand in the forefront of their historic struggles, and serve as their leaders. But when any leader of the Party or the state places himself over and above the Party and the masses, instead of in their midst, when he alienates himself from the masses, he ceases to have all-round, penetrating insight into the affairs of the state. As long as this was the case, even so outstanding a personality as Stalin could not avoid making unrealistic and erroneous decisions on certain important matters... During the later part of his life, Stalin took more and more pleasure in this cult of the individual and violated the Party's system of democratic centralism and the principle of combining collective leadership with individual responsibility. As a result, he made some serious mistakes: for example, he broadened the scope of the suppression of counter-revolution; he lacked the necessary vigilance on the eve of the anti-fascist war; he failed to pay proper attention to the further development of agriculture and the material welfare of peasantry; he gave certain wrong advice on the international communist movement, and, in particular, made a wrong decision on the question of Yugoslavia. On these issues, Stalin full victim to subjectivism and one-sidedness and divorced himself from objective reality and from the masses.

Mao: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/mswv7_467.htm

For a long time the tradition in our Party has been that decisions of important questions are made by a collective of the Party, and not by any individual. Although violations of the principle of collective leadership occurred in our Party from time to time, yet once discovered they were criticized and corrected by the Central Committee of the Party. The decision by the Central Committee in September 1948 on strengthening the Party committee system played an especially great role in strengthening collective leadership the Party.... This decision was put into practice throughout the Party and is still in force.... The significance of this decision is that it summed up the Party's successful experience in the conscientious practice of collective leadership, urged those organizations which had made collective leadership merely nominal to correct their mistake and extended the scope of the application of collective leadership.

Teng Hsiao-ping: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_41.htm

Teng is here summarizing a document from Mao which follow on the page this quote is from. To ensure the triumph of the cause of socialism, we must exercise collective leadership and oppose decentralism and subjectivism.

Mao: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_32.htm

We have been acting in accordance with Lenin's view, which is correct. The cult of personality is a revisionist formulation. Lenin had warned us of the problem of negating leadership just as he emphasized the need for our class, the Party and the revolution to promote our own leaders, and more than that, top leaders, and a Leadership. There's a difference here that is worth emphasizing. A leader is someone who occupies a certain position, whereas a top leader and Leadership, as we understand it, represent the acknowledgment of Party and revolutionary authority acquired and proven in the course of arduous struggle—those who in theory and practice have shown they are capable of leading and guiding us toward victory and the attainment of the ideals of our class.

Gonzalo: <https://archive.org/details/InterviewWithChairmanGonzalo/page/n1>

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When, instead of this customary procedure, it became necessary, because of the stormy development of the revolution and the development of the civil war, to go over rapidly from legality to illegality, to combine the two, and to adopt the "inconvenient" and "undemocratic" methods of selecting, or forming, or preserving "groups of leaders"—people lost their bearings and began to think up some unmitigated nonsense.

Lenin: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/lwc/ch05.htm>

Chairman Gonzalo did not invent Great Leadership, but he did develop it and squarely placed it on the red banner of Maoism. He did not take a single step back and apologize or downplay his rise to leadership at the helm of the Peruvian PPW. Leaders rise to Great Leadership through the class struggle, including two-line struggle, and steeled in revolutionary practice and experience. There is no such thing as an inexperienced leader. All leaders are experienced. But Great Leaders unify the militarized Party around themselves and embody the revolution through correct navigation of two-line struggle.

As mentioned earlier, all revolutions and revolutionary movements have produced leaders. To deny this is to deny history.

Comrade Stalin understood this and defended the leadership of Lenin and his indispensable role as the main organizer and leader of the Russian Communist Party and the Soviet Union [5]:

In our time of proletarian revolution, when every Party slogan and every utterance of a leader is tested in action, the proletariat makes special demands of its leaders. History knows of proletarian leaders who were leaders in times of storm, practical leaders, self-sacrificing and courageous, but who were weak in theory. The names of such leaders are not soon forgotten by the masses. Such, for example, were Lassalle in Germany and Blanqui in France. But the movement as a whole cannot live on reminiscences alone: it must have a clear goal (a programme), and a firm line (tactics).

There is another type of leader—peacetime leaders, who are strong in theory, but weak in matters of organization and practical work. Such leaders are popular only among an upper layer of the proletariat, and then only up to a certain time. When the epoch of revolution sets in, when practical revolutionary slogans are demanded of the leaders, the theoreticians quit the stage and give way to new men. Such, for example, were Plekhanov in Russia and Kautsky in Germany.

To retain the post of leader of the proletarian revolution and of the proletarian party, one must combine strength in theory with experience in the practical organization of the proletarian movement. P. Axelrod, when he was a Marxist, wrote of Lenin that he “happily combines the experience of a good practical worker with a theoretical education and a broad political outlook” (see P. Axelrod’s preface to Lenin’s pamphlet: The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats¹⁰). What Mr. Axelrod, the ideologist of “civilized” capitalism, would say now about Lenin is not difficult to guess. But we who know Lenin well and can judge matters objectively have no doubt that Lenin has fully retained this old quality. It is here, incidentally, that one must seek the reason why it is Lenin, and no one else, who is today the leader of the strongest and most steeled proletarian party in the world.

SS: <https://struggle-sessions.com/2018/07/20/on-the-maoist-principle-of-great-leadership/>

Someone has said that to oppose genius is to oppose me. But I am no genius. I read Confucian books for six years and capitalist books for seven. I did not read Marxist-Leninist books until 1918, so how can I be a genius? Didn’t I put circles round those adverbs several times over? The Party Constitution was settled at the Ninth Congress. Why not take a look at it? I wrote ‘Some Opinions’, which specially criticizes the genius theory, only after looking up some people to talk with them, and after some investigations and research. It is not that I do not want to talk about genius. To be a genius is to be a bit more intelligent. But genius does not depend on one person or a few people. It depends on a party, the party which is the vanguard of the proletariat. Genius is dependent on the mass line, on collective wisdom... I spoke to Comrade Lin Piao and some of the things he said were not very accurate. For example he said that a genius only appears in the world once in a few centuries and in China once in a few millennia. This just doesn’t fit the facts. Marx and Engels were contemporaries, and not one century had elapsed before we had Lenin and Stalin, so how could you say that a genius only appears once in a few centuries? In China there were Ch’en Sheng and Wu Kuang, Hung Hsiu-ch’üan and Sun Yat-sen, so how could you say that a genius only appears once in a few millennia? And then there is all this business about pinnacles and ‘one sentence being worth ten thousand’. Don’t you think this is going too far? One sentence is, after all, just one sentence, how can it be worth ten thousand sentences? We should not appoint a state chairman. I don’t want to be state chairman. I have said this six times already. If each time I said it I used one sentence that is now the equivalent of sixty thousand sentences.

But they never listen, so each of my sentences is not even worth half a sentence. In fact its value is nil. It’s only Ch’en Po-ta’s sentences that are worth ten thousand apiece to them. He talked about ‘establishing in a big way’, by which he gave the appearance of meaning to establish my prestige. But when you get to the bottom of it, he really meant himself. They also said that the People’s Liberation Army was built and led by me, and commanded personally by Lin. It seems that the person who founded it cannot command it! And I did not build it all by myself either.”

Mao, criticizing Lin Biao’s revisionist “genius theory”:

https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_88.htm

One thought on “Great Leader or Collective leadership?”

Creek | 16. January 2019

Leading Thought is necessary, as concrete application of MLM (or, previously, ML) to a country’s concrete conditions, product of its history.

Then, this Thought can be a collective production, that’s fine if it is; but if it’s not, if it’s really principally one individual’s work, I’m not shocked this individual is credited.

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Actually I don’t think the main question is here, “named after a collective or after a person”. The main question is, basically, if it’s correct or erroneous!

The same way, I’ve nothing against a Great Leader. Call a person Great Leader is nothing but this credit, aforementioned, to his/her works and contribution to the Thought, party’s building and correct strategy and so on.

The question is, a Great Leader is in some way “voted”: “voted” by the wide masses who recognize him/her so!!

Obviously, if someone starts to SELF-PROCLAIM “Great Leader” with a 10 or even 100 members org, that’s just ridiculous. But, I agree, I strongly believe it’s itching a good bunch of Western maoist “leaders”...

Reply to Rangnar V. Røed, tjen-folket.no

Posted on 20. January 2019 by maosite1917 | <https://mlmt.home.blog/2019/01/20/reply-to-rangnar-v-roed-tjen-folket-no/> This article has an Norwegian version

tjen-folket.no has published a criticism of my article “Gonzalo and left-wing deviation” by Rangnar V. Røed (RVR). There is a need for some clarifications in this regard.

RVR writes:

Furthermore, I disagree with the phrase “adapt Marxism” to describe how classics applied the ideology of the proletariat in their countries. As I see it, Marxism consists of universal laws. For example, the law of added value that Marx demonstrated. Can or must the law of added value be adapted to a particular country? Or the law of the class struggle as the main driving force for the development of society? Or subdivision of society into base and superstructure?

Marxism is a science of action. It consists of universal laws, but also distinctive theories for the application and adaptation of the universal laws to the concrete reality.

This also applies to the law on added value. The universal law of value added briefly (and slightly simplified) that the workers work free of charge for the capitalist a few hours each working day on average. The capitalist pays the workers salaries. The workers create value through their work. Part of this value-creating work is enough to cover the wages of the workers, but the workers work several hours after this. This extra free work is the work that creates added value.

This is the general law. Based on this general law, we can create customized theories to understand how this law works in a concrete country, or in a specific company. How much value is created in Norway, for example? This question can only be answered by specific

investigations of the concrete reality in Norway, and by using the general law in this concrete reality.

The general laws of Marxism only has any value when they are used to create distinctive theories for the concrete reality, which in turn leads to changes in practice. So the theories are the means and not the goal. If our theories are right or wrong, we find the answer in practical experience.

In Norwegian translation of Mao, the term “apply” is used. This is synonymous with my term “adapt”. Mao writes about this:

Many comrades seem to study Marxism-Leninism not to meet the needs of revolutionary practice, but purely for the sake of study. Consequently, though they read, they cannot digest. They can only cite odd quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in a one-sided manner, but are unable to apply the stand, viewpoint and method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to the concrete study of China’s present conditions and her history or to the concrete analysis and solution of the problems of the Chinese revolution. Such an attitude towards Marxism-Leninism does a great deal of harm, particularly among cadres of the middle and higher ranks.

Mao: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_02.htm

I agree with Mao that we here see a serious mistake in the thoughts that RVR here puts for the day. Such thinking as Mao writes can do a lot of harm, which is my most significant point in the article RVR here argues against.

Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world.

Mao: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_16.htm

RVR writes:

But Marxism was not Marxism, if it consisted of laws and discoveries that must constantly be reviewed and adapted.

Marxism is the theories of reality. It is not a static set of unchangeable laws – such view would be a mechanical view. There are laws for the development of eg. capitalism, and Marxism will describe these laws. But Marxism is a theory written by humans, and is therefore not without errors and omissions. Large parts of Marxism have proved their validity in practice, while other parts have been proven only under given conditions and must therefore be adapted to the actual reality in which we live in line with the actual reality it is applied to. Mao writes:

The active function of knowledge manifests itself not only in the active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge, but—and this is more important—it must manifest itself in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. The knowledge which grasps the laws of the world, must be redirected to the practice of changing the world, must be applied anew in the practice of production, in the practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle and in the practice of scientific experiment. This is the process of testing and developing theory, the continuation of the whole process of cognition. The problem of whether theory corresponds to objective reality is not, and cannot be, completely solved in the movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, mentioned above. The only

way to solve this problem completely is to redirect rational knowledge to social practice, apply theory to practice and see whether it can achieve the objectives one has in mind.

Mao: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_16.htm

It is precisely this assessment of the theory against the goals that dogmatists and puritists are skipping. The consequence of this is that they do not learn from their mistakes, but continue to make mistakes. What is the goal of the communists in Norway today? Isn't the first goal to build a strong communist party? How is this going? Is the communist organization getting bigger and stronger, or fewer and weaker? Such questions must be asked. If we have a decline we must find the cause and change the practice. Theory is a guide to practice, so derived from this we must also correct any theory that stands in the way of correct practice.

RVR writes:

Adapting Marxism is in its essence revising it, and it is a hallmark of opportunism that it will adapt to the prevailing conditions and to what other people think, rather than attempting to change these conditions and peoples.

This is a dogmatic way of dealing with Marxism, as we have seen, Mao has criticized this, among other things in the article "About Practice" and "Improve Our Studies". Every revision of Marxism is not necessarily revisionism. It becomes Revisionism when the revolutionary truth is removed from marxism. When, for example, Mao and the CCP adapted to Marxism by having a focus on poor farmers and on encircling the cities – this was in practice a revision of the Marxist theory that is based on the working class in the cities. This was an adaptation and further development of Marxism which made it more true and hence not revisionism. Mao's contribution in this area has been proven true through practice. But all the theories Mao wrote that are proven true for China are not true for Norway today. Here we must again adapt these contributions to our reality.

RVR asks the following questions:

If Marx's genius was his application of the theory of 19th-century Western Europe, then not all Social Democrats and auditors right if they say he is outdated?

I have not said, nor do I think what the quote above suggests. I see that I wrote in my article "The Most Brilliant with Lenin and Mao was their ability to apply and adapt Marxism to the reality they lived under." Here I should have written "some of the most brilliant". It is difficult to rank between general texts and texts for the specific reality. Some of the texts written for the actual reality play back on and change the general theories of Marxism.

RVR continues:

The author believes, however, that the Maoist thesis of living with, working with and fighting with the masses does not apply to communists in imperialist countries.

This is not true. RVR presumably misunderstood which part of one quote I was arguing against. The part I argued against was the following: "Communists should have a personal production in the sector where they must develop their respective mass work."

Communists should not rely on a utopia, but the actual reality in which they live, and they must critically assess whether they are getting results from the work they do. I agree with Lenin when he writes in "What to do":

we must have a committee of professional *revolutionaries*, and it is immaterial whether a student or a worker is capable of becoming a professional revolutionary.

Lenin: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/ch04.htm>

Mass work is one means on the road to the revolution. Absolutely crucial for this is the ability to build a strong Communist Party. If we are unable to recruit to the party or the party-building organization through the mass work, then we must change that practice. Organizations run by Puritans and dogmatists die out because they do not understand that this is important.

If we are able to build a communist party through mass work in the workplaces, then it is excellent, but this is not the case in Norway today. We cannot cling on to a very revolutionary and leftist theory, when we see that in practice it does not work – then it is the theory that must change.