

Ghosts Along the Capitalist Road

JUNE 22, 2018

STRUGGLESSESSIONS

00:00

00:00

(Read by Lee Hanbyul)

Revisionism and Communism

Looking At Capitalist Restoration Historically, And To the Future

Edited 7/31/20

Today we live in an age without the revolutionary USSR and China, global base areas for aiding and supporting revolutionary movements both materially but more importantly, ideologically. The counter-revolutionary capitalist forces within their respective Communist parties and states turned back the clock of time. So now we are left with many questions: how would future socialist revolutions avoid this capitalist restoration again in the future? How can communists deepen the involvement of the people in decision-making? How do we do better, building on the experience of socialism in the 20th century?

Can we recognize when capitalist society comes at us in “socialist” disguise? What is revisionism, and where does it come from? These are vast questions, so for purposes of clarity and because we have a greater vantage point of having over two decades since the dissolution of the USSR, we will be examining revisionism and social-imperialism as it emerged with the defeat of the Soviet revolution, and in doing so, will look at the particular and apply it to the universal.

Defining Revisionism

Despite common caricatures Maoism, as it has developed through Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Gonzalo, never held that capitalism emerged magically from some singular point in time, from the death rattle of Stalin’s lungs or in the moment Khrushchev stood up on a podium. This argument often reduces Mao to just making a silly, magical argument because he was cynical (not really believing his own analysis of Soviet events) and really arbitrarily announced that the Soviet Union went from being socialist to being state monopoly capitalist because (for other reasons) the relations between the two countries had come to a breaking point. This narrative is a lie and presents a caricature that misrepresents (and intentionally obscures) the actual argument being made.

Revolutions happen in the superstructure (in the realm of politics, power, ideas, education, culture, policy) and have their impact in the base (in the realm of property relations and class relations in general). The actual argument by Maoists in that socialism is, inherently and unavoidably, a contentious checkerboard of old capitalist and new socialist relations, and that there emerges (based on the complex

and difficult choices that the heights of a revolutions leadership face as they seek to find a way forward) within the new state and party powerful political forces who put forward programs and political actions that would essentially lead to the restoration of capitalist relations within society. The moment of all-around restoration is indeed singular, situated to the moment where the capitalist roaders seize overall power. This means they are able to implement their program unopposed. But very importantly, this doesn't mean that all relations, structures, norms of society change magically in an instant – indeed, Mao's point was that for many workers their conditions (by the time the capitalist roaders take overall power for themselves) often haven't changed in certain localized or workplace settings even prior to that overall seizure, because they labored in parts of that checkerboard that had a capitalist line in command for a long time.

So for example, when socialist construction[1] starts, many parts of the old society remain. At the level of relations IN production, for example, meaning how work itself is organized, and how much the workers in each enterprise are developing the consciousness and political power to affect it. In how the contradiction between town and country is managed, and where to locate investment in order to ensure equitable development in both areas. In the relations between men and women, and particularly in the case of the USA, in the inequalities between internal oppressed nations and the oppressor nation. There are many areas in which the contradiction between the old and new persist and where the people need to be organized to ask: which way is the Party and state going?

So while we've established the material basis of capitalist restoration above, revisionism remains the ideology that uses red flags and communist lingo to promote habits, theories, and programs that put capitalist politics in command and/or that would lead to an overall restoration of capitalism. Many anti-communist liberals claim "revisionism" is a label haphazardly thrown onto many things, without seriously investigating the history behind it. Historically revisionism is the attempt to revise, modify or abandon the fundamentals of revolutionary theory and practice in a manner that can be correctly perceived as concessions to a revolution's adversaries. In China, revisionists were theorized as being "bourgeois democrats turned capitalist roaders." Zhang Chunqiao, who would be arrested in

Deng Xiaoping's counterrevolutionary coup in 1976, explained what revisionists were in China's context during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1967-1976) in On Exercising All-around Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie: **

***“There are undeniably some comrades among us who have joined the Communist Party organizationally but not ideologically. In their world outlook, they have not yet over-stepped the bounds of small production and of the bourgeoisie. They do approve of the dictatorship of the proletariat at a certain stage and within a certain sphere and are pleased with certain victories of the proletariat because they will bring them some gains; once they have secured their gains, they feel it's time to settle down and feather their cozy nests.

“As for exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, as for going on after the first step on the 10,000-li long march, sorry, let others do the job; here is my stop and I must get off the bus.

“We would like to offer a piece of advice to these comrades: It's dangerous to stop half-way! The bourgeoisie is beckoning to you. Catch up with the ranks and continue to advance!”

Chih Heng in From Bourgeois Democrats to Capitalist Roaders explained further:**

“The new-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party are two revolutionary stages whose character, targets and tasks are essentially different. The former took place in the old China of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. The principal contradiction it aimed to resolve was the contradiction between the masses of the people including, workers, peasants, the petty and national bourgeoisie on one side and imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism on the other. Therefore, it was anti-imperialist and anti-feudal bourgeois-democratic revolution in character. Its task was to strive under the leadership of the proletariat to overthrow the rule of imperialism, the feudal landlord class and the bureaucrat-comprador bourgeoisie in China, and to lead the revolution to socialism.

“With the victory of the new-democratic revolution, the character and principal contradiction of the Chinese society changed. The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie became the principal contradiction in our country. This contradiction not only exists in society at large but is also reflected in the Party.

“The socialist revolution we are carrying out is a revolution waged by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes. The spearhead of the revolution is directed mainly against the bourgeoisie and against Party persons in power taking the capitalist road. Its task is to replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the proletariat, use socialism to defeat capitalism, and through protracted class struggle gradually create conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, or for a new bourgeoisie to arise, and finally eliminate classes and realize communism.

“The founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 marked the beginning of the socialist revolutionary stage.

“If one’s ideology still remains at the old stage and views and treats the socialist revolution from the stand and world outlook of bourgeois democrats, one will become a representative of the bourgeoisie, a capitalist-roader and a target of the socialist revolution.

“After the victory of the new-democratic revolution in China, the ideology of some people in the Party remained at the stage of the democratic revolution and they did not want to continue the revolution along the socialist road. Isn’t this true of the capitalist-roader in the Party who refuses to mend his ways? [M.E.: This is a reference to Deng Xiaoping]

He and his followers are afraid that the socialist revolution will bring them under fire and will affect private ownership, bourgeois right which they cherish, the traditional ideas they want to uphold and their bourgeois class stand and world outlook. They, therefore, become representatives of the bourgeoisie. The deeper the socialist revolution goes, the sharper becomes the contradiction between them and the revolution and between them and the workers and poor and lower-middle

peasants who persevere in continuing the revolution. As the socialist revolution moves forward, they fall back and oppose revolution.

“It is precisely the capitalist-roader refusing to mend his ways who opposed agricultural co-operation and the people’s commune and supported “the fixing of farm output quotas for individual households with each on its own.” Later, he set himself up against the Great Cultural Revolution and suppressed the revolutionary mass movement, and now made every effort to reverse correct verdicts and restore capitalism.”

Indeed in the process of socialist transition, we will have to deal with the fact that there are going to be sections of the people who are less enthusiastic at different points of the revolution. In the case of the USSR and China there were all kinds of people and strata who “got on the bus” with their own demands and prejudices – the issue of revolution never simply was a highly ideologized choice at the start of “communism: for or against” but instead there were overlapping and conflicting demands for national independence, modernity, popular representation, land reform, an end to war, attacking poverty and feudal backwardness. A big part of the popularization around New Democracy in China (for national independence, development, radical land reform) that brought a broad swath of the Chinese people behind Communist leadership was later strained when the second and more difficult polarization around fighting under socialism for communism arrived. At that stage, many people wanted to “get off the bus” (to continue with Chunqiao’s metaphor), and even more dangerously, some wanted to re-route the destination of the bus on a disastrous course, becoming pointmen for capitalist restoration through revisionism.

Capitalist Roaders in the Early Soviet Union

This conception of “capitalist roaders” is not alien to Marx and Engels, or to Lenin in the case of the Soviet revolution, the latter who emphasized the need for a creation of a ‘new type of state’:

‘From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state themselves, have taken this work into their own hands, have organized control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the ‘state’ which consists of the armed workers, and which is ‘no longer a state in the proper sense of the word’, the more rapidly every form of state begins to wither away.’” Lenin in Tasks of Workers and Peasants Inspection, written shortly before his death also recognized growing problems emerging within the Soviet Communist Party:

“Let us hope that our new Worker’s and Peasants’ Inspection will abandon what the French call pruderies, which we may call ridiculous primness, or ridiculous swank, and which plays entirely into the hands of our Soviet and Party bureaucracy. Let it be said in parentheses that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices.”

Thus, there was an attempt to propose an institutional mechanism for the proletariat class and the masses to reject and abandon a Party that has lost its proletarian character. Clearly, when the Party goes down the wrong path and there is no institutionalized proletarian democratic mechanism to confront it, then the masses are vulnerable to a final capitalist roader coup. Many revisionists[2] in their defense of the post-1953 Soviet Union and post-1976 China deny that Lenin ever thought the people must increasingly take over exercising day-to-day control of the economy and state apparatus at all levels. Mao universalized this principle of continuous revolution towards communism and sought out its institutionalization, promoting the creation of revolutionary committees made up of non-Party masses to conduct state functions in the model of Paris Commune; formation Red Guards in millions through the arming of the masses; inclusion of the rights of workers to strike in the state constitution; and so on.

In the case of the Soviet revolution, the whole burden of the civil war brought about a crisis of empty factories and a complete disruption of the transport of firewood,

coal, and food, suspending illusions that communism was close. In the extremities of war and the low support among the peasantry, the Soviet communists resorted to bureaucratic and commandist[3] methods of forced expropriation of food from peasants under a doctrine of so-called “war communism.” As the White generals were defeated and the imperialist Ententes’ troops were forced to pull out as they faced mass defections, Lenin called for a retreat from this phase of war communism, calling off expropriations. The “New Economic Policy” that followed allowed a great deal of capitalism – opening market conditions in food, allowing foreign investment in recently nationalized Soviet enterprises, allowing the development of a merchant capitalist class (of speculators) called NEP-men to facilitate the movement of goods and food. It was in this era of concessions that the need for a new revolutionary wave became apparent to Lenin and to the next generation coming up in the 1920s, who would have to carry out collectivization and socialist industrialization by beating back the NEP-men and aspiring capitalists of agriculture.

It was in this context of the upcoming wave that we see the first capitalist roader enter history’s stage.

Bukharin: The First of the Capitalist Roaders

Bukharin was a veteran Bolshevik who was well respected by many who eventually became a pointmen of restoration. He correctly recognized, as Lenin did before he died in Communist Party debates, that the question of the New Economic Policy was one of *tactics* related to repairing the strain in the worker-peasant alliance. The Soviet revolution was strong and popular among the urban proletariat but very weak in its support in rural areas and among the peasants. For example, the Evangelical Youth organizations had higher membership rates than Komsomal, the Soviet Youth organization, did. But Bukharin, in recognizing the significant growth of capitalist forces in Russia’s countryside along with the parallel growth of capitalist political trends, argued for a *tactic* of long-term conciliation.

Thus began a struggle within the Soviet Communist Party on how to proceed. Bukharin pushed a political program of making the New Economic Policy (which many urban workers were now calling the “New Exploitation Policy”) a permanent

and strategic approach to economic planning and class relations. Bukharin demanded that local Party cells be reprimanded for organizing people against NEP-men and capitalists, arguing under the assumption that through “competition” the capitalist economics in the countryside would (in a gradual way) “grow” into socialist relations. He argued for the introduction of capitalist mechanisms in determining prices based on calculations of balances between different sectors. Stalin correctly argued that the problem with these proposals were that, if they were pursued, would have produced a “socialist” system that was essentially capitalist, that the political and economic considerations Bukharin saw as fixed were ultimately those imposed by capitalist forces, and that (with time) they could compel a dominance by the law of value (in both capitalist agriculture and in the nominally socialist industry).

Stalin defeated Bukharin’s line and thus began a major forced march towards collectivization, with many revolutionary elements of those days, like “the 25,000ers,” young working-class communist activists, leaving their homes to go deep into the countryside for this revolutionary advance. The approach, as we know now, was associated with Stalin but in its own way had a relationship to the Left Opposition like Zinoviev and Preobrazhensky, as well as Trotsky. It saw socialist industrialization as a key link, and that if the Soviet Union could carry out a swift march to modern industry it could resolve the class contradictions inherited by the Revolution, including the problem of the peasantry, by quickly providing mechanization in the context of a new collective agriculture. Collectivization corresponded with a massive amount of social surplus being channeled into heavy industry, meaning that collectivization seemingly served as a way of extracting from the peasants – while their resultant industry was not built around light industry-goods that they themselves could consume in lieu of such extraction. Many peasants, and not just kulaks, felt that this collectivization was a new form of taxation or violent extraction, and indeed in many cases it was.

Mao in his Critique of Soviet Economics criticized the Stalin era methods in many ways — saying that forced Soviet collectivization appeared to the peasants as something imposed from the outside, i.e. as a commandism, for the purpose of extracting more surplus from them. And this, inevitably, alienated many peasants

from the socialist forms of organization and from the Soviet state, in ways that never went away (even generations later). The kulaks and nepmen might have been defeated in those class struggles and forced to acquiesce to the collectivized forms of ownership, but the peasants were deeply alienated from these socialist forms and the worker-peasant alliance even further weakened by the ways in which this process was carried out.

Mao's approach, which is worth another text explaining this, developed into an opposing, different practice (to peasants, to creating collectives out of voluntary cooperatives and mutual aid groups, to the people's communes, to centralization v.s. decentralization in initiative and planning, in the relation to light and heavy industry, to the degree of coercion in land revolution, to the relationship of mechanization to collectivizing land).

But for many reasons, when we look back at what is known about the Soviet and Chinese experiences, Bukharin articulated first the approach that would be known as the "capitalist road." There would be many figures who would elaborate on what Bukharin did over the next 50 years. Interestingly enough there was much continuity in the programs of Lieberman, Kosygin, Gorbachev (who actually rehabilitated Bukharin), Liu Shaoqui, and Deng Xiaoping. Liu, for example, wanted to "consolidate New Democracy" in precisely the Bukharin and permanent-NEP way in contrast with leaping forward in creating socialist forms in agriculture through the People's Communes. At the same time, Stalin failed to see the importance of an organic involvement of the people in the creation of socialist forms and in fighting for their own liberation.

By the end of the World War 2 many profoundly un-socialist social relations were in place, ultimately unchecked and justified by the ravages of war within the Soviet Union. The long persistence of relations in production that are indistinguishable from capitalism, such as one man management, material incentives, acceptance of class differences, enforced passivity and non-encouragement of mass criticism corresponded with worsening political conditions of conservatism in inner-military relations, in intimate family relations, with a rise in Great Russian chauvinism, a decline in internationalism, and cynicism about revolution elsewhere. Zhukov and

Khrushchev, who were the team that fought for victory in Stalingrad and played key roles in countless events of Soviet history, were permitted in the 1950s to help consolidate this rising politics of rightism. Khrushchev seized power leading to a decisive shift of policy and consolidation of a capitalist road, which ultimately involved Zhukov mobilizing the supposedly “Red” Army to remove a whole section of leadership. The workings of an actual state capitalist economy were put together (with profit at the factory and enterprise level, the law of value governing investment) culminating with the 1964 Kosygin Reforms.

China, likewise, saw a similar process, by which the “People’s Liberation” Army carried out the final consolidation of reactionary, capitalist relations through a violent coup and mass arrests, leading to the opening of society to massive and direct western investment, abolition of socialist forms in the countryside, opening of zones for capital accumulation outside the planning structure, and ultimately breaking the “iron rice bowl” social contract with the workers. We do not have the time to elaborate a long prehistory (though we must!) that led to these successful restorations, but we should look at how we can elaborate a Maoist communism that will prevent such events, at creating a prehistory within the areas we organize that imposes dictatorship on our revolutions enemies but that promotes mass debate and democracy among its friends.

What Capitalism with a Red Flag looked like

Engels wrote about how, as monopoly capitalism developed, a highly mystified form of state control over social capital does so with it, with the state becoming the “ideal aggregate capitalist”:

“But neither conversion into joint-stock companies and trusts nor conversion into state property deprives the productive forces of their character as capital. This is obvious in the case of joint-stock companies and trusts. But the modern state, too, is only the organization with which bourgeois society provides itself in order to maintain the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against encroachments either by the workers or by individual capitalists. The modern state, whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine, the state of the

capitalists, the ideal aggregate capitalist. The more productive forces it takes over into its possession, the more it becomes a real aggregate capitalist, the more citizens it exploits.”

The emergent Soviet bureaucrat monopoly bourgeoisie was by no means unitary (a single aggregate capitalist) though, as first under Khrushchev, and then under Brezhnev, there began a process of the Soviet revisionist party and Council of Ministers issuing out permits for the creation of industrial and production combines, with those enterprises who exceed in capital and profit-making at the head to become the combine’s general manager. Official Soviet data pointed out that by 1975 there was a total of 1,715 combines combining more than 6,700 enterprises. A Soviet combine would have many powers: including to let go of large amounts of labor that was redundant or not needed. The reforms required that every enterprise and economic administrative department practice “complete economic accounting” where profit is the main concern and economic incentive is above everything.

The concentration of capital and production indeed accelerated. Statistics show a fall in the number of industrial enterprises, as they went from over 200,000 in 1950 to about 48,000 in 1974. One of the goals in merging the combines was to “raise profits through specialization,” as Brezhnev noted. As Marx explained in *Capital*, “all methods for raising the social productive power of labor that are developed on this basis, are at the same time methods for the increased production of surplus value or surplus product.” Under these combinations, the combine was indeed free to work out production plans on the basis of profit-seeking, studying market conditions for itself, fix the prices of its own products as long as it didn’t violate the price ceilings set by the state on certain products, and market products themselves. Indeed, profits increased – the Moscow Likhachev Motor Works, for example, only had 10.3% profits before it was integrated into a combine, but soon was up 23.4%, as the combine sought out new markets to dump Soviet commodities in.

While many revisionists use bourgeois sociology (pointing to the lack of high net worth, income, or meaningful class distinction) to point to the inability of there being a Soviet state bourgeoisie, they refuse to understand the essence of the bourgeoisie—this ability described above to allocate the means of production as

capital, for the purpose of the self-expansion of value—which was very much present under Soviet capitalism. As Engels explained well above, the private (or “individual”) investment of income is not, nor was it in his time, essential to the capital relation, especially in our era of imperialism. The Soviet bourgeoisie also reproduced itself, not through inheritance of property of course, but through the party hierarchy and the educational system, with higher managerial positions increasingly staffed by specialists who had no prior work history in manual positions but instead went right into higher or specialized secondary education institutions that were increasingly inaccessible to the Soviet proletariat and peasantry.

Social Imperialism in the Soviet Union and China

Because this was the installing of a state monopoly capitalist dictatorship this was also the installment of *social imperialism*. It is especially the case with the Soviet state monopoly bourgeoisie and imperialism that unequal trade was an important means of extracting surplus value from third world countries. The structuring of treaties was an important means of colonial and imperialist economics for them then as it is now for the People’s Republic of China. Many revisionists today, especially in the case of China, do not acknowledge that structures of trade and finance have always been a major part of how imperialism works, and how it serves its interests in international economic, financial and strategic relations.

Syzmanski, Parenti, and many other revisionist intellectuals have gone to great lengths to report Soviet “aid” and loans as support for developing their national economies, ignoring how vampiric as creditors the USSR was. Soviet social-imperialism, particularly in the case of India, used loans as a means of imperialist extraction. In every “loan” given by the Soviet Union to India which had to be paid back in interest, it is stipulated that the loan is to be used only to import Soviet goods. India is also required to export raw materials to the Soviet Union as repayment. In other words, India became a market for dumping goods and a supplier of raw materials to the Soviet Union. In 1974 the Soviet Union exported to India machinery and transport equipment worth 82.9 million rubles, about two-thirds of which were spent on projects controlled by Soviet “aid.”

India's Economic Times, in looking at the Soviet Union as a creditor nation, made the following estimate: that by the time India has cleared its debt with Moscow, the Soviet Union will receive a sum that is 565.7% of the principal loaned to it. Taking advantage of the devaluation of the rupee the Soviet Union even demanded that India recalculate the principal and interest on Soviet loans in making repayment. This has meant that India would have to pay back an additional 400 million rupees. Even to today, as the Russian imperialists continue to renegotiate this debt with India, India remains so overburdened with these old heavy debts that they have to continue taking new loans on to cover what they have to pay back.

Also, there was buying "cheap" and selling "dear" as another social imperialist tactic. The Soviet loans deprived India of its freedom of choice, ensuring that many important products had to be shipped to the Soviet Union in large quantities as repayment for debts. The price it gets as a rule for such products as 10 to 15% lower than on the international market, while Soviet machinery and equipment sent to India as part of a loan costed 20 to 30% more than on the international market. In the "newspaper incident" of 1973 India was to import 45,000 tons of newsprint only to have the Soviets rescind on the terms, increasing prices to 30% more than the world market price.

Similar "aid" was given to other Latin American, Asian, and African countries – and Soviet military maneuvers and geostrategy, especially going into the 1980s, corresponded with their desire to have access to strategic beachheads near their profitable markets and to have access to warm water ports in certain locations to facilitate this unequal trade. In the case of Peru the Soviets put a great deal of importance in undercutting US influence there, with Yuri Andropov dumping tens of millions in military "aid" to the fascist Peruvian Army and Air Force, providing dozens of army and police officers with scholarships in intelligence programs in the Soviet Union, and actively collaborating along with the Cubans in supplying around 50% of military and police equipment, as well as many advisors. This relationship continued throughout the 1980s and was cause for the Peruvian Maoists targeting the Soviet Embassy as well as other military installations.

Likewise, with China social imperialism engages in similar practices. Syzmanski in the capitalist restoration-denialist opus *Is the Red Star Still Flying* brought up how

the Soviets demand for repayment in commodities instead of currency is evidence of the non-predatory nature of their loans (suggesting that debt-induced insolvency and restructuring does not happen under such a trade arrangement since they never have to pay with currency). But just because the loan is backed by an asset instead of a currency doesn't mean the borrower can't dictate the extraction and sale of those resources to service the debt they initiated. In Africa today Beijing engages in a similar form of financing, giving out massive amounts of loans with resources as a form of collateral. Angola with various oil projects and Congo with the Sicomines copper project are prime examples of China's imperialist exploitation, as the total debt now owed to China exceeds their total public GDP in both respective countries, allowing them to have little left after the Chinese extract superprofits. The same follows in Ethiopia and Kenya, where the bureaucrat capitalists' spotty credit records make them look for a 'less evil' neocolonialism through Beijing that permits repayment in commodities. There has since been an expressed interest in creating China's first overseas military presence in neighboring Djibouti, providing the Chinese with a means of promoting lender compliance to an imperialist borrowers' demands as well as access to an extremely crucial trade route up into the Suez.

The Question of Armed Forces

We know from our Marxist theory of the state the question of armed forces well. In capitalist society (even in ones that were formerly socialist) the oppressors' state needs an army that is disconnected from the masses in order to serve the will of the exploiting classes. One of the great contributions of the Communist Party of Peru was the militarization of the masses, or the crystallization of the principle and strategic necessity of smashing the old standing army of the state and arming the people to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat as the first step to eliminate the exploiters' state structure and to form a new type of state. Bhattari, before he went the road of betraying Nepal's People's War, wrote about this:

“Due to different factors as cited earlier, the Red Army in Russia could not fulfill the

dream of the Bolsheviks that it ‘would in the near future provide the basis for replacing the regular army by the armed people’. On the contrary, in course of time the Red Army itself got converted into a large professional army and ultimately it became an instrument of counter-revolution. Similarly, the Chinese Red Army, steeled in the twenty-two years long vicious PW, too, gradually changed its color as a standing army after the revolution and ultimately served as a weapon of counter-revolution. On the basis of these bitter experiences and guided by the scientific ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism on the question of army and state we should strive to build a new type of army as a defender of the proletarian state and medium of continuous revolution, which would be equipped with revolutionary ideology and politics, intimately linked with the general masses and capable of organizing rebellion of the armed masses against counter-revolution. In this context we should be serious to implement the following resolution recently adopted by the Central Committee of our Party:

‘...it should be guaranteed that the people’s army of the 21st century is not marked by modernization with special arms and training confined to a barrack after the capture of state power but remains a torch-bearer of revolution engaged in militarization of the masses and in the service of the masses. It is only by developing armed masses from both ideological and physical point of view that one can resist foreign intervention and counter-intervention; this fact must be made clear before the armed forces right from the beginning. The main thrust of work for the 21st-century people’s army should be to complete the historical responsibility of developing conscious armed masses so that they may learn to use their right to rebel.’ [CPN (Maoist) 2004]

Gonzalo more appropriately pointed to this but actually applied this. As he states in *Interview with Chairman Gonzalo*:

“The People’s Guerrilla Army is important. It is the principal form of organization corresponding to the people’s war which is the principal form of struggle. The People’s Guerrilla Army which we have founded and which is developing vigorously,

is being built based on Chairman Mao Zedong's theories, and on a very important thesis of Lenin's concerning the people's militia. Lenin, concerned that the army could be usurped and used to bring about a restoration, held that a people's militia should assume the functions of the army, police and administration. This is an important thesis and the fact that Lenin was not able to put it into practice due to historical circumstances does not make it any less important and valid. It is so important that Chairman Mao himself paid a lot of attention to the task of developing a people's militia. So our army has these features and it was formed by taking those experiences into account. But, at the same time, it has its own specific features. We have a structure composed of three forces: a main force, a local force and a base force. We have no independent militia, because it exists in the ranks of the Army itself, which was formed according to this criteria. It was the above-mentioned principles which guided us, but we also think it's correct to say that the People's Guerrilla Army could not have been built in any other way given our concrete conditions. This army, all the same, has been able to act in every situation and can be readjusted and reorganized as necessary in the future."

The Peruvian Maoists started to promote this concept of the "armed sea of masses," meaning that a peoples army, peoples militias, and armed masses exist on three aspects interrelated and guided by communist politics and proletarian military lines. Purposing and weaponizing this understanding to the concrete conditions of Peru, it was emphasized that this was not just a means of encouraging mass participation in the initial stages of people's war, but part of guaranteeing the posterity of protracted mass waves towards communism in the future. The people's militia then was to be used against the capitalist restorationists who would inevitably try to use the People's Army:

"...capitalist restoration must be confronted. When the bourgeoisie loses Power, it reintroduces itself inside the Party, uses the army and seeks a way of usurping Power, of destroying the dictatorship of the proletariat to reinstate capitalism. Therefore, the Communist Parties must militarize themselves and exercise the overall dictatorship of the three instruments, forge themselves in the People's War

and empower the armed organization of the masses, the people's militia, so as to engulf the army. Towards this end, President Gonzalo tells us to "forge all militants as Communists, first and foremost, as fighters and as administrators"; for that reason every militant is forged in the People's War and remains alert against any attempts of capitalist restoration.

By militarizing the Party, we complete a step towards the militarization of society which is the strategic perspective to guarantee the dictatorship of the proletariat. The militarized society is the sea of armed masses which Marx and Engels spoke about, that guarantees the conquest and defense of the conquered Power. We take the experience of the Chinese Revolution, of the anti-Japanese base at Yen-an, which was a militarized society where everything flowed out of the barrels of guns, Party, Army, State, new politics, new economics, new culture. And that way we develop war communism." [PCP, 1988]

This is one means by which we conceive of future waves of Cultural Revolution to safeguard socialism and to fight even further towards communism. Without attacking professionalization, material differentials, the positing of the importance of a conventional military, and all the norms and expectations a professional standing army has, the state retains a bourgeois disease that can paralyze the whole body if allowed to go untreated. This is not a task that occurs after the fact of initial state power being seized, the people's militias and what would become the Peoples Army would have to be built concurrently along with other organizational bodies that make revolution possible at all. Mass involvement in their self-defense as a class through collective training and support is one such way of organically and embryonically creating the initial basis for this. Every street protest and mass action must become a school of military education for its participant.

Socialist Democratic Forms

How then do the people rule in such a way to ‘whither’ the state away and abolish the class distinctions that make it necessary? What is needed is a state with structures that allow the masses to take control over their social existence in all its dimensions, in order to revolutionize the political, economic, and cultural processes of life towards communism. The Party, if it lives up to its name, will be composed of the most conscious and dedicated people committed to revolution, and it must never ‘substitute’ itself over the masses – it, therefore, must serve as a vehicle to guarantee an institutional structure of proletarian democracy and proletarian decision making in all aspects of state affairs. As practiced during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution such methods like guaranteeing the freedom of expression and press through allowing *dazibaos* (large character posters) to be placed everywhere debating every facet of life and lodging social complaints, permitting strikes, encouraging public criticism of a mass action against persons in high authority of Party and state, will have to be institutionalized. What’s more is that, in workplaces and local areas, new forms of democratic power would need to be promoted to organize these popular waves towards communism.

In economic planning and others forms of social life there needs to be tested, representative leadership with real living accountability – public reporting, forms of mass debate (input), but specific loci of decision making where a combination of specialists, leaders and the masses themselves make decisions. Then there needs to be a macro-political process for approving the overall line and direction of society, where there would undeniably be elections at local, regional, and national levels over this. Workers control would be seen as a crucial instrument of making revolution and breaking the hold of old bourgeois forces and habits in production, as an important and innovative ram in class war, but this would exist not as an end product but as part of a process of the simultaneous codifying of both real mass input (and accountability in leadership) as well as creating a decision-making structure of “three in one committees” (with specialists, trained communist leaders, and representatives from the grassroots). Wavelike motions of mass democratic

fury will help secure new revolutionary normalcies, preventing the restorationists from feeling comfortable.

Lenin's point of restricting the wages of representatives to being no higher than the average workers is crucial too – an enormous pressure imposed by Stalin on the party and state bureaucrats during his era as well, which preceded the new ethos of pursuit of career and the pleasure of purchasing goods that would occur under Khrushchev and even more so under Brezhnev. This is not to endorse Stalin's method of dealing with this contradiction as a model for our future socialist society, but much can be learned about the problems and dangers tied up with privileged consumption and the necessity to mobilize the masses against, restrict, and lay the basis to eventually uproot such elements within the state who demand to be treated differently from the masses when it comes to differentials in what they are socially reimbursed with. The right to recall of such representatives should also remain universal and enforceable by the masses.

Those who uphold Actually Existing Capitalism in the People's Republic of China and the now extinct Soviet Union are apologists for societies dominated by capitalism. Their outer differences with the traditional imperialist states like France or the USA are like distinctions between different kinds of fungi—a forager will take the wide variations, gradient of color, and shape into account without losing sight of the generic unity in the mycological form it takes. The exploitation of workers, the oppression, and sale of women, the suppression of oppressed nations like Congo or the Philippines and subsequent preparations for a world war of redivision—these are present both in China and the USA. Apologetics for these ruling class stooges are fools opposed to proletarian democracy and socialist construction, and with all revisionism, the gap between their professed ideals and the hypocrisy inherent in their politics are the stock in trade to become paid defenders of capitalism. They say “no to communism, no to socialism, preserve our petty bourgeois privileges and prerogatives” while declaring unfashionable the idea of thoroughgoing revolution

and declaring the rule of the privileged strata as in—the masses seem them for the liars they are!

It is up for the Bolsheviks of 2018 today to be radically honest about the past defeats to capitalist restoration and to articulate a new vision, based on not using state force to solve contradictions within the Party and among the people, but on developing and expanding the arming of the masses to replace the standing army, to develop and birth new representative institutions for the proletariat to be active in, and to require all bureaucrats to be at the level of the masses, to encourage freedom of speech and press for the people, to encourage mass supervision and intervention in state affairs, and to promote the widest promotion possible to move towards communism. We will articulate this vision and promote it in our organizing and in the revolutionary culture we will build!

The question of revisionism is not a question of the past; it is a ghost which haunts the very practice of activists today who must become the soldiers of the communist tomorrow and we must deal with it in the here and now.

Article by S. Mazur

[1] Socialist construction is the building of socialist society through restricting the law of value (the organization of society based on production for profit) for the purposes of abolishing class distinctions, abolishing the relations of production in which they rest, abolishing the social relations that correspond with these relations in production, and revolutionizing all ideas that result from these social relations.

[2] “revisionist” in this instance includes Brezhnevites, Dengites etc which is the denial of the need for “continuous revolution,” of continued popular wave-like

mobilizations to attack the old society under the context of the dictatorship of the proletariat (the division of manual and intellectual labor, between leader and led, between men and women, between town and country, against material incentives and wage gaps), in attacking this theorization of cultural revolution as non-universal it emphasizes that ‘Maoism’ is just a regionalization of ML theory. They focus on particularity and play off that there is no universal principle from Mao and Gonzalo to apply to concrete situations, allowing class collaboration, reformism, and counter revolution. These revisionists will claim to be honest Marxist-Leninists but are not and never were.

[3] “Commandism” is an error of “expression of ignorance of and callousness to both the hardships of the masses and the conditions in the grassroots organizations.”

NEXT POST

When We'll Worship Jesus

One thought on “Ghosts Along the Capitalist Road”

Pingback: [The Happy Face of Imperialism: Problems with the Democratic Socialists of America and why Election Boycotts are Necessary](#)

Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...

Search ...

ARCHIVES

December 2021

November 2021

October 2021

September 2021

August 2021

July 2021

June 2021

May 2021

April 2021

March 2021

February 2021

January 2021

November 2020

October 2020

July 2020

June 2020

May 2020

April 2020

March 2020

February 2020

January 2020

December 2019

November 2019

October 2019

August 2019

July 2019

June 2019

May 2019

April 2019

February 2019

January 2019

December 2018

November 2018

October 2018

September 2018

August 2018

July 2018

June 2018

BLOG AT WORDPRESS.COM.