

"On Marxism-Leninism-Maoism"



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The ideology of the international proletariat arose in the crucible of the class struggle as Marxism, becoming Marxism-Leninism and, finally, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. In this way the all-powerful scientific ideology of the proletariat, all-powerful because it is true, has undergone three stages: 1) Marxism, 2) Leninism, 3) Maoism. These are three stages, periods or milestones in the dialectical process of development of a single unity that in 140 years, beginning with the *Communist Manifesto*, through the most heroic epic of class struggle, through fierce and fruitful two-line struggles within the communist parties themselves, through the tremendous work of giants of thought and action that only the class could have brought forth, with three unfading luminaries standing above the rest -- Marx, Lenin and Mao Tsetung -- and through great leaps, especially three, has armed us with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism today.¹

However, while the universal validity of Marxism-Leninism has come to be recognized, Maoism is not broadly recognized as the third stage; thus, while some simply deny it as such, others only go so far as to accept it as "Mao Tsetung Thought." Essentially, in both cases, while they clearly have differences between them, they both deny the overall development of Marxism by Chairman Mao Tsetung. Not to recognize Maoism's character as an "ism" is to deny that it is universally applicable and, consequently, its character as the third, newest and highest stage of the ideology of the international proletariat: Marxism- Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, which we uphold, defend and apply.

As an introduction, and to better understand Maoism and the need to fight for it, let us recall Lenin. He taught us that as the revolution shifted to the East it would confront specific conditions which, without denying principles and laws, were nonetheless new situations, and that Marxism could not fail to recognize this fact on pain of leading the revolution to defeat. Despite the uproar raised especially by pedantic and bookish intellectuals full of liberalism and false Marxism in opposition to what was newly arising, the only appropriate and correct thing to do was to apply Marxism to the concrete conditions and resolve the new situations and problems that every revolution necessarily confronts and resolves; this in the face of consternation and hypocritical "defense of the ideology, the class, and people" put forward by revisionists, opportunists and renegades, and the enraged and blind attacks by the stultified academicians and hacks of the old order, debased by rotten bourgeois ideology and ready to defend the old society on which they were parasites. Furthermore, Lenin expressly stated that the revolution in the East would give rise to new and great surprises that would further shock the worshippers of known paths who are incapable of seeing the new; and, as we all know, he entrusted comrades from the East with resolving problems that Marxism had not yet been able to resolve.

Further, we should keep in mind that when Comrade Stalin rightfully and correctly stated that we had entered the stage of Leninism in the development of Marxism, there was also opposition, and those who opposed it also did so in the name of defending Marxism. Let us keep in mind that some people also said that Leninism was only applicable to the backward countries, but through struggle, practice confirmed it as a great development of Marxism, and proletarian ideology shined throughout the world as Marxism-Leninism.

¹ 'Principally Maoism' because today the most up to date and holistic application of Marxism to our conditions is Maoism and we must principally apply the most advanced science when attempting to do work in any scientific field of inquiry.

Today, Maoism faces a similar situation, and just as the new and Marxism have always made their way through struggle, so too Maoism will prevail and become recognized.

As for the context in which Chairman Mao worked and in which Maoism was forged, on an international level the basis was imperialism, world wars, the worldwide proletarian movement, the national liberation movement, the struggle between Marxism and revisionism and the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. Three milestones stand out in this century: first the 1917 October revolution, the dawn of the world proletarian revolution; second, the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949, changing the correlation of forces in favor of socialism; third, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated in 1966 as a continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to continue on the road to communism. Suffice it to say that Chairman Mao led two of these glorious historic events.

Maoism took concrete shape in China, the centre of the world revolution, amidst the most complex convergence of contradictions, intense and bloody class struggle marked by the imperialist powers' attempt to carve up China amongst themselves, the fall of the Manchu empire (1911), the antiimperialist movement of 1919, the upheaval of the vast peasantry, the 22 years of armed struggle for the democratic revolution, the tremendous struggle to build and develop socialism and the ten years of revolutionary fervor to advance the Cultural Revolution in the midst of the greatest two-line struggle in the CPC, principally against revisionism, with the world situation already described in the background. Four of these historic events are of particularly extraordinary importance: the founding of the Communist Party of China in 1921; the 1927 Autumn Harvest Uprising which was the beginning of the path of surrounding the cities from the countryside; the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949; and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976; in all of these Chairman Mao was the leading figure, and, above all, the highest and acknowledged leader of the Chinese Revolution.

Regarding Chairman Mao's biography, we can say that he was born on 26 December 1893, opening his eyes to a world convulsed in the flames of war. He was the son of peasants and was seven when the "Boxer Rebellion" broke out. He was 18 and studying to be a teacher when the empire collapsed; he enlisted in the army and later became a great organizer of peasants and students in Hunan, his native province. Founder of the Communist Party and the workers and peasants Red Army, he put forward the path of encircling the cities from the countryside, developed people's war and with that the military theory of the proletariat. He formulated the theory of New Democracy and founded the People's Republic. He was the motive force of the Great Leap Forward and the driving force behind the building of socialism, leader of the struggle against Khrushchev's modern revisionism and his lackeys, and leader and guide of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. These milestones mark a life totally and completely dedicated to revolution. In this century the proletariat has won three great victories; two were led Chairman Mao, and if one is glorious enough, then two is all the more so.

On the content of Maoism — obviously, its essence — we should underline the following basic questions:

1. *Theory*. Marxism is made up of three component parts: Marxist philosophy, Marxist political economy and scientific socialism.² The development of all of these gives rise to a great qualitative leap for Marxism as a whole, as a unity, to a higher level, which means a new stage.

² As defined by Comrade Lenin in "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism" —Ed

Consequently, it is essential to point out that Chairman Mao has produced, in theory and in practice, precisely such a great qualitative leap. In order to better explain we will examine this point by point.

In *Marxist philosophy* he developed the essence of dialectics, the law of contradiction, establishing it as the only fundamental law; and in addition to his profoundly dialectical understanding of the theory of knowledge, whose essence is the two leaps that make up this law (from practice to knowledge and back to practice, the leap from knowledge back to practice being principal), we must emphasize his masterful application of the law of contradiction to politics; moreover, he took philosophy to the masses, fulfilling the task laid out by Marx.

In *Marxist political economy* Chairman Mao applied dialectics to analyze the relationship between the base and superstructure and, in carrying out the struggle of Marxism-Leninism against the revisionist theory of the "productive forces," he concluded that the superstructure, consciousness, can transform the base and with political power develop the productive forces. He developed the Leninist idea that politics is the concentrated expression of economics, and proclaimed that politics must be in command (applicable to all fields) and that political work is the lifeblood of economic work; all this led to a genuine management of political economy and not just a series of economic policies.

One question that is overlooked, despite its importance especially for those who face new democratic revolutions, is the Maoist theory of bureaucrat capitalism, that is, the capitalism that imperialism develops in the oppressed countries on the basis of different levels of feudalism or other previous systems. This is a crucial problem especially for Asia, Africa and Latin America, since from its understanding flows the correct leadership for the revolution, particularly because the economic basis for advancing the revolution to the second, socialist stage depends on confiscating bureaucrat capital.

But the main thing is that Chairman Mao Tsetung has developed the political economy of socialism. His criticism of socialist construction in the USSR is extremely important. So too are his theses on how to build socialism in China: taking agriculture as the foundation and industry as the leading factor, industrialization guided by the relationship between heavy and light industry and agriculture, centering economic construction on heavy industry and simultaneously giving full attention to light industry as well as agriculture. We should highlight the Great Leap Forward and the conditions for its implementation: one, a correct line setting an appropriate and correct course; two, a range of small, medium and large organisational forms in terms of quantitative size; three, a tremendous push, a colossal effort on the part of the masses to set it in motion and finally to win, a leap forward whose results are more appreciated by looking at the process it sets in motion and its historical perspectives than by the immediate results, and at its links to agricultural cooperatives and people's communes. Finally, we must keep in mind his teachings on objectivity and subjectivity in understanding and managing the laws of socialism (whose full flowering has not been seen in the short decades of socialism, which likewise has prevented a better understanding of these laws and their specificity), and especially the relationship between revolution and economic development, concentrated in "grasp revolution, promote production." Nevertheless, despite its crucial importance, not much has been said about this development of Marxist political economy.

In *Scientific socialism* Chairman Mao developed the theory of classes, analyzing them on the economic, political and ideological plane; revolutionary violence as a universal law without

exception; revolution as the violent replacement of one class by another, putting forth his theory that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," and he solved the problem of the seizure of power in the oppressed nations by indicating the road of encircling the cities from the countryside and establishing its general laws. He brilliantly defined and developed the theory of the class struggle under socialism: that under socialism antagonistic struggle persists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the capitalist road and the socialist road and between capitalism and socialism, and that it was not yet settled which will win out; it would be resolved over a long period of time, a process of restoration and counter-restoration until the proletariat would finally achieve the definitive consolidation of its political power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Finally, and most importantly he formulated the great historic solution for continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

These basic questions, simply outlined but well known and undeniable, show Chairman Mao's development of the component parts of Marxism and the obvious development of Marxism-Leninism to a new, third and higher stage: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism.

Continuing with this synthetic approach, let us look at other specific points which, though they flow from those previously mentioned, should be taken up, even if only enumeratively, so as to call attention to them.

2. *New Democracy*. First of all, the development of the Marxist theory of the state, in relation to the three types of dictatorships: 1) of the bourgeoisie, in the old type of bourgeois democracies like the U.S., a category to which can be added the oppressed nations such as those in Latin America; 2) the dictatorship of the proletariat as in the USSR and China before the revisionists seized power; and 3) New Democracy as the joint dictatorship based on the worker-peasant alliance led by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party, which was forged in China during the democratic revolution and in Peru today takes the form of people's committees, base areas and the New Democratic People's Republic in the process of formation. Within this development of the theory of the state it is essential to stress the key difference between the state system, the dictatorship of a class or classes that hold political power, which is principal, and the system of government, the organization of the exercise of that political power.

Further, New Democracy -- one of Chairman Mao's most outstanding developments -- masterfully gives concrete form to the bourgeois revolution of a new type that can only be led by the proletariat, in sum, the democratic revolution in the context of the new era of the world proletarian revolution in which we find ourselves. New democratic revolution means a new economy, new politics and new culture, obviously it means overthrowing the old order and building a new one with guns in hand, which is the only way to transform the world.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that while New Democracy, being a democratic revolution, fulfills democratic tasks, it also advances in relation to some socialist tasks. This provides an overall solution to the problem of two stages -- democratic and socialist -- that correspond to countries like ours. It guarantees that once the democratic stage is completed, the revolution will continue advancing uninterruptedly to the socialist stage without the slightest pause.

3. *The three weapons*. The problem of building the three weapons of the revolution demands that the Party understand the relationship between the Party, the army and the united front; a task of leadership is to correctly and appropriately understand and handle the interrelated building of all three in the midst of war or the defense of the new state based on the power of the armed masses.

This building is guided by the principle that the proper and correct ideological line is decisive, and it is on this ideological-political basis that organizational building develops simultaneously, in the course of the struggle between the proletarian line and the bourgeois line and in the storm of the class struggle, principally war, which presently or potentially is the main form of class struggle.

Concerning the *Party*, Chairman Mao takes as his starting point the need for a Communist Party, a party of a new type, a party of the proletariat, today we would say a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party; a party whose objective is to seize and hold onto state power, which inseparably links the party to people's war, whether it be to initiate it, develop it or wage it to defend itself; a party based on the masses, either as a consequence of the people's war -- which is a war of the masses -- or the united front, which being a front made up of classes, is based on the majority of the masses. The party develops and changes according to the stages of the revolution and their periods; the motive force of its development is the concentrated contradiction within it in the form of two-line struggle between the proletarian line and the bourgeois line or non-proletarian line in general, which is in essence and principally a struggle against revisionism. This leads to the crucial importance of ideology in the life of the party and of the unfolding of rectification campaigns to adjust the functioning of the whole system of the party's organizations and membership to the appropriate and correct ideological and political lines, so that the proletarian line may predominate and keep a steel grip on the leadership of the party. The party's purpose is the establishment of the political power of the proletariat, even under New Democracy where it is the leading class, and principally the establishment, strengthening and development of the dictatorship of the proletariat so as, through cultural revolutions, to win the ultimate goal, communism. This is why the proletariat must lead in everything and in an all-around way.

The *revolutionary army* is of a new type, an army for carrying out the political tasks set by the party in accordance with the interests of the proletariat and people. This takes the concrete form of three tasks: to wage war, to produce so as not to become a parasitic burden, and to mobilize the masses. An army that is built politically based on proletarian ideology, on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (today) and the general political line and military line established by the party. An army that bases itself on people, not weapons; an army that has come forth from the masses and is always linked to them and serves them wholeheartedly, allowing it to move among them like a fish in water. Without a people's army the people have nothing, Chairman Mao says, while he also teaches the necessity that the party commands absolute leadership over the army and sets forth the great principle: the party commands the gun and we will never allow the gun to control the party. Beyond thoroughly establishing the principles and norms for building the army of a new type, the Chairman also warned that the army could be used to restore capitalism if leadership is usurped through a counterrevolutionary coup, and he developed Lenin's thesis on the people's militia, advancing further than ever before in the broad arming of the people, opening the way and pointing the direction towards the sea of armed masses which will lead us to the ultimate emancipation of the masses and the proletariat.

Chairman Mao Tsetung was the first to develop a complete theory of the *united front* and establish its principles. A united front based on the worker-peasant alliance and guaranteeing the proletariat's hegemony in the revolution; a united front of classes led by the proletariat, represented by its party, in sum a united front under the leadership of the Communist Party; a united front for people's war, for the revolution, for the seizure of power in the service of the proletariat and the masses. Concretely, therefore, the united front is the unity of the revolutionary

forces against counterrevolutionary forces in order to wage the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, principally through people's war, arms in hand. Obviously, the united front is not the same at every stage of the revolution, and moreover, it has its specific characteristics depending on the different periods of each stage; likewise, the united front in a specific revolution is not the same as on a world scale, though both follow the same general laws. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the relationship between the front and the state which Chairman Mao established during the war against Japan when he explained that the united front was a form of joint dictatorship. This is a question we who face democratic revolution must study.

4. *People's war* is the military theory of the international proletariat; people's war sums up for the first time, in a systematic and all-encompassing way, the theoretical and practical experience of the struggles, military actions and wars waged by the proletariat as well as the people's long experience in waging armed struggle, especially the war waged by the Chinese peasants. It is because of Chairman Mao that the class has a military theory; however, there is much confusion and misunderstanding around this issue. These problems arise from how the people's war in China itself is understood. It is often viewed, narrowly and contemptuously, as a mere guerrilla war; this already denotes a lack of understanding of the fact that with Chairman Mao guerrilla warfare acquires a strategic character. This view also does not understand how guerrilla warfare, on the basis of its essential fluidity, can develop mobility, mobile warfare, positional warfare; it can unfold plans for major strategic offensives and it can seize small, medium and large cities with millions of inhabitants, combining attacks from outside with insurrections from within. Thus, in conclusion, the four stages of the Chinese revolution, in particular from the peasant war to the people's war of liberation, with the war against Japan taking place between these two periods, demonstrate the diverse aspects and complexity of the revolutionary war waged for more than 20 years with a huge population and a huge mobilization and participation of the masses; the war involved examples of many different experiences; and the essence of this war has been extraordinarily studied and its principles, laws, strategy, tactics, norms, etc., have been masterfully established. It is in that incredible crucible and on the basis laid by Marxism-Leninism that Chairman Mao was able to establish the military theory of the proletariat, people's war.

We must keep in mind that subsequently the Chairman himself, with full knowledge of the existence of atomic bombs and missiles and the ability to use them, defended and developed people's war to wage it under new conditions involving nuclear weapons and against powers and superpowers; in sum, people's war is the weapon of the proletariat and people in confronting nuclear war.

A key and decisive question in understanding the universality of people's war is understanding its universal validity and consequently applicability, taking into account the different types of revolutions and the specific conditions of each revolution. To understand this key question it is helpful to keep in mind the fact that since the Petrograd insurrection this model has not been repeated, and to consider the antifascist resistance and guerrilla wars in Europe during World War II, as well as the armed struggles being waged in Europe today, and to see that in the end, the October Revolution was not only an insurrection but a revolutionary war that lasted several years. Consequently, in the imperialist countries the revolution can only be conceived of as revolutionary war and today this can only mean people's war.

Finally, today more than ever, we communists and revolutionaries, the proletariat and the people, need to be steeled in the point: "yes, we are advocates of the omnipotence of revolutionary war; that is good, not bad, it is Marxist." This means we have to be supporters of the invincibility of people's war.

5. The historical significance of *the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* is that it is the most far-reaching of Chairman Mao's developments of Marxism-Leninism, the solution to the great pending problem of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. It "constitutes a broader and deeper new stage in the development of the socialist revolution in our country." What was the situation? As the Decision of the CPC concerning the GPCR put it: "Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavor to stage a comeback. The proletariat must do the exact opposite: it must deal merciless blows and meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society. At present, our objective is to struggle against and overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic authorities' and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system."

It was under these conditions that the most earthshaking political event and the largest mass mobilization the Earth has ever seen took place. This is how Chairman Mao defined its objectives: "The current Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism."

We would further emphasize two other questions: 1) the GPCR marked a milestone in the development of the dictatorship of the proletariat towards consolidating the proletariat's political power, concretized in the Revolutionary Committees; and 2) the restoration of capitalism in China following the 1976 counter-revolutionary coup does not negate the GPCR but rather formed part of the contention between restoration and counter-restoration, and in fact, it points to the crucial historic importance of the GPCR in humanity's inexorable march towards communism.

6. *World revolution*. Chairman Mao emphasizes the importance of the world revolution understood as a single whole. His basic starting points are that revolution is the main trend while imperialism is increasingly falling apart every day, that the role of the masses grows more immense year after year and that they are making and will make their irresistible transforming force felt, and the great truth that he reiterated: either all of us will march on to communism or none of us will. Within this specific perspective of the era of imperialism is the great historic moment of the "next 50 to 100 years," and within that context, the period now beginning of the struggle against Yankee imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism³, those paper tigers fighting for world hegemony and threatening the world with nuclear war, to which we must respond first by condemning such a war and then getting ready to oppose it with people's war and make

³ Today: Yankee imperialism and Chinese social-imperialism.

revolution. Furthermore, based on the historic importance of the oppressed nations and even more their future perspectives, as well as the economic and political relations developing due to the decomposition of imperialism, the Chairman set forth his theory that "three worlds are taking shape." All of this points to the need to develop the strategy and tactics of the world revolution. Unfortunately, little or almost nothing is known of the writings and statements by Chairman Mao regarding these most important questions; however, what little we do know shows the tremendous prospects he foresaw, and these are major guiding principles which we should follow to understand and serve the world proletarian revolution.

7. *Superstructure, Ideology, Culture, Education.* These and other related problems have been sharply and profoundly studied and resolved by the Chairman; therefore, this is another basic question that demands attention.

In conclusion, the content of these basic questions clearly demonstrates to anyone who cares to see and understand that we have a third, new and higher stage of Marxism: Maoism; and that to be a Marxist today means to be Marxist-Leninist-Maoist and principally Maoist.

The exposition of the content leads us to two questions.

What is the essence of Maoism? *The essential thing in Maoism is political power.* Political power for the proletariat, power for the dictatorship of the proletariat, power based on an armed force led by the Communist Party. More explicitly: 1) political power under the leadership of the proletariat in the democratic revolution; 2) political power for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the socialist and cultural revolutions; 3) political power based on an armed force led by the Communist Party, seized and defended through people's war.

What is Maoism? Maoism is the raising of Marxism-Leninism to a new third stage in the proletariat's struggle to lead the democratic revolution, the development and building of socialism and continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat through proletarian cultural revolution, at a time when imperialism is increasingly falling apart and revolution has become the main trend in history, in the midst of the greatest and most complex struggles ever seen, along with the inexorable struggle against modern revisionism.

On the *Struggle around Maoism*. Briefly, the struggle in China to establish Mao Tsetung Thought began in 1935, at the Tsunyi meeting, when Chairman Mao assumed the leadership of the Communist Party of China; in 1945 the 7th Congress agreed that the CPC was guided by Marxism-Leninism and the ideas of Mao Tsetung, though this concrete formulation was suppressed by the 8th Congress where a rightist line held sway. The 9th Congress of 1969 summed up the GPCR and stated that the CPC was guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought; up to that point there was progress.

On an international level Maoism began to become influential in the 1950s, but it was only with the GPCR that it becomes widely known, acquiring enormous prestige, and Chairman Mao became recognized as the leader of the world revolution and the founder of a new stage of Marxism-Leninism; thus, many Communist Parties came to adopt the denomination Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. On a world level, Maoism openly and sharply confronted modern revisionism and exposed it deeply and thoroughly, and the same thing occurred within the ranks of the CPC itself, raising even higher the Chairman's great red banner: the third, new and highest stage of the international proletariat's ideology. Today Maoism faces the triple attack

of Soviet, Chinese and Albanian revisionism. Moreover, even among those who recognize the Chairman's great contributions, including his development of Marxism, there are some who believe we are still in the stage of Marxism-Leninism and others who only accept Mao Tsetung Thought but in no way accept Maoism.

Obviously, the revisionists in Peru who follow the dictates of their respective overlord -- Gorbachev, Deng, Alia or Castro -- have attacked Maoism; among them we must condemn, unmask and fight the callous revisionism of Del Prado and his gang of the so-called "Peruvian Communist Party"; the spineless snakes of the so-called "Communist Party of Peru, Red Fatherland" who formerly proclaimed themselves "great Maoists" and then became lackeys of Deng after having condemned him in 1976 when he was knocked down; as well as the anti-Maoism of the so-called "United Left" teeming with everything from all sorts of revisionists and even anti-Marxists to phony Marxists and opportunists of all shades. To hold high Maoism as a revealing mirror in front of the revisionists and to relentlessly struggle against them while working for the development of the people's war and the victory of the continuing democratic revolution is an obligatory and unavoidable task of a strategic nature.

The Communist Party of Peru, through the fraction led by Chairman Gonzalo which pushed forward the reconstitution of the Party, took up Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in 1966; in 1979, the slogan Hold High, Defend and Apply Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought! in 1981, Towards Maoism! and in 1982, Maoism as a component part and the highest development of the international proletariat's ideology: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

With the people's war we have come to more profoundly understand what Maoism means and have taken the solemn pledge to Uphold, Defend and Apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Principally Maoism!, and to tirelessly fight to help make it the commander and guide of the world revolution, the only really red and imperishable banner, the guarantee of victory for the proletariat, oppressed nations and peoples of the world in their inexorable combat and march towards communism, forever golden and shining.

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