

WHY MAOISM?

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“Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No, are they innate in the mind? No, they come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment.”

Mao, Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?

introduction

Motion is the essence of science. Every science is quantitatively in a state of constant progression. Intermittently, a phase of qualitative change in the form of a leap transports each science to a new stage. In such epochs, every science produces its own genius who, on the basis of the discoveries-accomplishments-theories of preceding scientists, study the changes in the material world and in the process take that science to a new, advanced stage of development with new, epoch-making discoveries, accomplishments, and theories.¹

Social science is related to the extension of nature—with society, and with the highest and subtlest motion of matter—with the aggregation of the human mind. Therefore, it is much more complicated and intricate than natural science: its laboratory is society and its experimental material is humanity. Society progresses

1 We do not entirely agree with the author about the idea of a world-historical “genius” – such a position could be read as a “great man” (for it usually gendered) theory that, at the end of the day, is a very bourgeois notion. It is more accurate to argue, we believe, that at different stages of history, those who happen to be in the position to develop a concrete analysis of a concrete situation that provides the theoretical and practical means to achieve revolution, are merely ciphers of a larger and often invisible collective process. Thus, what we call “marxism” stands over Marx, what we call “leninism” stands over Lenin, and what we call “maoism” stands over Mao – they are only named such because these people happened to be those whose theories provided universality to scientific socialism. Even Mao disagreed with the “great man” theory, troubled by the personality cult that emerged during the GPCR and that was often used, with significant and damaging effect, by political factions opposed to his line.

We should also examine the reasons why these people, and not others, happened to be in the position to develop concrete analyses of concrete situations. The Nepali Maoist Hisila Yami, in *Peoples War and Womens Liberation*, for example, argues that these so-called “geniuses” were men because the gender privilege of their time and place resulted in the material fact that only men had access to the educational privilege that would allow for a concrete analysis of a concrete situation. We can apply Yami’s theory to other forms of oppression as well.

through those social revolutions that demand the most diverse and skillful exercise of the highest and subtlest energy of humanity. In the crucibles of these intricate, complicated and agonizing social experiments, new theories are forged, developed and verified. The process of experiment-theory-practice goes on perennially, but it does not follow a straight, smooth path. This journey of progress moves forward through various crests and troughs and traverses a tortuous, spiraling path. After several failed attempts, a successful social experiment is conducted, the appraisal of which gives birth to a new theory. However, often this appraisal is either incomplete or partial and the lacuna is removed by a series of subsequent supplementary experiments and, on the basis of this new theory, a new experiment begins. Quite often it so happens that the process of verifying a new theory born by experiments becomes inordinately long, several hurdles creep up in its way and, by its force of inertia, surviving socially regressive forces place it in deadlock.

Scientific Socialism is a social science of the same kind.² In the present epoch of world history, this is the science of social revolution—the science of Proletarian Revolution. As a revolutionary science of the most revolutionary class in human history—the Proletariat—it is the paramount compendium of the journey of progress of humanity and society up to the present stage and, therefore, is historically an unprecedented, dynamic revolutionary force. In a constantly changing society, Scientific Socialism as a science of revolution changes constantly. The capitalist world, thoroughly analyzed by Scientific Socialism in order to change it, is in a state of constant development and on the basis of this development and experiences of revolutionary social experiments, the science of Proletarian Revolution has been in constant development.

In general, Scientific Socialism is named after its first and foremost discoverer,

2 The use of the term “science” in this context needs to be understood in the way that Marx, Engels, and their contemporaries understood “science” rather than how it has come to be understood now, following the emergence of positivism and scientific specialization. Crudely put, in Marx and Engels’ time, “science” was understood as that which examined natural phenomena according to natural causes – the “enlightenment” counterpoint to religion – and so sought to understand universal and applicable principles through rational and systematic investigation. Thus, Marx and Engels were interested in developing a materialist understanding through examining social and historical phenomena according to social and historical causes.

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Karl Marx, and is known as Marxism (this has been accepted by Friedrich Engels who assisted Marx). The continuously developing Marxist science took a revolutionary leap and entered a new stage in the first two decades of the twentieth century. It was then named Marxism-Leninism after Vladimir Lenin, the epochal genius who fulfilled the role of a leader and theorist in this kind of social experiment and revolutionary development in the resulting theory. Marxism-Leninism became the science of Proletarian Revolution in a new stage of Capitalism. This signifies that the contribution of Lenin to the development of Marxism is epochal as he took it to a new stage of development.

Today, all genuine Proletarian revolutionaries who are determined to create new versions of Proletarian Revolution are appraising every experiment of the past, especially the recent past, those great Socialist experiments that moved the Socialist Revolution forward and prevented the restoration of Capitalism that was performed under the leadership of Mao. They are mulling over the question of the contribution of Mao Zedong in the development of Marxism: how were these contributions important and to what extent were they epochal? Did Mao take Marxism to a new stage of development? And if he has done so, then should not the Marxism of today be called Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, as some Communist revolutionaries of the world are already calling it and as this essay is going to enunciate?

In the development of Marxist science, the assessment of the contributions of Mao Zedong is not an academic question or a superfluous mental exercise; it is a question of understanding Marxism in its present stage of development in its full measure as a guiding principle for new Proletarian Revolutions. It is a question of understanding that when we say today that Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, or Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, is our guiding principle then what does it mean and what is its significance. Reflecting on Maoism as a noun is basically a question of reflecting on whether it is possible for any party to ignore the teachings of the most recent milestone of Proletarian Revolution that was established in the

form of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution under the guidance and leadership of Mao, and still be able to carry forward a Socialist Revolution and prevent capitalist restoration. It is a question as to whether or not Marxist science was enriched by the experiment of Cultural Revolution and also whether or not the acceptance or non-acceptance of Cultural Revolution is the dividing line between Marxism and Revisionism.

No comrade, do not think that here again is a new nuisance, a new debate. For this is a debate about knowing and understanding Marxist science as a living science, as a historically dynamic revolutionary force (as Marx himself said). A debate that is a negation of all debates that negate the scientific nature of Marxism, and is also a negation of the dogma that gives strength to these debates. Our intention is to conceptualize the form in which the teachings from Marx to Mao become the guiding principle of our actions today—whether or not Mao Zedong qualitatively developed the science of Marxism-Leninism, and whether or not his contributions took Marxism to a new (third) and higher stage of development.

After Marx and Lenin, Mao, while leading the Chinese Communist Party in a revolutionary struggle against Imperialism and Feudalism between 1921-1949, developed Marxism in various ways. In the concrete conditions of China, and the general conditions of colonized countries, he completed the democratic revolution under the leadership of the Proletariat and its party and in the direction of Socialism, he enunciated related strategies as well as warfare strategies and other theories, and he continued the work of providing new comprehension and depth to the understanding of Marxist philosophy. After the victory of the Chinese Revolution of 1949, Mao provided leadership to the Socialist construction and revolution in China and, after the death of Stalin and the Capitalist restoration in Russia, led the struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism. In the long period of Socialist transition, he provided a general line for the Proletariat that emerged in the theory and experiment of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The essence of this whole experiment was: to recognize the presence of bourgeoisie

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under Socialism, to implement a comprehensive dictatorship upon this class and, under this dictatorship, continue the revolution.

Mao while characterizing the form, strategy and general tactics of this new Proletarian Revolution, educated the Proletariat on the general direction of the continuing class struggle in the entire historical period of Socialist transition and thereby qualitatively enriched the science of Marxism in the three fields of Philosophy, Political Economy and Scientific Socialism. In this regard, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is the third greatest Proletarian revolution after the Paris Commune and the October Revolution.

And it is needless to say that this is not the end of the development of Marxism. In the words of Mao Zedong himself, “Any philosophy is in the service of its contemporary task.” (*A Critique of Soviet Economics*). The Marxist science developed at the present stage is doing precisely this and is further developing in the process.

When we talk about applying the name Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, or Maoism, to the philosophy and theory of Proletarian Revolution we do not speak of this as merely a mode to present the sum total of all the contributions of Mao. Under this rubric, we want to accumulate the entire and comprehensive progress in Marxist science from Marx to Mao and declare that the contributions of Mao is a new stage of progress in Marxism. We see it as complete/collected and as a dynamic science in the development of which Marx, Lenin and Mao have most of all performed the role of the vanguard and guide by summarizing the class struggles of the Proletariat and of humanity, the struggle for production and the entire experience relating to scientific experiments in the past one hundred and fifty years. During this period, all the battles that have been fought by the Proletariat and the masses, or all the struggles against reactionaries that have taken place in order to move history forward, the sum of all the positive/negative experiences are the mutual heritage of the International Proletariat. Their essence is the science of today’s Proletarian Revolution, the axiom upon which it is constructed—the

essence of Paris Commune, the October Revolution and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

In developing this living science Marx, Lenin and Mao performed the role of leaders and thinkers—the nomenclature, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is a statement of this fact. For a thorough, balanced presentation of our proposition it is important that we discuss the historical significance of the contributions of Mao against the background of the process of development in Marxist science.



“In the end the Socialist system will replace the capitalist system. This is an objective law independent of human will. No matter how hard the reactionaries try to prevent the advance of the wheel of history, revolution will take place sooner or later and will surely triumph.”

Mao, *Speech at the Meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution*

MARXISM: WHEN THE SCIENCE OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION WAS BORN

The development of Marxist science in itself is a historical fact that establishes the veracity of dialectical materialism and the theory of the scientific materialism of knowledge. The axis of its development has been the theoretical struggles in solving the practical problems of society.

The method of Marxism is dialectical materialism which is the most systematic, condensed form of the scientific method that has been invented until now and is the most accurate and the most exploratory of scientific tools to understand the entire world, universe and their laws of motion. Marxism is a materialist science, it centers itself on the material world in order to comprehend the basic reason and path of development of each phenomenon and incident in nature and society. And it is dialectical because it sees all phenomena in their constant movement, transmutability and stage of development. It is dialectical because it studies the struggle of opposing elements inherent in any object or process on the basis of their movement and inherent cause of changes in them. The existence of each object in nature and society is due to the unity of their inherent opposing elements, and the object can be understood only through the study of the struggle of those opposing elements. Dialectical Materialists accept this truth as a universal law.

Karl Marx, born in 1818 in Germany, started to participate in the revolutionary

movements in the 1830's, and in the 1840's he was exiled—this period was the beginning of that exceptional friendship and historic philosophical-ideological cooperation with Friedrich Engels.

With the help of Engels, Marx developed dialectical materialism as a comprehensive philosophical system, discovering the fundamental laws that gave definite structure to human history. In this way, as dialectical and historical materialism, the most revolutionary science of the most revolutionary class in history, the Proletariat, the most advanced science of the most advanced revolution came into being. This itself was a dynamic and lively science that declared for the first time that it is important to take command over the laws of motion of human society in order to change it consciously.

Elucidating the general direction of the progress of human history and the history of class society, Marx proved that from the division of society into classes until now, history has been the history of class struggles—class struggle is the causal force behind history's momentum, Capitalism is the last class society, and revolutions under the leadership of the Proletariat will move human society forward by abolishing Capitalism and moving in the direction of a classless society.

Indeed private property drives itself in its economic movement towards its own dissolution, but only through a development which does not depend on it, which is unconscious and which takes place against the will of private property by the very nature of things, only inasmuch as it produces the Proletariat as Proletariat, poverty which is conscious of its spiritual and physical poverty, dehumanisation which is conscious of its dehumanisation, and therefore self-abolishing. The Proletariat executes the sentence that private property pronounces on itself by producing the Proletariat, just as it executes the sentence that wage-labour pronounces on itself by producing wealth for others and poverty for itself. When the Proletariat is victorious, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it is victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Then the Proletariat disappears as well as the opposite which determines it, private property. (Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*)

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The historical mission stated above was not propounded by Marx and Engels in some study room, but by living through, and participating in, the class struggles of their. They established the first international organization of the working class—the *Communist League*. In 1848 they prepared *the Communist Manifesto* which was the first and most concentrated (still the most concentrated) expression of the principles of Communism and which is still entirely relevant as the manifesto of the historical mission of the international Proletariat. In 1848 all of Europe was stirred by a wave of revolutions: in June 1848 there was an explosive workers' revolt in Paris that was hailed by Engels as the “first great struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie” (Preface to the 1888 English edition of the *Communist Manifesto*). After the suppression of this revolt the next decade was a period of descent in the workers' movement of Europe during which Marx and Engels completed the work of laying a strong foundation for the principles of Communism.

The three volumes of *Capital* were a result of the historic intellectual labour of Marx in the study of Capitalist political economy: he went into the deepest crevices of the entire Capitalist system and completely unraveled the internal motion and direction of capital in a most thorough and minute manner, laying it threadbare. For the first time, Marx explained that the cell of Capitalist economy is the commodity and the seeds of capitalist contradictions are inherent in commodity relations. Therefore, the departure point of study in Capitalism should be an analysis of the commodity. In doing this, Marx proved that the contradiction between private labour and social labour is the basic contradiction of commodity production, money is a natural product in the development of commodity exchange, and the law of money is indeed the economic law of commodity production.

In this way, Marx demystified commodity fetishism, completely shredding the veil of social life strengthened by bourgeois social relations promoted by the bourgeoisie, and explained the laws and movement of social progress. He showed that the surplus value usurped by the capitalist comes from the exploitation of the

workers. Unraveling the inherent anarchy and contradictions within the capitalist mode of production and exploitation of the Proletariat, Marx presented an exposition of the fundamental laws of proletarian revolution.

Furthermore, Marx established the method of Dialectical Materialism in thought and analysis of all fields—politics, literature/art/culture, aesthetics, jurisprudence, ethics—thereby thoroughly enriching Scientific Socialism. Marx and Engels summarized the bourgeois revolutions, Proletarian struggles, ongoing struggles in colonies and wars of national independence of their time; they pulverized all opportunistic attempts to circumscribe workers' movement to mere reforms of the condition of wage slavery that would divert the movement from its fundamental aim; they combated the joint intellectual force of bourgeois intellectuals and traitors, explaining fundamental Marxist propositions on the state and revolution; and, along with enriching the philosophy, of the Proletariat they provided a treasury of strategies and tactics. Marx and Engels, in this process, continued their attempt to organize the Proletariat and had a leading role in the formation of the First International. Summing up the first epic attempt by the Proletariat to capture state power, Marx for the first time developed the basic principle of the bourgeois state and the dictatorship of the Proletariat, the latter of which was to be established by displacing the former.

After the demise of Marx, Engels completed and edited Marx's incomplete theoretical works, defended the Proletarian ideology, and objectively assessed the historical contributions of Marx and coined it as Marxism. This was the first milestone in the progress of revolutionary proletarian ideology.



“...the struggle to consolidate the Socialist system, the struggle to decide whether Socialism or Capitalism will prevail, will take a long historical period.”

Mao, Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work

MARXISM-LENINISM: SCIENCE OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION IN ITS SECOND PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

As we have mentioned before, the progress in Marxist science itself establishes the veracity of Dialectical Materialism. The principles of Marxism originated in social experiments; these principles gave birth to new experiments, and these new experiments further gave birth to new principles. In this way, Marxism as a science of revolution developed by the process of the negation of the negation. However, as Marxism itself states, the laboratory of its principles—human society—is also dynamic. Therefore, in this scenario and as the logic of dialectical materialism itself suggests, thought from matter and expression from thought always lag behind. Thus, only those thoughts that are actively dynamic in filling this gap are vital.

Marxism is a living science and therefore some of its propositions and corollaries that were previously understood to be correct—or taken to be basic and recognized statements—have been proved by historical progress to be either wholly or partially incorrect, or incomplete. For example, on the basis of the assessment of their times, Marx and Engels were of the view that Proletarian revolutions would be accomplished in the most developed Capitalist countries and these revolutions would emerge victorious only when they occurred simultaneously in various countries. However, this position was proved historically incorrect. But this was not a failure of Marxism in itself.

During the lifetime of Marx and Engels, Capitalism was in the age of “free competition”, the global system of monopolistic and finance capital as yet was not developed and the battlefield for deepening capitalist contradiction was Europe where the organized industrial Proletariat maintained tremendous pressure on the bourgeois system. It is important to note that, although Europe in this entire period continued to be the storm centre of Proletarian struggles, in actuality the proletariat could not succeed in capturing state power. Amidst all this, Capitalism continued to develop according to its internal logic, entering into the stage of monopoly: the global system of finance capital emerged and, in this stage of Imperialism, there was a moderation in the contradiction within the industrially developed countries at the cost of deepening and intensifying contradictions in the exploited countries. The centre of the revolutionary storm now shifted from the West to the East and the nations of the East became the weak link of the bourgeois system. Therefore, the aforementioned assessment of Marx and Engels proved incorrect due to new assessments of changed conditions and, in a different manner, was a verification of Marxism as a science.

Born in 1870 in Russia, Lenin provided the analysis of this changed condition with the help of the Marxist method. He analyzed how and why these global conditions changed and, most importantly, what these changes would signify for contemporary and future revolutionary practice. In this process, he qualitatively and thoroughly enriched Marxism. In a short politically active period of nearly a quarter of a century, Lenin led the Proletarian revolutionary movement in Russia, waged a struggle against revisionism in the International Communist movement, and developed Marxism at an altogether new level.

Lenin thoroughly analyzed all the typical characteristics of Imperialism for the first time, its difference from the preceding age of world Capitalism (the age of “free competition”), its inherent contradictions and obstacles, claiming that it was the highest stage of Capitalism, making it apparent that this age of Imperialism is the age of Proletarian revolutions. The origin and development of Lenin’s thesis

about Imperialism and Proletarian revolution emerged from the need for social experiments, the intense ideological struggle that presented the general line of global Proletarian revolution, and Lenin shouldered the task of developing its strategy and general tactics—fulfilling this task in the October Revolution. During this ideological struggle, Lenin pulverized the theory of Super-Imperialism propounded by Karl Kautsky and his followers in the Second International that revealed their class-cooperationism. Disproving the attempts of Kautsky to invalidate the historically progressive role played by the ongoing national struggle for independence in the colonies, Lenin presented this proposition that Socialist revolution in Imperialist-Capitalist countries and the ongoing struggle for independence in the colonies were two constituent parts of global Proletarian revolution.

Waging a struggle against motley forms of bourgeois reformism, right-wing opportunism and middle-class anarchism, Lenin comprehensively developed the concept of a revolutionary party of the Proletariat, its nature, form, process of building and organization, characterizing its role as the steely avant-garde of a class conscious Proletariat. In his book *What Is To Be Done?*, written a few years before the Russian Revolution of 1905, Lenin propounded the organizational principles of a new type of revolutionary party, undertaking the task of developing and expanding its various aspects after the October Revolution.

Along with opposing the mistaken analysis of Imperialism by Kautsky and his followers, or opposing the corruption of Marxist political economy and wrong strategies of global Proletarian revolution, Lenin performed an even more important task of foiling the revisionist attack on the concept of Proletarian dictatorship and, in this process, clearly articulated the nature and form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He defended these Marxist principles on the subject of *State and Revolution*; the October Revolution not only proved this thesis but developed it further.

Above all, and chiefly with the victory of October Revolution, Lenin led the Proletariat and its party to capture state power, established the dictatorship of

the Proletariat, strengthened its political power and provided a tangible form for Socialist democracy, thereby comprehensively and entirely elevating the theory and practice of the Proletarian Revolution to an entirely new level.

Throughout his life, Lenin not only remained firm on the principle of Proletarian Internationalism, but further developed its theory and practice. In his struggle against the Kautskyite revisionists, the important aspects were his opposition to jingoism, his ability to explain/analyze various theoretical practical aspects of Proletarian Internationalism, and the fact that he held the interests of global Proletarian Revolution higher than everything else. He formulated that the Proletarian State of the Soviet Union was the base camp for global Proletarian Revolution and that, in the extensive interests of global Proletarian Revolution, the Soviet Revolution could be sacrificed.

As a consequence of Lenin's continuous, ruthless and uncompromising struggle against revisionism, and after the October Revolution decisively established the veracity of his ideological political line, the artillery sound of this epochal revolution played an unprecedented role in the worldwide spread of the Communist Movement. The struggles of all the exploited people of the world, along with the national liberation struggles for independence, were conjoined in the stream of global Proletarian Revolution. Thus the international organization of Communists—The Third International—was formed. Serving as its guide, Lenin not only led Communists all over the world but he performed the task of providing, for the very first time, a logical general line for the International Communist movement.

Apart from the important contributions in qualitatively developing the science of proletarian revolution, in sync with qualitatively different conditions in the age of Imperialism and Proletarian Revolutions, Lenin explained and investigated numerous phenomena/changes in the socio-political life, philosophical-ideological arena and world politics, thereby enriching in some way or other each aspect of Marxism. After the debacle of the revolution of 1905, when the philosophical

foundations of Marxism were being attacked from all directions, Lenin, in an ideological counter-attack, developed the philosophical aspect of Marxism. In works of this kind, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* occupies the highest place, but this process continued until the end of his life. In the field of art/literature/culture, Lenin's "reflection principle" applied Dialectical Materialism and provided new direction for the development of Marxist aesthetics, resulting in a strong ideological basis for the Socialist Realism movement that was, at that time, the process of emerging. Lenin explained the class alliance in both the Democratic Revolution and the Socialist Revolution and the respective roles of the peasant classes.

For the first time, Lenin presented a complete and comprehensive Marxist political economic summarization of the land question, continuously enriching the ideas on the question of the land programme within the party of the Proletariat. Additionally, on the question of nationality, he carried forward the preliminary thoughts of Marx and developed the Marxist position fully.

After the October Revolution the state that came into being in the Soviet Union, despite being in sync with the greater meaning and essence of the Marxist concept of the state, possessed differences in its nature and form vis-a-vis the projections and expectations. Also on the practical level there arose some unexpected problems. Lenin, in the process of analyzing them and struggling against famine and other immediate crises, as well as long-term fundamental economic problems, began to think on the theoretical aspects and practical forms of Socialist transition. He continued to grapple with the nature and problems of Socialism until his last breath.

Marx and Engels, on the long-term nature and form of Socialist transition—on its economic, political and other superstructural aspects—presented some general propositions and approximations, only indicating the general direction of its progress. Lenin dealt with the practical problems of building Socialism and, for the first time, provided a solid exposition on the politics and economic policies of

Proletarian dictatorship. He underlined those bureaucratic distortions and bourgeois deformities that were present in the party and state system as a consequence of pre-revolutionary vestiges and how the presence of myriad forms of private property in a Socialist society influences the impact of bourgeois thoughts and institutions.

Lenin argued that Socialism is a long historical time period of transition from Capitalism to Communism during which class struggle continues unabated and the danger of capitalist restoration remains for a long time due to the multidimensional conspiracies, sabotage or open attacks by Imperialist nations, as well as from the dislodged exploiters and depraved bourgeois political elements that spontaneously come into being in the ranks of the working class, party and government officials as a result of the background of small-scale capitalist production and the petty bourgeois milieu. Given these reasons, Lenin argued that in the entire period of transition the need for an “iron hand” of Proletarian dictatorship is indispensable under the leadership of the party of the Proletariat. In the last period of his life, along with dispelling the immediate and practical problems of Socialist transition, he thought deeply about long term strategic and policy-related problems putting them in a larger perspective that laid a foundation for a complete and thorough formulation for the future.

Today, in the light of the first experiment and principle of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, it can be said with confidence that if the life of Lenin had not come to an untimely end in 1924 (due to a long sickness caused by a bullet wound), then he would have discovered tangible practical forms for the continuation of class struggle, higher forms of the ever dynamic Proletarian Dictatorship, as well as discovered the tangible form of the gradual disappearance of class, private ownership and the entire superstructure that results from the former.¹ He would have propounded the general line, strategy and general tactics of the transition to Communism and would have again been successful in elevating Marxism via a qualitative leap to a new stage. However, the obstacles of *if* and tragedies of *but*

¹ Here again we might disagree with the author: no one possesses a crystal ball, and there is no evidence or guarantee that Lenin would have solved the problems he encountered had he lived longer.

keep appearing in the path of history.

Nevertheless, it is certain that Mao in the decade of fifties grasped the ends of the invaluable formulations that Lenin presented while thinking over the problems of Socialism, the policy of conducting class struggle after the establishment of Proletarian Dictatorship and the path of Socialist Revolution. Through extremely complicated and intricate social experiments, Mao led the Chinese people, Proletariat and Party amidst ongoing and intense class struggle, completing the journey of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

In the entire period of Socialist transition, Mao would act according to the principle of continuing the revolution under Proletarian Dictatorship—especially continuing the revolution on the level of superstructure—thereby providing an exposition of the general line, strategy and general tactics of Proletarian Revolution during the entire period of Socialist transition. He deployed these new Marxist principles that were born as a result of the summation of all past experiments during the first wave of Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76), proved its veracity, and took Marxism-Leninism to an entirely new level. In this entire process he once again made the science of revolution, in a tangible form, the science of present and (in the context of the prolonged historical period of Socialist transition) future revolution. Marxism-Leninism would remain the guiding principle for action in the form of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism; it would remain a lively, dynamic science.



After the demise of Lenin, Stalin played a historical role in defending the Proletarian Dictatorship from its enemies within the Soviet Union and outside. By defeating Fascism during the Second World War, and in the unprecedented mission of collectivization of farming and Socialist industrialization, especially by accomplishing the task of the socialization of ownership and unleashing the immense creativity of

the people, Stalin shouldered the mission of International Proletariat in a significant way. As a deserving successor to Lenin, Stalin defended the fundamental principles of Marxism by waging an indefatigable, ruthless struggle against right and ‘left’ opportunism, preventing the Bolshevik Party from turning into a bourgeois party and the Soviet state into a bourgeois state. Stalin rendered ineffective the attempts of revisionist to overturn the direction of Socialist progress. Stalin thoroughly summarized the contributions of Lenin and proclaimed it to be the second milestone in the progress of proletarian ideology. Against any attempts at distortion, and in order to stamp their indispensable historical significance, he argued that it is only Leninism (or, Marxism-Leninism) that is the science of revolution in the new age of Imperialism and Proletarian Revolutions—it is the Marxism of this new age. Stalin guided the Communist International and performed a significant role in the expansion and strengthening of the movement worldwide, providing vigorous moral and material support to the ongoing independence struggles in the entire world. He was a true internationalist.²

While this is a historical fact that should not and cannot be forgotten, it is also nevertheless a fact that has to be analyzed, and from which lessons have to be drawn, that Stalin could not carry forward the problems of Socialism after Lenin. He succeeded only within narrow limits in steering the policy of Socialist

2 We realize that it might be difficult for a reader in the North American context to accept these claims about Stalin who has been depicted, along with Mao, as a monstrous dictator who murdered and enslaved millions. Although we agree that Stalin was responsible for many serious errors (some of which Prakash does examine), we also believe that a critical reader should understand that much of our North American understanding of Stalin comes from Cold War propaganda and dubious sources (such as conservative novelists like Arthur Koestler and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn), as well as the influence of Trotskyism at the centres of global capitalism. None of this is to argue that there were no show trials, gulags, or a famines, but only to point out that the extent and meaning of these events needs to be separated from how they are depicted by sources that were often extremely anti-communist and pro-imperialist, or at the very least anti-Stalin.

The critical reader should also understand that the communists and progressives of the third world do not possess the same “Stalin as monster” discourse that is common in the West and Global North. Prakash, in fact, represents a strain of communist that is more critical of Stalin than other strains of third world marxism. Due to this fact, we should question why the predominant North American and European interpretation of Stalin, and those historiographies that produce this understanding, should be considered more “true” than the understandings and historiographies of Stalin produced in those nations that are the victims of world imperialism.

construction while committing some serious errors in this regard. As a result, in the entire lifetime of Stalin, although the Proletarian Dictatorship remained firmly lodged and some historical experiments vis-a-vis the building of Socialism were also conducted, the bourgeois elements/tendencies that manifest in a Socialist society and their material basis could not be identified, and a reasonable strategy for a struggle against them could not be decided upon.

The root of the serious errors that occurred with Stalin in the understanding of political economy and the entire nature of Socialism lies primarily in his philosophical deviation, which was his mechanistic materialist thought system

“The imperialists and the domestic reactionaries will certainly not take their defeat lying down. They will fight to the last ditch. After there is peace and order throughout the country, they are sane to engage in sabotage and create disturbances by one means or another and every day and every minute they will try to stage a comeback.. This is inevitable and beyond all doubt and under no circumstances must be relax our vigilance”

Mao, *The Chinese People Have Stood Up!*

that produced errors regarding theory, strategy, organization and style of work. In the period of Stalin’s leadership, an absolutist, static understanding of Socialism and Proletarian Dictatorship was dominant that, in different ways, helped the bourgeois elements that emerged within the Party and State in the Soviet Union—elements which later succeeded in capturing power under the leadership of Khrushchev.

Even so, in totality the achievements of Stalin were greater than his mistakes. His errors were those of an experimenter, of a scientist. He was a great leader of world Proletariat, a staunch Proletarian revolutionary and an unwavering Internationalist. Stalin defended the Proletarian Dictatorship at all costs, expanded the Proletarian movement all over the world and, in this way, spread the authority and base of Marxism-Leninism among the working people of the world. Stalin explained Leninism, made it comprehensible for the extensive working populace

and for the Communist rank and file, provided a base to enable it to continue as a strong material force. If Stalin would not have done this then revisionists and world Capitalism would have quickly strangled the Russian Revolution; the path of Chinese Revolution would have become long and difficult and the foundation for impending great experiments would have been destroyed. Stalin waged difficult struggles and, in unprecedented conditions, resolutely held aloft the banner of Leninism: this was historically his most significant role.



“It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. The reason is that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the other intellectuals who come from the old society, the very influence which constitutes their class ideology, will persist in our country for a long time. If this is not understood at all or is insufficiently understood, the gravest mistakes will be made and the necessity of waging struggle in the ideological field will be ignored.”

Mao, On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People

MAOISM-LENINISM-MAOISM: THE CURRENTLY HIGHEST PEAK IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIENCE OF REVOLUTION

Born in 1893 in China, Mao Zedong led the Chinese Proletariat and working populace for nearly half a century during the Democratic Revolution and in the unprecedented, epochal, historical experiments of the Socialist Revolution. For nearly a quarter of a century he performed the role of a guide, teacher and a leader to the International Proletariat and to true Communists throughout the world, thereby taking the science of Proletarian Revolution to an entirely new, qualitatively more advanced stage of development. He was a complete revolutionary, an ideal Communist, true child and true leader of the masses, a daring scientist and the foremost link in the chain of historical figures in the entire history of humanity. He was the greatest revolutionary of our time and, after Marx and Lenin, the third greatest theoretician in the history of Proletarian Revolution.

Mao Zedong discovered and proved the veracity of the nature, programme and path of the Chinese Revolution, thus showing a new path of liberation not only for the Chinese people but for all colonized people in the world. The splendid, awe-inspiring revolutionary experiments of Mao, the grand scale on which the initiative and creativity of the working masses were awakened, the power to turn the world upside down that came into their hands during this time was unheard of. Mao led the Chinese people during the New Democratic Revolution, guided the worldwide

struggle against modern revisionism, and discovered the theory, path and form of continuing the revolution under Proletarian Dictatorship, thus enriching the three constituents of Marxism—philosophy, political economy and Scientific Socialism.

The great and epochal October Revolution under the leadership of Lenin proved that the Marxist propositions on State and Revolution, along with all other fundamental Marxist positions, were correct. It is also true that this revolution proved the veracity of Lenin's proposition on Imperialism and the 'weak link theory' on the subject of Proletarian revolution in the era of Imperialism. But it is equally true that Russia was not a paradigmatic example of countries that had revolutionary potential. The revolutionary conditions in Russia in itself were, relatively speaking, a special and transitional phenomenon. With the advent of the age of Imperialism and Proletarian revolutions, the revolutionary storm centre was shifting from the West to the East, and Russia was a bridge between East and West without completely being a country of the East.

The first Proletarian Revolution occurred in Russia only where productive forces were so advanced even then that, merely eight months after the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution, the Proletariat concluded the Socialist Revolution. China in the true sense of the term was a representative nation of the East: feudal, destroyed by colonial exploitation, an extremely backward country of repressed masses with a majority peasant population—the kind of country where struggle for national independence was now the constituent element of world Proletarian Revolution, in fact that had become the primary constituent element.¹

¹ We want to problematize the use of the word "backward" that Prakash uses in this context. Although it is clear that he does not mean culturally or humanly "backward", and is intending mainly to note that the productive forces and relations of these societies are underdeveloped (he will also argue that the imperialist relationship means that they have been forced into underdevelopment or, to borrow Gunder-Frank's terminology, are relations of "developed underdevelopment"), this word intersects too much with imperialist and conservative racist language. We have left it here because that is the word Prakash chose to use, but we have changed it in later passages to accord with what the author actually means: these so-called "backwards" countries are the "peripheral" countries of world imperialism, those oppressed by imperial hegemony.

We also want to remind the reader that Lenin once turned this language of "backwards" and "advanced" on its head in his article *Advanced Asia and Backwards Europe* where he argued that, while the Asian countries did not possess an "advanced" industrial infrastructure, they were far more advanced politically than their European contemporaries.

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In this context, Mao accomplished the National Democratic Revolution under the leadership of the Proletariat verifying the theses of Lenin in no uncertain terms. He removed the weaknesses/lacunae in the Communist International and in the formulations of Stalin on the subject of National Democratic Revolution, enriching them in the process and demonstrating a new way for all the freedom-loving people and the Proletariat of the colonies/semi-colonies/neo-colonies that were victims of the exploitation of Imperialism and Feudalism. Apart from other immortal contributions, it is an incontrovertible fact of history that the influence of Mao was far greater than any other revolutionary on the national liberation struggles (even those that were concluded in the leadership of revolutionary or radical bourgeoisie) of the twentieth century in Asia/Africa/Latin America—the victory of national struggles that brought to an end the age of colonialism and neocolonialism in the entire world.² Imperialism was forced to take a few retreating steps before throwing all of its might and scheming intellectual force to survive its crises in order to spread a worldwide wave of counter-revolution, the like of which we are witnessing in this new age of economic neo-colonialism.



During the indomitable revolutionary battles and wars between 1921 and 1949, Mao further developed the science of revolution primarily by educating the revolutionary masses and the Proletariat of the entire world about the nature, form, path, military

2 Simply because the epoch of modern colonialism, where the most powerful nations policed the oppressed nations with colonial settlements, has shifted into an epoch of “colonialism by remote control” does not mean that settler-colonialism vanished. It is clear that settler-colonialism persists: the powerful imperialist nations of the U.S. and Canada, for example, are also colonial nations parasitical upon multiple indigenous nations. The lower Americas also maintain a variety of internal colonial relationships, as does Australia, New Zealand, Israel’s colonial establishment in Palestine, etc. These are important facts that cannot be downplayed by Prakash’s broad brushstrokes.

strategy, revolutionary culture and forms of cultural movements of the revolution in colonized countries. In the process of practice-theory-practice, he propounded the theory of People's democratic revolution (New Democratic Revolution), developed the strategy and general tactics leading the Chinese people on the arduous, spiraling and circuitous path of revolution. He presented a penetrating class analysis of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial society of China, clarified the form of the joint front of the New Democratic Revolution, characterized in a more tangible and clear way than ever before the various aspects of the revolutionary role of the peasant community, thereby enriching Marxist theory on workers'-peasants' alliance as well as the Marxist position on Agrarian revolution and

“After the enemies with the guns have been wiped out, there will still be enemies without guns; they are bound to struggle desperately against us, and we must never regard these enemies lightly. If we do not raise and understand the problem in this way, we shall commit the gravest mistakes.”

Mao,

*Report to the Second Plenary Session
of the Seventh Central Committee of
the Communist Party of China*

Agrarian programmes. The important and novel work that Mao performed in this area during the Democratic Revolution was, in the same vein, continued in the process of ever new experiments during the period of Socialist Revolution.

On the question of maintaining the initiative, freedom and vanguard role of the Proletariat through the Proletarian Party in the joint front of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, Mao's experiment and thought were entirely new, while first completing the task of democratic revolution

and then of Socialist Revolution. During the New Democratic Revolution itself, Mao established the thesis of “Three Magical Weapons”—Party, People's army and Joint Front—and argued that these were indispensable even in those countries where there were special conditions and different paths of revolutions (despite differences in form).

In the history of Proletarian Revolutions and ideology, Mao Zedong for the

first time made a formulated summation of Marxist and non-Marxist revolutionaries and thinkers, of the thoughts of Chinese and world experts on war policies, of the mass movements, struggles and revolutions in China as well as the entire world that had occurred in the past thousands of years propounding a revolutionary line on the subject of war as well as Marxist war, strategy and theory.

Earlier, Marx and Engels emphasized the historical inevitability of armed struggle and revolutionary violence in moving society forward: they logically analyzed and summed up the military aspect of the Civil War in the USA, myriad progressive wars in Europe and waves of European revolutions (1848-1850), especially that of the Paris Commune.

Then, beginning with the unsuccessful Russian Revolution of 1905, Lenin (who called it “dress rehearsal” for the capture of power in 1917) had started to reflect deeply on the aspect of military strategy of the Proletarian Revolution, that was catapulted to its zenith through the October Revolution, and victory of the Proletariat in the Civil War and against the aggression of Imperialist countries.

Lenin and Stalin further developed the theory and practice of popular armed revolt and war in a (backward) capitalist country. This path of revolution through popular armed revolt and its military strategy, despite important differences in situations, has immense significance in the context of a general line and wider form for the developed countries of the West. Also, in the countries of the East, the Capitalist socio-economic structure contingent upon Imperialism for the past nearly three decades, despite their myriad pre-capitalist vestiges, have fundamentally and principally established it as an operative tendency. Today these countries would learn significant lessons from the general teachings of the Soviet Revolution on the subject of popular armed revolt for their formulation of the path of Proletarian Revolution and military strategy.

For nearly twenty years, Mao Zedong led the Chinese Communist Party, people and the Red Army against warlords, against the reactionary regime of Chiang Kai-shek, against Japanese aggression, and once again against Chiang

Kai-shek and his American Imperialist masters in a revolutionary war. He not only propounded the politico-military theory and military strategy for a protracted peoples' war, not only provided historic formulations for the path of revolution in countries oppressed by Imperialism but, in fact, for the first time presented a complete and comprehensive Marxist analysis of a revolutionary military line and on military affairs.

On the foundation of class analysis, Mao established a clear dividing line between revolutionary war and counter-revolutionary war, emphasizing with a renewed understanding the inevitability and justness of revolutionary violence, claiming that: "Power flows from the barrel of a gun." The revolutionary mass-line and the line of "politics in command" that Mao followed without making an exception until the last great struggle of his life—a line for awakening, mobilizing and organizing the people in all areas including politics, economic policy and cultural policy, a line that demonstrated an unwavering faith in the people—is evident in the area of military policy with equal clarity and purpose. He argued that in all class-wars the decisive factor is the people and not weapons.

Every class fights the class war according to its character, goals and resources. The military strategy and tactics of the Proletariat is based on rousing the initiative, creativity and revolutionary enthusiasm of the people and by having unwavering faith in them. Mao came up with the dialectical formulation that the strategy and tactics of a people's war can only be applied by a people's army, never by an anti-people one. Moreover, it is the people who are the fundamental strength (in the case of aggression) and the impregnable fort (in case of defense) in a revolutionary war. Mao determined that the Chinese Revolution could emerge victorious only by building red zones in the countryside and expanding them gradually like waves, by the augmentation of political and armed strength of the people, with political/economic/cultural development and revolutionary transformation of the base areas as a stable foundation for the revolutionary war, with an encirclement of the cities by villages and ultimately with the capture of political power in the entire country.

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Mao provided this invaluable lesson while determining the revolutionary mass-line that, in all circumstances, the gun should be under control of the party and not party under the control of the gun.

The teachings of Mao with respect to a protracted peoples' war, along with the experience of the Chinese Revolution, provided a new direction and impetus in the ongoing struggles for independence in the exploited and subjugated countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America—especially in the decades of 1950's and 1960's, even in those countries where the leadership was in the hands of a radical bourgeoisie. These struggles have had the decisive role in putting the last nail in the coffin of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The possibility of completing democratic revolutions under the leadership of the Proletariat in various subjugated nations was still quite strong in the decade of the sixties—before Khrushchev had betrayed the world Communist movement and the Proletariat and had become lost to the counter-revolutionary waves of revisionism. Even still, the struggle of Mao against the revisionist military strategy for national independence played an important role in enriching Proletarian military science.



Some elements of Mao's theory on the subject of peoples' war possess universal significance—not only for the revolutions of peripheral and oppressed countries, but also for Socialist Revolutions in central and oppressor countries. Furthermore, the worldwide circulation of finance capital, and thus the global strategies of imperialist countries, has undergone numerous changes in the decades following the Second World War. The emergence of today's so-called "global village" means that even culture and communication systems have become part of

the worldwide imperialist monopoly.

After crossing the global stages of colonialism and neo-colonialism, the world today has entered a stage of economic neo-colonialism where, without the need to directly settle and police the colonies, the imperialist countries with advanced productive forces, as a result of their monopoly over the global market and technology, can plunder the peripheral, semi-industrialized countries, victimizing them with their tactics of political bullying. The share among the global Capitalist class in the management of worldwide surplus is being decided today on the basis of the strength of their capital.

Moreover, the native Capitalist classes in the majority of the third world countries are no longer the strategic ally of the people in the struggle against Imperialism; they have attached themselves to the masters of world Capitalism. All quarrels are now based upon these classes' share in the plunder; this faction no longer possesses a revolutionary dimension. On a world historical scale, the age of struggles for national independence at the weak links of Imperialism, with the exception of a few countries, has now come to an end. Even the pre-capitalist socio-economic formations that remain in the majority of these countries have come under the regime of capital and tutelage of national market system, with a centralized political and economic system having taken firm roots in these semi-industrialized and peripheral capitalist countries. Revolutionary historical momentum can now be provided only by a combination of anti-Imperialism and anti-Capitalism, new Socialist Revolutions in these countries based on a three-class alliance.

After this simply and brief analysis of the contemporary world situation, we return to the original context of our discussion. The question that arises here is whether, in the case of new revolutions in this new age of Imperialism, Mao's teachings on protracted peoples war have become irrelevant. Definitely not. With a colonial/neo-colonial past, the societies under a handicapped, stunted and congenitally diseased Capitalism that developed in the peripheral countries as a result of imperialism are still primarily agrarian. Despite the question of land

ownership being mainly solved, despite the tendency of commodity production in the area of agriculture and agriculture coming under the tutelage of the national market, and because of the continued process of division of the peasant population due to the fetters on industrialization and the gradual, sluggish process of agricultural Capitalization, the majority of the population in third world countries are dependent on agriculture, agriculture based and allied enterprises, and several other types of small enterprises that persist in the countryside. Therefore, in the Socialist Revolution of these countries the role of villages and the poor and middle peasantry and rural Proletariat remains crucial.

Consequently, even if we forego the discussion on tangible forms and paths of struggles, we can say with certainty that the path of New Socialist Revolutions in all countries of this kind would not be akin to the popular armed insurrection like that in the October Revolution. The wider framework of military strategy in the revolutions of these countries could be popular armed insurrection, but these will incorporate many elements of protracted peoples' war. Thus, the importance of Mao's teachings on the subject of protracted peoples' war for the Proletariat and revolutionaries of those countries that are "hot spots" and "flash points" for possible revolutions, continues to be relevant.³

In the period of New Democratic Revolution in China, in a succession of intricate and indomitable class struggle, Mao led the party, the Proletariat and the people. He thoroughly analyzed the socioeconomic structure of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society, thus enriching Marxist political economy. He developed Marxist military science, enriching Socialism through the conceptualization of New Democracy, and developed the Proletarian philosophy on the fundamental plane as well. He did this by waging an unrelenting struggle against "left" and

3 Here it should be noted that the Revolutionary Communist Party of Canada has developed a line about Protracted Peoples War that argues for its universal relevance in imperialist countries. In the first issue of their *Peoples War Digest*, in the article "Protracted Peoples War Is The Only Way To Make Revolution", they argue that there is a universal dimension behind Mao's theory of PPW that should be understood as the basis of strategy for revolutionary war everywhere. [www.pcr-rcp.ca/en/pwd] They are in the process of producing a book that will provide a historical and theoretical framework for this perspective.

right deviations, making the Chinese Party ideologically powerful and seasoned. This process, that began after 1949, progressed with an altogether new impetus culminating with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution when the philosophy of Marxism attained new and unprecedented heights (which will be discussed later).

Mao, through his classical expositions *On Contradiction* and *On Practice*, enriched Dialectical Materialism and Marxist epistemology by his brilliant contributions. He developed the law of contradiction, stating that the unity and struggle of opposites is the fundamental law that directs nature and society. The unity of opposites is temporary and relative whereas the struggle between them is permanent and absolute, giving birth to qualitative leaps and revolutionary changes. Mao provided depth to the understanding of dialectics, stating that in a specific time and space there is one principal contradiction among various basic contradictions, the resolution of which is the central link in the resolution of other contradictions, providing the momentum of history. For its resolution, it is also imperative to understand the principal aspect of the principal contradiction. Mao enriched Marxist epistemology by the application of this new and advanced understanding of dialectics in the interrelationship between theory and practice.

Practice is the source of theory, theory is the condensation or essence of practice. Perception is the raw material of concepts (or rational knowledge), and these concepts are the synthesized product of perceptual knowledge. However, concept, perceptual knowledge or theory has to return to practice again, during which it is not only examined/verified but also accumulates new raw material for a higher level of rational knowledge and, in this way, is an endless process of theoretical development. This is the gist of Mao's theory of knowledge that holds practice as the ultimate criterion where the primary relevance of theory is to illuminate revolutionary practice.

Mao constantly implemented the revolutionary mass-line, demonstrating confidence in the people without making an exception from 1921 to 1976, which became extremely important during the Cultural Revolution. Through the Marxist

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theory of knowledge he provided new ideological depth to the understanding of mass-line, claiming that *people and only people are the motive force for creating world history*⁴:

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 Zedong, *Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership*)

Mao held that when thought reached the masses it would become a material force. In this way, Mao developed the explanation of the dialectical interrelationship between matter and consciousness—the understanding of the conscious, living role of human beings as producers of history.

While reflecting on the progress of Marxist science we are forced to realize that, from its inception until now, fierce ideological struggles between political lines and tendencies within the workers’ movement (struggles that were a higher, refined and embryonic form of contemporary class struggle) played an important role in its development—that proves the validity of the law of dialectical progress. Mao waged fierce ideological struggles against counter-revolutionary political lines during every social experiment, but the struggle against the Khrushchevite revisionists and his fierce struggle against the clique of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were similar to the struggles waged by Marx and Engels against revisionists

⁴ The full quote is “the people and the people alone are the motive force in the making world history, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant.” (Mao, *On Coalition Government*)

like Bakunin and Lasalle, or by Lenin against Kautsky and other revisionists of the Second International. These great ideological struggles played an important role in the development of proletarian ideology and in preparing a New Proletarian Revolution.

Mao led genuine Communists around the world in the international struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism, demonstrating how to break from the revisionist parties and how to build new revolutionary Communist parties on the foundation of Marxism-Leninism. A new process of polarization in the proletarian revolutionary forces took place throughout the entire world to which new impetus was eventually provided by the Cultural Revolution and the decisive struggle against the revisionism of the Liu-Deng clique.

Mao led the Great Debate against the clique of Khrushchev making it clear that the Khrushchevite principle of peaceful transition is a bourgeois principle and it is not a development of the fundamental Marxist principles on the subject of state and revolution but a negation.⁵ He proved that the fundamental character of the Khrushchevite principles of peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition meant surrendering to Imperialism and back-stabbing the world workers' movement, implying the disintegration and abandonment of national liberation struggles. Mao exposed the Khrushchev's principles of "party of all people" and "state of all people", defending the fundamental principles of the party of the proletariat and dictatorship of the proletariat.

Moreover, Mao analyzed the material condition of the acquisition of power by revisionists and the restoration of Capitalism in the Soviet Union, clarifying

5 The Great Debate is the term used for the exchange of polemics between the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and the Chinese Communist Party under Mao during the mid-1960s. Khrushchev's concept of "peaceful transition" implied that there was no longer a reason for socialist countries and capitalist countries to be antagonistic because the latter would eventually transition to socialism peacefully. The Chinese communists argued that this was an abandonment of class struggle, that capitalists and imperialists would not give up without fighting tooth-and-nail to hold unto their privileges, and that this also meant the abandonment of anti-colonial struggles for national liberation since, in practice, it meant that the Soviet Union was no longer supporting these movements against imperialist intervention.

The interested reader can find the documents of the Great Debate at <http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sino-soviet-split/index.htm>

how the Soviet state was transforming from a dictatorship of the proletariat back into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In this process, he defended the great contributions of Stalin on the one hand and, on the other, presented an objective summation of his mistakes that had allowed the bourgeois elements to thrive. Mao reflected on Stalin's mechanistic materialist deviations in the field of philosophy that corresponded to his flawed thinking on crucial aspects of Marxist political economy, erroneous economic policies and on the nature of Socialism. (Stalin had incorrectly assumed that the nature of Socialism was absolute and stable.) In this process Mao began to comprehend the character and social base of Socialism in China, a problem he had started contemplating before the New Democratic Revolution of 1949.

With the completion of the democratic revolution in 1949, a struggle began between two predominant political positions regarding Socialist Revolution. Mao led this struggle, taking full advantage of the Soviet experience in this two-line struggle on the question of Socialist transition in China, to understand the nature, origin and development of Khrushchevite revisionism and to rigorously summarize the negative and positive teachings of the Soviet experiment. This enriched knowledge was then used for Socialist experiments in China and to present an exposition on the ongoing class struggle during this period—the nature and problems of Socialism, its contradictions, the reasons for Capitalist restoration, and the strategy and general tactics for the prolonged period of Socialist Revolution. This was a unique practical example of the dialectical relationship between the experiences of national and international class struggle.

As a logical conclusion to this process, Mao's greatest contribution to proletarian ideology were the theoretical insights that led to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. As sum and substance, it is an aggregate of important formulations relating to Socialist society, proletarian State and Party. and of propositions on the general line of continuing class struggle, strategy and general tactics during this prolonged period of transition. In a long process of continuing

class struggle, alongside ideological struggle at the international level, Mao grasped the loose ends of Lenin's thought on Socialism's nature and problems, developing it further with the hypothesis, experiment and summarization of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Immediately after the Revolution of 1949, Mao made it clear that after the capture of state power by the working masses under the leadership of the Proletariat, the contradiction between the Proletariat and the bourgeoisie had become the principle contradiction and that the struggle was still centered around the question of State power. Mao qualitatively developed Marxist political economy, a Marxist understanding of the contradictions and dynamism inherent in production, and the understanding of the dialectical interrelationship of the entire ideological/political/cultural super-structural system during the experiments and analyses of Socialist transformation. He clarified that the contradiction between relations of production and forces of production, and the contradiction between superstructure and economic base, were the two fundamental contradictions in a Socialist society. Only through their constant resolution could Socialism develop in the direction of Communism. The breaking of shackles in the development of productive forces by changing the productive relations is the goal of every social revolution; this also applies during the long transition period of Socialist revolution.

The goal of Socialist Revolution is to ensure the transition towards Communist relations by annihilating capitalist relations of production. In the long complex process of Socialist Revolution all three aspects of productive relations—*the system of ownership of the means of production, the role of people in production* and their interpersonal relationship, and *the distribution pattern of products*—intersect in a process of revolutionary transformation.

The installation of Socialist public ownership is fundamental because it is a negation of private ownership, a keystone of the capitalist system. This essential and decisive solution of the question of ownership is connected to the revolutionary transformation in the other two aspects of production relations. Merely a change

in the legal forms of ownership does not, all by itself, prepare the ground for the destruction of the capitalist production system and classes. Even after bringing all property under State or collective ownership the capitalists could still persist in various forms, specifically in the form of state capitalists.⁶

The historical role of proletarian dictatorship is not merely to bring about a change in the forms of property; its actual task is to conduct a complex and prolonged transformation in the social process of appropriation, ensuring the transition towards a Communist mode of production. The nature of Socialist relations of production relation is therefore dynamic. In the entire duration of development and strengthening of Socialist State ownership and Socialist collective ownership the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie for economic leadership continues.

The imperative condition for the continuation of Socialist transition is that there should be a constant development in the direction of transformation from small scale collective ownership to large scale collective ownership, and from collective ownership to that of state ownership. In this entire complex process of transformation of ownership (in peripheral countries with an agrarian economy this process is still more complicated and prolonged) the existence of the commodity, albeit in a controlled and restricted manner, continues for a long period of time. The economic units of collective ownership are not the property of the entire people, who continue to exchange commodities, whereas the economic units of state ownership are the property of the entire people who exchange objects.

Mao held that the Socialist transformation of the first aspect of productive relations—the system of ownership over the means of production—is definitely a precondition for the transformation of the other two aspects. Without the Socialist transformation of the interrelationship of people to production and each other,

⁶ This point is usually used as a general characterization of Maoism's contribution (in terms of universal applicability) to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. If Leninism is generally characterized by "class struggle to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat", then Maoism is characterized by adding the following maxim to that Leninist point: "class struggle continues under the dictatorship of the proletariat." That is, socialism is still a period of class struggle. This insight was first concretely theorized by Mao and, as mentioned by Prakash, was the motivation behind the Cultural Revolution.

and without transformation in the system of distribution, the first aspect cannot progress beyond a certain stage and society becomes a ‘nursery’ for new bourgeois elements. This means that, despite setting up a system of Socialist State ownership, there will remain a skewed form of interpersonal relationships (inequities between country and town, agriculture and industry, and mental and physical labour), along with the persistence of commodification.



Unless Socialist transformation is continuously pursued throughout the period of Socialism, the law of “from each according to his ability and to each according to his labour”—a law of bourgeois rights—will remain in effect despite the negation of capitalist exploitation. Unless the law of “from each according to his ability and to each according to his need” is not enforced in the distribution of social products, the inequity in wages and other bourgeois rights will persist, and the contradiction between general social needs and personal consumption needs, contradictions arising from division of items of consumption according to work will remain unresolved. Until all property is brought under state ownership with the goal of socialist transformation, the socialization of property will be impossible. When the ownership of the means of production happens according to the aforementioned transformation of productive relations, only then by bringing

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all property under State ownership will property become socialized. That is, the role of State in regulating the distribution system of articles of consumption will come to an end.

Socialization is an objective condition that requires a certain level of development in forces of production in order to ensure the production and distribution for the benefit of the entire society. In the development of productive forces an advanced culture is an important factor and an inseparable component.

In the contradiction between productive relations and productive forces, the role of productive relations is more active. Every qualitative progress at the level of productive forces depends on the revolutionary transformation in productive relations—this is true for the entire period of Socialist transition. For the revolutionary transformation of productive relations, the transformation of the system of ownership is a primary and paramount task. Furthermore, the constant revolutionization in the other two aspects of productive relations is also imperative, along with the strengthening of Socialist public ownership and continuously pushing it in the direction of a unified, unitary Socialist system of State.

Conversely, the result of all versions of the revisionist principle, *primacy of productive forces*, is to halt the process of transformation in productive relations after the socialization of ownership and to arm new bourgeois elements, providing the basis for these elements to capture and consolidate state power.⁷ These new

⁷ The author is briefly explaining the ongoing debate within marxist circles between the theory of productive forces and the theory of productive relations. The former theory is often characterized as *deterministic* and the latter as *voluntaristic*. The theory of productive forces holds that society only develops, and there can only be revolutions, when the level of the forces of production (that is, the means of production [tools, machinery, etc.] combined with human labour) is ready. The theory of productive relations holds that society can be changed, at any moment, simply according to relations of production (the social and historical relationship humans have to production). Both positions can be gleaned from Marx and Engels by cherry-picking passages, and it is important to note that Marx and Engels would emphasize either productive forces or productive relations based on who whoever or whatever they were arguing against. (Indeed, there are various letters between Marx and Engels discussing this fact.)

Although Prakash is indicating that productive relations are decisive, and that those who cling to a theory of productive forces are “revisionist”, it is important to note that, a few paragraphs later, he indicates the dialectical relationship between productive forces and relations. Mao’s point was always that these two aspects are always interrelated as a dialectical unity of opposites and that the, while the latter is *politically decisive*, the former is *economically necessarily*. One cannot achieve a classless society without, for example, automation, but one cannot achieve automation without the productive relations that would cause people to

bourgeois elements are present and continuously proliferating in the new Socialist society on the basis of the presence of forms of small scale capitalist ownership, interpersonal inequities, bourgeois rights and various forms of unequal distribution of goods for consumption—all of this is the result of the contradictory nature of the economic base of Socialism. This is why, if capitalist roaders do come to power in a Socialist country, it is easy for them to reinstall a capitalist system.

Mao underlined the more active role of productive relations during Socialist transition and argued that their relation with productive forces is dialectical, clarifying that the revolutionary transformation of productive relations illuminates the way for the development of productive forces and more developed productive forces prepare the ground for the further revolutionization of productive relations. This interpretation also explains the constant development of productive forces as also the progress of society towards the goal of communism, and this is the foundation of the excellence of the Socialist system over past systems.

Under Socialism the development of productive forces have definite objective laws that are a manifestation of the fact that the resolution of the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private nature of appropriation—and between the organized nature of production in private enterprise and the anarchic nature of production in the entire society—is possible after the socialization of ownership of the means of production. The Proletariat under the leadership of its party and through proletarian dictatorship exercise these laws for a rapid development in productive forces and the strengthening of Socialism.

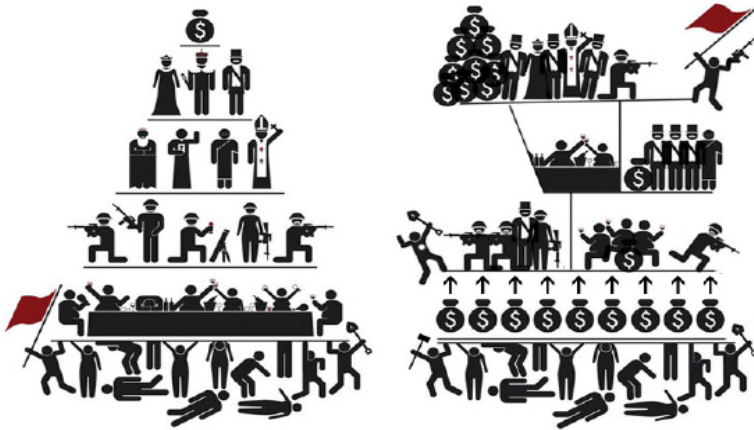
Mao also made it clear that the dynamism, creativity and enthusiasm of the working masses under Socialism is an important factor in the rapid development

imagine automation as necessary.

We can refer to productive forces as a form of *objective circumstances* and productive relations as a form of *subjective circumstances*. Thus, while capitalism might be, according to the objective circumstances of productive forces, historically obsolete (these forces are producing cycles of crisis, imperial devastation, and environmental destruction), the subjective circumstances of productive relations are currently still lagging behind the need for more sustainable forces of production. Thus, for Mao (and Lenin before him) a communist party is necessary to organize the subjective circumstances and produce the relations of production necessary to influence the forces of production in a revolutionary manner.

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of productive forces—the precondition of their unfettering being the installation of Socialist productive relations. The revolutionary enthusiasm and dynamism of the people, however, do not become a material force by themselves—for this to happen the Socialist state under the leadership of the party of the Proletariat has to adopt appropriate policies. While discussing these policies, Mao strongly emphasized implementing the mass-line, even in the execution of economic projects, for increasing the participation of people in deciding projects and in the process of their execution and in raising the political consciousness of the masses to strike a proper dialectical balance between centralization and decentralization.



Now we will discuss the epochal contribution of Mao on the subject of the second fundamental contradiction in Socialist society: the contradiction between base and superstructure and the continuous process of their resolution.⁸

8 The marxist concept of *base-superstructure* is a metaphor meant to explain the structure of a given society or “mode of production.” (Societies, for Marx and Engels, are primarily characterized by the manner of social production.) The superstructure, the realm of *ideology* (thought, customs, culture, political characteristics, etc.), is ultimately contingent on the *economic* base. To use a very crude example that might explain this relationship: the religious ideology of “the protestant work ethic” (that is, the belief that if we work hard we will receive better rewards in heaven) did not emerge in Europe until after a capitalist mode of production was in existence; this religious expression quickly gained more ideological force than prior “great chain of being” ideology (the concept that people were born into specific social positions ordained by god), the latter being a superstructural result of a tributary/feudal mode of production.

Furthermore, the words “base” and “superstructure” were intended to be a useful word picture: if we imagine the foundations and structural dimensions of a building we are imagining the *base*; but when a building is fully built and inhabited it will be more than its structural basis and possess doors, windows, wall-paper or paint, halls, rooms of various dimensions, furniture, etc. – all these things that emerge from inhabiting the building are the *superstructure*. So too does the historical inhabitation of a given mode of production, and an interaction with its economic logic and limits, produce its own interior structures: ruling ideas, religious expressions, languages, clothing, arts and literature, political institutions, etc.

Here we need to be careful, however, with the use of the word “economic” to define the concept of *base*. Marx and Engels had a very specific notion of *economic* that should not be confused with the modern and bourgeois understanding most commonly taught in university Economics Departments. When they spoke of economics being the basis and determinant factor of a given society, they did not mean to say that market relations (for today we often conflate “the market” with “economics”) were structurally primary,

Marx, Engels and Lenin shed light on the dialectical relationship between the economic base and the ideological superstructure by clarifying that the superstructure does not have an inert relationship with the economic base from which it originates but the base in return is actively influenced by the superstructure. In the period of revolutionary transformation, the role of the superstructure assumes a principal aspect. For a revolution in the productive relations a revolution in superstructure (principally a revolution in political superstructure, that is, the seizure of state power) is inevitable. Mao Zedong deepened the understanding of this dialectical interrelationship and made it comprehensive by clarifying the nature of contradiction between already-existing Socialist society and the onward progress of Socialist society by the continuous resolution of these contradictions.

Mao, for the first time, made it clear that in a Socialist state the vestiges of pre-revolutionary society in the form of bourgeois thought, traditions and habits are present for a long time. Also, for a considerable period of time in the beginning, small-scale Capitalist production, interpersonal inequities, and myriad bourgeois tendencies and lines of thought that come into being due to the presence of bourgeois rights act as adverse material forces in the movement towards a Communist society. The representatives of the bourgeoisie are present in the organization of the state system and political-legal institutions. The functioning of the state system in a bureaucratic style, along with other bourgeois distortions, continue to manifest. Due to all these reasons, the contradiction between the economic base and superstructure obstructs the process of strengthening and developing the Socialist economic base. To resolve this contradiction Mao argued that it was imperative to conduct a Socialist revolution in the sphere of the superstructure.

which is more in line with the ideology of bourgeois economics. Indeed, according to Marx and Engels, the market was a superstructural development also dependent on the base.

The concept of *economic* employed by Marx and Engels should be seen as a dialectical combination of *forces and relations of production* (discussed earlier by Prakash and in the previous footnote). Furthermore the concept of economy is something that is essentially socio-historical and is meant to describe the root logic of the mode of production: how humans produce/reproduce themselves at given points of history and the structural productive dimensions of the given society that was both the result of human production and in turn acts to produce the way in which humans will interact. And the word “production” should also be seen as synonymous with *creation*.

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During the entire historical stage of Socialist society, Mao argued that class and class struggle remains: the bourgeoisie, both new and old, will constantly struggle for capitalist restoration. In this period, the nature of the Socialist superstructure is mainly proletarian because the central constituent element is the dictatorship of the proletariat but, as a result of the presence of the bourgeoisie, and bourgeois ideology, amongst the people there is the constant threat that the character of Socialism will be transformed into its opposite; that is, the possibility of a counter-revolution emerging from the superstructure is always present. This counter-revolution can only be overcome by a continuous revolution in the superstructure and by continuing an all encompassing dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

Lenin claimed that “politics is the most concentrated expression of economics.” Mao developed this formulation by theorizing that whether or not the Proletariat is in control of state power and the means of production was due to the decisive factor of the correctness or erroneousness of the ideological-political line. Critiquing the revisionist theory of development of productive forces from this angle, Mao concluded that, through struggles in the superstructure, consciousness can change the economic structure and political power can develop the productive forces. This position is expressed in the slogan, “take firm hold of the Revolution, promote production.”

Since under proletarian dictatorship the bourgeoisie cannot openly attack Socialism, it will manifest under the name “Communist” and “Proletariat.” Mao said, “it (meaning the bourgeoisie) is inside the Communist party. Those who are in power are themselves adopting a capitalist road.” He warned that if the Proletariat would not enforce its all encompassing dictatorship on the bourgeoisie, then the bourgeoisie would return to strength and usurp power. Therefore, the Proletariat should be empowered to seize total control of society under the leadership of its party, maintain firm control over state power and, along with the economic system, maintain resolute and watchful control over education, art/literature, culture, science and all areas of social life. That the character of a Socialist state remains

proletarian depends on two factors: the Communist party and a heightened Socialist consciousness amongst the masses. The necessity of revolutionary leadership and Socialist consciousness, as well as the constant advancement of culture, are dialectically interrelated; a Socialist political system with a firm proletarian dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, as well as maximum democracy for the people rests on these factors.

In the entire period of Socialism the role of the Communist party is that of a vanguard and it is only through the leadership of the party that the leadership of the Proletariat is empowered in a Socialist state. And yet it is also true that even the Communist party is not insulated from the class struggle and, in fact, becomes a platform for class struggle where the Capitalist roaders will constantly seek to usurp state power by seizing control of the party. In order to maintain a proletarian character of the party, Mao argued that it should always practice the revolutionary mass-line, be irrevocably conjoined with the masses, be prepared to face their criticism, become steel through the masses' tempering while also providing leadership in the continuing class struggle, and first learn from the masses before educating them. He cautioned that the party can only maintain its liveliness and dynamism when there is a system of criticism and self-criticism in place: it must be ready to face the criticism of the masses while dealing with the constant two-line struggle through which non-proletarian tendencies and political lines can be eradicated.

To guard against non-proletarian tendencies emerging in the party, Mao emphasized the imperativeness of democratic centralism. He also claimed that, in order to prevent democratic centralism from degenerating into bureaucratic centralism, it is important that the participation of the cadre be ensured in the process of decision-making and in inter-party struggle and that they should be continuously educated. In all circumstances it is only through making inter-party democracy comprehensive and exhaustive that Centralism can be properly effective. In this way, during the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Mao advanced

these organizational tenets and taught the Communists all over the world lessons on how to build a party that can guarantee stability under the dictatorship of the proletariat and that can provide leadership in the continuing process of Socialist transition.

Mao argued that once the Proletariat assumes power and the party becomes the leading force under a Socialist state, the contradiction between the party and the people will become the concentrated expression of those contradictions that mark Socialism as the transitional phase between Capitalism and Communism.

Mao's position was that a constant advancement in the consciousness of the masses, and the process of constantly increasing their participation in decision-making along with constantly increasing their participation in running the state system, is another fundamental guarantee for the expansion of the base of proletarian dictatorship and the strengthening and development of Socialist society. Taking the model of the Paris Commune as an ideal, he further developed Lenin's insights on this subject. He emphasized both the need for a revolutionary leadership and the

need to awaken and have faith in the revolutionary—understanding the dialectical relationship between the two.



Mao emphasized the conscious and dynamic role of the people in changing the world and held that participation in this process of transformation would simultaneously cause people to change themselves. The Cultural Revolution was to be, first and foremost, the crucible to change the human being. During the Cultural Revolution he encouraged the party workers, the red guards and the people to wage a struggle

against the “self” and to create a new human being and a new society.

Assimilating the entire journey and progress of Marxist science, distilling the substance of the experiences of every Socialist experiment and every class struggle

from the Paris Commune to his own time, Mao took his thought on the nature and problems of Socialism, on the cause and remedy of capitalist restoration, and class struggle and proletarian dictatorship to a stage that became the departure point for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In the history of humanity, the Cultural Revolution is the currently most radical revolution that elevated the theory and practice of proletarian revolution to a new level.⁹

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was an all-encompassing political revolution started and led by Mao that, for the first time, provided an exhaustive and comprehensive solution to the problems of Socialism.¹⁰ This great revolution unfettered the immeasurable revolutionary energy, enthusiasm and creativity of the people and caused them to move forward resolutely on the epic mission of traversing the path of Socialism. Through the leadership of Mao, millions were awakened to advance and [attempt to] annihilate the bourgeois headquarters of capitalist roaders. Mao challenged the capitalist roaders in an unprecedented experiment of popular movements, demonstrating to the masses how to enforce their interests, their aspirations, will and views in all walks of life—even in those superstructural areas

9 This is not an uncommon view even among post-Maoist theorists/philosophers. For example, the celebrated (and currently chic) French philosopher Alain Badiou has argued, most recently in *The Communist Hypothesis*, that the Cultural Revolution was the most recent and greatest world historical revolution.

10 We know that in North America the Cultural Revolution is depicted as an orgy of violence but, as should be evident, we reject this interpretation as historically revisionist and (most often) intentionally right-wing. The recent publication of Jung Chang and Jon Halliday's *Mao The Unknown Story* has revived anti-communist cold war propaganda regarding Mao's China. Despite being roundly denounced by China historians (even anti-communist liberal historians) as revisionist history – and despite the fact that studies have been released demonstrating how Chang and Halliday misrepresented their sources (when they chose to use sources) and misquoted myriad source materials – this book and the rehashed “Mao-the-murderer” story it tells remains popular. Kazuko Ross, in her essay “Mao the all-too familiar story”, has argued that Chang and Halliday's book is popular mainly because of anti-asian racism and orientalism in North America and Europe: *Mao The Unknown Story* was meant to confirm what western readers already wanted to believe about China.

A very excellent and recent book that interrogates the current furor of anti-Cultural Revolution propaganda is Mobo Gao's *Battle For China's Past* (published by Pluto Press). Gao succinctly demonstrates why the legacy of the Cultural Revolution is worth preserving, the problems with Chang and Halliday's analysis, and explains why the Mao era and the Cultural Revolution are still seen as important and liberating legacies by the peasants and workers of China today who are struggling against the capitalist roader Chinese government.

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of philosophy/theory which were considered to be unintelligible and beyond their reach even in a Socialist society. There was important progress made in the gradual eradication of bourgeois rights and the three major interpersonal inequities; this led to the liberation of revolutionary energy, initiative and creativity amongst the people. For the first time in the history of proletarian revolutions, Marxist science was acting perceptibly as an authority and guide for people in all walks of life and was proving that in that present difficult period of indomitable historical class war, despite various ups and downs, the direction of the progress of humanity was, at last, moving towards Communism through Socialist transition.

During this great historical Socialist experiment, the capitalist roaders were made to bite the dust in a life and death struggle; an extensive part of the masses also conducted newer experiments with new Socialist institutions, social relations, values, beliefs and thoughts. Class struggle, struggle for production, and the struggle of scientific experiment gave birth to a massive burst of creativity and surge in enthusiasm. There were revolutionary transformations that took place in productive relations, and the management of committees of specialists-bureaucrats was replaced by a system of management through revolutionary committees of workers. Entirely new models of Socialist production were created in the fields of industry and agriculture.

Despite these unprecedented achievements, despite the successive defeats experienced by the capitalist roaders, and despite presenting a logical solution to the first stage (1966-69) of the first wave (1966-76) of this great revolution by the Ninth Congress of the party of China, a fierce and complex class struggle continued in ever new forms. Capitalist roaders continued to attack, ambush and plot against the revolution. In this fierce class struggle, Mao acted as a guide for the Proletariat of China and the entire world. He always treated the Cultural Revolution as a part of the international struggle of the proletariat, a training centre for proletarian internationalism. During this period he maintained that the travelers on the way to Socialism were still on the path of Capitalism and the victory of the revolution was

not assured: for the decisive victory of Socialism it was imperative that there should be many cultural revolutions and that many generations should apply themselves in this struggle.

“Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period. In the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place. From now on we must remind ourselves of this every year, every month and every day so that we can retain a rather sober understanding of the problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line.”

Mao (March 12, 1957)

After the demise of Mao, there was a counter-revolutionary coup in China under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and Hua Kuofeng. This fact does not in any way negate the historical achievement and valuable lessons of the Great Proletarian Culture Revolution; in point of fact it establishes and verifies Mao's theses on capitalist restoration, the necessary conditions of Socialist society, and the need to continue the revolution under proletarian dictatorship. Furthermore, even the fall of the so-called “Eastern Bloc” in 1990 establishes and verifies the analytical system discovered by Mao on the nature and the direction of progress of capitalist restoration after a temporary defeat of Socialism.

Lenin has said that “only [s/he] is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.” With the theory and practice of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Mao stressed this dividing line more clearly and theorized that one can only call himself a Marxist if s/he extends the recognition of class struggle to the recognition of proletarian dictatorship and, in the entire prolonged transition period of Socialism, extends the recognition of classes, hostile class contradictions, and the objective presence

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of bourgeoisie in the party and the state system, and recognizing the continuance of revolution under an all encompassing dictatorship of the Proletariat over the bourgeoisie. This is also a recognition of the inevitability of revolution in the superstructure.

Today, the above conjectures form the dividing and battle line between revisionism and Communism. This is the essential conclusion of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution where Mao developed scientific socialism to its third stage and most advanced stage.

This great revolution is a comprehensive outline for the policies, strategy and general tactics of the Proletariat—the general ideological, political, organizational line for the entire stage from Capitalism to Communism. In the history of class society, this is the most advanced and complex world historical epic of revolution; it is the newest milestone in the journey and development of the Proletariat, the Communist movement, and the science of revolution—an indelible achievement and an immortal flame that illuminates the path that has to be traversed to Communism.

Mao Zedong developed all of the important constituents of Marxism-Leninism while leading the Chinese revolution and world proletariat, but it is primarily the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that produced a qualitative leap in revolutionary theory. Now it can be said that *Marxism-Leninism-Maoism* is the revolutionary communist theory of today—Maoism is the Marxism of today. This and only this can be the guiding principle of today's proletarian revolution, the science of new proletarian revolution, and creation of new editions of the October Revolution.

“In our country bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, anti-Marxist ideology, will continue to exist for a long time, Basically the Socialist system has been established in our country. We have won the basic victory in transforming the ownership of the means of production, but we have not yet won complete victory on the political and ideological fronts. In the ideological field, the question of who will win the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has not been really settled yet. We still have to wage a protracted struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology.”

Mao, Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work

AND NOW, THE GIST. . .

I. We can see the epochal and immortal contributions of Mao Zedong, the greatest revolutionary and proletarian philosopher of his times, in two stages. First, the stage of enriching the arsenal of Marxism by propounding the strategy and general tactics, the united front and military strategy, and on the question of the culture of the New Democratic Revolution. This was a stage of important, partial, qualitative progress in Marxism-Leninism; the historical importance of this progress was expressed by the term *Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought*. The second stage was the period of reaching the point of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution while engaging with the problems of Socialist transition. The lessons of this stage thoroughly, qualitatively and fundamentally enriched the philosophy, political economy and Party and State related questions. This stage also dealt with superstructural related theories and entire branches/sub-branches of Marxist science, taking them to an entirely new stage of development. This new revolutionary development should be made accurately apparent by emphasizing the nomenclature of *Marxism-Leninism-Maoism*. Only in this manner can the epochal

importance of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution can be underlined.¹

II. After the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, there were incidents throughout the world that established and verified its teachings and estimations without exception; thus the significance of the contributions of Mao is improperly explained by the use of the terminology of *Mao Zedong Thought*. This dilutes the historical importance of the principle of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it weakens and slackens the effort to prepare a generation that could befittingly inherit the tasks of its accomplishment—the long and difficult task of building such a party. The term *Mao Zedong Thought* was used only when the Cultural Revolution had not yet commenced and the Chinese Revolution, after establishing the thesis of New Democracy, was struggling with the challenges to unravel the knots of Socialist transition. After the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, after the characterization of the general line of proletarian revolution during the prolonged historical period of Socialist transition, after reaching the summit of Mao’s thought on the subject of Socialism, the nomenclature of *Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought* is insufficient for the

1 Here the author is discussing the distinction between “Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought” and “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism” that is important to grasp in order to understand significant differences between self-proclaimed “Maoist” organizations and revolutionaries throughout the world. The former treats Mao as simply the most advanced interlocuter, perhaps more advanced and updated than Stalin, of “Marxism-Leninism” – the most important Marxist-Leninist theorist and thinker but, ultimately, someone who did not produce any new and universally applicable developments in revolutionary communist theory. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, however, holds that Mao theorized universally applicable developments in revolutionary communist theory – this is, obviously, Prakash’s position.

In any case, this represents a significant debate in the worldwide Maoist movement that is sometimes coherent and sometimes incoherent. Although some self-proclaimed Maoist groups will only refer to themselves as “Maoist” and not bother with the nomenclature differentiation that Prakash is discussing, they might still argue for one position over another without naming their positions with the same words. And there are numerous Maoist organizations and people who, even if they do not refer to themselves specifically as “Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thoughtists”, will be very firm in arguing that Mao’s contributions lack universal applicability – many will argue that “Maoism” only applies to third world countries and is therefore only a particularist, rather than universalist, development of revolutionary communism. The point, therefore, is that while it might seem odd that Prakash is expending many concluding paragraphs in order to argue for “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism” over “Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought”, this is a very important ideological distinction in the global Maoist movement.

science of proletarian revolution.

III. It is an attitude of dogmatism—the blind emulation of the past—that since the terminology of *Mao Zedong Thought* was used during lifetime of Mao and the event of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76) we should continue to do the same today. An exhaustive summation and distillation of the essence of all aspects of a revolutionary development in any science is not completed in an instant, but only after understanding its historical significance. This was established by Marx and Engels when they comprehended the Paris Commune as the first stage of the development of Scientific Socialism, summarizing its complete experience as part of the science of proletarian revolution. And Engels, after analyzing the complete contributions of Marx, was able to coin the term *Marxism*—this happened some time after the Paris Commune and the demise of Marx. Although Lenin’s comprehensive and qualitative development of Marxist science was verified by the October Revolution and subsequent developments, the assessment of the contributions of Lenin continued for a long time until Stalin indicated the qualitative progress made in the Marxist science and called it *Leninism*. The first experiment of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as well as the task of summing up of its teachings, was still in progress when a capitalist reversal happened in China. Even then, the teachings that happened during the lifetime of Mao could be used by Communist revolutionaries to sum up the capitalist restoration in China due to subsequent implementations of policies by the followers of Deng: on that basis it can be said with certainty that, after the Paris Commune and October Revolution, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is the third great proletarian revolution that developed the proletarian ideology to a new stage. This is the most radical, comprehensive political revolution in known history. Thus, it is now the task of Communist revolutionaries worldwide to situate the teachings of Mao up to the Cultural Revolution in a correct, thorough and

historical perspective and to perform a thorough summing up. Those who do not understand the teachings of Mao established and verified by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution do not understand the science of Marxism. Those who do not defend Mao's contribution do not defend Marxism—this is the gist of every class struggle and every proletarian revolutions until now. Its nucleus is composed of the essence of the Paris Commune, the October Revolution and the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, it is entirely correct that we call today's science of revolution *Marxism-Leninism-Maoism*. This would be the guiding principle for the party of the Proletariat in this period of Imperialism and the entire period of the Socialist transition.

IV. Today when there are no teachers or leaders like Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin or Mao to lead the Proletariat, and no authority like Marx, Lenin and Mao, nor any international organization nor a Socialist country... in these unprecedented and difficult conditions it is imperative to start building the foundations for new proletarian revolutions by again beginning a difficult ideological and class struggle. It is important to unwaveringly establish the authority of ideology of the revolutionary Communist forces and, instead of compromising with revisionism, resist the counter-revolutionary current by drawing a clear dividing line. The revisionism of the “Dengites” is often the most lethal tendency of revisionism—the specimen of which is still on display in China and is providing solace to many revisionists and the capitalist roaders throughout the world. The clique of Deng even today takes the name of “Mao Zedong Thought” even though it claims that the greatest contribution of Mao, the Cultural Revolution, is “apocalyptic” and an “historical mistake”; it is “singing hallelujah” to his contributions only until the democratic revolution. Today, the final battle line in the ideological struggle must be drawn between the “Dengites” and the teachings of Mao that were codified by the theory of Cultural Revolution. To project one's position in a correct way in this

war, and to underline the teachings of the Cultural Revolution as Mao's greatest contribution, it is correct to name today's science of revolution *Maoism*. Because, *today only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the inevitability of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

V. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is that higher plane from where the teachings of all the great teachers of the Proletariat until now, even the teachings that preceded Mao, can be assimilated with more depth and in an entirely new sense. The objective conditions of today do not allow for the summation of past teachings to be performed at any plane lower than this. It would be "Old Marxism" where it is not possible to snatch a lively future from the decaying present, that cannot be liberated from the mystification of social relations, and cannot accomplish entirely new responsibilities.

VI. The first world historical cycle of the ongoing great war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie at the global level after establishing the lighthouse of the Paris Commune, the October Revolution and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has come to an end with the restoration of Capitalism in China; now this great class war has entered the second world historical cycle. The proletarian revolutions have been temporarily defeated but the Proletariat is not standing where it was before the October Revolution. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the amalgamated light of the lighthouse of the three great revolutions; it is a realization of the sense of direction of history acquired from the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Mao. Now only with this guidance can a new history of new Proletarian Revolutions be written in the coming century. This theoretical foundation can equip the rebellions and struggles of workers' of the entire world with vision and

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direction against the Imperialism that is now trapped in an unprecedented crisis, causing intractable challenges that can create new revolutions. When Maoism reaches the hands of the people it will again become a tremendously powerful material force. And in the experiment of changing the world it will develop itself further because motion is the essence of science. And Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is a science: the science of revolution, the science of the proletarian revolution.

