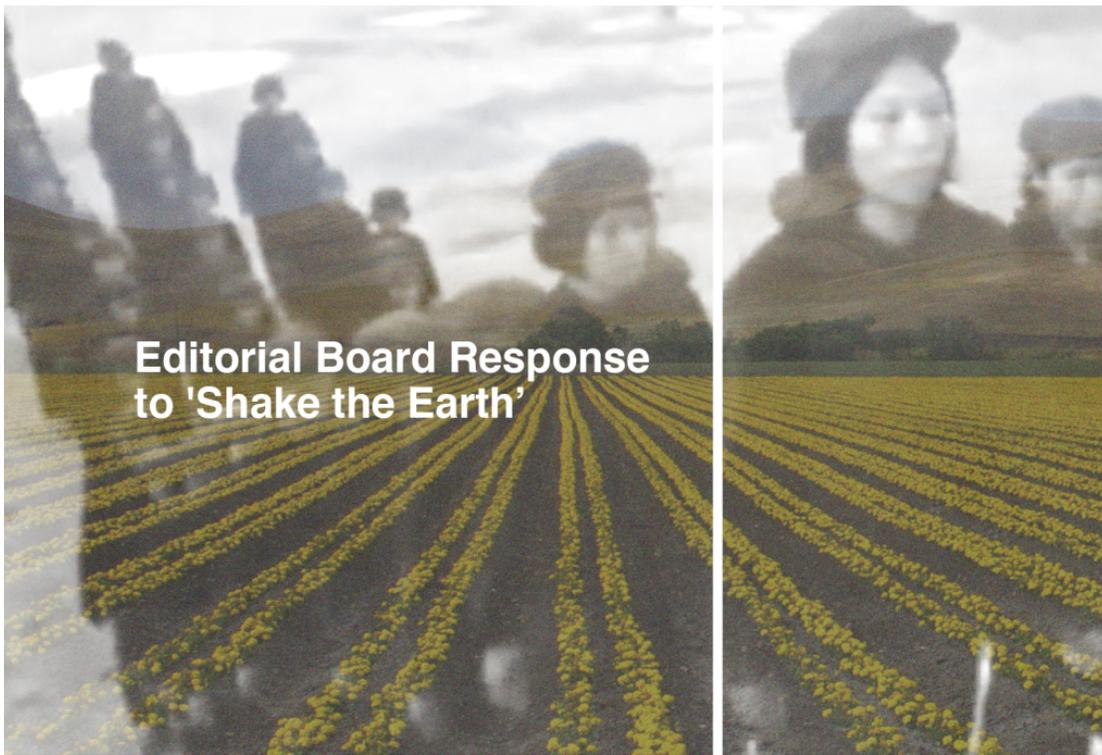


Editorial Board Response to “Shake the Earth”

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STRUGGLESSESSIONS



Struggle Sessions Editorial Board

As communists, we should see not only the moment, but the long years to come. – Communist Party of Peru, International Line

The thesis of Comrade Alex G's article can be summarized as: the enemy has grown stronger since the temporary triumphs of revisionism over the socialist states, and this quantitative growth has changed into a qualitative new thing —which is to say, a return to the stage of the strategic defensive of the world proletarian revolution. Our author historically locates this precisely at the point where Chairman Gonzalo locates the process of entering into the strategic offensive, in the 1970s and 1980s, within the period of 50 to 100 years in which imperialism will be sunk and world reaction will be swept from the Earth, ushering in the era of proletarian dictatorship and socialism.

Fundamentally Alex G. is applying a worldview and method foreign to Marxism. There is the purely military viewpoint, which focuses only on weapons, armies and base areas and not on the masses who are the basis of the people's war, and in fact whose armament and organization into the New Power led by the Communist Party is the foundation of base areas themselves. There is historical pessimism, a revisionist view of history which is unscientific and serves revisionism and reaction. These two can be summarized as subjectivism. On top of this is Alex G's logic of eclecticism, jumping back and forth between incompatible positions. We must combat the essentially revisionist stand even as it hides behind revolutionary expressions. Our author claims to agree with the line of the Communist Party of Peru (hereafter PCP) in essence but not in form. He does not want to explicitly negate the PCP, and so holds an impossible middle-of-the-road position. How can something be correct in essence but incorrect in form? Form and essence are a unity of opposites, and essence is principally determinate. Calling something correct in essence but incorrect in form turns everything on its head, reducing substance to surface. Revisionism always claims to be revising form, not essence; to change tactics, not principles. We must see through these tricks and strike at the heart of the matter: words either correspond to reality or they do not; tactics either conform to principles or they do not. We quote Lenin:

“When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a characteristic feature of present-day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, amorphousness, elusiveness. An opportunist, by his very nature, will always evade taking a clear and decisive stand, he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to ‘agree’ with both and reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, innocent and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth.” (*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*)

Our author wriggles “like a snake” between the positions of the left line in the international communist movement—which are reduced to empty phrases by him—and his rightist line. We interpret this as a genuine attempt to grasp the left line while still struggling internally with incorrect ideas, and hope this

response will demonstrate his conceptual inconsistencies and so promote the left line in essence and not merely in form.

The Current World Situation

Why is the question of the current stage of the world proletarian revolution important? Because it determines the tasks of the revolutionary movement today, lays them out before the revolutionaries of the world. The strategic defensive poses different strategic and tactical tasks than the strategic offensive. We claim that the tasks of the International Communist Movement are in line with the stage of strategic offensive. Our author claims that our tasks are the same, but that nonetheless we are in the period of strategic defensive. In answering the question of stage we seek to defend the content of Maoism from pessimistic and dogmatic distortions, and thus contribute our position on the strategic orientation of the world proletarian revolution as part of our task to impose Maoism as command and guide of the proletarian revolution in the United States.

Chairman Mao developed our understanding of world revolution as a unity; this work began with Lenin who laid the foundations for the strategy for world revolution of combining the proletarian revolution with the weight of the masses in the third world in their national liberation struggles. Chairman Gonzalo says that “the military principle is well arranged: world revolution, trend, weight of the masses, the period of 50 to 100 years.” Because we all enter communism or no one enters, there must be a conception of the world revolution as a unity in uneven development. And because the trend of the world today is of imperialist decomposition and of the weight of the masses making themselves felt in struggles of all types against imperialism, revolution becomes the order of the day, the main trend, and so we are in the period of 50 to 100 years in which imperialism will be swept from the face of the Earth.

Our author, however, gives the following summation:

“At a certain point the quantity transforms into quality and we have to recognize this current defensive period a significant stage in its own right. So just as we can consider imperialism to be a stage of roughly the same ‘size’ as the period of capitalist free-competition, we should consider our current stage of strategic defensive to be comparable to the first defensive stage. The PCP’s model ignores this entirely in order to artificially construct a linear progression from defensive, to equilibrium, to offensive.”

Here the pessimism of our author is on full display, discounting the linear progression in the world proletarian revolution and calling for a major shift in strategy—which he claims changes next to nothing in terms of content. He sees imperialism as ascendant, world reaction in its strategic offensive, and the world proletarian revolution as defensive, fledgling. In the real world, meanwhile, imperialism is battered and scarred, wracked with crisis, a state of things expressed especially in the third world—the storm-center of the world proletarian revolution—where the crises of bureaucratic capitalism become more and more acute while massive uprisings and rebellions of the people break upon the shores. There is a counter-revolutionary offensive but it unfolds within the wider stage of the strategic offensive of the world proletarian revolution, within which we see a new great wave of revolution advancing, as revolution is the main trend. Chairman Gonzalo cuts down the pessimists who claim that imperialism is ascendant in the face of all observable facts:

“Who can deny the greater decomposition of imperialism every day, is it not sinking more and more? It is decomposing, it is rotting. If some can claim that they produce more, what the hell does it matter, is that the problem? On the contrary, if they produce more, what they are showing is that there are all the means to satisfy basic needs.”

Also: “Some say Lenin was wrong because we see that they have more rockets, more weapons, but is that not an expression of weakness throughout the

world? Throughout history it has always been an expression of weakness. What Marxism says is that imperialism slows down all the capacity of the existing means of production, it does not say that they do not produce. That's what Hoxha never understood in his miserable life. They have confused and some repeat, they don't understand the problem, I think that's it. It is the decomposition of imperialism and its increasing artillery, a sign of weakness and not of strength. Review any history or look at history thoroughly and it will be understood, any military history proves it." (*On Chairman Mao's Thesis 'Three Worlds Delineated'*)

Chairman Gonzalo correctly notes that imperialism has had no stability since the Second World War, that imperialism is a giant with crumbling clay feet. The era of US imperialism's sole hegemony and apparent strength—but real weakness—is coming to an end. There was a temporary reactionary counter-offensive beginning around the time of the dissolution of the Soviet social-imperialism, however starting with the 'War on Terror' and continuing to today this counter-offensive is breaking. Russia or China threaten to rise to a point of counter-hegemony, while the EU breaks apart and contradictions within the so-called NATO bloc grow.

Quoting Chairman Gonzalo's speech *On the Rectification Campaign Based on the Study of the Document 'Elections, No! People's War, Yes!'* Alex G. compares "the essential trend of development (we are living in an era where entering into the general revolutionary offensive is both possible and necessary), and our present stage of counter-revolutionary offensive." He takes the quote out of context and misses the point of what Gonzalo is saying.

Chairman Gonzalo says that we are in the strategic offensive of the world proletarian revolution on the broad strategic scale, but within that stage we are within a temporary sub-stage of counter-revolutionary offensive. A retreat in forces is not the same thing as a reversal in stage. We quote Gonzalo's speech:

“Therefore we are talking about a general counterrevolutionary offensive aimed at averting the revolution as the main historical and political trend in today’s world. ... This offensive is developed principally by US imperialism in its role as main aspirant to world hegemony. Also, it is a general offensive because, besides coming from imperialism, revisionism and world reaction, it also occurs at all levels: ideological, political and economic, although the political level is the principal one. [...]

“Here it is appropriate to make a note—this is not a final offensive. We must differentiate correctly. It is a general counterrevolutionary offensive. In general terms, one speaks of a final offensive when dealing with the last stage of the strategic offensive of the revolution. Politically and militarily speaking, this offensive undergoes three moments or stages—of course, with politics being the principal aspect and always leading the military one—the strategic defensive, the strategic equilibrium and the strategic offensive. Our standpoint is that we find ourselves at the stage of the strategic offensive of the world revolution. However, we do not hold that we are in the final offensive. Besides, we consider that the strategic offensive of the world revolution develops within a protracted process, not within a short one, and moreover, in the midst of great zigzag movements and even retreats. Therefore, what we now are dealing with is not an issue of the revolution but of the counterrevolution.”

With developing splits within the imperialist camp and the rise of imperialist powers in growing antagonism to the US, a new imperialist world war becomes more and more a possibility. To the revisionist, those who follow Khrushchev’s footsteps, and the likes of the rotten Avakian, this is something to be feared, a justification for the peace of bayonets. Applying Mao’s military theory we recognize that splits within the enemy camp are opportunities that will spur on people’s war. Either world people’s war will prevent imperialist world war, or else an imperialist world war will push forward the world peoples war.

Imperialism is in the midst of all sorts of troubles. We need not simply repeat the examples provided by the PCP in their International Line. In Afghanistan,

the Taliban controls the majority of the country and international bourgeois analysts say there is “no point” for them to go to the bargaining table with the comprador government as they are poised for nation-wide victory. In Yemen the Houthi armed struggle has turned up their noses at the UN and Biden Administration pleas—crocodile tears—for a ‘humanitarian solution’ and peace talks, because the perspective for victory is growing. Whether these forces seize power in their respective countries or capitulate to imperialism—note these armed struggles are critically lacking proletarian leadership and New Democratic revolution remains the order of the day—does not change the fact that US imperialism cannot constrain armed struggle in even a single country. Imperialism cannot impose basic ‘structural adjustment’ reforms in Columbia, is met with massive and sustained protests, and backs down. Right now we are witnessing a massive upsurge of resistance in Palestine with the youth at the forefront, facing the bombs and bullets of the Israeli oppressor and the panicked Netanyahu clique. Even in the imperialist centers, the range of motion of the ruling class is more and more prescribed, faces more and more resistance, and the steady advance of the Maoists in the imperialist countries is testament to this. Brexit and the other anti-EU movements show the internal decay and dislocation of imperialism—there was never a united bloc of imperialists, whether NATO, the EU or any other; these are simply temporary alliances which were always doomed to break down, giving way to inter-imperialist contention.

The ‘end of history’ discourse spouted by reaction in part stemmed from the counter-revolutionary offensive and the US’s temporary grasp of sole hegemony after the fall of Soviet social imperialism, where for a brief time it appeared that imperialism was united across the world with NATO and the UN, hence the putrid theories like that of ‘Empire’ put forward by Hardt and Negri. This was the same old tale repeated for instance by Huey P. Newton (see our article *Intercommunalism is not a Marxist Concept*), a trend of historical pessimism justifying right opportunism—all variants of Kautsky’s ‘ultra-imperialism’ theory which falsely believes that imperialism can unite into a single all-powerful force that will bring stability and peace—a negation of the basic contradictions of capitalism. Lenin specifies the danger of this theory:

“The whole purpose and significance of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the *most profound* contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of ‘unity’ with the apologists of imperialism, the outright social–chauvinists and opportunists” (*Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*).

We follow Mao who says that “Imperialism will not last long because it always does evil things,” that imperialism follows the logic of “make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again ... until their doom.” To make trouble is not strength, but a sign of weakness. The imperialists are incapable of turning back the flood waters to their source; they can only continue to stir trouble until they are beaten down permanently.

Chairman Mao says in his statement *A New Storm Against Imperialism*:

“At present, the world revolution has entered a great new era. The struggle of the Black people in the United States for emancipation is a component part of the general struggle of all the people of the world against US. imperialism, a component part of the contemporary world revolution. I call on the workers, peasants, and revolutionary intellectuals of all countries and all who are willing to fight against US. imperialism to take action and extend strong support to the struggle of the Black people in the United States! People of the whole world, unite still more closely and launch a sustained and vigorous offensive against our common enemy, US. imperialism, and its accomplices! It can be said with certainty that the complete collapse of colonialism, imperialism, and all systems of exploitation, and the complete emancipation of all the oppressed peoples and nations of the world are not far off.”

Perhaps the biggest wave of protest and uprisings in US history struck the country last year, spreading across the world. The state forces were shaken, unable to stop the rebellion which will inevitably surge again. Is this not a sign of imperialism’s decrepitude, of the people’s thirst for rebellion and the destruction of imperialism? Bourgeois democracy is becoming increasingly reactionary as the ruling class is no longer able to rule in the same way. The

illusion of democracy is every day being stripped from the masses' consciousness as they turn instead toward the truth that it is right to rebel.

The contradictions and lessons generated by the wars of national liberation, people's wars, and armed struggles that were diverted by armed revisionism have not disappeared but are still present in much of the third world. Look at any country and one is likely to see armed struggle or at least a tradition of armed struggle and a memory that still persists today. With the constitution or reconstitution of Communist Parties in these countries, the armed struggle is bound to develop rapidly, drawing from the already existing tradition and applying Maoism to the new conditions.

We have Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, the highest stage of our ideology, corresponding to the latest period in class struggle, that of the general sweeping away of imperialism. Maoism is the highest achievement of the world proletarian revolution and assures its continued development and ultimate victory. How can history go backwards? We have all the lessons of the past 150 years or more of class struggle. Through applying Maoism to the concrete conditions of each country, revolutionary forces are certain to develop quickly and overthrow the animated corpse of imperialism.

As the 2020 Joint International Declaration *Learn from Chairman Gonzalo* puts it:

“We want and we must emphasize the great farsightedness of Chairman Gonzalo manifested in his speech, how he justly and correctly describes the development of the New Great Wave of the world proletarian revolution. He foresees how Maoism will become the command of this New Great Wave in the upcoming decades and how it will be embodied more and more, by more and more communists generating their Communist Parties, in more and more countries, how it will become material violence when it is embodied in the peoples of the world.”

We are closely approaching a new great wave of proletarian revolution. We assert that we are in the strategic offensive, emerging out of a counter-revolutionary offensive within that stage. History moves always forward, in a spiral motion; there may be zigzags and retreats, but history can never move backwards. The strategic stage synthesizes all aspects of the global situation: imperialist decay, the growing weight of the oppressed nations, the increasing rebellion of the masses, the development of the subjective forces to grasp the conditions and lead forward towards world people's war.

This forms the basis of the objective and subjective conditions. We must distinguish between the two, if we are to approach the topic of the world proletarian revolution from a correct basis. The subjective conditions of a revolutionary situation are distinct from, but related to, its objective conditions. We discussed this in our response to the "Maoist Communist Group" of New York City and refer our readers to this essay as a supplement to the study and debate presented here within comrade Alex G's article and our response.

It is true that the subjective forces for revolution are relatively weak, but this exists in a dialectic with the objective conditions for revolution. Not only are the objective conditions ripe for the general sweeping away of imperialism, but the subjective conditions will surely develop rapidly to catch up with them. Hence the growth of the forces fighting for Maoism as the command and guide of the world proletarian revolution, the development of the people's wars through all sorts of twists and turns, setbacks and advances. We must have a long-term perspective, and not miss the forest for the trees. If we turn back the clock, presuming to reverse the floodwaters back to their source, then we are merely lost because we are not looking at the process of world revolution as a unity. We must instead understand that the objective conditions for revolution are ripe, have never been better in fact, and that, while the leadership of the proletariat through its communist parties is currently lacking in most parts of the world, the objective conditions necessarily give rise to the subjective leadership more and more every day.

Once the subjective forces catch up with the objective conditions we are sure to see imperialism swept from the Earth within the timescale already established, 50 to 100 years. This orientation was not seen in the stage of strategic defensive and could not have been seen. During the equilibrium, which grew even after the counter-revolution in Russia, we saw the first great blossoming of socialist and national revolutions as well as other armed and unarmed struggles on a scale never before seen. As Alex G. admits himself, the developments in the last 40 years will lead to a blossoming that grows above and beyond that of the “global sixties.” What are we to make of this except the development from strategic equilibrium to a higher stage, to strategic offensive, despite setbacks and retreats?

Alex G. offers an inconsistent analysis: imperialism is decrepit, but also all-powerful; people’s war and militarization is the order of the day, but also we are within the strategic defensive which presents different tasks. He metaphysically detaches the strategic stage from the objective as well as subjective conditions, focusing solely on the military question. In the examples of militarization and electoral boycott, he simply replaces “strategic offensive” with “crisis of imperialism.” The crisis of imperialism makes people’s war the order of the day. This was not the case during the strategic defensive, when legal parties and electoral participation were correct tactics in a limited agitational sense, noting importantly that Engels already was struggling against electoral cretinism in the 2nd International. The absolute decay of imperialism, not only in its economic basis but also politically and militarily opens up a different stage in world proletarian revolution, one that implies different strategies and tactics. What is this other than a general strategic offensive as the imperialists desperately attempt to hold onto their hegemony?

To cut off all of the complex conditions that evolve with the general movement of history, and instead to focus on one aspect, the existence of base areas, of socialist countries, is a betrayal of materialism, of dialectical analysis, a product of the pessimistic world view typical of revisionism. It denies that the masses make history, that history always moves forward, never backwards,

through a spiraling development. It views imperialism as a real tiger, rather than an animated corpse desperate for new life. It refuses to see world revolution as a unity, operating in a dialectic of revolution and counter-revolution, restoration and counter-restoration, with revolution as the main trend. Our author upholds some positions of the left line in the international communist movement, but eclectically combines them with revisionist positions, incompatible with the former.

Military Theory

Alex G. replaces the proletarian military theory of protracted people's war with the bourgeois purely military viewpoint. He fails to see military matters dialectically in relation to the whole situation—political and economic, the situation with the enemy, among the masses, within the revolutionary forces—and this necessarily results in subjectivist pessimism.

Let us take the Long March as an example. Was this not a great advance for the People's War in China? Operationally it constituted a retreat, including a great loss in forces and base areas. However at the greater strategic level it advanced the revolution immeasurably. It allowed the strategic reorientation in Yenan towards the war of national liberation against Japan; it regained the initiative against the Kuomintang who tried fruitlessly to encircle and annihilate the people's army; it laid seeds across large parts of China—cadres and weapons that would later serve the people's war; it centralized the revolutionary forces who were previously dispersed; it broke decisively with the revisionism of Li Lisan and Chang Guotao and established Mao as great leader of the party and Mao Zedong Thought as the guiding thought of the revolution. The purely military viewpoint is counterfactual and serves revisionism and reaction: our author might characterize the Long March as a regression within the strategic defensive due to the loss of base areas, but approaching the situation dialectically allows us to see that, despite military setbacks, the Long March was principally an advance within the strategic defensive.

There is a tendency to apply the concepts of defensive, equilibrium and offensive one-sidedly, only at the level of grand strategy, taking Mao's description of the three stages in *On Protracted War* in isolation. However in other texts Mao uses the terms offensive and counter-offensive widely and at multiple levels of analysis. In particular in *Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War*, he describes the tactic of retreat and counter-offensive, a basic element of guerrilla warfare to combat campaigns of encirclement and annihilation. With this in mind we have to understand that the dialectics of offensive and counter-offensive, restoration and counter-restoration apply at many levels and are not reducible to the three broad stages. Tactical and operational retreats can occur within a strategic offensive, while the defensive stage itself does not take a defensive posture but is offensive-defense. It is therefore no strange thing to assert that we are in an overall strategic offensive even as we suffer what could be called "operational" defeats.

Let us turn also to Mao's justification of protracted people's war in *On Protracted War*: on the one hand victory is possible and ultimately inevitable, hence we oppose the view of national subjugation—or in our case, of imperialism being all-powerful on a world-scale—on the other hand the enemy is (temporarily) strong and we are (temporarily) weak, hence the necessity of a protracted war. Placed in the context of the international situation and world people's war, we see that the objective situation is ripe for revolution, hence revolution and the sweeping away of imperialism is the order of the day; at the same time the imperialists are militarily strong and so world proletarian revolution will be a protracted process of developing people's wars in individual countries and eventually linking them to forge world people's war in uneven development. While recognizing the stage and general tendency and the need for everyone to enter communism, we still reject the Trotskyite view, the distortion of permanent revolution, that revolution will happen spontaneously and immediately the world over.

In the strategic defensive at a global level, which began before the era of imperialism and world proletarian revolution, there was at first no possibility of long-term success of proletarian dictatorship faced against the forces of

imperialism, and later only the etching out of individual socialist countries able to defend themselves indefinitely, due to the strategic stage and the objective world situation. In the strategic equilibrium there was the possibility for long-term existence and expansion of socialist states in contention with imperialism, but there had to be further development to allow the possibility of the total wiping away of imperialism. The strategic offensive means that the complete destruction of imperialism is possible and moreover inevitable as people's wars develop and socialist states are again formed within the dialectic of revolution and counter-revolution, restoration and counter-restoration. To say that we are back in the stage of strategic defensive means we are at best able to defend an isolated socialist country, but not sweep imperialism away due to its strategic advantage. Is this what our author believes?

On Elections

Our journal has published on this topic multiple times before, in particular on the distortions of Lenin's text *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder* made by revisionism to defend electoral cretinism. It is worth repeat here that the Bolshevik participation in the Duma was an aspect of the combined illegal and legal work, that it was a violent participation including battles with the Black Hundreds and the political police.

The glorious people's war in Peru was initiated with the burning of ballot boxes, and Maoists throughout the world uphold the election boycott and carry out electoral boycott campaigns. Imperialism is sinking and it lashes out, offering nothing but misery and death to the vast majority of the world, including with its elections. However, our author claims to save the principle of the election boycott while throwing out the current stage of the world proletarian revolution. He does not succeed in this.

Participation in elections is no longer a viable tactic as the Old States reactionize and militarize more and more, and as the last vestiges of bourgeois progressivism are thrown out. The masses are no longer interested in or

participating in the metaphorical Duma.

World reaction is in its death throes and it is not merely a “policy” that bourgeois elections are corrupt, a tactical choice by the imperialists which is then met by the tactical choice of the revolutionaries to boycott. Such is tantamount to Kautskyite revisionism on the question of imperialism, calling it merely a ‘policy,’ and leads us down a dangerous path. Our author echoes the calls of the International Communist Movement to (re)constitute militarized Marxist–Leninist–Maoist communist parties to initiate people’s wars and to develop the current people’s wars onward to new democracy and socialism, and onward through cultural revolutions to communism, but he does so in a manner which negates the very point, situated in the unity of the world revolution, and thus we are dangerously close to a call for armed revisionism.

That imperialist “democracy” has nothing to offer, that it is permanently closed to the proletariat as a trench of combat, directly results from the current stage of world proletarian revolution, the strategic offensive in which imperialism is a dead weight and proletarian revolution is the order of the day. If we have genuinely returned to the strategic defensive, then surely we should return to the parliamentary front as a trench of combat? Our author again jumps between inconsistent positions, seeking through semantics to find a “middle-ground”. But there is no middle ground: bourgeois elections have nothing to offer the proletariat but disarmament and misery, when the task is to transform the world with arms in hand, led by the Communist Party.

Historical Materialism and Historical Pessimism

Alex G’s historical method is one of bourgeois pessimism, a form of subjectivism. In all moments of proletarian history he sees only failure, loss, decline, and the omnipotence of capital. Historical materialism instead is rooted in the recognition that the masses make history, that the forward march of history is inevitable and that capitalism produces its own

gravediggers, inevitably giving way to socialist revolution leading to communism.

Alex G. claims that the Paris Commune opened up the strategic defensive “in its military aspect.” Yet the Commune lasted two months and was then militarily defeated, after which there were no significant armed struggles or base areas until 1905, or even 1917. According to his logic then, the military defeat of the Commune closed the strategic defensive and returns us to the period before proletarian revolution, since there was no significant armed struggle on the side of the proletariat for over 30 years. He essentially admits this, but then concludes “nevertheless the PCP is correct to characterize this period overall as that of strategic defensive.” So, was the period from 1871 to 1905 one of continuous advance despite little military success—forget Marx and Engels’ transcendental theorization of the civil war in France!—or did we return to the era of bourgeois revolution, of capitalist ascendancy? This is an opportunist wriggling between two incompatible positions. Either the strategic defensive was opened in 1871 and is not reducible to a purely military aspect, or else the defeat of the Paris Commune returned the world to the stage of capitalist ascendancy for over 30 more years. Perhaps he thinks we entered strategic defensive in essence, but not in form?

The Second International founded by Engels was a great advance for the proletariat, uniting its forces in a way before unseen. As with everything however the Second International was a contradiction and a product of its historical stage in which proletarian revolution was not on the order of the day. One necessarily divided into two and the International split, producing the communist camp under the leadership of Lenin and the revisionist camp led by Kautsky, Bernstein etc. Our author’s description of the decay of the Second International as representing a “widespread retreat” in world proletarian revolution illustrates his subjective pessimism. That the Second International lost its revolutionary character does not mean that the world proletarian revolution stepped backwards. On the contrary, the split with revisionism marked an incontestable advance—seen not only in the glorious October Revolution but also Germany, China etc. Not only did revolutionary

movements in the first world develop qualitatively and quantitatively, but the revolution also “moved east,” to the third world which Lenin masterfully delineated as the alliance of the proletarian revolution and the national liberation struggles. The Second International led by the social democrats had become a shell, a corpse representing imperialist decay. In that regard, the “loss” of the Second International can only be seen as an advancement, being superseded by the Third International free of the dead weight of revisionism.

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution marked a development within the strategic defensive, where a socialist country was able to defend itself indefinitely, surrounded by imperialism on all sides. With the success of the Chinese revolution in 1949, the proletariat entered the stage of strategic equilibrium, where imperialism passed from ascendancy to its final decay and socialism passed from defending base areas to expanding and sweeping imperialism away.

Similarly to the split in the Second International we can look at the so-called Sino-Soviet Split. Modern Revisionism will call it ‘unfortunate,’ ‘unnecessary’ etc. In general they blame China for being ‘ultra-leftist’ and ‘splittist,’ but may well blame the USSR instead; the essential thing is the pessimistic view that the struggle against revisionism was a set-back or even a mistake overall. Alex falls in line with this revisionist position by asserting that the Khrushchevite counter-revolution reversed the revolutionary stage from equilibrium to defense.

Needless to say the bourgeois restoration in the USSR was a great defeat for the proletariat, the loss of a large section of the socialist base area. At this point the socialist base areas were reduced to China and a few other countries, a fraction of the world and without military parity with the twin forces of imperialism and social-imperialism. Despite this retreat, however, global revolutionary forces led by Chairman Mao only developed in this time. We rightly recognize this period, especially the “global sixties” as being a high point in world revolution: not only the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, but the national liberation movements across the world bloomed at this time;

rebellion and armed struggle rose within the imperialist powers; Communist Parties began to take up Maoism, then called Mao Zedong Thought, and initiated and developed people's wars. The struggle against modern revisionism was a great advance, a qualitative development for revolutionary forces, a moment which broadcast Maoism and the left line across the world. Would the Cultural Revolution have been possible without the struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism? Would Maoism have been possible without it?

Alex G. characterizes the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as a defensive response to a revisionist offensive. This is not only terribly false but yet again betrays the general pessimism that infests this piece. Socialism is always in a state of contradiction between the capitalist road and the socialist road, between restoration and counter-restoration. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a bold offensive against revisionism initiated by Chairman Mao within the context of general socialist development in China, one that made great gains, preventing capitalist restoration for 10 years, and which consummated the elevation of Marxism to its third and highest stage. To list just a few of its effects within China: the development of socialist relations of production to a level never before seen; the far-reaching expansion of democratic forms in the revolutionary committees and mass organizations; mass militarization and the revolutionizing of the people's army; the destruction of the Liu-Deng revisionist clique and the Lin Biao clique. Its effects were felt across the world and objectively developed the world proletarian revolution immeasurably. Perhaps its greatest result was Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the greatest weapon and guarantor of victory of the world proletarian revolution. It is revisionist history that portrays the Cultural Revolution as "one last desperate attempt that failed," reminiscent more of the pessimist anarchism of Alain Badiou than a sharp Maoist analysis of reality.

In the end, of course, the socialist road was temporarily defeated, the Dengite counter-revolution succeeded, and the proletariat lost all of its socialist base areas. However, this is only one side of the historical development. By the end of the 1970s, imperialism had clearly lost its strength and stability, forced to

engage in countless proxy-wars and low-intensity conflicts, losing more and more frequently, divided among itself, growing more decrepit every day. At the same time the strength and weight of the masses only grew. Our author correctly says that imperialism is sinking, close to the grave, but also says that imperialism is ascendant, dominant, being in the stage of strategic offensive. It is a dis-unity, discordance of thought and reality. Revolution, rather than counter-revolution, is the main trend in the world today. With the collapse of the revisionist USSR, the US gained the position of sole hegemonic superpower, of the world's gendarme, which it retains to this day. Around this time also, there was a general counter-revolutionary offensive of imperialism, principally US imperialism, across the world. This temporary stability of US imperialism does not reverse the general trend however, and the cracks in US imperialism are beginning to show as Russian imperialism and Chinese social-imperialism develop as imperialist powers, generating new contradictions within the imperialist forces which provide ever more fertile ground for world people's war.

Our author pointedly asks, "Couldn't imperialism as a whole, the era of proletarian revolution, also be considered the era of strategic offensive by this logic?" No, because like all things, imperialism has a beginning, middle and end, a period of ascendancy and a period of passing away, even as on the broad scale it is born in its coffin. We cannot throw out the law of contradiction reigning in everything, as the PCP puts it, summarizing Chairman Gonzalo's delineation of the stages of the World Proletarian Revolution.

We therefore counter-pose Alex G's historical method to the method of historical materialism. Where the materialist view sees the continuous advance of the proletarian revolution despite setbacks and defeats, Alex G's method is pessimistic at all points, a subjectivist view which, in its logical conclusion, denies the inevitability of communism. It is the opportunist "middle-of-the-road" position which we see for instance in Joshua Moufawad-Paul's so-called "revolutionary realism"—as opposed to revolutionary optimism based in Marxism. Taken to its extreme, this has more in common with Kautsky and Khrushchev, who worshiped imperialism and

belittled the success of socialist revolution, consequently joining hands with imperialism and reaction. We do not wish to imply that Comrade Alex G. is equivalent to Kautsky and Khrushchev, however he would do well to study the struggle of Lenin and Mao against each of these rats to compare their methods with his own.

The fact is that imperialism will be sunk; that is the current orientation, and not one of imperialism being born, gaining power, and growing, which is the orientation of the strategic defensive of the world proletarian revolution. The water which has flowed cannot be made to turn back and return to its source. This is a basic principle of dialectical motion. We do not negate the potential of setbacks, of zigzags in world politics, nor the dialectics of defeat/victory and restoration/counter-restoration. But we forcefully oppose the claim, sewn into the seams of Comrade Alex G's argument, that the clock has turned back, that imperialism is *on the rise* rather than *headed for its grave*.

Alex G. suggests that his disagreement is superficial. He calls the PCP correct in essence but incorrect in form, correct in analysis but incorrect in synthesis. However, we know that behind every change in form there is a change in principle. Marxism is an all-encompassing, monist doctrine, a worldview as well as a method, the product of millennia of class struggle. Alex G. is clearly struggling to come to the left line, to understand and apply Maoism to the conditions we find ourselves in today. However he still has a toe dipped in the black waters of revisionism, and although it is but one question, one that is not yet deeply understood by many, his position betrays a worldview and method antithetical to Marxism, one rooted in idealism, metaphysics and subjectivism.

We hope our readers will read this exchange not merely in terms of the issue at hand, but also as an illustration of the application of the Marxist worldview and method counter-posed to that of opportunism. We hope that this relatively quick intervention will shed light on this important question and help illuminate the path forward as revolutionaries in the US and globally struggle to apply Maoism to their conditions, to develop a correct orientation within

our strategic stage, to constitute or reconstitute the Communist Parties and initiate and develop people's wars as part of the world proletarian revolution leading unceasingly towards communism as our inevitable destiny.

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