GUIDING THOUGHT, THE GUARANTOR OF VICTORY[1]

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[EDITORS NOTE: P*lease see the end of the article for an updated conclusion and self-criticism from the author and Editorial Board.*]

We will primarily concern ourselves with three concepts: 1) what is guiding thought, 2) what are the universal contributions of Gonzalo Thought, and 3) how do these guarantee victory?

On the general character of guiding thought

The Chinese revolution adopted Mao Zedong Thought as the Guiding Thought of their Party during the great rectification period in Yenan. The first great ideological movement initiated by the Communist Party of China (CPC), Yenan would provide many of the basic discoveries which led to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966. Without Yenan there would be no GPCR, and without the GPCR there would be no Maoism proper. Even bourgeois scholars acknowledge Yenan as the revolutionaries—i.e. the leftists in the Party—taking control of the whole party apparatus and imposing themselves on the right. Mao was at the helm of this revolutionary triumph and emerged as the recognized center of Party unity. Most importantly,

[1]https://struggle-sessions.com/2019/06/30/guiding-thought-the-guarantor-of-victory/

Guiding Thought was precisely summed up in the specific applications of Marxism-Leninism to Chinese conditions—this meant necessarily refusing to follow certain faulty advice coming from Moscow in the 1940s. Yenan also saw the building of the CPC through People's War with Japan—a ragged and depleted CPC landed in Yenan after the long march and had to fully replenish itself from around 40,000 into a Party of millions in the world's largest country. Again in 1949 Mao would refuse to take the advice of Moscow to partition the country; he knew that countrywide victory was made possible not only by creative application of Marxism-Leninism, but also assisted by new theory and new ideas developed through it—in short, victory was made possible through Guiding Thought.

Guiding Thought is the answer to the riddle which plagued the Communist Parties of the world through their dogmatic fidelity to the experience and advice of the Russian revolution, in this way its addition was actually faithful to Marxism-Leninism which has always been designed for creative application. Mao summarized the content of his thought in his most important documents produced during the Yenan period, to only name a few these are "On Practice", "On Contradiction", and "New Democracy", all of which were instrumental to elevating Marxism-Leninism to its third and so far highest stage, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism. We can conclude that without the creative application of Marxism-Leninism there could be no Guiding Thought. So the first characteristic of a Guiding Thought is the successful application of the universal science of revolution (Marxism by Lenin and Marxism-Leninism by Mao) to the particular conditions of an actual revolution. Only the strictest, mechanical, vilest, and lifeless dogmatists can oppose Guiding Thought on the basis of opposing creative application of revolutionary science to the particular conditions of one's own country.

Guiding Thought is the lifeblood of scientific and stage-like development of the ideology of revolution—of revolution itself. Lenin was Lenin not because he was simply a repeater of what was correct in Marx, but as a master in his own unique application of Marxism in conditions very different from that in which Marx himself imagined his ideas taking root. Marx laid the very foundational content which Lenin, through what would come to be understood by the Chinese as "Guiding Thought", was able to transform all of the Russian empire and make an irreversible leap for the world's proletariat, offering concrete proof that power is accomplishable and without it all is illusory. This is the power of Lenin Thought, which was quickly understood as Leninism—that is, a higher stage of Marxism. It is true that Leninism is Marxism in the age of imperialism and proletarian revolution, but it is not just this. As Comrade Stalin insisted in his masterpiece Foundations of Leninism, Leninism is a qualitative leap in Marxist science— in how we view and change the world.

Guiding Thought as a theory itself is universal, because if such a category as "universal" exists, then it must necessarily be applied to the specific—this is a law of contradiction. There could be no universal without the particular, and there could be no particular without the universal, etc. Guiding Thought finds its first characteristic in this universal necessity to apply revolutionary science to the particular conditions which you seek to understand and transform.

This application makes certain quantifiable discoveries, exposes its own mistakes and analyzes these discoveries and mistakes making a synthesis. Anyone familiar with the mass line method of Communist leadership over the masses can grasp this process well. A concept exists, it is placed next to the various and mixed ideas of the masses and used to glean the best ones into a synthesized line—a line designed to bring the ideas further along to revolutionary conclusions, then it is fielded and propagated and it most often falls short—discoveries are made, mistakes in application and ideology are noticed and another, sharper synthesis is produced and fielded. This is the raw material of both the mass line and of Guiding Thought. The mass line itself emerged as a full theory in the context of Mao's thought.

Communist organizing however is centralized—is unity in action—this sets apart the Bolshevik from every other kind of organization. There will emerge from democratic centralism two main types of leadership. These are collective leadership on the one hand —which is attained from broad and democratic practice, and individual leadership on the other which is attained from the centralized aspect. It is undeniable that every cadre is a leader among the masses and that the Party collectively leads; it is equally undeniable that the top leadership of the party has survived many trials and earned the recognition of the Party. Maoism holds that two-line struggle exist inside every party as the motor force of party development; the greatest leaders, men like Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Gonzalo have navigated the course for their Parties and in some instances the whole of the proletarian revolution in their countries. These men are not special by any natural talent, they are not bestowed with inherent wisdom, their ideas did not fall from the sky and they are not beyond criticism. What they have done is successfully organize the two-line struggle, becoming the center of Party unity, and chiefly they have applied Marxism successfully to the Party itself which applies it to the given conditions—this is individual leadership, the second characteristic of guiding thought.

As long as democratic centralism is the necessary model for all parties and organizations based in Leninism, then individual leaders will emerge as a center of Party and movement unity. The masses of Turkey will never dispense with the likeness and lessons of Kaypakkaya, just as the people of the former Soviet Union lay wreaths for Comrade Stalin against all the revisionist and capitalist indoctrination. The masses

know Stalin and will not ever part with him, even if they lack a fully Marxist evaluation of him. This is not a superficial matter of a "cult of personality" but mass recognition of who stood tall as their center of unity, who embodied the most revolutionary practice and who led them successfully out of the looming capitalist shadows and blackest of fascist nights as well as against emergent revisionism. The gratitude of the masses, the masses that make history, the real heroes, those who are not some gullible idiots easily duped into religious iconography, at least not in the sense of upholding proletarian revolutionary leaders. Unlike religion which has an analgesic effect, revolutionary icons have a struggle effect. They are a commitment to the pains of war to transform reality. The second characteristic of Guiding Thought again proves itself as universal; only the most heartless, deaf to the masses and doubters of the masses can oppose it on the terms of personality.

These two characteristics are not determined by individual opinion, but by the official recognition of a party of Communists. These are experienced communists trained and tempered in class struggle; they are not starry-eyed novices any more than the masses are bleating sheep. These Parties, if they are successful are implementing the mass line, or the processes which came before its theorization. Every bit of recognition is hard earned. There are of course those rightists within the party who will seek to mutate this feature for their own dubious ends. The correct criticism of the use of personality comes into play when this is used to void the actual guiding thought and replace it with a hollowed icon. Reactionaries and revisionists like Lin Biao have mastered this art of keep the image of Mao while eliminating the thought of Mao. Guiding Thought then finds its third characteristic—insurance against what critics call incorrectly the "cult of personality." Rightists might vary in form, but they share the same essence—while Lin Biao was different from Deng Xiaoping, both mutated the image of Mao into that of a founding father devoid of his actual thought. New revisionists who nominally call themselves Maoists maintain the same views on Guiding Thought, that it is to be eliminated, and they will echo Khrushchev while opposing the actions of Lin and Deng. They will insist that individual leadership is not earned and must be opposed. This insistence becomes an attack on the recognition of the center of party unity and the application of the general to the particular. Their attack comes masked as genuine concern; revisionism has adapted its appeal to continue its wrecking path in service of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. In essence this is a decapitation of the party concept, a great swindling of the masses, a false diagnosis of illness to avoid class struggle and decentralize Maoism.

Guiding Thought guarantees victory

The world's history as insisted by Marxists is only understood through class struggle, this is its revolutionary content—hence it is rich in revolutionary experience, in both positive and negative lessons. Not all attempts to make revolution produce a guiding thought; some revolutions are but temporary rebellions when opportunist elements succumb to progressive aspects among the people and, by tailing these, come into contradiction with imperialism etc. We understand that even if class power does not change hands—and hence no complete revolution is accomplished—that there is still a revolutionary quality to be examined. We understand such situation as wars of resistance against imperialism or incomplete national liberation struggles which do not result in New Democracy or socialism. So Guiding Thought does not emerge just by resistance to imperialism; it emerges only through the successful application of Marxism to the specific conditions of a country, hence there is not and cannot be a Fidel Castro Thought or a Thomas Sankara Thought etc. It would be equally pointless to go through every various resistance struggle and determine whether or not there was a guiding thought developed. What is important for our purposes is to understand that not all Guiding Thought develops the overall science into a new and higher stage; this development is determined on the overall enrichment and elevation of the three component parts of Marxism—philosophy, scientific socialism, and political economy.

Understanding the above, it becomes easy to comprehend that while a Guiding Thought might not elevate all three component parts into a new stage, it still can present us with certain universal contributions. Defense of these contributions provokes a defensive response from the rigid and dogmatic; they will always try to create terms for it, for instance claiming that Maoists who uphold the universal contributions of Gonzalo Thought are no longer Maoists etc. The same was done by the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists against defenders of Mao Zedong Thought and is a tale as old as Lenin. Followers of Lenin were first decried as false Marxists by those who followed Bernstein or Plekhanov, for instance.

Opposition to Guiding Thought tends then to move from revolutionary optimism to bourgeois cynicism. It is eternally doubtful to such types that rich lessons can be ripped even from the jaws of failure. How easily they break then from historical materialism, how easy they gloss over the Cultural Revolution, which produced a specific development of a specific guiding thought (that of Mao) which developed in Peru into Maoism proper—yet, for all of this, the GPCR failed in its stated aim to prevent capitalist restoration. We insist on the correctness of Mao's line, that revolution never proceeds in a straight line, and that there are many bends in the road to Communism.

The ideas produced by the GPCR were concentrated in the thought of Mao, under the leadership of Chiang Chunqiao and the Shanghai Group a series of textbooks were produced during the latter half of the GPCR to train students in the only scientific approach to revolution, one of these books is titled *A Basic Understanding of the Communist Party of China*, a manual in service of cadre development. Chapter two, dedicated to the Party's Guiding Thought, asserts:

> "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought tells us that the disappearance of capitalism and the victory of communism are certain. Eventually socialism will be substituted for capitalism — this is an objective law independent of man's will."

Echoing a position held first by Marx and Engels and included in the Communist Manifesto, the revolutionary leaders of the GPCR are highlighting the fact that along this inevitable ascension of socialism against capitalism, the only guarantee is in the correct application of Marxism and particularly this means the necessity of grasping a guiding thought. In all of this, setbacks and falls are expected and guiding thought is what guides us back time and time again to the inevitable path of revolution. The class struggle produces leaders which will provide a guiding thought—this too is an objective law independent of man's will. In spite of the lip-service to Mao's four persecuted comrades including Chiang Chunqiao by the Avakianites throughout the 80s and 90s, they in essence have opportunistically culled Mao's thought. This arrested the development of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement after the arrest of Chairman Gonzalo and to this day the views of Co-RIM affect the Parties and organizations who uncritically seek to revive RIM. Of course Avakian's hollowed and unearned centering of his own image in the ICM offers these types an avenue of attack against Maoism which makes them appear to the understudied to be valid.

Suffice it to say that there is no such thing as an "Avakian Thought" because, in spite of its sheer destructive capability, the teachings of Avakian have not in any way harmed the bourgeoisie. On the contrary they have only harmed the International Communist Movement. Avakian has never managed to apply the universal MLM to the specific conditions of the US; he has not earned any recognition as a great leader (beyond the views of his sycophantic followers), and he assists the cynics by promoting himself as such—offering them an easy out to "what went wrong with the RIM." Their positions are superficial and better dealt with elsewhere. What matters to us for this purpose is demarcating actual Guiding Thought from the mere posturing of charlatans and swindlers.

Real Guiding Thought which meets all of the criteria and has all the characteristics we outlined is an all-powerful weapon. It is all-powerful because it is true, because it makes

revolution and leads the way to the inevitability of socialism. Real Guiding Thought is the creative application of the world's most advanced revolutionary science and it produces universal aspects—which hold true for every country in the world—such is the quality of Gonzalo Thought. These new and universal contributions are part of the natural life development of revolutionary science, they cannot be dispensed with by those who make revolution—in this way Guiding Thought is a guarantor of victory, provided of course we adhere to the Marxist conception of victory and reject the bourgeois short sighted view. By understanding this process revolutionaries can free up revolutionary potential and hone it into revolutionary action, ultimately People's War, without it they will suffer the hell of endless defeat and have already defeated themselves.

Gonzalo Thought is a weapon in our eager hands!

As explained succinctly by the Communist Party of Brazil (Red Fraction), to begin to comprehend Maoism is to first grasp Gonzalo Thought. This might seem confusing to some readers based on what we have examined so far, so more unpacking is needed. Maoism transformed from the raw material Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought grasped all over the world into Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the Peruvian People's War; this would not have been possible without the Guiding Thought of Gonzalo—that is, the characteristic of the successful application of the universal to the particular. This synthesis of Maoism as the third and thus far highest stage was both made possible by Gonzalo Thought as well as spurred forward the further development of Gonzalo Thought, not leaving it as it found it but transforming it. The same method holds true in production: production itself discovers tools which transform production and even bring the relationships to production into revolutionary contradiction.

Mao Zedong Thought, once believed to be the specific application of Marxism-Leninism to the particular conditions of China, quickly showed the world revolution that it had many universal contributions. Originally Mao Zedong Thought was used as a demarcation between revolutionaries who took up this title and revisionists who claimed to be "ML." This demarcation led revolutionaries to begin consciously applying Mao Thought to their particular conditions. Heroic leaders such as Ibrahim Kaypakkaya in Turkey and Charu Mazumdar in India stand out strong among these. In this tradition although head and shoulders above all others is Chairman Gonzalo, who synthesized all of these universal contributions into a complete system—a completed fully theorized MLM which proved itself as a third and higher stage and not merely an application particular to China or even the third world.

Today Gonzalo Thought is already taking on the former role of Mao Zedong Thought, it is both a demarcation and an application outside of Peru. Once theorized as the specific application of MLM to Peruvian conditions, it has already transcended these parameters, the revolutionary movements of Latin America, Europe, and the US have discovered that certain contributions of Gonzalo Thought are indeed universal. This has not been synthesized into a fourth stage yet, but the possibility remains intact. Such a synthesis is well beyond the means of our journal so we will not concern ourselves with this and instead leave this task in the capable hands of the revolutionaries in the storm centers.

This brings us to the important question of how MLM remains a living science, how its application in Peru spurred forth yet more universal qualities belonging to what is called Gonzalo Thought. We do not concern ourselves with ticking off a list of the universal contributions of Gonzalo Thought, our purpose is something different—that is to argue that Gonzalo Thought is the guarantor of victory. There are certainly points we will miss as the thought of Gonzalo is vast and deep, but we will try and be succinct in our examination.

First among these is the application of People's War in Peru as Unified People's War, which takes the emergence of mega-cities into consideration developing an urban component and understanding the peasantry as the principal force and the urban guerrilla as the secondary force. In this way the movement from countryside to city (this is a development for a majority of third world countries) is taken into consideration and used to serve the general strategy of People's War.

This highlights the theory's universality to the third world. Let us examine its lessons for the imperialist countries. By grasping how the third world contends with the migration patterns of peasants into shanty towns surrounding mega cities (Lima is considerably larger than New York City or Los Angeles) many of the most valuable lessons on urban people's war have been provided and new discoveries were made—particularly in the battles against infrastructure, the orientation militarily toward revisionists and the legalists. In a Protracted People's War, it is not a question of the possibility of defeating the enemy militarily to start with, nor is it simply a question of surviving enemy attack (as falsely understood in the theory of war of attrition popular among the Republicans in Ireland) but, as Mao insisted, it is a question of preservation of our forces as well as destruction of enemy forces. This means inflicting blows and taking symbolic actions against the whole infrastructure of oppression, making it difficult for the enemy to carry out social administration and at the same time put down insurgency. This exasperates the enemy, divides him and further discredits him against the masses. Necessary to the People's War in Peru is the attacks on infrastructure.

This also takes into account the ideological and cultural terrain of combat. Everything the enemy has is a weapon against the revolution, whether it be electricity or soup kitchens. For an imperialist country, the urban environment is the principal aspect with a secondary supporting rural component.

Hence Gonzalo Thought becomes important to the heath and function of the application of PW to the imperialist country; it sets to rights the practical errors of the entire past historical urban guerrilla struggles which have failed up to today. Through reconstituted Communist Parties the proletariat of imperialist countries can wage People's War and conquer power, but only if these parties correctly grasp, uphold and apply Gonzalo Thought. We have embryonic, untheorized attempts at what resembles People's Wars to learn from and analyze—is Gonzalo Thought which provides the ability to synthesize all this into practice.

Chairman Gonzalo also enhanced the overall Maoist understanding of fascism and his definitions and clarity on the topic are of universal importance. The same can be said for his positions on bureaucratic capitalism. These two topics are only supporting arguments and cannot be fleshed out here.

Scientific process and development are inescapable. You are subject to laws of science even if you deny the existence of such laws. The law of opposites as expressed by Mao is the only fundamental law of dialectical materialism—if we follow this law that one opposing force must overcome the other one, we can easily understand the position that socialism will certainly replace capitalism. We understand then that what is needed is the application of Marxism.

It would be unthinkable in any field of research to outright ignore existing data or to deliberately misconstrue all of its content and forcefully do the opposite hoping to get the desired result. This is the method of those who reject Gonzalo Thought wholesale. Rich lessons and experience are denied to them, the door to knowledge is closed, and their efforts to apply the general to the particular have already gone awry because they have put cotton in at least one ear. They are free to disagree, but are also held to the scientific criteria of proving their disagreements—the only ones who have attempted this have relied not on examining what Gonzalo Thought actually is, but on what it never claimed to be. To maintain the position that the successful application of the general to the specific does not and cannot provide universal revolutionary contributions is to deny that Marxism itself can develop to higher stages or that it can do so without any chartable process, that new stages are not the possible result of applying the general to the specific, but rather that they fall from the sky. Even average critics have to concede that when revolutions sweep the mountains and assault the skies they discover things and come up with new ideas that are useful to every

revolution in all countries. There is nothing revolutionary which does not offer lessons in the positive and negative, assessment of these is a matter of class stand. To only see the positive or only see the negative is bourgeois subjectivism.

In the history of Maoism proper—Maoism properly understood as the third and so far highest stage of all Marxism—no revolution has soared higher than the People's War in Peru. But the cynics insist that these contributions of Gonzalo Thought are not universal, thus they have to uphold the lies of the fascists, reactionaries, and imperialists that the People's War in Peru was resoundingly defeated. Even if we were to suffer this point—we won't—this is the logic of fools which immediately exposes itself as anti-Maoist. By their own rules we would have to get rid of all our notions about the universality of the GPCR since it failed to prevent restoration. It took a Maoism, post-Mao, to solve the issues of the GPCR theoretically with Maoism proper and specifically Party militarization, the militarization of the masses, and concentric construction of the three instruments, all of which these cretins attribute to Gonzalo Thought and hence reject. When asked what their solution to the question of the GPCR is, they have no credible answer. If taking and holding power were the only criteria for the development of revolutionary science, we should also go ahead and dispense fully with the Paris Commune, in fact with the whole history of revolutionary struggles. Marxists, like Marx, instead analyze and synthesize and move forward always dividing failures and successes. We cannot hope to accomplish this with cynicism or a failure to pick up the weapons which lay before us.

Self-Criticism and Retraction on the Conclusion of this article

When we have made mistakes we are glad to admit them and attempt to correct them. There is an important redaction to this article; we have chosen to pull the conclusion due to some very useful criticism which has exposed an incorrect idea on our part. Namely where we misspoke saying that leadership is determined "not a mere chance of force of personality" while it is important to state that "mere chance" is superficial by itself, chance is actually quite important and we agree with what Chairman Gonzalo put forward in the Interview:

> "In our Party, revolution, and people's war, the proletariat, by a combination of necessity and historical chance, has brought forth a group of leaders. In Engels' view, it is necessity that generates leaders, and a top leader, but just who that is is determined by chance, by a set of specific conditions that come together at a particular place and time. In this way, in our case too, a Great Leadership has been

> generated. This was first acknowledged in the Party at the Expanded National Conference of 1979. But this question involves another basic question that can't be overlooked and needs to be emphasized: there is no Great Leadership that does not base itself on a body of thought, no matter what its level of development may be. The reason that a certain person has come to speak as the Leader of the Party and the revolution, as the resolutions state, has to do with necessity and historical chance and, obviously, with Gonzalo Thought. None of us knows what the revolution and the Party will call on us to do, and when a specific task arises the only thing to do is assume the responsibility."

Chairman Gonzalo is speaking of "necessity" and "chance" as philosophical categories, drawing from Engels. We must understand the two as a unity of opposites, this is a requirement for assessing the matter correctly and arriving at the correct understanding of the combination of phenomena which determine leadership and not a superficial, subjectivist viewpoint that the original version of this article contained. So we should examine chance a bit further starting with its opposite, necessity.

The past approach was determinist. Philosophically this is a major error, pointed out to by comrades,. Necessity is the guarantee of certain conditions—capitalism's inherent contradictions produce class struggle, necessarily; class struggle necessarily produces communists and communists necessarily produce leaders in the class struggle; who these leaders are exactly is determined by chance, and the leaders themselves become more precious because their existence and the production of leaders cannot be replicated, mainly because of the condition of chance, which is the dialectical opposite of necessity, necessity and chance clearly rely on one another and share a common identity.

By understanding chance and necessity dialectically we develop a deeper appreciation for our great leaders both historically and contemporarily. The past subjectivism was that of the passive observer who allow history to unfold before them. According to Engels:

> "Another opposition in which metaphysics is entangled is that of chance and necessity. What can be more sharply contradictory than these two thought determinations? How is it possible that both are identical, that the accidental is necessary, and the necessary is also accidental? Common sense, and with it the majority of natural scientists, treats necessity and chance as determinations that exclude each other once for all. A thing, a circumstance, a process is either accidental or necessary, but not both. Hence both exist side by side in nature; nature contains all sorts of objects and processes, of which some are accidental,

the others necessary, and it is only a matter of not confusing the two sorts with each other."

Our past conclusion indeed contained elements of metaphysics, especially when it comes to this specific question, on which we came to the wrong conclusion. In any case we would rather be daring with our assertions that reserved as long as we are willing to admit when we are wrong, please understand that the views expressed in our journal are the views of individual authors, or the views of our journal, they do not reflect the views of any Party or organization which we support or show solidarity with. All of the theory which we present is for the sake of debate and clarity, please feel free to contact us Strugglesessions@protonmail.com

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