

Intercommunalism is Not a Marxist Concept

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STRUGGLESSESSIONS



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“The economic relationships of imperialism constitute the basis of the existing international situation.” –V.I. Lenin

Introduction

On the surface, even a short article about Huey P. Newton’s theory of intercommunalism might seem outdated or even pointless. Newton produced the theory at a time when the Black Panther Party which he led was on the decline, and this theory did not serve its re-organization; in a few short years, Newton would declare that the people were no longer interested in socialism—this position was not just demoralization breaking the surface, but one he had put forward in his theory of intercommunalism.

So why retrieve this idea from the dustbin of history? Because it has already been done by others, and, most concerning, it has been done so with the implication that it is somehow compatible with Maoism or is a proper component of it. This is still a fringe view; however, our duty is to examine it from a Marxist viewpoint in order to clarify its precise shortcomings for those who might be drawn to it.

The ideological background from which many young would-be revolutionaries emerge provides a fertile ground for the type of deviation intercommunalism represents, and it therefore deserves critical attention.

Because of the fact that Newton developed his theory after returning from a trip to China, and seeing how powerfully socialism could transform the relations among the people, intercommunalism often gets inappropriately associated with Mao; our purpose is to prove that the two have nothing in common. Revisionism in the USA robbed the proletariat of its Party and left only a collection of different organizations with their positive and negative aspects, but mainly negative aspects, haphazardly labelled the “New Communist Movement” by bourgeois historians. In this context, an understandable but unscientific nostalgia develops among some sectors.

It is true that imperialism in its decrepitude increasingly unites the people of the world against itself, a phenomenon which may be mistaken for a great world-wide unification into two camps. We witness the pauperization of the people, the growth of the reserve army of labor concomitant with the growth of technology and the increasing rate of exploitation, with the rising organic composition of capital, and the swings between imperialist collusion and contention.

It may be tempting to read these developments and swings as fundamentally new situations requiring the revision of old concepts. After all, the US is now the world’s sole-hegemonic imperialist superpower. It may be tempting to leap from this to the conclusion that US Imperialism is “all there is”, that the world has moved beyond imperialism, beyond nations and into a state of

generalized “Empire” or “reactionary intercommunalism” as the theory of intercommunalism posits. Meanwhile, in the US we have the brutal and bloody oppression of black people by the US ruling class, and the resistance to this oppression which rings clearly across the world. Newton’s theorizing of the revolutionary class as a new class of “Unemployables” gains some traction in these conditions. Indeed, the struggle of black people in the US, at the heart of US Imperialism, is bound inexorably with the struggles of the oppressed nations against imperialism and of the international proletariat. US imperialism will be overthrown with the complete emancipation of black people; on this Chairman Mao is clear:

“The Afro-American struggle is not only a struggle waged by the exploited and oppressed Black people for freedom and emancipation, it is also a new clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class. It is a tremendous aid and inspiration to the struggle of the people throughout the world against U.S. imperialism and to the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism.

“Racial discrimination in the United States is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the Black masses in the United States and the U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the Black people in the United States win complete emancipation. The Black masses and the masses of white working people in the United States have common interests and common objectives to struggle for. Therefore, the Afro-American struggle is winning sympathy and support from increasing numbers of white working people and progressives in the United States. The struggle of the Black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers’ movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.”
[1]

It is tempting to some to “cut corners” and view the state of things

monolithically, relying on the concepts like “Empire” and “Underclass”, etc, sometimes as a gesture of unity between the people of the third world and black people of the USA, of all those oppressed by imperialism. Chairman Mao specifies the situation however with the utmost simplicity and profundity, posing that national struggles are ultimately a matter of class struggle. Maoism solves this problem scientifically and not just rhetorically, posing the only Marxist tactic of going to the deepest and most profound masses and educating them in revolutionary violence and the struggle against opportunism, and in the struggle against revisionism and imperialism which must be waged inseparably and implacably. This follows from strategic concerns, the necessity to distinguish between the “superficial scum which is the crust that serves the bourgeoisie” and “the immense majority of deep and profound masses”. [2]

1. Intercommunalism develops in opposition to socialism in one country and is based on idealism

“When people depict the difficulties of our task, when we are told that the victory of socialism is possible only on a world scale, we regard this merely as an attempt, a particularly hopeless attempt, on the part of the bourgeoisie and of its voluntary and involuntary supporters to distort the irrefutable truth.” -Lenin [3]

Intercommunalism forms part of Newton’s later theories, formed in the political, organic, and ideological decomposition of the Black Panther Party. We must assume Newton was attempting to solve the real problems facing the practical life of the organization, and that his views are based mainly in practical experience. Newton began explaining intercommunalism at a variety of university talks between 1970–74, before his Cuban exile, meanwhile his return from exile would mark a further downward trajectory in his life as a revolutionary. There is a big political difference in the work of the early Newton

and the post-prison Newton. This is especially relevant to intercommunalism, the question of the role of service programs and armed revolution.

Historically, the emergence of intercommunalism parallels the emergence of charity as the main method of work, placed in combination with bourgeois politicking. It is hard not to raise an eyebrow at Newton's ideas at this time, including his meetings with Jim Jones of the "People's Temple" and his endorsement of him via a phone lecture to the church and the cult's adoption of Newton's terminology "revolutionary suicide," which they implemented in a totally reactionary manner.

Newton the person is often evaluated from a subjective standpoint; the overall positive allows critics to ignore the negative, or outright racism and fear cause other critics on the right to dismiss and misunderstand him entirely. What is not discussed on the left are his theories, rightist and liquidationist in essence, and how he and David Hilliard liquidated BPP militancy behind empty charity and electioneering, and what role revisionism and reaction played in influencing his views. It is much easier to condemn his opposition expressed in the personage of Eldridge Cleaver—whose mistaken analysis is quite obvious—than it is to examine how and why Newton shifted so drastically, and to examine the lengths to which he went in theorizing his deviations, shrouding them in legitimacy.

Newton began discussing the matter of intercommunalism by way of citing "new" conditions to justify "new" adjustments. He begins by underestimating the contradictions inherent in imperialism, and makes the same mistake as those who view imperialism as blocs instead of through how they collude and contend for hegemony over the world and especially the nations oppressed by imperialism—he calls his version of imperialist bloc theory "reactionary intercommunalism."

Newton's interest in Mao did not result in him accepting the ideology and so by no stretch of the imagination was Newton a Maoist or adherent to Mao Zedong Thought as it was known at the time. This is evidenced by the diverging views

of the two at the time; Chairman Mao expressed that the world was delineated into three, with two imperialist superpowers colluding and contending for world hegemony—that is, US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism composing the first world—while, for his part, Newton does not examine the question of Soviet social imperialism and tends to view US imperialism as the only real imperialism, a problematic view which we will go into later. Chairman Mao on the other hand could not be clearer:

“In our opinion, Russia may be called a social-imperialist country, and this system engenders war. Not that you or we or the third world want a world war. Nor do the people in the rich countries want a world war. This sort of thing happens irrespectively of man’s will,” and, explaining that collusion and contention are real, with the principal aspect being contention, Chairman Mao states, “They may reach some agreement, but I wouldn’t take it as something solid. It’s transitory, and deceptive too. In essence, rivalry is primary.” [4]

Thus, Newton sets off on the wrong thinking by the way of ignoring the collusion and principally the contention between the imperialist superpowers (US and Soviet). While notably stating that “ideology is the most important,” Newton also expresses that the Panthers’ decision to base themselves on materialism was “arbitrary” because, according to Newton, “Idealism might be the real happening; we might not be here at all.” So Newton is an agnostic at best. What is important to discern from these kind of views is the form of neo-Kantism which Newton imported into his nominally “Marxist” framework. In combination with the above failure to understand the contention between imperialist superpowers and themselves, between imperialist superpowers and imperialist powers, and between the imperialist powers themselves, this neo-Kantism indicated major missteps in understanding both Marxist philosophy and political economy, missteps which further taint the entire analysis of intercommunalism.

Newton supports the idea that formal nation-states have ended and proclaims the US to no longer be a nation but an empire, and defines this specifically:

“When we say ‘empire’ today, we mean precisely what we say. An empire is a nation–state that has transformed itself into a power controlling *all* of the world’s lands and people.” [original emphasis] [5]

This is a view at odds with Mao and Lenin, a view which finds itself more comfortable with some of Kautsky’s positions—only drawing separate conclusions. To come to this position one has to neglect the importance of the principal aspect of inter–imperialist contention; more on this later.

We must draw from Newton’s conclusion that socialism is not possible in one country and he arrives here, at a great reversal due to his mishandling of contradiction. He states as much clearly in his speech at Boston College:

“We think that it is very important to know that as things are in the world today socialism in the United States will never exist. Why? It will not exist because it cannot exist. It cannot at this time exist anyplace in the world. Socialism would require a socialist state, and if a state does not exist how could socialism exist?” [6]

We note that the People’s Republic of China, in the middle of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution under Chairman Mao’s great leadership, was in fact socialist!

Above, Newton’s agnostic neo–Kantism approaches the surrender. In one swoop Newton has dispensed with Lenin, Mao, etc. and revived Trotsky and Leftwing–communism which insisted that socialism could not exist outside of a world system; these latter positions however did not advance so far as to deny the existence of states. This feature belongs to Newton, and he arrives at this conclusion not by way of changing material conditions, but by way of ignoring conditions. Newton trafficked in the popularity of the Chinese example, while denouncing its living socialism with a centrist position.

We must state that even with the collapse of the Soviet social–imperialists and their step back into Russian imperialism, that the US is not the world’s only

imperialist, and that such is impossible. The US however is the world's sole-hegemonic imperialist superpower, "sole-hegemonic" must not be taken imply that it is the only imperialism or at the head of a unified imperialism.

2. Do nations no longer exist? Was Kautsky right on imperialist merger into one power?

Newton claimed that states, nations and countries no longer exist, hence foreclosing socialist revolution and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in one country—and with this he actually rejects the party form. He states:

“In order to plan a real intercommunal economy we will have to acknowledge how the world is hooked up. We will also have to acknowledge that nations have not existed for a long time.” [7]

The above implies a singular cohesive imperialism, which Kautsky understood as “ultra-imperialism” and which Lenin rejected; it can be no other way, if there is more than one imperialist, there must be states and nations. If there is more than one class (there cannot be only one class), there is class struggle, and as long as class struggle exists states will exist and nations will exist. Newton casts an old metaphysical view through his agnosticism in a “new” light and cites “new” conditions for imperialism's merger by ignoring social-imperialism.

Let us examine Lenin with this question in mind: what new conditions would alter his conclusions, or are they valid today? If we seek to understand any diversion at all we must start from the rational path from which we have diverged. Lenin explains imperialism in this way:

“The typical ruler of the world became finance capital, a power that is peculiarly mobile and flexible, peculiarly intertwined at home and

internationally, peculiarly devoid of individuality and divorced from the immediate processes of production, peculiarly easy to concentrate, a power that has already made peculiarly large strides on the road of concentration, so that literally several hundred billionaires and millionaires hold in their hands the fate of the whole world.” [7]

From the above are we to draw the conclusion that there has developed a singular imperialist power which is uncontested by others? Not according to Lenin:

“Can one, however, deny that in the abstract a new phase of capitalism to follow imperialism, namely, a phase of ultra-imperialism, is ‘thinkable’? No. In the abstract one can think of such a phase. In practice, however, he who denies the sharp tasks of today in the name of dreams about soft tasks of the future becomes an opportunist. Theoretically it means to fail to base oneself on the developments now going on in real life, to detach oneself from them in the name of dreams. There is no doubt that the development is going *in the direction* of a single world trust that will swallow up all enterprises and all states without exception. But *the development in this direction is proceeding under such stress, with such a tempo, with such contradictions, conflicts, and convulsions—not only economical, but also political, national, etc., etc.—that before a single world trust will be reached, before the respective national finance capitals will have formed a world union of ‘ultra-imperialism,’ imperialism will inevitably explode, capitalism will turn into its opposite.*” [Our emphasis] [8]

Newton of course was not a Kautskyist, and intercommunalism is not based on the idea of imperialist peace as is Kautsky’s ultra-imperialism, but rather on the idea of imperialism having developed into a singular force of “reactionary intercommunalism.” Nonetheless, such a viewpoint diverges from Mao most specifically at the point where Mao insists correctly that while the imperialists collude, they mainly contend. This is evident in the world today all over. It is important not to forget why Lenin is insisting that that imperialism will “inevitably explode” before it can accomplish forming a world union; this is due to the law of contradiction, the moribund and decaying nature of

imperialism itself, and the contradictions it forces upon the world's masses. Primarily it is due to the proletariat, and Newton finds clever but blunt ways to eradicate the leading role of the proletariat.

What do we witness in Syria where rival imperialist super-powers the US (the big dog) and Russia (the skinny dog) fight a proxy inter-imperialist war trafficking in the misery of the people in this region? And what of the color-revolutions which pit worker against worker in the interests of one imperialist master or another? This is evident in places like Belarus, dominated by Russian imperialism; when the people rebel, it is US imperialism which seek to subvert and dominate these progressive struggles.

We must consider the correct principle; each revolution or movement must specify its principal enemy and avert the domination of the other superpower or of the other powers. This is important when understanding that each revolution and movement forms part of the world proletarian revolution, and that this does not divert into imagined "communities" up against an imagined singular imperialism. Lenin expresses something vitally important and based on Marxist philosophy and the law of contradiction:

"...alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably nothing* more than a 'truce' in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics." [9]

Even if we were to concede ground to the theory of "reactionary intercommunalism," it must be understood as nothing more than re-branding the temporary alliance of the imperialists in preparation for their inevitable disunity and war, and a re-branding which mistakenly views this as a more or less permanent feature due to development. As Lenin insists above, Mao expressed philosophically, "disunity is unconditional."

These things are true and said by Lenin and Mao because they are true, and not true just because it was Lenin and Mao who said them. There exists economic laws which force the imperialists to collude and contend, regardless of any contrived or desired policy. The imperialist class in competition for profits and hegemony comes into contradiction with itself; it cannot solve its problems through co-operation alone, so co-operation is but one tactic in competition. The proletariat, on the other hand, has everything to gain from the slogan, “Proletarians of all countries, unite!” Were the imperialists to issue their own version—“imperialists of all countries, unite”—this would come at the expense of their struggles for maximum profit and hegemony, It would be nothing but imperialist world power-sharing, when, in reality, war and more war is the tendency of imperialism.

The assumption that imperialism is not the last stage of capitalism and that, instead, reactionary intercommunalism is the last stage would mean that every war is a just war between communities of the people on one side and communities of imperialism on the other side. The latter view is appealing to the revisionists who champion any imperialism other than US imperialism.

The PCP puts it succinctly when describing the first world imperialist superpowers: “In synthesis, they are two superpowers which do not constitute a block but which have contradictions, clear mutual differences, and they move within the law of collusion and contention for the re-division of the world.” [10] Has this feature fundamentally changed today in the absence of the Soviet Union or does it hold true in regards to Russian imperialism? It still holds true; the major contradictions in the world are the same ones today as they were then. Following the notion of “reactionary intercommunalism” leads to assuming the world cannot be redivided through war, that dominance can only be maintained through it, and nor can it be liberated without one simultaneous war to establish global socialism. We find this view dangerous and liquidationist.

Newton states clearly what intercommunalism means and its idealist which does not correspond to the world as it exists:

“We say that the world today is a dispersed collection of communities. A community is different from a nation. A community is a small unit with a comprehensive collection of institutions that serve to exist a small group of people. And we say further that the struggle in the world today is between the small circle that administers and profits from the empire of the United States, and the peoples of the world who want to determine their own destinies.” [11]

Here you have it: a dispersal of communities with only one “empire” and thus, imperialism, democratic revolution, socialist revolution, cultural revolution, internationalism etc. (in short everything Maoism believes) is tossed out. It is not as if Newton was engaging in a separate set of conditions from Chairman Mao when he gave the speeches regarding intercommunalism; he did so during the life of Chairman Mao, and during the GPCR. Newton reverses Mao’s position on the contradictions in the world today, the main one being between imperialist countries and nations oppressed by imperialism. Revolutionary conclusions cannot be accomplished by throwing aside the fundamental contradiction in the world today. While the Marxist slogan is “proletarians of all countries, unite!” the Newton slogan would be “oppressed communities, unite” and in this way it is debasing the actual force of history in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

Those who call themselves Maoists and still find time to promote intercommunalism, or some variant of it, inevitably jettison the teachings of Chairman Mao for the teachings of Newton, ignoring the contradictions and distinctions between them. This has a negative worldwide implication.

3. Service programs on a world scale and lack of military strategy

Newton provides no military strategy derived from intercommunalist principles. He devotes time to the question of automation and re-distribution but little to armed struggle, and as an example he only tacitly provided the tactics and strategies used in national liberation struggles, which he

simultaneously denies were national liberation struggles on the basis of his denial of the existence of nations. He states:

“They have liberated their territories and have established provisional governments. We recognize them, and say that these governments represent the people of China, North Korea, and the people in the liberated zones of South Vietnam, and the people of North Vietnam.” [12]

Contrast this view with the revolutionary nationalism of the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese leaders. “The Chinese people have stood up” is how Mao viewed the victory of new democratic revolution and of course includes armed struggle in the forefront:

“We have closed our ranks and defeated both domestic and foreign oppressors through the People’s War of Liberation and the great people’s revolution, and now we are proclaiming the founding of the People’s Republic of China. From now on our nation will belong to the community of the peace-loving and freedom-loving nations of the world and work courageously and industriously to foster its own civilization and well-being and at the same time to promote world peace and freedom. Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up. Our revolution has won the sympathy and acclaim of the people of all countries. We have friends all over the world.” [13]

How did Ho Chi Minh see the matter? “At first, patriotism, not yet communism, led me to have confidence in Lenin, in the Third International. Step by step, along the struggle, by studying Marxism-Leninism parallel with participation in practical activities, I gradually came upon the fact that only socialism and communism can liberate the oppressed nations and the working people throughout the world from slavery.” [14] Keeping in mind the shortcomings of Ho Chi Minh’s views generally, we must observe the fact that this process was still raging when Newton spoke of “taking these examples” which meant not taking these examples at all and instead recasting them in an opposite manner.

Newton undervalues the actual example provided by these struggles, and only considered the proletarian dictatorship in China a “provisional government” and of course in his view it had not accomplished national liberation and new democratic revolution, but only “liberated its territory”. This diminished view is unacceptable to Marxists and most especially to those fighting to liberate their nations from imperialism.

We are left grappling with the question: if, according to Newton, socialism is not possible in the current conditions, then what does he envision in its place? the mere redistribution of goods mainly. By eliminating the existence of countries, nations and states, we are left with confusion as to what this will look like. On this point Newton provides a very general view:

“The stage of history is set for such a transformation: the technological and administrative base of socialism exists. When the people seize the means of production and all social institutions, then there will be a qualitative leap and change in the organization of society.” [15]

According to Newton then, the conditions for socialism exist, but only on a world scale via a network of communities forming revolutionary intercommunalism and making simultaneous revolution. Very well. Still, even if our imaginations allow for such, our eyes must not. The above provides no examination of uneven development in the conditions and revolutionary situation objectively or subjectively for socialism. New democratic revolution, on the other hand, does provide the answer to the questions in nations oppression by imperialism, who lack the technology and administrative basis —that is political power, power for the proletariat, power for dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone can transform the semi-feudal, semi-colonial conditions of backward countries through new democratic revolution uninterrupted into socialist revolution.

Correspondingly, who then is the revolutionary class according to Newton’s theory of intercommunalism? Not those who produce everything by selling their surplus labor power, but those who do not, those who stand to gain the

most from an equitable distribution of goods on a world scale, the “unemployables” to use his term. “Unemployables” here are not to be confused with the classic lumpen–proletariat who are the refuse of classes or the de–classed; the former are more precisely a group in motion between proletarian and lumpen–proletarian. According to Newton, this category means Black people and third world people, “They do not have the skills needed to work in a highly developed technological society.” This view is flimsy from a political economic standpoint for several reasons.

First, lacking a skill set does not make one unemployable due to industrial development or automation—quite the contrary, and technology does not change this fact. Development in industry does not do away with the proletariat; it expands the proletariat, making the bourgeois increasingly richer and the proletariat increasingly poorer, Engels says, “...this process has, to an ever greater degree, ruined the old middle class, especially the small handicraftsmen; it has entirely transformed the condition of the workers; and two new classes have been created which are gradually swallowing up all the others.” [16] What Newton theorized is not taking place, but what Marx and Engels theorized is taking place; the comfortable sections of proletarians in imperialist countries are declining and the massive section of poor proletarians is increasing.

Capitalist production accounts for a lack of skills needed by providing the minimum training. If we exclude all these proletarians into the category of non–producing “unemployables”, we lose the very basis of what makes socialism inevitable and the proletariat revolutionary. Newton parachutes out of Marxism; he has not developed it. In fact, Newton does away with communism. We must again turn to Engels when understanding what this word means: “Communism is the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.” This can never be dispensed with in favor of slogans such as “In the name of humanity”, “All power to the people” or any other such nonsense; the proletariat must be the central focus for anything to be considered communist at all.

In Newton's view, "The proletarian will become the lumpen proletarian. It is this future change—the increase of the lumpen proletariat and the decrease of the proletariat—which makes us say that the lumpen proletariat is the majority and carries the revolutionary banner." [17] Quite the prediction, and counter-revolutionary at that.

Marx and Engels made a far better prediction, one which is tested scientifically, when they stated, "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" and, "With the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level." And in regard to the lumpen proletariat, "The 'dangerous class' [*lumpenproletariat*], the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; *its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.*" [Our emphasis] [18]

Finally, Marx and Engels state, "The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." [19]

Very well. We have established the position of Marx and Engels in our most foundational text, but the critic might insist that this text is already old, 173 years old. Our response is that this text is not a fad; it does not become outdated, as it is based on fundamental laws of capitalism and not the simple observance and “best guess” of its authors. Unlike Newton, who at every turn treats materialism as an arbitrary choice, Marx and Engels establish materialism as scientific truth. Hence it is the Manifesto which endures the ages—its pages have not faded, its predictions come more and more to fruition and it is Newton’s theory of intercommunalism, interesting but fraught with metaphysics, which has already faded. The fact that this fad is being taken up again today by a few speaks nothing of its merit, and instead speaks only about the need to refute it.

There are no nations, no possible establishment of socialism in one country, no military strategy, and soon there will be no proletariat according to the views of intercommunalism. The world is not lacking these, however; intercommunalism simply lacks Marxism.

The principal contradiction in the imperialist countries—one of the three fundamental contradictions in the world today—is the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This is sidelined in intercommunalism as well. The contradiction here would be between the “unemployables” who are undergoing the process of being declassed and more and more producers of nothing, meaning not a source of profit, and the bourgeoisie who go on deriving their profits from exploiting the proletariat; but in this science-fiction, they instead exploit machines that have replaced the proletariat. This demands a shift in tactics for those who follow intercommunalism: the labor struggles, the strike and the Communist Party are hereby tools they have relinquished. And what did they pick up? Survival programs, charity programs meant to sustain the non-producers until revolution. And hence, revolution is not emerging from the class struggle between the bourgeois and the proletariat, but is spontaneously emerging from the lumpen proletariat when it—for some reason or another—decides to seize everything and redistribute equitably.

For some who seek to blend intercommunalism with Maoism, they still maintain the need for the strike, labor organizing, and even in a restricted (i.e., opportunist) sense, the Communist Party. These want to keep both intercommunalism and Maoism in stock “just in case”, and do a gutting of both to fit them into a twisted and non-cohesive framework. Their tactical orientations traffic with Maoism, but their strategic orientation is the doomed and dooming intercommunalism.

Whether or not armed struggle fits into this agenda of the theory of intercommunalism, it reduces itself to the reformist survival-pending-revolution line which has already proved itself, and proves itself more and more, to be a miserable failure, only this time superimposed on a world scale. In form, it claims to offer improvement on the concept of internationalism, but essentially it erases internationalism, along with new democratic revolution, socialist revolution, and cultural revolutions in each country forming a part of the world proletarian revolution.

4. Marxist internationalism already answers the question and better

Chairman Mao teaches that, “The victory of China and the defeat of the invading imperialists will help the people of other countries. Thus in wars of national liberation patriotism is applied internationalism.” [20]

Thus he expresses the important point that each national liberation struggle and each socialist revolution are conquests against imperialism and are part of one international struggle waged by one class that is also international.

Following Mao, Chairman Gonzalo says:

“It is increasingly urgent and peremptory to rely upon Communist parties based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism that are forged for and in people’s war through their militarization. Strategically defining the zones of principal and

secondary importance to make the world revolution is key to establishing the role that each region and each party should play in the world revolution.” [21]

This is exactly how it is. According to Newton however, “Since there must be nations for revolutionary nationalism or internationalism to make sense, we decided that we would have to call ourselves something new.” [22] Newton attempts to answer the problem of the world proletarian revolution in the wrong way—getting rid of the proletariat, the struggle for national liberation and the struggle for socialism, as well as the struggle between restoration and counter-restoration, by conflating it all into a singular simultaneous revolution which does not progress through uneven development but simply survives in all moments until the worldwide overthrow of capitalism, which, again, according to him has developed into “reactionary intercommunalism.” Hence, the socialist countries when they existed were mainly understood as provisional—large scale survival programs where these “communities” had community control.

We do not find it coincidental that Newton relied on the political economic analysis of the avid Trotskyist Ernst Mendel when he was defending “revolutionary intercommunalism.” Mendel, like Newton, theorized a withering proletariat due to automation and technology. This has already been demonstrated as contradictory to what Marx held, and of course it is contradictory to the laws of Marxism, however the Trotskyist might attempt to claim otherwise. Like Sam Marcy, and in fact like Newton, Mendel denied social-imperialism and was considered “too soft” on the matter of Stalin, resulting in a more appealing form of revisionism that proved palatable to some would-be Marxist-Leninists; these views when held today also conform to the idea of one world-imperialism or of the imperialist bloc.

Newton draws from Mendel when he imagines the worldwide intercommunal redistribution of goods, and he quotes Mendel to support it: “Free distribution of bread, milk and all other basic foodstuffs will bring about a psychological revolution without precedent in the history of mankind. Every human being will henceforth be ensured his subsistence and that of his children, merely by

virtue of being a member of human society.” [23] For the Marxist, the most profound psychological revolution happens in class struggle and most especially in armed struggle—not through being welfare recipients. The fact that these views were being forwarded at the time of the GPCR only highlights their bankruptcy, because it was in China where more people than ever had mobilized to grasp revolution and continue the socialist revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the most transcendental development making Maoism rise Marxism to a superior stage. The Mendel, Marcy, Newton viewpoint assumes the masses learn from having their basic needs met, thus undervaluing their role in active class struggle. It is in class struggle in which they are fundamentally transformed.

5. The uneven development in the revolutionary world situation and the Maoist view

There exists in the world today an unprecedented revolutionary situation in uneven development. Why unprecedented? Because never before has imperialism been so decrepit, so ripe for overthrow, stumbling from crisis to deeper crisis. There has been no stability since World War II, and since 1980 the world has entered even sharper crisis. We understand this as the period of the 50–100 years outlined by Chairman Mao in which imperialism and reaction will be swept from the face of the earth.

Why uneven development? This has to do with taking revolution on a world scale, understanding the overwhelming concentration of the world’s masses, the masses who make history, and, following Lenin, how the economic relationships of imperialism constitute the basis of the existing international situation.

Chairman Mao has determined that the nations oppressed by imperialism form the storm centers of the world proletarian revolution, and he was basing himself on Lenin who stated that:

“In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And it is precisely this majority that, during the past few years, has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.”

Or as the journal *El Maoista* states:

“A new period is opening, since revolution has become the main historical and political tendency in the world; world proletarian revolution, which in the 80s of the previous century entered its stage of strategic offensive and sweeping imperialism off the face of the earth. When imperialism expresses more and more its greatest decomposition, in the midst of which its general and ultimate crisis is worsening, it is currently suffering from the greatest overproduction economic crisis of its whole existence and the aggravation of all its contradictions, in the midst of greater imperialist collusion and struggle; which shows that imperialism is sinking in the midst of wars of all kinds; The anti-crisis measures which, in the midst of the intensified collusion and struggle between the reactionary factions in each country, are unloaded on the masses, the objective conditions for the revolution are maturing more and more; the uneven development of the revolutionary situation in the world, with the development of the subjective forces of the revolution, will be more and more increasing. The new great wave of the world proletarian revolution is developing and the explosiveness of the masses is manifesting everywhere and filling the world reaction with fear. Representatives of imperialism, reaction and revisionism are calling for plans to lower the explosiveness of the masses and to avert the liaison with the leadership of the Communist Party to organise themselves in revolution, in People’s War, as a scientific organisation of poverty.” [24]

This is a viewpoint which fills the revolutionary with unbridled optimism, and is evidenced in every corner of the word.

Communists base this view on the fundamental set of contradictions existing in the world today, expressed most clearly by the Communist Party of Peru and Chairman Gonzalo:

“Our Party sustains the view that in the current world there are three fundamental contradictions: 1) The contradiction of the oppressed nations, on one side, against the superpowers and imperialist powers, on the other. Here the thesis that three worlds are delineated is contained, and we formulate it this way because the kernel of that contradiction lies with the superpowers but it is also a contradiction with the imperialist powers. **This is the principal contradiction** and its solution is the development and triumph of new democratic revolutions. 2) The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which has as its solution the socialist revolution and in perspective, the proletarian cultural revolution. 3) The inter-imperialist contradictions: Between the superpowers themselves, between the superpowers and the smaller imperialist powers and, finally, among the imperialist powers themselves, which tends towards war for global hegemony and imperialist wars of plunder which the proletariat must oppose with people’s war and in perspective, world people’s war. We do not list the contradiction socialism-capitalism because today it exists only at an ideological and political level, since socialism does not exist anywhere as a state; today there is no socialist system. It existed, and to say that it exists today it is to claim in essence that the USSR is socialist, which is revisionism.”

[Original emphasis] [25]

This set of contradictions must necessarily form the departure point for theorizing the problems each revolution faces; without understanding the contradictions we are left with only the vaguest indirection. The V. Meeting of Latin American Maoist Parties and Organizations put the matter clearly in their resolutions:

“Only the fiercest revisionist and opportunists can try to negate the great ripening of the objective conditions in all the countries, especially in the

oppressed countries, that are the basis of the world revolution and the spoils of the undergoing redistribution.” [26]

It is indeed a great time to be a revolutionary in service of the world proletarian revolution, therefore we overflow with enthusiasm in regard to even the most modest post.

What is the fundamental lesson derived from the world situation? The role of ideology, expressed by Chairman Gonzalo in this manner:

“The question poses itself: what is the key point? It is Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, because it is a question of having a correct ideological and political line, and you can’t have a correct political line unless you have the correct ideology. For that reason, we think that the key to everything is ideology: Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, principally Maoism. Secondly, the development of Communist Parties. Why? Because the masses thirst for revolution, the masses are ready and crying out for revolution. So the problem does not lie with them. The proletariat cries out for revolution, the oppressed nations, the peoples of the world cry out for revolution. So we need to develop Communist Parties. The rest, I repeat, will be done by the masses, they are the makers of history and they will sweep imperialism and world reaction away with people’s war.” [27]

The importance of ideology means nothing without upholding, defending, and applying Maoism. That is the ideology of the proletariat, first developed as Marxism, then into Marxism–Leninism and finally into its third and superior stage Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, in which it is Maoism that is principal. Some will always use the development or appearance of something new, or of something that seems new in an effort to reinvent the wheel; in this process they rid themselves of important criteria and run full speed away from doctrine, but doctrine is important.

In response to even a small renewed interest in intercommunalism, we raise Lenin’s point:

“The chief thing in the doctrine of Marx is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society. Has the course of events all over the world confirmed this doctrine since it was expounded by Marx?” [28] It has and it will continue to do so.

It is the Manifesto of the Communist Party which establishes our path; on this path massive developments have taken place, each corresponding to the class struggle and the world situation. The proletariat remains the vanguard of the world revolution, its party remains the Communist party. Proletarian internationalism and people’s war is how imperialism is fought, not with “revolutionary intercommunalism.” The latter is tempting to the appetite of contemporary imperialist society as it constructs for itself a fantasy of diffused communities who seek to fuse into new people but it cannot ever satisfy the hunger of revolution, it cannot meet imperialist world war with people’s war.

Following the PCP, we do not focus on potential world war: “If imperialist world war presents itself, first, we are opposed to it; second, we do not fear it as we center on revolution; third, to focus on revolution means to wage people’s war led by the proletariat through its Communist parties; and fourth, this people’s war must be specified in each type of country according to the type of revolution. Therefore, the world people’s war is the order of the day.” [29]

World people’s war is the order of the day, comrades, not intercommunalism. Hence revolutionaries must resolve themselves to stand for the constitution or reconstitution of the Communist parties in the countries which lack them—this is their main task. Revolutionaries must resolutely base themselves in Marxism–Leninism–Maoism and reconstitute the Communist International on this basis.

The above means challenging all incorrect ideas, including the would-be blending of MLM and intercommunalism, for the sake of Maoist clarity. We believe the PCP to be correct when they explain the difficult but necessary path to establishing Maoism as the sole commander and guide of the world proletarian revolution, and insist that this has made great strides in the

International Communist Movement today and is ever advancing in this direction:

“The struggle to impose Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, principally Maoism, as the command and guide of world revolution will be long, complex and difficult, but in the end, the Marxist–Leninist–Maoists of the world shall succeed. Marxism has not taken a step forward in its life without struggle.” [30]

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