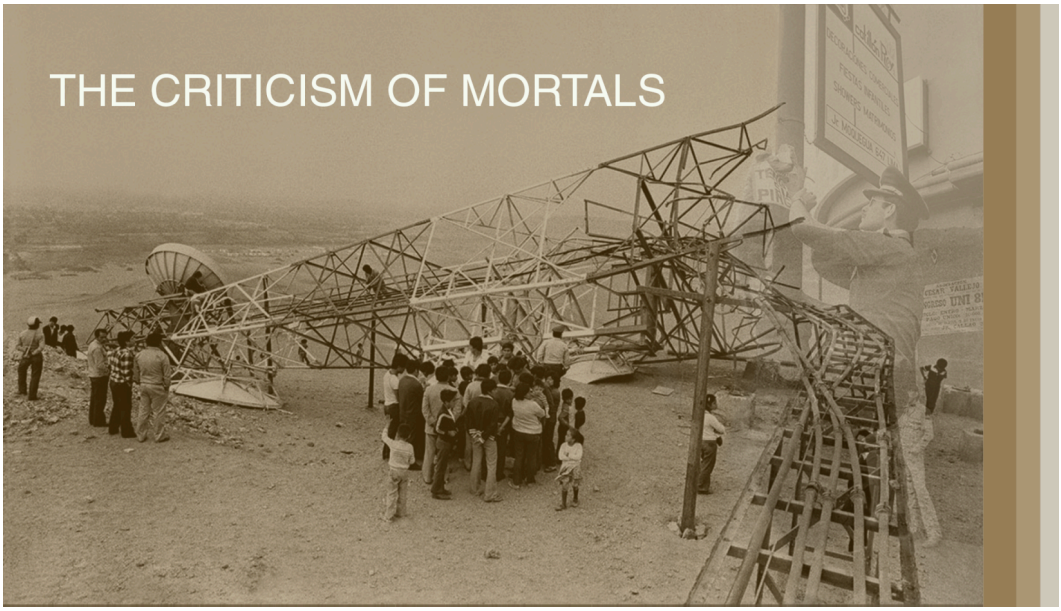
The Criticism of Mortals[1]

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In only a matter of a few days, author JMP has responded to the article titled "In Defense of the Mass Line against Rightist Attacks," which critiques one of the conceptions he put forward regarding the mass line and the Maoist Party. He failed however to include links to the article, or even mention the article by name. We can forgive his indirectness but ask no forgiveness for the fact that we at Struggle Sessions are direct. By failing to link the article, to quote it, or even cite it, he has intentionally or not maneuvered around the critique in such a way as to move the goalpost. His argument is that we think he is espousing "Luxemburgism"—we do not. For starters, in spite of her many faults, Rosa Luxemburg was a genuine revolutionary, a martyr, and an eagle of her Party; we do not consider JMP to be of this caliber any more than we consider his conception of the Party to be in line with the insignificant tendency she created, albeit unintentionally.

The argument, which he fails to mention, centers on the mass line being viewed by him as little more than a process of accountability in which the Party becomes the "mass party." While his conception of the "mass party" is not the incorrect theory put forward by Luxemburg, it is still incorrect in its own right. He totally ignores the argument for the mass line as the method Communist leadership, principally.

[1] https://struggle-sessions.com/2018/06/22/in-defense-of-the-mass-line-against-rightist-attacks/

So let's talk of bringing the masses into the Party and JMP's notion of the "mass vanguard party." The Party must always replenish and in some cases replace its ranks by developing the advanced masses into Communists. This is not to say that the Party itself ever takes on the form of a "mass party." The vanguard Party has always been explained as the advanced detachment of the masses. It is antithetical to the "mass party," and there is no such thing as the "mass vanguard party," which is a contradiction in terms, or an oxymoron. The Maoist Party as expressed by Gonzalo is where the few converge. In the General Political Line (GPL) of the Communist Party of Peru, in the section dedicated to the mass line, Gonzalo gives us a precise quotation that sets to rights the distortion expressed by JMP and others when it states, "Organize the masses so that they can go beyond what is permitted by the existing legal order, so that they struggle to destroy the old order and not to maintain it. This is accomplished by use of the three instruments of the revolution: **The Party where the few converge, the Army with more participants, and the new State/Front which is the base which progressively accumulates the masses through leaps**. In the countryside, this is achieved through People's Committees and in the cities through the People's Revolutionary Defense Movement. In this way, the tradition of electoral fronts, which the revisionists and opportunists apply to channel the struggle of the peasantry and to divert the masses in the cities from not seizing power through war, is destroyed." This is very much in line with the quotation from Lenin included in "Defending the Mass Line against Rightist Attacks."

In the above quote, the relationship between the three instruments is articulated correctly, as well as the forward motion of leadership through reiterative sequences that are encapsulated by the mass line. This document (GPL) is one of most clear-cut articulations of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, to date. What is more, it is everything that JMP is opposed to when it comes to his "mass line" and "mass party" position.

The convergence of the few is not a formulation the PCP put forward casually or by mistake; it is actually the scientific way in which the Party acts as the spinal column of the whole mass movement. The masses and the Party are clearly demarcated. It is not enough for JMP to insist that he upholds the Leninist conception of the vanguard Party while he puts forward the exact negation of its essence—he must go further, and try to use the "mass line" as a means for liquidating the convergence of the few, which is a fundamental characteristic of the Maoist Party.

Academics, even left-academics, have an ingrained compulsion to reinvent the wheel, to put their own stamp on what is already adequately explained by the great teachers of Communism. JMP is no exception to this rule; on the contrary, his work is a glaring

example of this phenomenon. While the book Continuity and Rupture does, in fact, deserve a more nuanced and detailed polemic than this blog/theoretical journal is able to provide at this time, we would be remiss if we failed to criticize it altogether. So this rebranding of theory from both his blog, MLM Mayhem, and his books needs to be addressed. This is particularly true because the author here hides behind this rebranding. What he puts forward is neither new nor correct, but simply an attempt on his part to seem like an interventionist and inventive theorist.

Throughout his work he uses these same maneuvers, rebranding what Lenin calls the worship of the spontaneity of the masses—for this he makes up the term "movementism." Combine this with loose terminology like "oppressed genders" and "continuity and rupture" and you get the general idea that he is making his name off of made-up terms to describe things that are already clear while making minor distortions or lumping things together into hybrids. This article is intended to unpack this criticism only a little when it comes to his positions on continuing and rupturing.

The argument in his book is summed up in the following quotation in the recent blog post: "The RIM position was thus a ruptural [sic] position because it broke from claims that there could be nothing more than Marxism-Leninism, that a third stage of the science was somehow foreclosed, and in breaking from this simplistic idea established scientific continuity." He fails to be anywhere near precise and does not let us know who these mysterious figures are that believed revolutionary science could not ever develop past Marxism-Leninism. He could be referring to the Hoxhaists, of course, and is hence implying that MLM is a rupture with Hoxhaism, and that genuine Maoists (who are the Marxist-Leninists today) ruptured from Hoxhaists. This hardly makes sense considering the fact that these people were never part of the general movements that produced nascent Maoism to begin with. If anything their dogmato-revisionism is a rupture from Marxism-Leninism and not the other way around. To be charitable, we could assume he means that there are somewhere adherents to Mao Zedong Thought who are still convinced that ML could not possibly reach a higher stage. These people still calling themselves Maoist seem to already indict themselves as confused. Either way, it is not so much that these types believe that Marxism-Leninism cannot be developed into a new stage, but that they contest that is has been, in the form of Maoism. So who is it that insists revolutionary science cannot develop further? Certainly, even MLM could develop to another stage, a fourth and higher stage. This would require a serious development in all three component parts of Marxism, though. This overall development is the criterion used to evaluate an ideology when considering whether or not it is a new and higher stage. The criterion of rupturing is just reinventing the wheel–this time without spokes or tires.

Breaking from "claims" that were never really claims made by the International Communist Movement generally is hardly a "rupture with Marxism-Leninism." In fact, if you go back to the point in time when Marxism was synthesized (mainly by comrade Stalin) into Marxism-Leninism, there was absolutely no need to frame this new and higher stage as "a rupture with Marxism." This is because Marxism-Leninism was clearly a development of and an enrichment of Marxism. It was not the emergence of revisionism that Stalin was "rupturing from" but new objective developments that, when incorporated into the ideology, advanced its three component parts–Marxist political economy, scientific socialism, and Marxist philosophy. It is the Trotskyites—not Marxist-Leninists—who claim that Stalin's synthesis was a rupture with Marxism. Likewise, when MLM was synthesized, mainly by Gonzalo, there was no insistence that it was a rupture with Marxism-Leninism ideologically, but again an enrichment of it, and recognition of its overall development into a new and higher stage on the basis of new discoveries correlating with the objective conditions. In this case, we do not see so much of a rebranding from JMP but more of an adulteration. This is an example of a desperate attempt on his part to divorce himself from the legacy of Stalin, a desperation that is as common as postmodernism among academics. There is, in fact, a rupture here, but it is not on the part of MLM but on the part of JMP.

Let's examine then where JMP is rupturing and what exactly he is rupturing with. He consistently places the development of MLM to the credit of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), while begrudgingly accepting the fact that Maoism, as we know it, was actually synthesized by the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) as early as 1983 (even though he would move this date back to 1988). By crediting the RIM, much later he is able to wedge some distance between himself and the body of theory produced by the initiators of MLM. It is this synthesis put forward by the PCP and their conception of Maoism that JMP is hell-bent on rupturing with, obscuring and liquidating. His book, as mentioned in the previous article in this journal, contains a clear attack on the theory of Jefatura, which translates into great leadership, as opposed to just the position of elected leadership. Great leadership —which is recognized by the Party and which has emerged in two-line struggle–also provides a guiding thought to the revolution. Guiding thought is another tenet of MLM that JMP is rupturing with; elsewhere he has shown a specific dismissal of Gonzalo Thought and squirms at the very idea that it could have universal aspects that need to be applied to our specific conditions.

Critically, and what is the clearest indictment of the right-opportunism on the part of this author, he also rejects Party militarization and the concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution, both of which are irreconcilable with his ideas that the Maoist Party becomes a "mass party." Militarization and concentric construction

were both put forward in the very documents in which MLM was synthesized, as core parts of MLM, and not as a mere application of MLM to the conditions of Peru. Even more obvious as an example of the rightism he pushes are his past attacks on the formulation of principally Maoism. These are the real-world elements of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, which he is rupturing with, but he has been trained to wiggle out of criticism and does a great job applying this training which he defaults to. On one hand, he will invoke the name of the PCP (even using their propaganda art for his book cover) and claim he is contributing to Maoism, while on the other he is gutting it of its essence and promoting a "critical" (real talk: distorted) understanding of the PCP.

The rebranding comes back into play when he starts making excuses for his theory. What he describes as "continuity and rupture" is sometimes just a convoluted intellectualization of the very base concept of two-line struggle, now mystified by the drapery of "continuity and rupture." Maoists all understand that new developments are accomplished through internal line struggles between left and right political lines. In the process, incorrect ideas are corrected and correct ones emerge. All of this correlates to and interacts with the concrete conditions of class struggle, which the Party is subject to. While one could say, "All JMP means by this expression is this process of two-line struggle," and while we would hardly disagree with the fact that line struggle is the motor for internal changes, for adaptations and adjustments, we insist that this is not what he is smuggling in. Two-line struggle has been explained and needs no new terminology to justify itself or its process or what it accomplishes in terms of growth. Nonetheless two-line struggle is also where revisionism is exposed. With organized two-line struggle the revisionists are expelled and defeated. Part of two-line struggle is representing your opponent correctly–at least mentioning the positions, books, or articles that you're struggling against. This method is not in his arsenal, so he must maneuver around the question. If the article is wrong then it is on him to explain how; furthermore, this explanation should be precise and effective at proving the article is rightist, revisionist, and so on. Instead he relies on the catch-all charge of dogmatism, always leveled at anyone who defends the ideology against incorrect modifications, changes, and adjustments that are actually in essence liquidationist.

Again, to frame this process of two-line struggle mainly as one of rupturing from revisionism means that he considers the proletarian line to be nothing of its own but just a line that ceases to be revisionist, making the revisionist line—that is to say the bourgeois line—principal and default. This is a suspicious argument for a Maoist to make. Mao, while breaking with Soviet modern revisionism, Mao was not actually rupturing with revisionism, he was never a revisionist—revisionism was rupturing from Communism, and Mao simply articulated this. He did so properly, without ever needing

this formula of "continuity and rupture." As mentioned, this is not found in Mao's writings on this or any other topic, at least to my understanding.

JMP claims that he adopted this terminology from the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan, which is not surprising since he pushes their theory to the front and the theory of the PCP to the side. To reiterate: the article never accused him of being original, just of being full of shit. It is easy to see through his attempts to justify his terms by pushing the burden onto the CmPA. His arguments against Jefatura are likewise reliant on accusations of a "personality cult," which is nothing new in the world of bourgeois academia and has a tradition all the way back to Khrushchev himself, who reigned atop the revisionist kingdom. In the example of JMP, however, it is not Khrushchev whom he is borrowing from, as the whole argument against Jefatura in his book might as well be copied-and-pasted from "Against Avakianism" by Ajith. In the spirit of understanding that two-line struggle does indeed exist in all things we have to always state, without being shy that it exists in the ICM as well, that adherents to and propagandists of this line–whether they are JMP, OCML/VP, Ajith, or others—are in fact the rightist line of the ICM against the leftist line as represented by the teachings of Chairman Gonzalo and his students.

JMP, in his vague response to "In Defense of the Mass Line against Rightist Attacks," goes so far as to state that Marxism-Leninism had "revisionist limits," which really negates where and why revisionism emerges. Revisionism, like two-line struggle, will emerge in any and every Communist formation until class has been abolished as surely as the class struggle will continue on in the Party and under socialism. What is important is learning how to fight it, suppress it, and eradicate it—In short, how to impose the left upon the right in organized two-line struggle. Marxism-Leninism did not contain some imagined "revisionist limit" that it inevitably came to. To argue this is to argue that revisionism is something ideologically innate in Marxism-Leninism instead of a product of the class struggle that emerges in the expression of capitalist roaders inside of the Communist Party. In fact, Marxism-Leninism waged tireless struggles against revisionism from its inception, and it was in these struggles that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, developed as the third and highest stage of Marxism.

As predicted before, without pause JMP resorts to charging "In Defense of the Mass Line against Rightist Attacks" (and really all of his critics) with dogmatism. This is the go-to insult for some academics and all of the big-tent socialists, an easy, prepackaged way to attack the ideologically consolidated opponents to their "heterodoxy" or eclectic nonsense. This charge is tricky though because it just shows a dogmatic adherence to his own supposed heterodoxy, a fidelity to his false frameworks and the made-up terms he uses to smuggle in rightist lines under the banner of MLM. A commitment to the

teachings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Chairman Gonzalo does not in and of itself mean "dogmatism." It is more just a defense of what is correct in the foundation of MLM, principally Maoism, and not trying to make up terminology or jump at the chance to "rupture" with our core values. To be dogmatic would mean an insistence that the science cannot grow or develop; this is not our position. We assert simply that the "ruptures" of "theorists" like JMP are not so much improvements or better articulations but themselves revisionist deviations.

Even the title of his response is obscurantist; by claiming that he is just still waiting for an "honest" response to his work he frames all criticism of his work as dishonest. Of course, in his view, anyone disagreeing with him is a challenge to his intellect and therefore must be a liar, since he sees his working method as the absolute criterion of the truth. Maoists should at the very least (keeping in mind the nature of two-line struggle) be able to admit the very possibility that they are incorrect. What is more, they should try to prove the correctness of their theoretical positions with engagement, not through deflection. The last article openly calls his specific work into question, while he relies on vagueness to distort criticism and dismiss it on his blog.

His deflection is coupled neatly with the charge that all critiques are rooted in a "misreading" or a misunderstanding of his work, due to our ignorance or possibly malice. In no universe he can conceive of could the academic be contradicted by actual Maoists, loyal to the revolutionary project. According to JMP, the only people stupid enough to criticize him are those who are too dense to understand him. Either way, the fault is with everyone else and not the quality of his work or which class it is in the service of. We critics are not content to leave this expert in command and would much rather bombard his headquarters. He relies on his status as an academic to invoke a social status above the lowly Maoists who have none of his bourgeois training, as being the only "Maoist academic" in North America. He fancies himself special in some way, even though he is only an adjunct professor. In the interests of reality and bringing him back down to where the rest of us live, we should really inquire about who his supporters are, since he's already made it clear that he is beyond the criticism of mere mortals.

We have talked of the criticism of Continuity and Rupture, so let us ask him honestly: where is the praise for it? We can all read the blurbs of praise from other "left" intellectuals in the first world, but where is it being applied or studied in the actual struggles in the storm centers of world revolution? Are there actual Maoists outside of Canada who find this book useful to our ideology or enriching of its content? Has anyone encountered any? At best his book is ignored, which is also evidenced by his title choice that he is still waiting for "honest" engagement. This necessarily has to

mean that no one at all in the Maoist world is praising it, since Maoists do not praise uncritically. If there were honest praise (that is, from anyone but a cabal of followers) there would be honest criticism, and he would not be left wondering where it is. The book itself is only going to spread confusion on what Maoism is, where it emerged, and why, and is ultimately put forward only in the interest of putting more titles into his list of writing accomplishments. It is clear that the book, in its form and content, was not directed to actual Maoists engaged in revolutionary struggle; its audience is other academics. This is something he admits by and large. When the book is read critically against the classics, it is a major disappointment. Clearly and based on the way in which he receives and responds to criticism, the book is but a project of intellectual vanity, much like the blog associated with it. Regardless of his lofty intentions, the book itself is an attempt to rebrand Maoism, its history, and its worldview.

What is almost sad is that due to an inability to take criticism as anything but dishonest lies and attacks JMP will likely have to keep waiting and waiting forever for an "honest critique" of Continuity and Rupture. Surely nothing yelled from the mouths of mortals can reach the ears of gods. He would be wise to hear, though, because history is merciless, and far crueler to the arrogant than any polemic is capable of being.