

The Pseudo Intellectualism of Joshua Moufawad-Paul: Regarding “Critique of Maoist Reason”

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STRUGGLESSESSIONS



By Cathal

“Consider it as an audacious step that we must take; all audacious steps are the beginning of a new task, and the new has a problem: a terrain not sufficiently known; let’s take firm steps, being sure that all beginnings are nothing but that, the beginning, that many issues will be developed, because there are things which we do not have enough knowledge of; and therefore, be more farsighted, more firm, more demanding of ourselves. Let’s apply: Wage the battle and you will know how it unfolds. We communists are audacious and we are so because we are consequent materialists, and we are not afraid of making mistakes, nor are we afraid of confronting anybody because truth is on our side. This is our conviction and we can have no other; we are men of conviction, ‘convinced and confessed’ in the greatest transforming scientific ideology proved in thousands of glorious battles. There has not been nor there is any ideology on Earth that has had the practical test like Marxism–Leninism–Maoism; never have so many millions of people been and will be dragged along by so powerful revolutionary storm.”

“In the IV Plenum Session of our Central Committee we agreed upon the slogan of: Towards Maoism!, in this session we have assumed the task of: Impose Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, mainly Maoism as the command and general guide of all our Party activity, and to serve and strive also, so that Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, mainly Maoism, be the command and guide of the world revolution, all on behalf of the indeclinable and glorious goal of all humanity: Communism.”

–Central Committee of the Communist Party of Peru, 1982

“In the last nine years our Movement has been engaged in a long, rich and thoroughgoing discussion and struggle to more fully grasp Mao Zedong’s development of Marxism. During this same period the parties and organisations of our Movement and RIM as a whole have been engaged in revolutionary struggle against imperialism and reaction. **Most important has been the advanced experience of the People’s War led by the Communist Party of Peru** which has succeeded in mobilising the masses in their millions, sweeping aside the state in many parts of the country and establishing the power of the workers and peasants in these areas. **These advances, in theory and practice, have enabled us to further deepen our grasp of the proletarian ideology** and on that basis take a far-reaching step, the recognition of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as the new, third and higher stage of Marxism”

-Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, 1993

“The international proletariat needs to fully overcome the current dispersion of forces – which began with the counterrevolutionary coup of Deng Xiaoping’s clique in China after the death of Chairman Mao, sharpened by the liquidation of the RIM by the new revisionism of Avakian, Prachanda and their adulator –, to realize a Unified Maoist International Conference, to advance the formulation of the General Line for the International Communist Movement and the formation of a New International Organization of the Proletariat, which serves the struggle to put Maoism in the command and guide of the World Revolution.”

“The opportunist plans for a broad unity, independently of ideological and political unity, must be rejected. As affirmed by Lenin, ‘It is not a question of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policies of the truly revolutionary proletariat’.”

“The Communist Movement is reappearing with renewed strength, today the objective and subjective situation for a Unified Maoist International Conference and the formation of an International Organization of the Proletariat are far better than when the RIM was founded, enough to say that in its foundation meeting in 1984, the participation of parties and organizations that opposed Maoism as the new, third and superior stage of development of Marxism was predominant, and it only adopted ‘Mao Zedong Thought’ and only much later they accepted Maoism, even though it was only formally.”

-Joint Declaration of Maoist Parties and organizations May 1, 2018

Introduction

With the release of Canadian professor of philosophy and pseudo-intellectual, Joshua Moufawad-Paul's (JMP) new book "Critique of Maoist Reason," it is important to examine its political lines. For our purposes we will commit to the examination of chapters 3 and 4, as they are most pertinent. In doing so, we must acknowledge two things. The first is that these chapters deserve a public response due to the fact that they address important issues in the International Communist Movement (ICM), particularly between US Maoists and Canadian thinkers like JMP. Secondly, the chapters demarcate two lines in the ICM, and are not simply the views of a few individual thinkers or organizations. With that being said, we must clearly state that *Struggle Sessions* speaks only for itself, and does not represent the positions of others, including the Parties and organizations we support or share ideological principles with.

We wish to set the tone by expressing that JMP represents an ideological trend bigger than his work. Due to a poverty in academia in the imperialist centers, he has emerged as a significant thinker in what is otherwise an abysmal swamp of bourgeois thinking. At the very least, he promotes some basic principles we agree with, albeit routed by his own deviations. Thus, we intend to focus mainly on the errors being made and not on the individual making them.

The main obstacle that makes formulating a response to his new book so difficult is his penchant for creating phantom arguments for his opponents, and how he takes these arguments apart rather than engaging with the real arguments. This can be understood by his tendency to mistake form for essence. This error is present throughout all of his work and most evident in his responses to what he calls "principally Maoists." In essence, "Critique of Maoist Reason," when thoroughly examined, reveals itself as a straw man and falls into pieces.

All Maoism (meaning everything *labeling* itself as such) must correctly assert that Maoism is *the third and superior* stage of revolutionary science, and hence, in the formulation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Maoism is principal. For this reason, we reject the "MLMpM" abbreviation peddled by JMP and others and continue using MLM. After all, to be a superior stage means a higher quality, making it the principle aspect of

the whole; a new stage cannot be reached if you mainly adhere to its less-developed precursors. MLM is principally Maoist and no new abbreviations are needed.

In this response, we intend to address various distortions of history and confused points, as well as the acrobatics on display in the furtherance of conflating and flattening MLM to the most general formality. We expect that our readers are familiar with the book we are discussing and the work of the author, and we recommend studying him.

For those who have not familiarized themselves with his work, we will quote at length so that we do our best to not divorce his positions from their context. We intend to present his views as they are, and responsibly rise to issue our disagreements in the interest of further solidifying the great wave of international Maoist unity being accomplished in the ICM, most notably among the signatories of the May 1 joint declarations which include the majority of the Latin American and European organizations for the past three years, noting the fact that the list of signatures has grown each year, with more in 2020 than any other claiming to follow MLM. We do not bring this up to focus on the quantity of signatories, but the quality of the politics and practice which secures ever greater support for the joint declaration.

Part 1.

The importance of the point of origin and our disagreement on “consummation”

Chapter three of “Critique of Maoist Reason” begins by expressing its most common theme:

“[T]he point of origin for Marxism–Leninism–Maoism is found in the sequence begun by the PCP and consummated by the RIM. Anything else did not generate Maoism as Maoism (what I have called ‘Maoism–qua–Maoism’) and was only a prefiguration to or adjacent of revolutionary science.”

It is obvious enough that we take no issue with the position that the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) began to impose Maoism as the command and guide of the world proletarian revolution, and that they utilized the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) in this interest. This is an indelible mark made by the PCP, which has offered the most radiant light to guide the Parties and organizations which were created or came to MLM post–RIM. We should more closely examine which theoretical articulations and contributions of universal validity from Chairman Gonzalo guaranteed that Maoism

would be generated beyond the shores of Mao Zedong Thought, and how these interacted with the RIM, which would take up the *form* of MLM more than a decade later.

As JMP insists correctly, points of origin are important and cannot be dispensed with:

“Why does the grounding of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism in a univocal origin matter? Most importantly, because origins matter to any theory that speaks in the name of science as those who oppose the totalizing aspect of revolutionary science have made patently clear.”

In 1982, before the existence of the RIM, the PCP’s Central Committee declared a campaign to impose Marxism–Leninism–Maoism as their ideology; it would not be possible to spread this to the movement outside of Peru for several more years. We should not simply state that because this happened before RIM’s declaration that it is therefore correct, but we must be precise in pinpointing the origin of the ideology to better chart its development, which will assist in the task of proving what is correct and what is not, and why.

In November of 1982, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Peru delivered a report which detailed the campaign concerning Maoism. They stated that:

“We must hoist the slogan: LONG LIVE MAOISM! in order to initiate this great campaign which, obviously, is of a strategical character. It is a campaign of vast dimensions and a complex problem: it is a difficult task, but it is an obligation that we have as communists, as about the complexities of this campaign, but the importance that it has weighs much more, and historically it is necessity because world revolution needs Maoism in order to unfold a higher peaks, in order that the strategical offensive of world revolution be unfolded, tasks in which we communists of the world are engaged. We do not pretend to say that Maoism reaches only till there. **Marxism–Leninism–Maoism possesses programmatic points, laws, principles which go until communism, and as we march toward this great goal it is being specified starting from what is established since Marx.** Because the ideology of the proletariat is a powerful science that develops itself through big leaps, generators of higher stages each time: **with Marx, Marxism, with Lenin, Leninism and with Chairman Mao, Maoism, as the first, second and third successive stages, Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, and, today mainly Maoism.**” [emphasis ours]

While this would make major headway with the successful and historic First Congress and the publication of the documents composing the General Political Line in 1988, followed by the Interview of the Century with Chairman Gonzalo, all important in materially delineating Maoism for the world to comprehend, we can be precise in arguing that MLM, as the third and superior stage of revolutionary science, has already been articulated as Maoism since 1982. This was two years before the formation of the RIM, and 11 years before their acceptance of MLM in form. This is important, not for bragging rights or any such bourgeois nonsense, but to highlight the fact that the leading force fighting for the establishment of MLM was the PCP, and foremost its Great Leadership, Chairman Gonzalo. This is a critical matter of two-line struggle being the motive force in political, organizational, and ideological development. To deny this is dogmatic and erases the role of two-line struggle and contradiction as the basis of change.

The “consummation” theory as peddled by JMP, is a distortion of history meant to impose the liquidation of the leading role of the PCP and specifically Chairman Gonzalo as the point of origin. That is not to say that opportunism can dispense with the contributions of the PCP in developing MLM, this would expose its filth and get nowhere. Instead, the device of opportunism is to give partial credit to the PCP and Chairman Gonzalo, who fought to conquer ideological leadership and impose Maoism for 11 years, as this process was partially successful for some time before RIM’s moral and political degeneration. Opportunism must make a partial concession to the role of the PCP, otherwise it exposes itself too-nakedly as an attack on MLM and hence it would not be able to uphold the legacy of RIM as uncritically as it does, due to the PCP’s monumental role in the formation of MLM as well as conducting line struggle to win RIM over to it (formally). We will later address the fact that the PCP was not uncritical here, and that the RIM was not a homogenous monolithic entity as the worshipers at its desecrated temple would like to maintain.

Since we have no major disagreements with JMP regarding the various past ideas or groups that used the term MLM but basically had nothing new to say (or said mainly nonsense), it is not important to go over these; our view may be less charitable on certain points, but we can and must find general agreement here. What he identifies as the “adjacents” is a far more important area to engage. He expresses that the “prefiguratives” include steps to conceptualize Maoism, but that they did not go beyond Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought until the “PCP-RIM sequence” and that there were “adjacents” that would eventually come to MLM. The latter assertion has its own problems which are ignored by JMP.

He correctly explains that:

“We cannot accept the mythology of multiple lines of descent that are all equal because that would be analogical to our biologist declaring that there were multiple lines of evolutionary emergence, numerous points around the globe where the human species evolved independently.”

However, it fails in many respects to adhere to his own principles here by utilizing various confluences, theoretical acrobatics, and a poor reading of history. This is what is happening with JMP’s admittance that the PCP initiated MLM, but that it could not be “consummated” until *after* the arrest of Chairman Gonzalo, *invalidating his specific work on the topic for a less coherent version expressed by the RIM.*

The “adjacents” explained by JMP include the Communist Party of the Philippines, who maintain that MLM and Mao Zedong Thought are identical, as well as promoting the idea that their point of origin and acceptance of MLM were fully independent of the PCP (and RIM for that matter), which is in direct contradiction with the principle expressed in the above quote. Without acknowledging these positions (the contradiction we point out), JMP includes them in his fly-by-night definition of MLM. Such flippancy cannot do anything but muddy the waters and make a precise understanding of MLM illusive. The fact that the CPP never upheld the RIM conception of MLM (albeit a limited one) only brings into focus the fact that JMP is really bending the stick. This is an attempt to legitimize the RIM’s defects by including those outside of it in its tradition because they wage People’s War.

It is important to account for the fact than none of the “inheritors of RIM” (the organizations in Canada, Italy, Afghanistan, etc.) ever led a people’s war, begging the question of which legacy they follow. Two groups who maintained *consistent* membership in RIM and actually waged People’s War were the PCP and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). The latter led to capitulation and has less to offer to this specific examination.

This conundrum leaves those like JMP grasping for sources (people’s wars) outside the RIM to support their diluted conception of MLM since they have no reference point within it that does not rely on the PCP or the liquidationists in Nepal. “Critique of Maoist Reason” does this by putting forward the concept of “adjacents,” mainly through channeling the People’s Wars in India and the Philippines into their own conceptions, neither of which hold organizational, political, or ideological adherence to the RIM,

which would necessarily be reflected in their official organizational statements. What is clear from studying these is that neither uphold the RIM as the correct model, and authors like JMP play slight of hand here duping their followers.

The RIM existed in 2004 when the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was declared, but they did not join the RIM. The Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist Leninist was at one point a RIM organization which led a People's War, but did not remain in the formation, which then went on to recognize the revisionist Maoist Communist Party of Turkey (MKP). As has been well documented, the Filipino revolutionaries refused to join and instead maintained international relationships with more conservative formations than the RIM. This history is all conveniently forgotten by "Critique of Maoist Reason", opportunism must change its colors rapidly and rely upon forgetting in order to do so. The fact that some of the existing People's Wars do not follow MLM as outlined by the PCP has no bearing on whether it is correct or not, and most certainly does not strike a blow to impose the RIM's formalization as correct.

To illustrate this convenient forgetfulness, we quote "Critique of Maoist Reason" at length:

"The people's war in India, led by the CPI(Maoist), is probably the easiest to grasp as an adjacent process that confirms the significance of the PCP-RIM sequence. Although the Charu Majumdar led Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [CPI(ML)] pre-existed the PCP [**NOTE this claim is false since the PCP was founded in the 1920's by Jose Carlos Mariategui-S-S**] and the RIM, and was veiling itself as Maoist as it associated itself with the original Naxal Rebellion, like the majority of the New Communist Movement it never really theorized Maoism as a third stage and was instead an anti-revisionist variant of Marxism-Leninism declaring 'China's chairman is our chairman.' When it fragmented into multiple proto-Maoist groups [**NOTE: it fragmented into multiple reformist and legalist anti-Maoist groups as well-S-S**], however, two of these groups ended up joining the RIM: the Maoist Communist Centre [MCC] [**NOTE: MCC was not a fragment from Majumdar's group, it was independent and led by Kanai Chatterjee who during Majumdar's leadership of CPI(ML) did not join due to ideological differences and maintained the group Dakhshin Desh-S-S**] and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Naxalbari [CPI(ML) Naxalbari]. At the high-point of the RIM the MCC ended up uniting with another post-Majumdar Indian revolutionary organization, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War Group [CPI(ML) PWG], and their unity would be on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and not Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought [**NOTE: this claim is**

irrelevant since their material as CPI (Maoist) makes no distinction between the two other than the name-S-S]. The CPI(ML) Naxalbari would join the CPI(Maoist) years later, after the dissolution of the RIM, thus signifying the importance of the theoretical conjuncture that the PCP-RIM sequence had sealed: Ajith, one of RIM's primary theorists of Maoism-qua-Maoism, was now a theorist of the CPI(Maoist). The overall point, here, is that although aspects of the Maoism developing in the people's war in India were adjacent to the PCP-RIM process, it was also intimately connected to this process and its current understanding of MLM cannot be treated as separate any more than the Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist [TKP/ ML] or the Maoist Communist Party of Turkey [MKP] are separate from this process."

Above we see a selective memory, the truth is used, but only partially with regard to the fact that as MCC dissolved in order to help form CPI (Maoist), the new organization itself was never compelled to join RIM. This means that the comrades in MCC effectively left the RIM when merging to form CPI (Maoist). Without more information we cannot reach a position on the decision of these comrades; in our view RIM already showed signs of serious degeneration by 2004 when the Party in India formed, and joining such a rat-infested (Prachanda, Avakian) vessel would have been reasonably unappealing. It is precisely the critique we have of RIM that explains its degeneration, a fact most often ignored for convenience by JMP. This should significantly expose the way in which JMP traffics with the glorious People's War in India to legitimize the RIM's defects. In essence, JMP hides behind the People's War in India, which both sides of this debate actively support and defend, as a kind of ruse to divide the ICM on the very points on which it unites. This maneuver serves neither the consolidation of Maoism, nor the support and defense of the People's War in India.

A preliminary word on Ajith; it should be recalled that the most vigorous calls to free Ajith came from the exact groups that JMP seeks to counterpose to the Indian comrades and comrade Ajith, who has defended many principled positions including the PCP's role in imposing MLM, the fact that MLM and MZT are not the same (a position we have not encountered in our study of official CPI (Maoist) documents). Disagreements on Great Leadership, which Ajith mistakenly conflates with "the cult of personality," are withstanding, and while struggle on this is needed from more capable organizations, *the main thing from the Maoist movements which JMP seeks to cleave from India has always been support for Ajith and the People's War in India*, leaving criticism and line struggle open which will only increase unity and strengthen all Maoist forces. We ask our readers to investigate this tangential point; where was the support for the campaign to free Ajith in Canada, the homeland of JMP where his ideas are most accepted and defended?

We have seen little proof that such a campaign was taken up as it was in the US, Brazil, Germany, Norway, and other places. We insist that practice be evaluated and taken seriously as Maoism is more than a thinking exercise.

Our assessment of the RIM is that it was (for a time) a step toward establishing Maoism as the command and guide of world proletarian revolution, a necessary step that fell off the path with the emergence of Avakianism, etc. This is the only correct view when proceeding from two-line struggle, and the history of the formation. JMP, on the other hand, seeks to preserve the right and center as the progenitors of Maoism who “consummated” the unfinished or incorrect (in his view) ideas of Chairman Gonzalo, whom he tirelessly attacks in a backhanded and cowardly way. What he seeks to preserve is a more red-looking version of Avakianism, as we have described elsewhere in our journal.

JMP’s conflation is abundantly clear. For example, his recognition of the TKP/ML and MKP as equally legitimate, which is not the case. Similarly, the international declarations he supports are signed by both splits of the PCR-RCP (the eclecticists he supports and the dogmatists he opposes); they are both recognized as equally legitimate. Anything goes, it is all “Maoism.” Following this illogical conflation, any country could boast numerous “Maoist Parties” which is a rejection of the critical and important positions held by Lenin in the Communist International, that were correct to insist that there could only be one singular Communist Party in each country. Liberalism replaces Marxism-Leninism ideologically on this question.

Regarding the Philippines, we encounter an even more muddled ‘making the shoe fit’ method:

“The people’s war in the Philippines, however, is different from the Indian case because the Communist Party of the Philippines [CPP] never joined the RIM and yet was pursuing a people’s war under the name of Maoism before the PCP initiated its own people’s war and declared Maoism as the third stage of revolutionary science. Since the CPP initially embraced an ideology of anti-revisionist Marxism-Leninism, eventually adopting the terminology ‘Mao Zedong Thought’ it might seem that the CPP is not properly Maoist, as some have claimed. Indeed, in *Stand For Socialism Against Modern Revisionism*, a classic CPP anti-revisionist text from 1992, ‘Marxism-Leninism’ is the terminology used for revolutionary science. In this sense it may appear as if the CPP is closer to the CPI(ML), or at least similar to the NCM Marxist-Leninist ‘Maoist’ groupings, in its understanding of Marxism.

At the same time however, the CPP participated as observers in the first RIM meeting and those Maoist organizations that came out of RIM largely recognize the CPP's people's war as an advanced Maoist revolution. Most importantly, however, is the fact that the 2016 Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines begins by asserting the universality of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism.” [“Critique of Maoist Reason”]

Inching toward the truth then abruptly reversing position, now all that is required to legitimize the defects of the RIM is “observing” the first RIM meeting! No value is placed on the fact that their observation did not lead to any unity, let alone their joining RIM. Instead of going into the reasons the CPP determined not to join RIM (preferring unilateral international relationships, and opposing democratic centralism being required at the international level, among other things), JMP is content to find evidence that the CPP has in fact adopted MLM as outlined by RIM (in 2016!). This is an act of faith not supported by any material evidence. Perhaps he should read one his own rants against “theology” in Maoism.

Terminology (as JMP would surely agree with) does not denote ideological or political unity, as the terminology of Marxism is used by revisionism as a mainstay in its efforts to confuse the proletariat into the pockets of the bourgeoisie. This is a general truth to highlight that terminology is form, and how that terminology is understood is the essence, it is not a comment on the CPP. Going out on a limb, the author arrogantly speaks for the CPP, again to legitimize his own views instead of letting them speak for themselves. The CPP does not offer an argument that the incomplete and seldom practiced formulas of the RIM were taken as legitimate, let alone the consummation of Maoism. The CPP remained outside of the RIM, and their conception of Maoism upholds neither the so-called RIM definition of Maoism nor the PCP's definition. Furthermore, there is no evidence that any MLM Party or organization does not support the People's War in the Philippines, and this is abundantly clear when reading the joint international declarations. Furthermore, the CPP itself poses an independent point of MLM's origin which is at variance with the very scientific approach espoused by JMP earlier, he ignores this to fabricate his bad theoreticization.

In these acrobatics JMP finds himself exposed with regard to the debates on the universality of People's War, in which the CPP takes the position that it is only applicable to third world conditions, his handling of this question is quite interesting:

“None of this is to say that these adjacent emergences of MLM are homogenous with the PCP–RIM process, or with each other, but only that they are adjacent to the latter’s conception of MLM and eventually participated, echoed, and reasserted that conception of MLM. Although some aspects of the PCP–RIM conception of MLM are not accepted in these adjacent versions that exist as a constellation around the point of origin—–for example, the universality of Protracted People’s War—–it is notable that they otherwise are largely in agreement with the way in which the RIM statement conceptualized Maoism.”

After using the People’s Wars in India and the Philippines to legitimize the so-called RIM conception and flattening the PCP into this (via negation of the ideological and political struggles within RIM), the author takes a step back to admit that these are not homogenous, but similar. This is a cop out because all adherents to MLM are similar at least in the way of terminology, and if they were so similar as to be the same thing, then there would be little need for the major ideological disputes which prompted the writing of “Critique of Maoist Reason” to begin with.

The fact is, nothing is monolithic and homogenous, and there will always be two-line struggle in the ICM. The issue of Universal People’s War is a significant disagreement, but it is casually set aside by JMP because in his RIM worship, he understands that this was accepted as a formality and never taken seriously in essence. The proof of our assertion here can be found in what passed for the “military strategy” of one of the main leading groups and founders of the RIM, the RCP–USA. While RIM (in form) claimed that People’s War was universal, the RCP, who again was a leading force in the RIM, never updated any of its own positions to reflect this. What they maintained from before RIM to after its collapse was the stale legalistic accumulation of forces theory followed by the so-called “October Road” to insurrection, not People’s War. This was only polished slightly by the “New Synthesis of Communism” to include Avakian’s “original contribution” of “hastening while waiting” on insurrection. The later adjustments only officiate the typical stale accumulation of forces theory, which promote legalism and “non-violent” agitation in a protracted way to “help hasten” the coming insurrection, which is fully dependent on the masses of people accepting Avakian and his ideas as their own. This is an impossible and hopeless strategy which negates both People’s War and the mass line.

Just like with Avakian, the issue of the universal and only scientific military strategy of the proletariat is a voluntary side point which has no real bearing on the difference between MLM and any of its “adjacents” or “prefigurations.” What we get is Mao-ish

and not Maoist, a grab bag of assorted ideas that reject systematization and a program for revolution. The universality of people's war is integral to Maoism, so much that it must be struggled for as a point of unity in the ICM. Since those denouncing the strategy as non-universal such as the CPP, would never have the chance to apply it to an imperialist country, they must be won over to support and defend its application, lest they promote a non-starter, stale accumulation of forces with legalist "hastening" while "awaiting" an insurrectionist moment in the nations which oppress them. Opposing the military strategy of your comrades is not an impediment from supporting them overall, but unity must still be struggled over so that the correct kind of internationalism can be in command—making revolution in one's own country as part of the world proletarian revolution while supporting foreign national liberation struggles as well as new democratic and socialist revolutions. In order for revolutionaries to make revolution in the imperialist centers, they necessarily have to accept the universal (and creative) application of people's war as their sole military strategy.

JMP is more than willing to surrender the argument before even having it:

"revolutionary parties such as the CPP still deny the universality of Protracted People's War is somewhat meaningless since they are engaged in People's Wars themselves, and thus proving its significance in practice, and are not based in the imperialist metropolises and thus cannot really speak to the strategy of particular contexts outside of their revolutionary practice."

Maoists must oppose this liberal "agree to disagree" approach to internationalism, and in its place insist upon broadening and deepening the two-line struggle over the question. While he claims they "cannot really speak" to the strategy of applying People's War in an imperialist country, they can and do, especially with respect to the Philippines who have important and historic ideologues publicly taking positions on this question, and official Party websites sharing these positions without objection to any of their contents. Furthermore, it is a sort of chauvinistic identity politics that would suggest that comrades in the third world could not comprehend nor take positions on the revolutionary strategy in other countries different from their own; their vast experience in making revolution alone earns them this qualification. Maoism can be understood by anyone regardless of their geographic identity, this is the exact same reason why the PCP, being based in the third world, was *still qualified* to assert that people's war is universal and can be applied to imperialist countries as well. No Maoist should ever fear two-line struggle or even fierce debate with those they support, and hence they cannot surrender the way JMP does. Just as North and South American

Maoists were qualified to denounce focoism, which cannot be applied outside of inaccessible terrain (geography being one of the key points in Regis Debray's work on the topic), third world-based revolutionaries must engage with the military strategy of the first world, as both are part of the world proletarian revolution, which includes all People's Wars and national liberation struggles.

The thirst to preserve the RIM's worst defects comes at the cost of failing to defend the universality of People's War in a thoroughgoing way, or even calling for line struggle over the question. JMP only states that the CPP "proves" the theory of peoples war is "significant" a point which no one has denied. Instead of the most important question in Maoism—the conquest of power—JMP devotes whole sections of his books to casting aspersions against the formulations of the PCP as well as those who defend them. He is eclectic enough to concede, in his mind, that MLM does not include the universality of People's War, and he certainly denounces the concept of "jefatura." In short, MLM is, according to JMP, a category of convenience with no real consolidated fundamental content, beyond what Mao has already stated. In all his rallying against dogmatism, he fails to see the dogma in his own position, which invariably rejects the new fundamental content of Maoism but insists on maintaining that it is the third and superior stage, even if he finds what makes it such largely dispensable.

In all of this, the position of Mao-ish eclecticism seeks a watered-down variant of what RIM at its best advocated for in its 1993 formal adoption of MLM, and certainly falls short of what the PCP taught the world of Maoism's fundamental content. The PCP not only struggled fiercely to impose MLM as the command and guide of the world proletarian revolution, but their understanding of it was also clearer and stronger; the struggle in the RIM sharpened the PCP's understanding of MLM, which was a conquest of the People's War in Peru. It is not about who first raised the red flag of MLM, but to what highest summit it has reached, and for that answer we look to the Andes. It was the PCP, led by Chairman Gonzalo, who dragged the right and the center of the RIM higher along the path to Maoism, and this was still incomplete when the bend in the road befell the ICM and the RIM degenerated. As the '93 RIM statement made clear, the experience gained from the People's War in Peru led by the PCP was of the *highest importance*, placing it above the other revolutionary experience is not accidental nor was it empty political flattery. What we see is JMP moving the goal post to the point of reversing the verdict.

As the Brazilian comrades made clear in their polemic against the Communist (maoist) Party of Afghanistan (CmPA):

“We consider that the RIM was a step forward at the time, and that a correct and justified evaluation of its experience is necessary. To make this correct and justified evaluation of the RIM, it is necessary to analyze the history of the two-line struggle within it and the role of each party in it. Like every revolutionary organization, the RIM was divided between left, center and right. Those who now advocate legitimate ‘heirs’ of RIM should clearly state which heritage they claim and which heritage they renounce. A centrist position on it is nothing more than adhering to revisionism.”

The position of the Brazilian comrades is fleshed out in the Joint International

Statement “In defense of the life of Chairman Gonzalo, Hoist Higher the Flag of Maoism” which correctly analyzes the life and death of RIM so well that we cannot hope to improve upon it and instead quote it at length:

“If we see the real state of the struggle for the reunification of the communists in the world we can see that in many aspects we are much better off than we were during the best moments of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), because although the RIM was correctly characterized by Chairman Gonzalo as a ‘step forward’, he also pointed out – with his proper precision – that ‘as long as it follows a just and correct ideological-political line’ the RIM will be a step forward, and it was, and it served to unite the communists on the basis of the red line and this could be no other than the line of Chairman Gonzalo. That is to say, the principal in the evaluation of the RIM is to state that it served the Proletarian World Revolution – and particularly the struggle to reunite the communists, while it served the struggle to impose Maoism as its sole command and guide – that is to say, the struggle which was led by Chairman Gonzalo – and that it ceased to play a positive role when the revisionists of the ‘RCP’ from United States – taking advantage of the problematic situation of the left due to the bend in the People’s War in Peru – turned to totally hegemonize it. We must never forget that the unity is to serve the revolution and it only serves it, if the interest of the proletariat is imposed. The unity of the communists today in the world can only be achieved on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, or else it is not a unity of communists but a kind of ‘front’ with revisionism and opportunism.

“RIM was liquidated by revisionism’s handling of the two-line struggle. The maneuver of Avakian was, to state – as a starting point of his ‘criticism’ of the second Right Opportunist Line, revisionist and capitulationist, in Peru – that supposedly ‘the author would not matter, only the line’, which precisely led to centering the debate on who ‘the author’ was. Or did this miserable not know that the communists of the world would rise

when their Great Leadership was questioned? This is how the two-line struggle was derailed. The Problem for the left in the ICM was the hard and complex situation in which the PCP entered after the arrest of Chairman Gonzalo.

“Despite everything, the PCP continued fulfilling its role as the Red Fraction in the ICM and the People’s War continued to be beacon and guide of PWR [NOTE: “proletarian world revolution”-S-S]. Because the life of the party can never be detained and the People’s War was not stopped for even a moment. However, situations like the lack of the Great Leader caused problems in the left. The right could then state their positions (the attacks on the dictatorship of the proletariat, the ‘justification of peace negotiations as tactics’, the negation of semifeudality and evolution of bureaucratic capitalism, the negation of the three characteristics of imperialism, etc.) and all this remained in second place because the attention was centered on ‘debating’ the maneuvers of the psychological warfare of imperialism and the sinister actions of traitors. Around the turning of the century, the struggle was sharpened. Then the left went into trouble and a great part fell into Avakian’s trap, the initiative fell into the hands of the right and they could lead the two-line struggle into exploding and thus revisionism liquidated the RIM.”

Part 2. Addressing the claims made against our journal and the Parties and organizations we support

“In many countries where the communist forces were on a very underdeveloped stage, Parties and Organizations that uphold Marxism-Leninism-Maoism reemerged and who struggle to reconstitute their Communist Parties that were destroyed by revisionism. The majority of these forces took clear position for the definition of Maoism made by Chairman Gonzalo. This makes some people, aloof from any Marxist criteria, label them as ‘Gonzaloists’ and impute the left to be ‘sectarian and dogmatic’. Apart from the obvious – that opportunism and revisionism have always branded Marxists this way – it reveals that they have not understood that we are in the period of struggle to impose Maoism as the sole command and guide of the Proletarian World Revolution and that when assuming Maoism as the third stage of development of the ideology of the international proletariat, many parties and organizations, in essence, have only seen it as changing one formulation, that to speak of Maoism was a ‘more modern’ form to speak about Mao Zedong Thought.

“So the problem in the ICM is not principally rooted in that Maoism is not formally acknowledged, but how some understand it, and this is why it is important to start with who defined Maoism as the new, third and superior stage of our ideology; because it is only by

starting from what was scientifically established by Chairman Gonzalo that we can understand Maoism as one unit, as one harmonic system. If one does not take the work of Chairman Gonzalo as a starting point, one falls into eclecticism, counterposing quotes but not understanding the ideas. If we understand this, we can understand the reason why there are not few Parties and Organizations that, while taking longer time, have become stuck and have not made leaps in their processes, while those who put the most effort into learning from Chairman Gonzalo are, in general, advancing principally in qualitative terms, but also in quantitative terms. We advise those who rush to give labels to open their eyes to the material truth instead of getting carried away by their imaginations.” – In defense of the life of Chairman Gonzalo, Hoist Higher the Flag of Maoism

The above more or less stands to address the arguments in chapter 4 of “Critique of Maoist Reason” and we highlight this even though it was published years before “Critique of Maoist Reason” in order to point out the faulty approach of JMP when addressing oppositional viewpoints, and again we must acknowledge that he is not alone in this approach. It is his proximity to the US and his direct mention of our journal which demand that we address his claims directly, and as he makes them instead of basing our arguments on assumption. The above-quoted document signed by Maoist Parties and organizations around the world already does a good job of this and should be studied. We intend to continue building upon what has been said for years, and we hope to make modest contributions on our front.

Chapter 4 of “Critique of Maoist Reason” starts out sensibly enough by making the argument that the “sign posts” of revolution, (who we would call the great leaders of the world proletarian revolution), Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao, all had a deep thirst for knowledge and studied everything which might be at all useful in service of their cause. We agree with their methods of course, and we hold that such obvious truth is stated by JMP to imply that these methods are *rejected* by the majority of the ICM, making his conclusion what we reject.

Maoists of course do not oppose being “extremely well read” and to reiterate our earlier point, everything should be studied from a foundation rooted in Marxism, and with this lens, the useful can be demarcated from the useless. Likewise, the emergence of dogmatism as a substitute for Marxism occurs throughout all revolutionary struggles, just as two-line struggle persists. Dogmatism fails to uphold the logic of Marx, which is to be the ruthless critic. “Critique of Maoist Reason” does not provide a full picture, using only partial examples without dividing a thing into two, this is a subjectivist mistake:

“During the course of the New Communist Movement in the imperialist metropolises, for example, there is a point where all of the polemics devolve into quote mongering protectionism of little ML kingdoms—of whose hermeneutics is the most faithful to a pure Marxism–Leninism.”

The so-called New Communist Movement was not simply lost to dogma, while dogmatism undoubtedly existed, the “NCM” was born (at least in the US) from a partial anti-revisionism and mired with the birth defect of nascent identity politics. This was in the 1970’s when postmodernism was just being implemented as a counter-revolutionary ideology to replace Marxism on campuses in imperialist countries. This defect predated the dogmatism and actually helped sectarianism and dogmatism ferment. The defects of the “NCM” which most align with the ideas of JMP are ignored for the defects he assumes most exemplify his opponents. It must be expressed that we revolutionaries are correct to detest Badiou etc., not because they are intellectuals, but because they are revisionist enemies of Marxism. After all, we are guilty as charged of following the teachings and ideas of Chairman Gonzalo, who was also an intellectual. Instead of just understanding the anti-revisionist stance against bourgeois ideas, the author here assumes anti-intellectualism, while offering no actual examples of it in the living movement. We must express that our opposition to JMP is not due to his job as a low-level part-time professor, but because of his role in the implementation of bourgeois ideas in the revolutionary struggle.

We encounter grand generalizations in the place of concrete examples derived from the facts:

“It has become commonplace for young Maoists, who in their laudable desire to stand against contemporary revisionism and anti-communism (which also takes pseudo-radical forms such as post-modernism), adopt the same kind of anti-intellectualism as previous generations that is in direct contradiction to the expansiveness of intellectual rigour and investigation that the great theorists and philosophers of Marxism demonstrated. They even treat the theoretical achievements of these thinkers as theological artifacts, though they employ the name of ‘science’ to hide their hermeneutics, forgetting that these great theorists came to their conceptual insights partly because of their expansive intellectual rigour”

We ask, where is this “commonplace”? Who are these “young Maoists”? To what formation do they belong and what is their practical application of this error? Surely answering these questions would be beneficial to the argument being made. Instead we

are given only the vaguest generalizations without substantiation. In our assessment this is likely due to the author's immersion in subcultural social media websites, where unknown and unorganized individuals, the majority of whom have no practice, profess knowledge of Maoism inappropriately. We are not of the view that this is evidence of errors in the existing, living movement, nor are we determined to take them seriously as if they were part of the movement at this point. We prefer citing published material and engaging with opinions that can be attributed to an organized group or an individual linked to said group.

No argument can be made against JMP if he is saying that unorganized but newly interested and enthusiastic supporters of the movement who manifest online tend toward immaturity, and defend the movement at times in inappropriate ways. There is a vital criticism here: the movement must struggle to educate, uplift and organize these well-meaning supporters, which it has yet to accomplish in a meaningful way. Even with opportunistic criticism, one must search for what is useful and reject what is only meant as slander. With this approach, even the opportunist attacks can improve the work of genuine Maoists. At the very least, we can learn to disarm the opposition.

We must however condemn the method likely being used here: that is to engage in internet arguments with unorganized people who speak for no organization in the US and are not active with their support, and then take this experience as proof of issues in the actual movement in which they play no part. This is almost certainly the case, since no example can be cited. A lack of professionalism taints the argument being made by JMP and highlights the intentional negligence of his editors. If your only connection to Maoism in a country is through anonymous online accounts, then you cannot claim to have anything resembling an accurate idea and such data has no bearing, it is irrelevant. Instead of attempting to make a materialist argument, JMP and his editors have mined social-media websites and not cited their sources so that they can find filler for their straw man argument; it is amateurish and slimy.

He continues:

“the great theorists from Marx to Gonzalo did not shy away from intellectual investigation, and in fact held such investigation to be supremely worthwhile, there is now a troubling anti-intellectual current that fears engagement with any text that is not canonical. All Marxist theorists and philosophers outside of this core canon are treated as immediately suspicious. At best they are vaguely interesting curiosities; at worst they are seen as impure academics who exist to seduce the masses.”

Of course the great theorists had a thorough method of intellectual investigation, otherwise they could not have become great theorists. This truism hardly requires mention on its own, it is only necessary to transition into false charges. Is it wrong to be suspicious of non-Marxist thinkers? After all, there is not a thought that exists outside of class, if Marxism is the ideology of the proletariat, then to what class does non-Marxist ideology belong? And, should proletarian intellectuals embrace bourgeois or petty bourgeois thinking without any skepticism? We leave the answer to our readers and only suggest that healthy skepticism is what allowed Marx to turn Hegel on his head and claim political economy for the proletariat by taking apart the ideas of Smith and Ricardo. We applaud the skepticism of Marx, as well as his acute ability to *separate the true from the false with his sharp criticism*. The same goes for military science. Approaching bourgeois military science without any skepticism of its over-reliance on weaponry leads to error, approaching it as Marxists allows one to gain many insights from bourgeois military theorists; Clausewitz and Danton are shining examples of great theorists from among the bourgeoisie, and these are not “canonical.”

A study of our journal would help clarify the matter, bourgeois thinkers are referenced and cited for two reasons: either to express and defend what is true, or expose the maneuvers of the ideology to promote what is false—they are divided into two. Our journal has defended Darwin, Freud, and others, all while remaining Marxist. Are these cannon? No, they are not. At the same time, we have opposed the incorrect ideas and even worse application of these ideas from those who are accepted as “cannon,” such as Antonio Gramsci, who while heroic in his efforts to found and lead the Italian CP, represented much of the ideas that led to its later reformist degeneration. Ideology and which class it serves has far more to do with our evaluation and reliance than “cannon,” and of course, we are willing to study everything under the sun, provided we do so as Marxists. We are well aware that the position we have published on Gramsci differs from many comrades internationally whom we unite with. This respect has not prevented us from asserting our own views on the matter and going against the “canonical” tide, wrong or right.

If the criticism is that we do all this with too much reliance on Marxism and not enough “good faith” to the ideology of other classes, this is a criticism which has been exposed as an opportunist attack and tossed aside.

Our criticism of JMP and company has never been that they study too many things, or that they appropriate from these things what is true and useful. If this were the case, the movement in Canada would be vibrant and growing, would be able to march in the

streets on May 1st or at least show signs of increasing ideological and political unity, however this is not the case anywhere in that country currently. Anyone paying attention to the Canadian struggle sees the deep and lasting effects of dogmatism and eclecticism, it is undeniable. The proof is in the practice and not what they say in books, magazine articles, or blogs.

We are witness to a deeply fractured movement with two hostile sides—one totally degenerated by the errors JMP most exemplifies, that is the wholesale and opportunist importation of bourgeois “common sense” into Maoism, which muddles and destroys “Maoist reason,” and the other is the bankrupt and outdated fossil of dogmatism, which cannot mobilize, organize, or affect the class struggle. Thus, with all his ranting against dogmatism and eclecticism, he should gaze into the mirror thoughtfully and self-critically; these errors have feasted on his movement, and those whom he flings mud at have only grown in quantity and quality over a significantly shorter time period in places like the US. This practical metric is of no use to JMP or his cohorts, but it is testimony to the fact that a small number of people with the correct ideology and good working methods can persist, and polished but incorrect ideas with bad working methods will degenerate. We reiterate and paraphrase Stalin to the ire of our opponents—that which is growing is invincible and that which is decaying is already dead!

He finally drops the ambiguity for a direct assault:

“we have the phenomenon of Maoist militants who should be aware of the failures of the previous anti-revisionist sequence, who should be conscious of the fact that the thinking produced by the PCP-RIM experience was critical and creative, who fall into the worst patterns of hermeneutical exegesis. Such failure in thought is endemic to the ‘principally Maoist’ trend, with several outliers, and the aforementioned US-American platform Struggle Sessions is paradigmatic of this poverty in thought. Nearly every article on this site reads like a hermeneutic of classical texts, demonstrating a fear of critically engaging with thought itself, resulting in a tragic repetition of the worst examples of the previous generation of anti-revisionism: ‘This is wrong because Gonzalo/Mao/Lenin once wrote x.’”

Our journal is “guilty” of making arguments and substantiating them with established Marxist positions derived from the classics, and it is also focused on the practical experience which earned these classics the prestige of being fundamental texts. We hold, like all Maoists, that practice is the best method of attaining and accessing rational knowledge, and hence rely upon the practice (historical and contemporary) of the ICM in

its highest expressions of class struggle. The criticism here is reduced to a criticism of form, a criticism that we do not engage enough with vogue theories from bourgeois schools of thought that are divorced from the class struggle of the proletariat. This can be understood in part as an objection to studying and defending classic positions. Historical materialism is a science, and to utilize it one has to be familiar with the history of class struggle; for the proletariat this means familiarization with the history of Marxism. We have never made the argument that this material is correct simply because it was written by great Marxists, it is the historical practice which proves its validity. JMP hardly concerns himself with whether the political line being put forward is correct or incorrect, and instead takes issue with citing positions held by great leaders past and present.

While we are accused vaguely of being skeptical of non-Marxist texts, JMP has concluded that we are not skeptical enough of Marxist texts—this position reflects his class stand. This tendency from some critics is derived from the position that Marxism itself was a flawed and limited science, rather than one already containing the analytic means of overcoming practical limitations with new discoveries and the ability to reach superior stages. When someone claiming to adhere to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is making statements that directly contradict the work, principles, or laws espoused Marx, Lenin, or Mao, this should be pointed out and discussed. If the contradiction is correct (like the fact that Mao expressed base areas as only possible in China and similar countries) we have no qualms with issuing disagreement here and stating our reasons for disagreeing. Furthermore, we do not insist something is correct or incorrect on account of who said it, our method is to explain why something is correct or not, and of course it is not wrong to substantiate these positions with the positions of our great teachers and great leaders. JMP attempts to encourage his readers to believe that quoting from the classics to substantiate actual arguments being made is “hermeneutic” in an effort to rid himself of the responsibility to be a Marxist!

He continues with an attack on the majority of the ICM:

“Such theological thinking results in a doctrinaire application of categories, as it always has, that eclipses scientific rigour. For example, the ‘principally Maoist’ trend is wont to claim that all forms of Maoism that do not fully agree with the way in which the PCP conceptualized MLM prior to the RIM sequence are either examples of ‘rightism’ or ‘centrism’.”

After the admittance of ideological line struggle, are we then to assume that both lines are equally correct? Are we to drop our banner? Line struggle over fundamental questions regarding differences is now reduced to theology. There has to be a left, a right, and a center in any line struggle. Ignoring this for unprincipled ideological peace stinks of opportunism. While JMP has conducted work to attack Maoist principles such as Great Leadership (derived from Leninist principles), he has done so with the same means—accusing people of being religious. In many cases, he has provided no “scientific rigour” at all concerning the questions of militarization and concentric construction, and the groups which he defends have themselves never attempted to answer the questions that militarization and concentric construction do. We are not of the mind that these positions are correct just because they were upheld by the greatest living Marxist–Leninist–Maoist, Chairman Gonzalo. We have insisted that they are necessary to resolve the question of capitalist restoration as they grapple with the role of the People’s Liberation Army in the restoration of capitalism in China, and the Red Army’s role in the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, and further speak to the issue of raising People’s War in a world where imperialism has developed further militarization itself. JMP and company are anemic on these positions, and instead of being rigorous scientists, they simply repeat platitudes that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution “did not happen soon enough” or that Mao’s successors just were “not popular enough;” these are dollar store theories from the clearance bin. Furthermore, the dogmatic rejection of militarization and concentric construction *is* a rightist deviation, it seeks to tail the masses in every way and not to crystallize or rethink solutions to problems which threw the ICM off its course with capitalist restoration.

We hold that Mao’s theory of cultural revolutions was his most transcendental contribution, and that it fundamentally changed the way Communists view revolution. This was of course possible, not because it was Mao who said it, but because Mao had the vantage point of witnessing capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union. We will not discount Mao’s genius here, but insist that he was not a god, he had the great experience of the People’s War and was witness to totally new developments. Likewise, Chairman Gonzalo was not god, we do not uphold his analysis of Maoism simply because he made it, but we adhere to the principle that Maoism is all powerful because it is true. Chairman Gonzalo was in a unique position in the ICM (leading the most important People’s War even according to RIM), he also had a unique vantage point, bearing witness to the restoration of capitalism in China and identifying its internal contradictions, posing solutions to them which were derived not merely from his own genius but from that of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. Those who JMP is eager to dismiss as theologians have done rigorous and scientific work on explaining this, as well as explaining why rightists

oppose this in numerous articles, magazines, and online journals, to which our own pales in comparison. We highly recommend studying the magazine *El Maoista* and in particular the article “Lenin and the Militarized Communist Party.” The point being, disagreements on the matter cannot be equally correct, equally left, there must be a left, right, and center. If we follow the logic of JMP we should capitulate in our principled disagreements and not struggle to come closer to the truth. We insist that this struggle between left and right is exactly how we come to correct ideas and improve upon the existing ones, and we do not need a bloc of Mao quotes to substantiate this. While JMP fears labeling Chairman Gonzalo a “theologian” outright, he still does so in an indirect and cowardly manner, by ignoring the fact that Chairman Gonzalo completed the theory of Party Militarization and proclaimed it necessary for all MLM parties on earth for a reason.

Likewise, JMP makes a serious error by using a bourgeois framework for success and failure, which, if applied logically and consistently, would liquidate the communist struggle for the end of history. This is a particularly misguided notion (even he knows better) so it needs some specific attention:

“it asserts that it [‘principally Maoism’] is properly ‘left’ only because the claim that Maoism was the third stage of the science was first declared by the PCP but then, despite the PCP’s failure, refuses to accept the later instantiation located in the RIM sequence. Moreover, it refuses to account for the PCP’s failure in a historical materialist sense”

“Failure” here is a precise word choice, and we should examine that. What is the failure of the PCP? A failure to accomplish seizure of state power for the class at this current moment? We remind our readers that no People’s War since the one led by Chairman Mao has accomplished this, including those JMP traffics with to legitimize his line. So we can cross that off the list, it cannot serve as a metric here. In fact, whatever “failure” (we call it what it is, a setback) of the PCP regarding the bend in the road still far outran all the successes of those whom he is most aligned with (Italy, Afghanistan, Canada), which is precisely why the RIM expressed that the People’s War led by the PCP was “most important.” Marxists must understand success and failure in the context of class struggle, and the dialectical understanding that it does not proceed in a straight line. We often rely on the example of the Long March in China, which was falsely qualified as a failure (by the bourgeoisie at the time) but proved to be a great success in spite of the setback that eliminated the majority of the Party and army. An even better example for a deeper understanding of failure and success, which JMP would be compelled to agree with, is the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), which on one hand unarguably

failed to prevent capitalist restoration, and on the other hand lit the path forward to do just that—by the continuance of the socialist revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat to prevent restoration of capitalism and secure the path to luminous communism. We can only conclude that the GPCR was a success in terms of what it offered the world. Should there exist those who seek to argue for an entirely new approach to class struggle, which dismisses the GPCR as a “failure,” this would invariably result in post-Maoism of the Avakianite variety. After all, Avakian’s so-called contributions are based on the idea that the general period of revolution depicted by Marx, Lenin, and Mao has closed, opening the need to adopt the “New Synthesis of Communism.” We see here JMP using this logic, the PCP did not accomplish state power throughout Peru, therefore we must jettison their contributions.

The Marxist method of dialectically comprehending the success/failure contradiction has to extend to comprehending the bend in the road facing the People’s War in Peru, understanding that the Party is in the stage of reorganization (this is not unprecedented as the CPC had to replenish itself in the Yenan period). This is laid out clearly in the very important interview with Comrade Laura of the PCP. *The People’s War in Peru continues* and within the war the Party is being reorganized. We cannot consider the continued struggle, with twists and turns, advances and setbacks, as anything but dialectical materialists, hence it is a foolish conclusion to claim that the PCP “failed.”

Setbacks and advances form a dialectic, these must be weighed and measured. Hence, we cannot say that the PCP reached a dead end, as the so-called “NCM” did. In fact, their experience with the creative application of Maoism outside of China made them the most important (the leading force) in the world proletarian revolution and allowed them to articulate and impose MLM. Without this, the struggle for communism would not have advanced as far as it has today. Claiming “failure” is using failure in the bourgeois sense, and not the Marxist sense. This is done opportunistically, to attack the PCP and those who defend them. Strange causes which do not rely upon a class analysis are credited for this supposed “failure,” like the “cult of personality” supposedly inherent in Great Leadership, militarization, etc. These are dispensed with by way of a superficial understanding that stinks of the novices who claim capitalism was restored in the Soviet Union just because “Stalin died,” when in fact we understand that the preservation of bourgeois right and the lag in the superstructure had far more to do with it, and that signs of this were becoming visible even during Stalin’s lifetime.

A major shortcoming of “Critique of Maoist Reason” is its lukewarm hesitancy which refuses to define “principally Maoism” as either a correct stand or a rightist deviation—

then what is it? It cannot exist floating ephemerally beyond a left and right framework. The issues were significant enough to the author to merit several chapters in several books (although not considered important enough to diligently examine these things or cite his positions at all!), but he cannot express where they fall within two-line struggle? It is disingenuous to claim that a thing is theological, yet not rightist as theology itself cannot be leftist or materialist. The hesitancy here is nothing but posturing to appear on the “high road” and “non-sectarian,” but in essence the whole argument is a charge of dogmatic rightism—revisionism, only delivered in a liberal backhanded way with minced words. This method too is opportunism, and we should not shy away from saying that anymore that we should shy away from expressing optimism that such methods can be overcome and unity can be accomplished through direct struggle, without mincing words and concealing views.

Regarding the argument of synthesis posed in “Critique of Maoist Reason,” we assert that it was Engels who continued leading the fight of Marx after his death, and it was Stalin who continued leading the fight of Lenin after his, spatial and temporal aspects are secondary to the political line in the ICM, which these great leaders represented. The same holds true for Chairman Gonzalo continuing to lead the fight of Mao in the ICM. These torchbearers cannot be written off due to questions of physical or chronological proximity. Politics in command here means that the political line is what we examine over direct contact or spatial and temporal concerns, or any other desperate obfuscation which ignores the political content. After all, Bernstein bore more spatial and temporal connection to Engels than Lenin, who never met Engels, *yet it was Lenin who maintained the political connection to Marx and Engels* and not Bernstein. We find that this view illustrates the shortcomings in what is expressed by JMP:

“That is, Gonzalo synthesized Marxism–Leninism–Maoism just as Stalin synthesized Marxism–Leninism and Engels synthesized Marxism. At first glance, such an interpretation appears to make sense but, at the level of substance, it begins to fall apart. The comparison of Gonzalo to Stalin and both to Engels is a faulty analogy. First of all, whereas Gonzalo was temporally and spatially removed from the sequence of the Chinese Revolution, Stalin was intimately involved with Lenin in the Russian Revolution; he was a fellow cadre whose practice was bound up with the Bolshevik Party and thus his work on Marxism–Leninism (the work that first gave us the name Marxism–Leninism) is the work of someone practically involved and invested in what would come to be known as the Leninist sequence.”

We remind our readers that not only did Chairman Gonzalo receive ideological, political, and military training in China at the peak of the GPCR, but that he also gave MLM its name. This is not what is most important here though, the issue of utmost importance is who carried on Mao's work, who developed the understanding, and who imposed Maoism as the third and superior stage of Marxism? The only answer to this question, which JMP has already admitted, is Chairman Gonzalo. We need not use crass methods of geographical distance and timing to undermine our correct political positions when political proximity is the principal aspect. Chairman Gonzalo embodied the red line in the ICM, and at a time of general crisis and major setback, he propelled things further with breakthroughs represented by the initiation of the People's War in Peru. Much the way that Mao, who was just becoming a Marxist around the time of the Great October Socialist Revolution and just before Lenin's death, would carry on Stalin's role in the ICM, Mao was temporally and spatially separate from Lenin, but inextricably linked to Lenin politically. This is why the banners of our revolution and the name of our ideology reflect Marx, Lenin, and Mao. We oppose the superficial compartmentalization that JMP is using as an escape hatch.

“Critique of Maoist Reason” and, before that, “Continuity and Rupture” both claim that “the procession of sequences themselves are the synthesis.” This strange position is an elimination of both the mass line and the dialectical relationship between practice, analysis, and synthesis. If the sequences themselves are the synthesis, Maoism would be a playbook of rules, a blueprint for making revolution; this is actually the viewpoint of dogmatists who see theory as scripture. In reality, sequences must be analyzed, and the lessons derived from this analysis must undergo synthesis. In this way, all the lessons of the world proletarian revolution were subject to analysis by Chairman Gonzalo and the PCP, allowing for a complete understanding of MLM to be presented to the world by 1988. Unfortunately, the RIM only adopted MLM at the point in which they were robbed of this direct Great Leadership, never completely grasping MLM but taking it up in form, only grasping it partially. This caused the left to face real setbacks and allowed for the right and center to mount a coup, which is visible in the pages of the unofficial organ of RIM (A World to Win magazine) which hosted numerous official RIM statements.

Understanding that this will be loathsome to JMP we will quote Chairman Gonzalo on the point of the relationship between analysis and synthesis, since he explains it masterfully and neatly exposes why one of the aspects without the other results in deviation:

“Pay attention to analysis and synthesis — these are two aspects of a contradiction and synthesis is the principal one. Analysis allows us to break down and set elements apart in order to achieve a better understanding, but this is only one aspect. It is not, nor can it ever be, the entire process of knowledge. It requires its other aspect — synthesis. It is synthesis which enables us to grasp the essence of knowledge. If there is no synthesis there is no qualitative leap in knowledge. Synthesis is the decisive aspect, the main aspect, the one which enables the formulation of objective laws.

“Grasping this question is a problem of an ideological nature. It is an essential part of the application of the Marxist theory of knowledge, of dialectical materialism. Grasping this point runs counter to bourgeois idealist ideology which strives to separate analysis from synthesis. From the standpoint of proletarian ideology, from the standpoint of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, these are two aspects of the same unity but synthesis is the principal aspect since it produces a higher level of knowledge, a qualitative change, a qualitative leap.

“There are two classic examples of this. One is the example of the clock. In order to understand its mechanism it is first necessary to take it apart. This allows us to know its components and the functions of each one of them. But if the clock is not put together again there is no clock, only its parts. Even if they were to be placed together in a group that would only constitute a pile of pieces, never a clock.

“The other example is the development of the various disciplines of natural science since the fifteenth century. This process historically demonstrates where lack of synthesis leads to. The great development of science enabled us to grasp various aspects of nature through studies such as mathematics, astronomy, physics, etc. But this development, entailing the breaking apart, the analytical process of science, its differentiation into various fields, often led to metaphysical theories.

“Even the eighteenth century, a century of great materialist scientific advance, produced metaphysical knowledge. Nevertheless, all this breaking into constituent parts, all this separation of fields of knowledge, laid the foundations for the qualitative leap. It generated the conditions, first for the appearance of Hegel’s idealist dialectics and, later, of Marx’s materialist dialectics.

“Therefore this breaking down required synthesis, a thoroughgoing condensation. It laid the ground and the appropriate conditions for that dialectical materialism achieved by Marx and Engels, principally by Marx. The arrival at this milestone, at the proletarian

outlook, at Marxist philosophy, at dialectical materialism, was a process linked to a powerful synthesis. It was in this same manner that we arrived at the central question of the proletarian outlook, at the question of the universality of contradiction, an historical qualitative leap of monumental importance.

“Both examples show the need for synthesis, for the qualitative leap. Therefore let us pay special attention to analysis and to synthesis, principally to synthesis.

“From the various contributions to the debate we can see a problem arising the process of breaking down into constituent parts leads to talk about ‘quotations’. The contributions say ‘quotations from the document’ or, ‘on reading the words of Marx’, or, ‘on grasping the quotations of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’. In this manner they fall into listing isolated quotations which are not applied to actual and current problems. In this way the lack of grasp of synthesis generates a problem: a failure to grasp the proletarian ideology as a unity — as Marxism–Leninism–Maoism. We can see this problem even in some peoples’ way of expressing themselves. For example, in one of the contributions the question of ‘Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, principally Maoism, and the fact that, here in Peru, this ideology’s creative application is Gonzalo Thought’ is barely mentioned a couple of times

“It is not sufficient to grasp only the facts. Wherever there is a problem one must seek the cause. This is an ideological question and since, in the realm of ideology, the contradiction between proletarian and bourgeois ideology manifests itself, there is always resistance and bourgeois ideology reflects itself in that specific and concrete moment in time as taking precedence over the proletarian ideology. This is but part and parcel of the struggle between these two ideologies which commonly arises in those inexperienced people who themselves are still in the midst of their ideological development. This entails the need to demolish bourgeois ideology in order to build up proletarian ideology. Without demolition there can be no construction. The dead weight of tradition, of old ideas and customs, of deformities in the ideological level, constitutes an encumbrance presenting strong resistance.

“Therein lies the need for a profound effort in the direction of transformation. Human beings are practical beings, not contemplative entities, particularly so when acting upon reality in order to change it in the service of the proletariat and the people. Hence humanity is capable of overcoming the old and obsolete ideology and of embracing the proletarian ideology, the only ideology able to comprehend and transform the world in the service of the class and the oppressed peoples.

“Very well. But, when studying, this contradiction is an issue of analysis and synthesis. From the standpoint of knowledge this is the driving force which generates a qualitative leap. In the absence of a correct handling of this contradiction problems will arise in the handling of the proletarian ideology. Therein, at this level, lies the root cause of the failure to take a stand for Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, principally Maoism, as universal truth, as the outlook uniting the communists of the whole world and, specifically, the failure to take a stand principally for Gonzalo Thought here in Peru for this, our Peruvian revolution. Taking up positions based on isolated quotations on the international situation or on the national political situation, on the questions of the Party and its Three Instruments, or on work among the masses, etc., reveals a failure to conceive of Marxism as a unity. When studying, to restrict oneself to the analysis and to fail in the handling of the synthesis as the principal factor, constitutes a problem of a bourgeois ideological character involving failure to carry out a qualitative leap. Taking a stand for Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, principally Maoism, as guide and center, is the axis upon which everything depends. It is this standpoint, the one which generates comprehension and the elucidating of the objective law, the grasping of which makes possible the changing of everything — nature, society and ideas.

“One must always learn this lesson well. Limiting oneself merely to analysis leads to metaphysics. Undertaking synthesis leads to dialectical materialism. In studying the document this outlook enables us to arrive at Marxism. Arriving at Marxism leads us to Leninism, and Leninism to Maoism. Of all these three, Maoism is principal. Moreover, Maoism leads us to Gonzalo Thought, which is the universal truth specific to the concrete reality of Peruvian society and specific to the concrete conditions of the class struggle today.

“It is synthesis which enables us to understand the document and to understand its Marxist character. To grasp the way in which the Party understands Marxism today while basing itself on the Marxist–Leninist–Maoist, Gonzalo Thought, thesis which holds that Maoism is the new and superior stage.

“All of us, communists, fighters and masses, must forge ourselves in the proletarian ideology — Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, Gonzalo Thought.”

History is a set of class contradictions, and hence the study of history is the study of these contradictions. A sequence must be broken down in order to be understood in its totality, the bourgeoisie divided from the proletariat, and with the elimination of the former, this process is eradicated with the revisionist position that a sequence is a

synthesis itself—exposing that JMP’s conception of MLM is that it has not been synthesized (according to him the PCP “failed,” and while he does not comment on the degeneration and dissolution of the RIM, this should qualify as having reached its conclusion and being liquidated by revisionism). The purpose of historical materialism is done away with for the superficial acceptance of the exact type that JMP poses regarding RIM. According to the logic of JMP, the PCP “failed” and therefore provided no synthesis, the synthesis was “consummated” in the RIM only after the “failure of the PCP” and therefore, even though the RIM also “failed” it contains the real synthesis!

In fact, the position that the “sequence is the synthesis” is the single thread linking all of his dollar store, bargain bin concepts. If the RIM sequence is the synthesis itself, there is no longer a need to analyze it and synthesize a way out of its quagmire, and it is then treated lifelessly without line struggle—a left, a right, and a center. Contrary to this ideologically bankrupt notion, the ICM has accomplished increased unity behind the banner of Chairman Gonzalo and is making heroic strides for a Unified International Maoist Conference. It is precisely the refusal to grasp how Maoism must be applied today that leaves thinkers like JMP stranded in the past, craving answers to their own quagmires. This, along with a tendency to ignore what the PCP was actually teaching the RIM, has them heavily leaning on bourgeois ideologies like postmodernism to answer things that they cannot answer with a mastery of Marxism.

Understanding that a sequence such as the GPCR must be analyzed and synthesized after its conclusion is essential to thinking through its fundamental problematic—the question of power. Mao died and his four leading comrades were imprisoned by the end of the GPCR, and hence were unable to analyze it in totality, and this charge was left to the forthcoming torchbearers—the PCP. The same is true for the RIM sequence, which is now undergoing interrogation so that synthesis of its experience is possible.

Importantly, our assertion is that the completed and harmonious system of MLM was present in the work of Chairman Gonzalo in 1982 (being presented to the world by 1988), 11 years before its formal acceptance by the RIM. The latter did not further develop Chairman Gonzalo’s contributions but hesitantly tailed behind them, advancing only so far in part, restrained by conservative apprehension and not articulated disagreement. This cannot be used to distort reality and proclaim that the RIM “consummated Maoism;” such a position is to claim that the PCP went “too far” in terms of ideology and practice and that restraint, holding on to Mao Zedong Thought, was the advance! They pose a “strategic retreat” from MLM only to smuggle in

eclecticism without merit and dogmatically cling to this deviation as if it were god's truth.

It is evident that the data produced by the sequence contains the lessons within it, but disassembled lessons themselves are not a synthesis. The process of synthesis is so important that Chairman Gonzalo highlighted its role as the principle aspect between analysis and synthesis. The so-called "failure" of the PCP does not discredit its role in this process, nor does it allow for the dismissal of the correct and universal contributions of Chairman Gonzalo any more than the total degeneration of the RIM can be used to dismiss MLM as a whole. We find inconsistency in the fact that the devotees of an uncritical reading of the RIM's history (lacking analysis and synthesis) simultaneously credit it with the "consummation of Maoism" and at the same time dismiss the PCP for its bend in the road, conveniently forgetting the fact that the RIM suffered its own bend in the road to the point of non-existence (unlike the PCP). We must also point out that the claim of "MLM being consummated" in 1993 places it well after the bend in the road of the Peruvian People's War, as a way to circumvent the monumental Great Leadership role of Chairman Gonzalo.

"Critique of Maoist Reason" expresses the above-described ideological coup clearly:

"Finally, Maoism was not synthesized by Gonzalo: as discussed in the previous chapter it must be understood as the product of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement of which the PCP, though significant for putting the question of Maoism on the map, was a member. That is, Gonzalo's early theorization of Maoism was bound to his particular context and it is only through the social process of the RIM, in a statement that his [sic] PCP endorsed, where we find a universal conception of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism that spills beyond the regional context of Peru."

Our point, which we have consistently made, is that many of the positions fundamental to MLM as taught to the ICM by the PCP were not Peruvian particularities or aspects only of Gonzalo Thought. If we were addressing Gonzalo Thought, we would agree in part; while aspects of Chairman Gonzalo's contributions are indeed universal, other aspects are specific to Peru. This is why the PCP has been consistent in its position that for the world the ideological line is expressed in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism, and for Peru it presents itself in the distinct form of mainly Gonzalo Thought. For the world it is mainly Maoism and in Peru it is mainly Gonzalo Thought. We must reiterate however that to understand MLM one has to understand Gonzalo Thought, as the Brazilian comrades have expressed so well:

“The Campaign for Maoism cannot make a great leap only with declarations, studies and debate if it does not advance in more People’s Wars in the world, in addition to further development of those that are taking place. On the other hand, no party can advance the central and principal task of reconstituting or constituting a CP to initiate the People’s War, without understanding and assuming the contributions of universal validity of Gonzalo thought, as an inseparable and indispensable part for the application of Maoism as ideological-political embodiment.

“That is why we reaffirm that Maoism is the third, new and superior stage of the ideology of the international proletariat, today’s Marxism. Gonzalo thought is the creative application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the Revolution in Peru through People’s War, without which we could not understand Maoism.”

It was through the specific application of Mao Zedong Thought to the Peruvian reality that allowed for MLM to be understood (synthesized) as the third and superior stage. The PCP was correct to state that People’s War is a universal and fundamental quality of MLM, and they were to correct to insist the same for militarization, concentric construction, and so on. The argument that the RIM was correct to dispense with these things in essence is nothing but an argument for diluting Maoist theory to appeal to those who wish to remain in the past, who superstitiously convince themselves that “the sequence is the synthesis.” By doing so, they go against the Marxist theory of knowledge and two-line struggle as the motive force of communist development. This dogma, too cowardly to gaze at its own reflection, instead projects its inherent insecurities on all who struggle for clarity—they call us the dogmatists. After all, they present no improvements to the concepts outlined by Gonzalo, they just arrest Maoist development for the sake of convenience.

Hence a “sequence” cannot itself be the “synthesis,” it has to be synthesized. Likewise, a previous sequence cannot be synthesized by the proceeding sequence—this diffuses, disorganizes, and decentralizes synthesis, which is a concentration of the information and a breakthrough in its application. A new sequence cannot be started without an analysis and synthesis of the former sequence. A synthesis is a combination and systemization of ideas to form a theory, the ideas of Mao Zedong Thought were combined by 1982 by Chairman Gonzalo to assert themselves as MLM. Over a decade later, the RIM did not advance this concentration, they only grabbed parts of it, grasping it formally but partially, and hence did not offer anything new. The argument that “the sequence is the synthesis” is an erasure, rank opportunism.

On top of this erasure, there exists even more opportunism—suggesting that because the PCP united with the minimum points of unity in RIM, that they did not see a need to bring things further and were not struggling within it according to principles. This thinking is reminiscent of Enver Hoxha and not at all up to Maoist standards. The implementation of any minimum program requires minimum unity, which was in fact accomplished by RIM, but matter does not remain in stasis, it remains in motion, driven by contradiction (in this case two-line struggle)—that is to say a struggle for unity, a higher level of ideological unity developing an improved program. By agreeing on the basic principle of Unity-Struggle-Unity, we are correct to appraise the role of the PCP as uniting in order to struggle for increased unity around Maoism within RIM (and we will say this as many times as we need to until those with ears use them). The conception of MLM by the Peruvian comrades did initiate and lead a People’s War, and this credential belongs to the PCP alone, as no other consistent RIM organization can claim to have done this before the PCP. What has their “improved” version of Maoism accomplished in practice? Where are the “inheritors” of the RIM today but taking a step back? Maoism must advance ever forward. The PCP creatively applied Mao Zedong thought in a new and different way, which allowed them to comprehend Maoism as a new and superior stage, and to concentrate these ideas into a new theory: MLM. This was not incomplete—it led the People’s War for a decade before the bend in the road and the RIM’s formal adoption of MLM.

While our critic insists that:

“Indeed the US MLMpM movement have designated my Continuity and Rupture, which was only ever a sum-up and thinking through of what the main currents of the Maoist international movement was asserting at the time, as putting forward a revisionist ‘theory of rupture’ and then claiming that it was tantamount to a rupture with Leninism. Reducing the dialectic of continuity-rupture to a ‘theory of rupture’, while a misrepresentation of what I actually argued, is perhaps the only way that those who understand revolutionary science as an unbroken/continuous destiny promised by Marx and Engels can conceive of a position that undermines such a political theology.”

In synthesis, “Continuity and Rupture” was not a summary of “the main currents” in the international movement, it was focused on elaborating the most conservative aspects of it in a more vulgar iteration, with less skill than its compatriots. It is not a matter of “pure continuity” or “pure rupture;” this is not, nor has it ever been the argument. It is precisely a matter of what is being continued and what is being ruptured with. We view this matter with regard to dialectical materialism. The book is a continuity with the

worst aspects of RIM, a continuity with the worst aspects of Badiou, Bettelheim, etc., and a continuity with “MLM” in form but a rupture with it in essence, a rupture from the vital role and lessons imparted by the PCP, and yes, a rupture with many vital aspects of Leninism, which it launches many of its attacks against without declaring so openly. Of course, by situating itself within the Marxist tradition, at least in form, it presents continuity with some true aspects as well.

Let’s look at the argument posed by “Critique of Maoist Reason” a little closer:

“According to this view [belonging to those who uphold the universal contributions of Chairman Gonzalo], the emergence of Maoism is nothing more than a sequence that could not have been otherwise, like Hegel’s Geist, from the very beginning. The great thinkers, like Napoleon, are programmed moments from the potential seed in the work of Marx and Engels that will actualize themselves at unavoidable historical moments. In this sense, Maoism is reached according to a quantitative arithmetic that is prophetic: Marx + Engels + Lenin + Stalin + Mao + Gonzalo.”

This is mainly an incorrect assessment, while it is true that Marxists hold the view that the class struggle inevitably will produce proletarian revolutionaries who will grasp out for the science of Marxism, it is false that our view is deterministic like Hegel’s Geist. Chairman Gonzalo expresses the issue in his 1988 interview:

“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.”

We have published on this topic in the article “Guiding Thought the Guarantor of Victory,” with an updated conclusion based on correct criticism from our comrades:

“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...”

It is Engels and Chairman Gonzalo who are teaching this point, not Hegel. If the argument is that Engels and Gonzalo are suffering from Hegelian logic and have not

“ruptured” into “Maoist reason” then the author should direct his criticism appropriately rather than raising phantoms. In fact, the unity of opposites between necessity and chance in the emergence of great leadership, specifically does away with Hegelian determinism.

“Critique of Maoist Reason” continues:

“to claim that Maoism is the third and highest stage of revolutionary theory is to in fact claim some notion of rupture along with a foundational notion of continuity gleaned from the unity of related stages. Asserting that one theoretical stage is higher than another is to say that is not the same as the previous stage, is in some form of discontinuity, because to be logically continuous is to be logically identical, which means that there can be no higher stages just as there can be no lower stages. Something new is not in perfect continuity with the old even if this newness highlights and unlocks truths and germinal insights in older moments— which would be the continuity preserved in such a theoretical development.”

Continuity in development does not even imply on its own an identical nature. Continuity, in fact, even within a specific stage, reaches milestones and developments without having the overall leap into a new stage. It is far-fetched to suggest that Marxism upon its very inception remained identical to the Marxism practiced at the start of the Russian Revolution. So yes, one stage is not identical to the next—this argument has not been made by anyone—and even within a stage, things do not remain identical. There exist quality and quantity (understood as a unity of opposites) cycles inside of each stage, otherwise one stage leading to a higher would be impossible. To be logically continuous is not to be logically identical, logic itself grows, changes, and develops as it is being applied, mistakes being corrected through theoretical and organic adjustments do not require rupture, at least not in the sense that it is used by JMP.

Instead of the mire posed by the already muddled “continuity and rupture” discourse, we would rather express similar concepts with the terminology used by Mao when developing dialectical materialism on the basis of the only fundamental law (contradiction), which would be to speak of affirmation and negation. While Marxism was on one hand affirmed totally by Marxism-Leninism through the creative application of Marxism to Lenin’s time and the conditions, Marxism-Leninism only negated Marxism as a *standalone* stage, as Stalin insisted there was no Marxism completely outside of Marxism-Leninism. It was affirmed in essence and negated in the form which existed prior to Lenin’s theoretical interventions. Lenin did not correct the course of an

inherently flawed Marxism that would require “rupture” in the JMP sense, he affirmed Marxism with its creative application, and this experience negated standalone Marxism without Leninism, to allow Marxism to stand alone would be to counterpose Marxism to Leninism. For all its terminology, the “dialectical materialism” contained in both “Continuity and Rupture” and “Critique of Maoist Reason” is nothing but compartmentalist formalism itself, a very amateur and stale understanding of philosophy. We must ask genuinely what was so false in Marxism that Lenin had to negate it? We adhere to principles of affirming what is correct and negating what is incorrect, so the question demands an answer. Likewise, Marxism–Leninism was correct, and Mao was not negating, he was developing it, and the negation was that of Marxism–Leninism still existing without Maoism. The “continuity and rupture” theory uses a dialectical materialist appearance but does not contain a dialectical materialist core. It is a piece of fruit with appealing skin, but when you bite into it, the flesh is rotten. After all, its real argument is that Marxism–Leninism was incorrect or flawed inherently, and that these flaws had to be “ruptured with.” This is so similar to the essence of Avakianism that we can categorize them in the same group—the only difference is that JMP wants to keep up the appearance of Maoism to better attack it, while Avakian, due to his monumental egoism, has to shed the Maoist appearance to better promote his own self-appraisal of genius. This is why we deem JMP’s not so original interventions as “Avakianism without Avakian.”

We must elaborate on this latter point. Avakian, by way of being self-obsessed, has done the world a favor by discarding his ragged “Maoist” garb, he is now naked and should be filled with shame. We cannot call him a traitor because he was never really on our side. JMP however represents a more toxic strand of the same virus, only his maintenance of “Maoist” garb allows the promotion of opportunism within Maoism, in fact as Maoism itself. In the struggle to impose Maoism, we can denounce Avakian, who has shown himself out, and at the same time fiercely struggle against his proteges who still insist on calling themselves MLM. Ideological struggle here must take place and we proceed from the principle that most can be convinced to break with Avakianism fully.

What follows this argument in “Critique of Maoist Reason” is the warn-out argument that Maoists are confusing non-antagonistic contradictions for antagonistic ones. Pages of the book are dedicated to this, but again these claims are not substantiated by any fact so we will not respond in full to it and simply state that mistakes are made in the handling and identification of types of contradiction, but this does not inform the character of the ideology itself. It is possible to handle an antagonistic contradiction with antagonism but lack the subjective capability of winning in this attack, hence errors

can be made even when the contradiction is correctly identified. The best example of this is that the contradiction between the people and the police is antagonistic, yet in the absence of appropriate subjective conditions, it would be an error to handle every forced interaction with the police with the use of antagonistic responses. The question still has to be handled tactically, regardless of the nature of the contradiction. The nature of the contradiction determines the strategic method of resolving it absolutely.

The contradiction between revisionism and Marxism remains antagonistic at all times objectively. This is not to imply that everyone misled by revisionism has to be dealt with antagonistically, nonetheless we find sloppy handling of revisionism from JMP and company:

“[T]he forcing of antagonism on the part of the Avakianites was a good thing for the rest of the Maoist movement because it revealed the RCP–USA’s revisionism quite quickly and resulted in a useful series of demarcations. However, it is notable that the group that pushed this contradiction into antagonism was the locus of revisionism. Those who persist in treating all contradictions as antagonistic will most likely be those through whom revisionism will manifest.”

There are a few big assumptions here: first is the assumption that the contradiction between Avakian’s attempt to liquidate Maoism internationally, replacing it with his own “New Synthesis,” and the Maoist movement’s need to exist and uphold Maoism was non–antagonistic. This included the direct slander against Chairman Gonzalo, propping up the Right Opportunist Line in Peru, which serves the agenda of the old Peruvian state and the CIA—it is and was antagonistic. It is reasonable and in fact sensible to attempt to persuade others non–antagonistically to reject Avakianism, but we should not mistake the contradiction itself as non–antagonistic since we can only situate this contradiction with an understanding of class struggle between the two main forces: the proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Maoism holds that imperialism and revisionism have to be combated inseparably and without relent, making it very clear that the contradiction between revolutionaries and revisionists is antagonistic. The second major assumption JMP makes is that treating revisionism antagonistically makes one a revisionist or prone to revisionism. This last assumption gives a lifeline to revisionism and attacks Maoism, forbidding Maoists from combating revisionism relentlessly and inseparably. This furthers the goal of preserving Avakianism without Avakian.

We raise no objection to the collusion and contention between dogmatism and eclecticism and have pointed out that even the critics we are dealing with here express this character. Those who uphold an eclectic mess of theory are most typically dogmatic adherents to this mess. Likewise, those who dogmatically cling to history, rejecting what is newly formulated from it (militarization and concentric construction for instance), tend toward desperately grasping for imported frameworks from the bourgeoisie.

The commentary on eclecticism and dogmatism is useful, especially for understanding the conditions in Canada, which have driven the former leadership of one group calling itself the PCR-RCP into the mud of post-Maoism (“Jumping from the Leninist Family Tree”) and the other tiny band to dive headfirst into the most lifeless dogmatic reading of Maoism, which insists that Mao Zedong Thought and Maoism are identical (the Montreal-based fossil clique). The former were the most dedicated students of JMP and the latter were his old comrades. This alone does not provide commentary on his work, it merely highlights the fact that eclecticism and dogmatism plague the movements calling themselves Maoist in Canada, rendering them to near-nonexistence, a husk in Montreal and a declining presence throughout the rest of country. This is not the case for the countries he names explicitly in his work. He notes that Brazil has seen the growth of Maoism but does not mention the same about the US, however it is evident for anyone following the movement in the US, and it would be evident to him as well had he actually investigated properly in preparation for his book. The contemporary Maoist movement in the US has been finding its footing for just over five years, and it has been marked by growth and consolidation, guided by its ideology. We should consider the practical role of ideology in getting results and not discount that. Why is the dogmatism (according to JMP) seeing to the growth (here we speak mainly of quality but also of quantity) of the US Maoist movement, and the dogmatism in Canada doing just the opposite?

Following “Critique of Maoist Reason” to its inevitable conclusion results in the liquidation of two-line struggle. For instance, it states that:

“The MLMpM tendency of Maoism, along with tendencies of Maoist reason that function in a similar manner, is not as different from the Avakianite revisionism as it would like to pretend. On the one hand, this tendency is antagonistic to all theoretical expressions that seem to betray the Marxist classics, locking itself into the standpoint of theological purity. On the other hand, it promotes the militarization of the party and jefatura— which are not directly found in the classics and can indeed be treated as eclectic developments— as doctrinaire.”

The above, in a very unqualified treatment of theory, dismisses upholding the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao as dogmatism, while at the same time dismissing necessary articulations and development of their works as eclecticism. If the author were to genuinely engage with the theory, he would comprehend that in each case the developments are derived from the work of the banners of the ideology—that is mainly Marx, Lenin, and Mao. The principles of leadership are found in Lenin’s work, and its creative application inevitably results in development. Militarization of the Communist Parties deals with specific questions largely derived from the GPCR. The argument of “Critique of Maoist Reason” is against anyone not following the nebulous Mao-ish ideas and actually struggling to more clearly define the ideology, while defending it from distortion and upholding its specific application in which it develops. We also argue that there is a basis for militarization of the Party in Lenin’s work, the magazine *El Maoista* expresses this in an article written by the Brazilian comrades, but it would seem JMP remains unaware of what his subject actually believes or is at ease with ignoring it:

“The conception of Militarized Communist Party has the beginning of its formulation with Chairman Mao, and is developed and completed with Chairman Gonzalo, however the need for it and its realization was already put forward and took place in embryonic form with Lenin. Because of this and in order to highlight the importance of the celebration of the 100 years of the Great Socialist October Revolution, we will then highlight what was developed by Lenin regarding the principles of the party of a New Type, Communist Party, to show its full validity in the Militarized Communist Party.”

To argue against a concept, you must at the very least familiarize yourself with it. The statement that militarization is not found in classic texts is as incorrect as the idea that it is a doctrinaire and eclectic addition. As the above points out, it was completed by Chairman Gonzalo, but did not simply emerge from his mind—it emerged from the practice of the ICM in class struggle, beginning with Mao, but in its embryonic form with Lenin and the Bolsheviks and was completed, in the theoretical sense by Gonzalo. In any case, JMP systematically fails to engage with the theory itself, as articulated by Peruvian, Brazilian, or even US sources. Instead, he dismisses the theory as “eclectic,” “doctrinaire,” and “dogmatic” with a mere wave of the hand. This lack of seriousness exposes irresponsible positions in his work, which excludes the work from the category of scientific.

“Critique of Maoist Reason” would be greatly benefited by better editors, at times the whole chapter in question reads like a very long social media screed:

“some of the most faithful adherents to this tendency openly proclaim their devotion to eclecticism by claiming that we should only read the works of Gonzalo and the PCP because everything else to date, and everything produced by ongoing people’s wars, is infected with revisionism.”

It is very tedious to engage with the ridiculous phantoms that haunt the mind of JMP. Since he and his editors fail miserably to cite their work, we must issue criticism for their total lack of responsibility to situate their arguments in reality—they do not seek truth from the facts. Who are these “most faithful adherents?” And where can we find their “open proclamation?” If such a position exists, it might be useful to examine it, and of course, to criticize it. We are forced to consider the fact that this is an intentionally vague accusation to portray his ideological opponents in the ICM as sectarian and senseless, which would be a stand-in for an actual argument—make up a position, then attack that with no regard for reality.

Following the work of the publications and organizations he has managed to name, would quickly shred this allegation to ribbons. *Struggle Sessions* has relied upon the work of Charu Majumdar and Ibrahim Kaypakkaya in making specific arguments many times, and both of these men are quite essential to the People’s Wars in India and Turkey. This is not a major sticking point, but we are right to demand honest engagement from JMP at the very least. Beyond this, all those who he seeks to label here would staunchly reject this claim—no one, least of all Maoists, are accusing the great teachers and leaders of Marxism of revisionism. A strange accusation coming from a man who just proclaimed that we Maoists uphold perfect continuity, and recite Marx, etc., with religious fervor.

We would remind both our readers and his, that the news and international organs most closely associated with the Maoist movement that JMP is targeting in chapter 4 of “Critique of Maoist Reason” consistently publish on the People’s War in India, covering campaigns and defending political prisoners of that country as well as highlighting numerous celebrations of important dates related to the People’s Wars. His criticism is so much hot air that it cannot even be cited with any evidence. We encounter more false claims based on a failure to actually read our journal and others:

“The US online principally Maoist journal *Struggle Sessions* is evidence of such assimilated thought: nearly every article is an ad hoc exercise in maintaining the boundaries, refusing to think through any critiques of its particular variant of Maoism, and demonstrating the theological practice of repeating slogans and terms, defining

these terms in the relation to the unquestioned truth of the tendency, and generally failing to think its own thought.”

Our journal has covered a variety of concepts and issues in which we have had to think for ourselves. In some cases, it is true that we have defended long-established Marxist positions against postmodernist trends taken as common sense within the left in imperialist countries, hence we denounce the frameworks of “sex work” from a Marxist perspective.

We have also provided space in our journal for contending views with the 100 Flowers section, in this section we have promoted thinking and two-line struggle. Any theoretical journal should seek to defend and explain Marxist theory, as well as to use it to address major and minor disagreements. We insist that those who are committed to rupturing from established positions of the ICM should qualify the necessity of this, and not just pretend that the position they are rupturing from is non-existent.

We have written on topics which are relatively newer and not addressed in any of the classics, such as the role of postmodernism as an imperialist cultural export, and the mutations from the French to the US variants. We have also addressed social media, putting forward material reasons for why it is a faulty place to gain data and conduct communist propaganda. Again, the charges placed by JMP do not stick, except in the minds of the already-committed who read his work but not our journal.

Much of our work is necessarily defending Maoism from distortion—this is a requirement when there are those who misrepresent your arguments. We have earned special ire from JMP, which we recognize and celebrate, as we are the first MLM journal to write articles exposing his role as a hackneyed theorist and pseudo-intellectual. We are not at all ashamed of this, someone needed to do it. His bad ideas were causing real problems in the US movement, until demarcation began taking place in a real way. We do not seek to harm or defame the man; we seek to combat his ideas without relenting. In his book and various interviews it is clear that he is wounded and takes political line struggle personally, and seeks to avoid the political essence of the two line struggle. This is also evident in his consistent denial of the charges made against him, while still failing to provide a convincing theoretical argument.

Some months ago, JMP made reckless and unfounded accusations against the revolutionary news service, *Tribune of the People*, calling them “Covid Truthers.” After being confronted with direct quotations from the publication that refuted this, *he did*

the right thing, and admitted that his view was derived from something he heard on Twitter and did not actually investigate. This seems to us to be the JMP method of investigation and analysis passing for revolutionary theory—he hears things on Twitter and does not bother to perform any deeper investigation. Even by bourgeois standards, this is not an acceptable form of intellectual engagement. We will await the citations for his claims, but do not hold out any hope that he or his editors will take responsibility for their straw man arguments, sectarianism, and practice of basing views off what they hear on Twitter, or Facebook, etc.

Conclusion

To give “Critique of Maoist Reason” the attention it deserves would require a series of articles, dealing with the entirety of its contents. This is not possible to release all at once, and will hopefully be more feasible with time. Focusing on the chapters that are most pertinent for us must be understood as a starting point and not a finishing one.

On our disagreements with the publishers of “Critique of Maoist Reason”:

We would be negligent in our duties if we failed to contextualize the book in the struggles facing our movement, and its relationship to “Foreign Language Press,” which is a pet project from the same individual behind the sub-par news site Redspark. This individual can only be considered a servant for the white line in the ICM, who seeks to condemn Maoism and promote a watered-down variant of it. The material he chooses to publish reflects this political line. The project began as a hobby for this servant of the white line. It started by publishing “the Collected Works of the PCP. Vol 1 of 4” with very bad editing and even worse translations, many of which were sourced in part from RCP-USA translations, which have been known to be imprecise in such a way as to promote distortions. However, his first release sold quickly and revived a lot of interest in the PCP. The servant of the white line would never publish the other 3 volumes or any other material of the PCP after this.

As far as his role in Redspark, the website ceased all coverage of the US Maoist movement after a group of collectives in the US denounced a clique of his friends and allies, the former rightist-liquidators of Germany Jugendwiderstand, who have since collapsed. This website has instead interviewed “US Maoists” who are disorganized and unknown to the actual movement, in an effort to prop up a counter-pole sympathetic to the white line in the ICM. On top of this, the web page which portrays itself as news simply alters words from bourgeois articles, changing the word “terrorist” to “Maoist,”

etc. but leaving the rest of the content intact uncritically. This exposes the right opportunism of the individual in charge, his control over the project and the fact that he relies on friends he makes on the internet who are politically under-developed for this work (according to some of the websites former contributors).

Word adjustments suffice for this opportunist when the analysis remains essentially the same and the individual lacks the dedication to actually write new articles about what is going on in the world and instead opts to just change the form of bourgeois anti-communist articles, a shoddy attempt at internationalist news. The more recent inclusion of original content (some of it is very good even) does not absolve or transform the project or its role as an agent of international revisionism, which seeks to prop up revisionists in other countries. The individual was based in the Netherlands at the office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF-P), and his view of internationalism is as despicable as his role as a functionary of revisionism. What is clear is that the website fails to live up to its own objectives, a Google news search would be more effective and less insulting to the reader, because at least then the articles are openly bourgeois and do not try to masquerade as red.

We denounce “Foreign Language Press” and are not all surprised that it would release such shoddy material as “Critique of Maoist Reason,” which spews allegations without citing them, relying on the a priori prejudice of their small bubble audience. They preach to the converted in hopes that their myths become common sense assumption about the Maoist movement. This former assistant of Jose Maria Sison finds common ground with JMP for the purpose of attacking Maoism and dispensing with it, even if the two are likely to disagree on Sison’s definition of Maoism, rejection of the universality of people’s war, and embarrassing social media behavior.

On our disagreements with Ajith:

Unlike JMP or “FLP” we consider Ajith a qualified and well-respected revolutionary who has produced many useful theoretical texts which should be seriously examined. We intend to do this in the most comradely way possible, stating our disagreements here only briefly. We of course reject the conflation of Great Leadership with the “personality cult” and insist on more discussion around this topic. This disagreement does not transition into a denunciation of comrade Ajith, who we celebrate the liberation of and extend respect and gratitude toward with high revolutionary honors. His work speaks for itself as well as his revolutionary life. Opportunists, like the one we addressed in our article “Cackle of Hens,” have taken his nuanced positions and vulgarized them,

denigrating his work and using it to dispense with Leninism in ways that Ajith himself has never done. We must be extremely clear on this: we do not consider the theory of JMP or other opportunists to be in accordance with what is being said by Ajith, even if they speak on similar topics and share some positions.

JMP attempts to misrepresent our views and others when he states, again without any citation of Maoist publications or organizations, that:

“I am well aware that Ajith is now being called a ‘rightist’ by those elements of the Maoist milieu who would lock us into an emaciated version of Maoism that has not developed since the possibility of such a new stage was first conceived. This charge of ‘rightism’, though, is merely rhetorical since it is only an insult thrown out by those who see themselves as properly left and thus cannot conceive of any deviation from their line as anything but rightist.”

We have already discussed this as an attempt to divide and insist that it is baseless. We intend to expose the methods of opportunism to divide and not unite, via what we have to state is a collusion between the opportunists in Canada and the agents behind “Foreign Language Press” to distort our views and the views of others to maximize division and denigrate comradely debate. We do not consider Ajith to be a right opportunist. We disagree with some of his articulations and support and encourage struggling over these disagreements, however we do not assume our journal has met the qualification to do so effectively and trust that more experienced comrades will rise to this task when needed. We are not aware of any legitimate Maoist publication or organization labeling comrade Ajith as a rightist, and we would not support such reckless labeling without proving this claim with comprehensive engagement with his theoretical work. We simply believe it is untrue, a fabrication from JMP and his co-conspirators. We leave the burden of proof to JMP and “FLP” and will take a failure to respond as an admission of guilt. Only desperate vagrants who hang onto the fringes of the movement dare make such baseless allegations or publish such trash. These are spurious and offensive, and they should be held to task for making them, even by those sympathetic to their political line.

Concluding remarks on “Critique of Maoist Reason”:

Through ignoring the two-line struggle within RIM, the author fails to highlight how the RIM’s conception advanced, perfected, or completed what was put forward by the PCP. There is no attempt at all to do this, the PCP is just fully conflated with RIM as if the RIM

were monolithic. It is not done because it is not doable—there is no evidence to support the bogus “consummation” theory. JMP is such a terrible philosopher that he cannot even begin to approach the question of internal contradictions to his so called “PCP–RIM sequence” even though he claims it to be the very synthesis of Maoism.

JMP acknowledges the differences in the viewpoints while at the same time shirking the duty to express exactly how the RIM answered correctly the questions that the PCP answered differently. Instead of conceptualizing the PCP as a dull patch on the sword of Maoism, as JMP alludes, we should insist that it was in fact the blacksmith who forged and brandished the sword. Combining the raw material of all the most important revolutionary struggles known to mankind. Likewise, we Maoists will not be ground away by time as the opportunists hope, and they lack the will power and skill to defeat us. Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, principally Maoism will be imposed as the sole command and guide of the world proletarian revolution. This is already happening and there is nothing the naysayers can do to drive the tide out to sea, their desperate gesticulations are that of frightened and cornered cowards and nothing more.

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