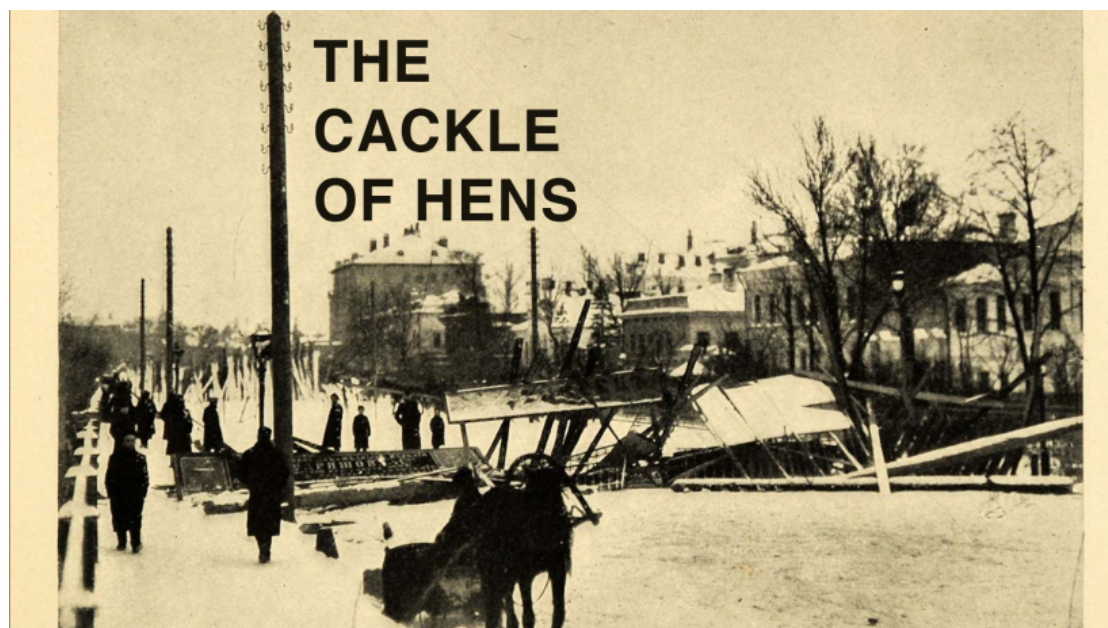


The Cackle of Hens:

JANUARY 13, 2019

STRUGGLESSESSIONS



A response to the attacks on our German Comrades by the Norwegian blog “MLM Thoughts”

“[...] of course, in the backyard of the working class movement, among the dung heaps, hens will cackle over the mistakes committed by the great Communist”- Lenin

The second post from “MLM Thoughts” continues its opportunist attacks against the red line in the imperialist countries; while the first assault on the concluded Red Guards Austin project is not worth public comment, we have chosen to return fire at the article “Gonzalo and Ultra-left Deviation”.

This article, by attacking the website Dem Volke Dienen is making an attack on MLM in an effort to water it down with hollow populism. The author insists that the German comrades seek to mechanically apply the teachings of the great Chairman Gonzalo; in reality the German comrades put forward a fairly uncontroversial universal position which he quotes:

“... but the basic condition is that we strictly apply the ‘three with’, as President Gonzalo taught us: Work with, live with and fight with the masses. Communists should live according to the needs of the revolution. Generally, comrades should live with the widest and deepest masses, sharing every aspect of the lives of the masses. Communists should have a personal production in the sector where they must develop their respective mass work.”

This quotation expresses three principles, which are summed up in one Maoist principle: do not distance oneself from the masses! While the rightist blog attempts to liquidate the role and function of the vanguard Party by encouraging mass recruitment at the expense of ideology and security he has no qualms with objecting to being among the masses. All of Maoism entails living among the people you hope to organize, working in production alongside them and fighting by their side. There is nothing “mechanical” in this position; the rightist simply despises the masses, showing a preference for petty bourgeois comfort. Having personal production in the sector within which one develops their work does not limit oneself to the factory; if one is organizing the women’s struggle one must be among working women, and if we are to organize working class students we must do so as students and from the outside both.

His misreading of their position exposed:

“In Germany, Sweden and Norway, there is much longer between everyone who is receptive to being able to organize themselves. There are also fewer large industrial workplaces today in these countries – it is therefore not possible for everyone to come to a workplace with many

employees. When you work with few people, the recruitment basis becomes too small. My experience is that the largest recruitment base is with proletarian youth and most of all with politically engaged youth”

There are a few issues with this analysis: he mentions three imperialist countries and attempts to use the role of finance capital to argue that there is no worthy proletariat to organize, while simultaneously arguing there is a large amount of proletarian youth! “Fewer” large industrial workplaces do not and never have been a pardon to avoid point of production struggles among the proletariat. There were fewer factories in China and Russia during their revolutionary upsurge, none the less this class and its forces were at no point neglected. Norway, Sweden, and Germany all have a sizable proletariat, with sizable proletarian enclaves in all their major cities. Even if large factories are not an option, living among, working among, and fighting alongside the proletariat are still necessities. We are offered no political economic analysis of factory recession from the author, so further engagement on this is limited. The German comrades state that we must organize the widest and deepest masses, while the right opportunist only hears “working with few people”.

While student and youth organizing are necessary, they do not outweigh the importance of organizing actual workers. Rightists in imperialist countries—following the line of this author—have more or less reduced themselves to little more than campus clubs for protest-hopping young people, isolated from the working class. While our German comrades speak from a position of real life organizing in their conditions, our Norwegian blogger simply is promoting his own personal opinion. Once students are recruited into a Communist Party the distinction between worker and student becomes irrelevant; this does not excuse orienting only toward students and excluding workers.

To puff up his argument against the Party of professional revolutionaries the blogger tries to dust off an article from Lenin: here he is using Lenin in 1905 to attack Lenin’s classic *What Is to Be Done?* (Trying to copy Ajith, but distorting his work in the process). Using Lenin to negate Leninism is as tired and old a trick as using Marx to attack Marxism. While *What Is to Be Done?* has been required study material for Communists around the world as the principle source where Lenin developed his theory of the vanguard Party, and the 1905 text “New Tasks and New Forces” has not been elevated to anywhere near such stature, it is not without its merits.

Far from being an attack on any sort of “ultra-leftist” Lenin’s “New Tasks and New Forces” actually promotes methods of mass work as an attack on right opportunists:

“Once again, excessive (and very often foolish) repetition of the word ‘class’ and belittlement of the Party’s tasks in regard to the class *are used to justify the fact that Social-Democracy is lagging behind the urgent needs of the proletariat*. The slogan ‘workers’ independent activity’ is again being misused by people who worship the lower forms of activity and ignore the higher forms of really Social-Democratic independent activity, the really revolutionary initiative of the proletariat itself.” –Lenin “New Tasks and New Forces”, emphasis ours.

Lenin, far from opposing his early theories contained in *What Is to Be Done*, is speaking of the Party lagging behind the mass movement, *a movement which already exists*. He is not insisting that the Party be opened up to just anyone and accept a lower standard than that of professional revolutionary. Most importantly Lenin is speaking of the way in which *professional revolutionaries lead the masses in existing mass struggle and train them to become members of the Party*.

Lenin puts forward the titular New Tasks as: “to extend our agitation to new strata of the urban and rural poor; to build up a broader, more flexible, and stronger organization; to prepare the uprising and to arm the people; and, to these ends, to conclude agreements with the revolutionary democrats.”

Lenin, being a dialectical materialist understood that the relationship of legal to illegal could only go so far:

“The present situation has done more than merely ‘legalize’ much of what was formerly banned. It has widened the movement to such an extent that, regardless of government legalization, many things that were considered and actually were within reach only of revolutionaries have now entered the sphere of practice, have become customary and accessible to the masses.”

Due to developing conditions, the masses of Russia had now advanced to the point of grasping many things that formerly only professional revolutionaries could reach—this speaks to a quality among the masses and is clearly a conditional quality which determines a quantity of the masses being recruited and trained by the Party:

“we must considerably increase the membership of all Party and Party-connected organizations in order to be able *to keep up to some extent with the stream of popular revolutionary energy which has been a hundred fold strengthened*.” (Emphasis original)

Norway, Sweden, and Germany—the example countries given by our rightist—have no Communist Parties and are in reality making great strides in the reconstitution of their Parties. Reconstitution of these Parties is the principle task of the Maoists there. This is lost on our rightist who assumes that the legal status of these groups determines that they must, right now, develop broad parties which draw in masses who are decidedly less class conscious than those who were in daily rebellion in 1905 Russia—his opportunist reading of Lenin only tells him what he wants to hear; it cannot however trick actual students of Lenin. Lenin did not see his 1905 work as a rupture with his 1902 work:

“We must remember that our ‘doctrinaire’ faithfulness to Marxism is now being reinforced by the march of revolutionary events, which is everywhere furnishing *object lessons to the masses* and that all these lessons confirm precisely our dogma.” (Emphasis original)

Unlike our right opportunist blogger, Lenin did not favor opening Party doors wide just because the masses had reached a higher level of class consciousness in response to the upsurge of 1905:

“Their mood of protest and their sympathy for the cause of international revolutionary Social-Democracy in themselves suffice, provided the Social-Democrats work effectively among them, for these circles of *sympathizers* under the impact of events to be transformed at first into democratic assistants and then into convinced members of the Social-Democratic working-class party.” (Emphasis original)

Lenin outlines stage-like recruitment, that is to say, the cultivation of cadres through class struggle, through contact with revolutionaries, and then (and only then) can these be recruited to the Party where their training continues. Lenin’s position was that the period required wartime standards of enlistment.

Our argument is fairly simple; it conforms to both the Lenin of 1902 and of 1905 which are consistent. The Party of professional revolutionaries trains new Communists in class struggle and prepares them ideologically to become its cadres—the Party grows through People’s War and grows the People’s War in turn with its mass work. Our German comrades do not differ from us in this respect, for it is not them who complain of a lack of capable cadres. Our blogger on the other hand finds himself without an organization to speak through and must resort to making his attacks from personal blogs. Maoists have always understood, and have numerous historical examples of, Parties growing this way—through class struggle and principally though war. The size of a Party (or Party reconstitution effort) by itself with no regard to its quality is no way to make an analysis, as it only sees half of the contradiction.

Mao expressed great optimism in this regard by insisting that with the mass line and with given conditions all things become available including recruits:

“a leading group should be formed in each unit in the course of the movement, made up of a small number of activists and with the heads of the given unit as its nucleus, and that this leading group should link itself closely with the masses taking part in the movement. However active the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses. On the other hand, if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level.”

He continues:

“A leading group that is genuinely united and linked with the masses can be formed only gradually in the process of mass struggle, and not in isolation from it. In the process of a great struggle, the composition of the leading group in most cases should not and cannot remain entirely unchanged throughout the initial, middle and final stages; the activists who come forward in the course of the struggle must constantly be promoted to replace those original members of the leading group who are inferior by comparison or who have degenerated. One fundamental reason why the work in many places and many organizations cannot be pushed ahead is the lack of a leading group which is united, linked with the masses and kept constantly healthy. A school of a hundred people certainly cannot be run well if it does not have a leading group of several people; or a dozen or more, which is formed in accordance with the actual circumstances (and not thrown together artificially) and is composed of the most active, upright and alert of the teachers, the other staff and the students. In every organization, school, army unit, factory or village, whether large or small, we should give effect to the ninth of Stalin’s twelve conditions for the bolshevization of the Party, namely, that on the establishment of a nucleus of leadership. The criteria for such a leading group should be the four which Dimitrov enumerated in his discussion of cadres policy—absolute devotion to the cause, contact with the masses, ability independently to find one’s bearings and observance of discipline. Whether in carrying out the central tasks—war, production, education (including rectification)—or in checking-up on work, examining the cadres’ histories, or in other activities, it is necessary to adopt the method of linking the leading group with the masses, in addition to that of linking the general call with particular guidance.” –Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership”.

Our rightist insists:

“In reality, most experienced cadres will have to choose between work and family towards continuing as organized communists. The result is that we will be left with a small group consisting of militant students, schoolchildren and unemployed people.”

By placing ourselves among the proletariat we do not see a contradiction which requires us to choose work, family, or organizing as Communists. We organize our workplaces and our families as Communists! If these were to come into irreconcilable contradiction for other reasons, all Communists would choose Communist organizing over any other consideration. What is more, there is no choice here for the worker; he or she is bound by their class, their only interest is in revolution and making revolution, once this necessity is grasped they are on their way to becoming Communists. It is the petty bourgeois class and its class stand which ponders the choice between work, family, and organizing—this is a hallmark of their lack of discipline which places individual and familial pursuit over organizing or even in direct opposition to it. Our blogger’s conclusion here is particularly disturbing: only unemployed people have the time to be communist organizers!

What is more, the blogger has a mistaken idea of the word “militant”: in his subjectivism he only views one role for the militant:

“What we need, however, is a sea of different people who contribute differently in building the party. We need the experienced comrades who no longer have the same amount of time or desire to join all kinds of militant actions.”

Being a militant is not reduced to always participating in “all kinds of militant actions”. There is such thing as militancy in ideology, in theory, in leadership etc. By considering militant only to be frontline fighters engaged in at-risk activity he excludes some of the greatest Party militants in the whole ICM. Lenin led much of the revolution from exile with ideological militancy; he led other portions from meetings and offices—no one dare claim that Lenin was not a militant. Gonzalo, like Lenin, was seldom seen on the frontlines of the war with gun in hand, in fact there is no report of either of these great leaders taking such a post—they were nonetheless the most shining examples of militancy. Militancy means fervently fighting for a cause; this is a standard that all Communists should hold when developing cadres.

Continuing his attacks on the comrades in Germany our blogger states:

“Even worse, this article is translated into several languages and spread like good Maoism. It does not make it any better for the author here that he tries to legitimize himself behind the fact that Lenin used such harsh words against actual demagogues in his day.”

The German comrades, with their blood and their tireless internationalism, have earned the love and respect of Maoists around the world. Their fight is ours. While they are well equipped to respond to this blogger themselves, we take this attack as an attack on the ICM and will return fire. The articles from Germany reach the world through translation due to the quality of their work and their analysis, unlike the musing and speculation of this gnat who issues his personal opinion from a personal blog; these are lighter than air, and obviously international activists are not clamoring to make translations.

He concludes his article with a sham disclaimer:

“This article is not one attack on Gonzalo. Gonzalo is a skilled Maoist theorist and the one who more than any other has summarize Maoism. This article is part of an combat of puritanical Ultra-left deviation spread by several MLM organizations labeled with Gonzalo’s banner. Ultra-left deviation is just as reactionary as right-wing deviation, and must therefore also be combated.”

The article may not be a direct attack on Gonzalo the person, but it serves as an attack on his teachings and some of his best students, which is, of course, an indirect attack on Gonzalo. Like his first article, our blogger makes speculation that there exists in the Maoist movement “puritans” but cannot specifically identify them in concrete terms. This is a scare tactic which must be demystified. Gonzalo, furthermore, did not simply “summarize” Maoism; he synthesized it and in doing so brought the whole of the ICM out of increasing darkness. Through the application of this synthesis he developed greater analysis which pushed MLM even further. While it is possible that this word choice is due to translation there is a principle difference between summary and synthesis which must be fleshed out.

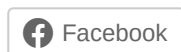
Maoists nowhere consider a Party to be a monolithic “pure” organism, and instead focus on the methods which a Party seeks to purify itself as a process, removing the capitalist roaders. Maoists without exception believe in the existence of two-line struggle, that there is always combat between the bourgeois and the proletariat in any given Party and this is precisely why we engage in internal two-line struggle to better ourselves. Communists organize this two-line struggle with the same goal as they organize class struggle—in the interests of the proletariat overcoming the bourgeoisie. For external matters there is no question of purity but of ideological struggle, not only to protect and ensure the revolutionary quality of our ideology but to ever improve it (gaining a new quantity for organizations).

Ultra-leftism is not as commonplace or as dangerous to the work in imperialist countries as the default right opportunism expressed by this blogger—with that in mind we seek to combat

his ideology. The right opportunist is always plagued by “ultra-leftists”; he sees them in every shadow on the ground. He will tell us that being among the masses is too much to demand of Party members, but at the same time we must recruit the masses en mass. Those who favor reconstitution of the Communist Parties along loose lines neither understand the Party nor the Masses, and they most certainly do not grasp the principle that the leading core must have flexible but durable links to the broadest, deepest and most profound masses.

Article by Kavga

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