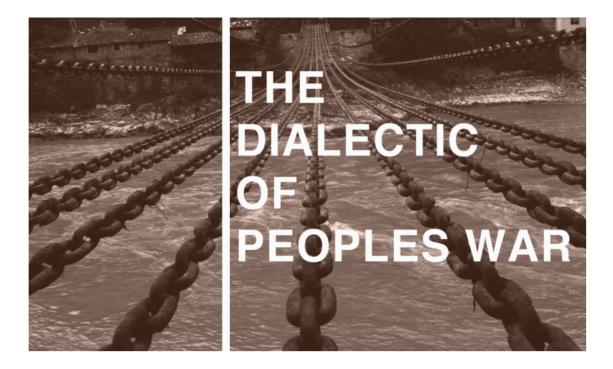
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MENU

## The dialectic of People's War

DECEMBER 22, 2018 STRUGGLESESSIONS



Chairman Mao teaches us that the world is made up of contradictions, particularly the law of opposites[1]. These two opposites, or the two *aspects – one primary, the other secondary –* are in constant contention. In all contradictions. This gives the thing – *any* thing – motion and development. All things cannot remain still and unchanged. Since things are in constant motion, there is constant struggle. This is the law of contradiction. This is particularly true and acute in class struggle and especially in its highest form: the People's War.

Mao said that the law of contradiction, taking lessons from Lenin, can be understood as the essence of Marxist dialectics. It is the only fundamental law of dialectics. It was not invented by Mao but rather further developed by him. This is an indispensable part of what it means to qualitatively develop and advance the science of Marxism, which today is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism. A great qualitative leap of Marxism occurs when there is an overall discovery and advancement of all three components of Marxism – scientific socialism, historical and dialectical materialism (or Marxist philosophy) and Marxist political economy[2] – which then can be applied and its universal contributions tested. During a People's War the contradictions in society, and in particular between the proletariat versus the bourgeoisie, come in sharp collision. The torch-bearer of the People's War is the Communist Party, and in particular its Guiding Thought who masters Maoism and applies it to the specific conditions of that particular nation or country. The proletariat uses its only method of warfare, the People's War, against the bourgeoisie's counter-revolutionary bourgeois warfare. The proletariat has the people on its side, hence where the People's War derives its name. This is not happenstance or empty sloganeering. It is not called a Proletarian War because, although the proletariat is the leading class of the revolution – the last social class of history which aims to destroy itself – it needs the support of its allied classes and mass sectors, the masses, or the people. The nature of the People's War is a protracted process that, because it follows the law of contradiction like anything else, has its ebbs and flows, its peaks and falls.

The development of the People's War, in the final instance, is not determined on the bourgeois state and its counter-revolutionary military. Mao, according to the law of contradiction, says that everything develops through "their internal and necessary self-movement" and not external factors[3]. We here this often referred to as: the internal is primary over the external.

The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary cause. **[4]** 

#### The dialectic of the bourgeois and proletarian state

Another fundamental contradiction is that between the old, dying capitalist system and the new, growing proletarian state. The proletariat's Communist Party shows the masses how to fight and win while decimating the enemy and the bourgeoisie. The road of development of the People's War is the conquest of power, the conquest and then development of the **Bases of Support**– in Spanish, "Bases de Apoyo" (sometimes referred to as "Support Bases," "Base Areas," "revolutionary bases" or simply "Bases"), **Guerrilla Zones** and **Operational Zones.** This is how the People's War is principally developed, internally and not through external factors like a military coup d'état or a capitalist economic crisis.

What propels that development of the People's War forward toward socialism is the correct handling of the contradiction between the main two warring classes – the proletariat and the bourgeoisie – with the correct ideology carried forward in its specific application of the Party's General Political Line, and in particular its military line, through revolutionary violence. This has always been the case, since the time of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party and Presidente Gonzalo and the Communist Party of Peru (In Spanish, PCP).

Like a body, the Bases of Support act like the spine, holding the People's War together. The Guerrilla Zones are the arms, fighting but also creating and destroying. The Operational Zones are the feet, carrying the body from action to action. Revolutionary violence is the blood, giving life to the body of the People's War, and unavoidably spilling from its veins. And the Party is the brain and nervous system, that which administers, controls and develops everything.

The People's War is the long road toward socialism, and Communism. What carries it forward are the militarized masses led by the Communist Party.

### Three stages of People's War, three forms of warfare

While the method, or the *essence*, of proletarian warfare is People's War, it has three specific forms of warfare corresponding to the three stages of People's War – strategic defensive, strategic stalemate or equilibrium and strategic offensive or counter-offensive.[5]

Those three corresponding forms of warfare in general are: mobile warfare, guerrilla warfare and positional warfare. But all forms of warfare exist throughout the entire People's War with each particular one being the dominate form in each of the three stages of People's War.

Moreover, throughout People's War and the three forms of warfare there are four *forms of struggle*: 1. guerrilla actions, which include assaults and ambushes, 2. sabotage, 3. selective annihilation and 4. agitation and armed propaganda.[6] All four forms of struggle exist within all three forms of warfare.

In the three forms of warfare there are two contending aspects in constant struggle: the enemy forces and the revolutionary forces, the former representing the bourgeoisie, the latter the proletariat. This makes up the antagonistic principal contradiction in socialist revolution, which can only be resolved antagonistically, violently, through war. One must supplant and destroy the other.

Going further still, within each stage of war *like in all things* there is a transformation from quantitative to qualitative that advances the war from stage to stage in overall development, in accordance with the law of contradiction.

Mobile warfare is characterized by quick, impactful attacks on the enemy. It is generally the primary form of warfare for People's War. The People's Army is constantly on the move and, in the beginning, small and weak. It has yet to conquer enough Bases of Support in building the new proletarian state. Mobile warfare is fluid, with armed field formations advancing and retreating. In the defensive stage, there is less time spent on the battlefield. This form of warfare is the dominant aspect during the strategic defensive but in general also for the entire People's War. Guerrilla and positional warfare is also used but to a significantly lesser degree. When the Communists are in strategic defensive, the enemy forces are in strategic offensive.

Guerrilla warfare is also mobile in nature, made up of smaller units carrying out dispersed military operations. But the strategic role of guerrilla warfare, as Mao said, "is twofold, to support regular warfare and to transform itself into regular warfare." That is, whereas mobile warfare is generally the primary form of warfare in People's War, it is supported strategically by guerrilla warfare. Regular warfare is a higher degree of centralized armed forces under the general military apparatus. Guerrilla warfare is the primary form of warfare during strategic equilibrium. But guerrilla warfare will become mobile warfare.

Mao taught us that guerrilla warfare is made up of six general principles:

(1) the use of initiative, flexibility and planning in conducting offensives within the defensive, battles of quick decision within protracted war, and exterior-line operations within interior-line operations; (2) co-ordination with regular warfare; (3) establishment of base areas; (4) the strategic defensive and the strategic offensive; (5) the development of guerrilla warfare into mobile warfare; and (6) correct relationship of command.[7]

During strategic equilibrium the Communist forces are evenly matched with the enemy forces. This means the new proletarian state is facing off with the old capitalist state, with the former at dual power as a parallel socialist government in all the conquered Base Areas of Support.

In the final stage of strategic offensive or counter-offensive, mobile warfare returns as the dominant form of warfare but closely complemented by positional warfare. Positional warfare is the expression of an immense force by a military apparatus. The armies are now strong enough to last longer on the battlefield, with each army traditionally behind its respective front line, but the People's Army is primarily mobile. It does not stay stationary in the Communist Party's Base Areas of Support, Guerrilla Zones or Operational Zones.

This is the dominant characteristic of warfare during the strategic counteroffensive. The enemy is retreating. The People's Army is advancing.

While mobile, guerrilla and positional warfare are important in a revolution, they are not the deciding factors. Both Mao and Gonzalo argued that the masses are the fundamental factor in the People's War. Not weaponry. Not technology. Not how many counter-revolutionary soldiers or brigades or battalions or companies or platoons or units there are. This is not hyperbole or lazy poetry; it is a scientific analysis on social relations and history. Marx teaches us that all wars in history are that between social classes. The proletariat is the determining class in class struggle. They are, what Marx calls, the revolutionary subject. They are the last class of capitalist society. In other words, they are fundamental in the development of society. The same cannot be said about other classes like the lumpenproletariat, the semi-proletariat, petite-bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie. The peasantry in pre-capitalist feudalism and semi-feudalism represents a fundamentally important class because they, like capitalism's proletariat, are still a main producer of the economy. But the peasantry belongs under a feudalist mode of production that is quickly being completely wiped out with capitalism reigning supreme globally. The peasantry came before the proletariat but much of the proletariat came from the peasantry in the progression of social production. Therefore, in general, the proletariat is the revolutionary subject.

In addition to the proletariat, there are other classes and allied sectors of society that are generally in support of the proletariat and have an invested interest in proletarian revolution. These are generally the semi-proletariat, the petitebourgeoisie and the peasantry and progressive sectors of society.

The PCP is well-known and internationally recognized as the synthesizers of Maoism and the torch-bearers of the world's foremost advanced People's War. The PCP mastered the three instruments of revolution, another indispensible tenant of Maoism: the Communist Party, the People's Army and the United Front. Through their development of the People's War, the PCP was able to reach universal discoveries in their application of Marxism. From this, Maoism grew. These discoveries are now known as the universal tenants of Maoism: the understanding of Maoism as the third, highest thus far stage of Marxism, the universality of New Democracy to semi-feudal and semi-colonial nations, the concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution, the universality of Protracted People's War, the universality of repeated cultural revolutions to carry forward the construction from socialism in fierce two-line struggle until Communism, and the worldwide struggle for Communism through People's Wars. But, in general, Maoism contains three main universal advancements: 1. the militarization of the Communist Party, 2. the concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution, and 3. the universality of Protracted People's War and the application of revolutionary violence. This generally is the main unifier in the U.S. Red Guards Movement.

To distinguish ourselves from the revisionists who falsely claim Maoism – a small and dwindling political camp, growing more irrelevant each passing day – or the contemporary Communist Parties who continue internally struggling over these questions and have only, in name, in *form*, hoisted up the banner of Maoism but have not, in *essence*, grasped the universal tenants of Maoism laid forth by the PCP and its Guiding Thought, Presidente Gonzalo.

### **Conquering power and Bases of Support**

In speaking on Maoism and People's War, we have to return to the subject of Bases of Support. There is no former without the latter.

There can be no People's War, let alone socialism, without Bases of Support. "The Base Area [Bases of Support] is the essence of People's war. Without it, People's War cannot develop." Presidente Gonzalo said this in his 1988 interview with the El Diario newspaper.[<u>8</u>]

These Bases of Support are not mostly physical areas; rather, they are principally political areas of mass support conquered through revolutionary violence, where the Party and its People's Army through United Front organizations are creating the proletarian state to rise up and destroy and then supplant the bourgeois state. In the construction-destruction dialectic of People' War, destruction is the primary aspect in general.

The contradiction here is between the old bourgeois state and the new proletarian state. It is an antagonistic contradiction that, like the fundamental contradiction of

capitalism – private ownership over the public character of production. It can only be resolved through war.

Inside Bases of Support, the Party guides and develops social relations and production while militarizing and mobilizing the masses to carry forward and administer the new, growing state. The Party, through its Army, creates and leads mass organization in training and developing the masses to become socialist administrators. New structures are created, like new local proletarian governing bodies in new public education, new hospitals/healthcare, new self-defense schools, new proletarian recreational centers, new rehabilitation systems, etc. The PCP wrote about these new structures and left us valuable lessons. The PCP created various organizations, such as the People's Revolutionary Defense Fronts, the People's Revolutionary Defense Movements, the Movement of Classist Workers (MOTC), the Revolutionary Student Front (FER), the Single Trade Union of Educated Workers of Peru, the National Federation of Teachers of the Peruvian University, the Popular Women's Movement (MFP), the Revolutionary Front of Secondary Students (FRES), the Neighborhood Classist Movement (MCB), the Movement of Poor Peasants (MCP), and many more[9].

But the most key Party-generated organisms in conquering power, conquering and then developing Bases of Support were the People's Committees in the countryside and the People's Struggle Committees, or simply Struggle Committees, in the cities. The former's primary role was in developing the new state. The latter was to disrupt the old state while mobilizing in the cities for the final insurrectionary offensive. [10] But the People's Committees were generally primary over the People's Struggle Committees.

These committees were what Mao called the revolutionary policy of the "three-inone combination"[<u>11</u>]; he also referred to them as revolutionary committees, taking lessons from Lenin's similar policy with the Revolutionary Military Committees[<u>12</u>]: one part Communist (revolutionary cadres), one part masses (leaders of revolutionary mass organizations) and one part military (representatives of the People's Army). Like in Russia and China, Presidente Gonzalo's People's Committees are the life force of the Bases of Support and therefore the new state. The PCP first developed the People's Committees in 1982, two years after the initiation of the armed struggle for the primary reason of building the new state through Bases of Support:

... and what is more important, hundreds of People's Committees have been formed, we strive to develop the support bases [or Bases of Support – in Spanish it is Bases de Apoyo] and to advance in the formation of the People's Republic of New Democracy, it has emerged, then, the New Power and it is being developed by exercising real state functions.[13].

Bases of Support should be seen where the Party carries out some of its most fundamental work. The Bases of Support are first conquered and then developed[14]. They are the physical and political point of contact and development of and with the masses. It is here that the masses continue to be militarized, organized into people's militias under the leadership of the People's Army. But they are also trained in administrative functions, paired or mentored by revolutionary cadre with close and intimate political development every step of the way. All this happens in the midst of the People's War. It is not incidental that it occurs this way, the building up of people's class consciousness and revolutionary leadership in socialist projects. But rather it is directly consequential to the conquering of power, the conquering and then developing of the Bases of Support – through the Party's three-in-one People's Committees and the People's Army. It can only occur in profound and qualitative development in the midst of the armed struggle, in the objective conditions of the People's War.

However, in the absence of the armed struggle, the pre-Party or Party if it does not initiate armed struggle at the founding congress (which is an unsettled question within the International Communist Movement), Maoists must not take on the rightist position that the masses must not be mobilized through revolutionary violence, i.e. that the militarization of the masses be "put off" until a later time and place because otherwise it would be "ultra-'left" and would alienate the people from Communist and Communist organizing.

In the movement for the reconstitution of the Communist Party in the U.S. initiated by the Red Guards Movement, ideologically led by Red Guards Austin, Communists have not and do not wait for objective conditions to change or worsen to the favor of more accelerated organizing. The objective conditions already exist in the world today for revolution. We are not waiting for fascism to fight fascism. We are not waiting for People's War to arm and train and militarize ourselves. We, as Maoists, are historical and dialectical materialists and work with what we have and where we are. We are not demoralized by errors and deviations or dull contradictions or economist struggles. As Marxists, we know we have the ability to transform subjective conditions and in changing subjective conditions we can transform objective conditions. There is no armed struggle, but there is class struggle. The proletariat continues to be exploited, evicted, killed, raped, and robbed of its power daily. The internal colonies/oppressed nations in the U.S. are oppressed by U.S. imperialism. They are viciously exploited and colonized. The masses and oppressed nations cannot afford to wait for conditions to worsen to see revolutionary organizing.

Maoists are not waiting for the collapse of local bourgeois government to begin training the masses to conquer power, to conquer and then develop Bases of Support. We must militarize all our mass work to this end: integrating the masses into militant formations and administrative roles and solid leading positions in socialist structures to destroy the enemy in strategic endeavors; if the masses are to be the defenders of the revolution and the future Dictatorship of the Proletariat, they must be led to wield revolutionary violence and win and then hold on to those victories – it is through this inevitable process of revolutionary demands and gains of the masses, led by the proletariat, that they make history. It is through this invincible process that the proletariat becomes aware of itself as the revolutionary class.

Three errors and revindication

But before the proletariat can seize power, its Communist Party must subdue and effectively and brutally corner revisionism, dogmatism and economism – we'll call these the three errors – that constantly lie in wait, waiting to infect and kill revolutionary struggles.

Much has been written about economism, but Lenin hails as the best theorist on the subject, leaving the International Communist Movement valuable lessons to draw upon, even before the October Revolution in 1917.

Economism is both revisionism and rightism. It is the perfect pairing of both. It is revisionist because, as Lenin calls it, it is a vulgarization of Marxism – that is, it dresses itself up as Marxism when it is not, effectively smuggling in capitalism dyed in red. It is rightist because it refuses Communist mass-line leadership. It refuses to actually lead in revolutionary action, to be carried forward with revolutionary violence in People's War. Economism only focuses on economic gains and survivability under capitalism; Economists could care less about revolution, even if they talk about it. In the final instance, economists are scared of the masses and the terror of revolution.

More than a decade before the October Revolution, during intense line struggle between Marxism led by Lenin and the *Iskra* newspaper against various trends of revisionism, one of which was the Russian newspaper, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, Lenin laughably spelled out the "petty activities," the absolute arrogance in the stupidity of the economists (for they cannot see their errors). Today, the ideological inheritors of the Russian economists of that era are the Democratic Socialists of America, among the hundreds of other differently-flavored economist and revisionist organizations in the U.S.

This was, indeed, a sad situation. It meant the emergence of a separate trend, which is usually designated as Economism (in the broad sense of the word), the principal feature of which is its incomprehension, even defence, of lagging, i.e., as we have explained, the lagging of the conscious leaders behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses. The characteristic features of this trend express themselves in the following: with respect to principles, in a vulgarisation of Marxism and in helplessness in the face of modern "criticism", that up-to-date species of opportunism; with respect to politics, in the striving to restrict political agitation and political struggle or to reduce them to petty activities, in the failure to understand that unless Social-Democrats take the leadership of the general democratic movement in their own hands, they will never be able to overthrow the autocracy; with respect to tactics, in utter instability (last spring Rabocheye Dyelo stood in amazement before the "new" question of terror, and only six months later, after considerable wavering and, as always, dragging along at the tail end of the movement, did it express itself against terror, in a very ambiguous resolution); and with respect to organisation, in the failure to understand that the mass character of the movement does not diminish, but increases, our obligation to establish a strong and centralised organisation of revolutionaries capable of leading the preparatory struggle, every unexpected outbreak, and, finally, the decisive assault.

Since revisionism is capitalism distorted through the mask of Marxism, it remains the biggest threat and danger to the Maoist movement. Following closely like death upon the pale horse in apocalyptic prophecy is economism.

There is only one method in effectively combating economism: the mass-line method of Communist leadership. All other strategies that are not based on the mass line are deviations. Whether accidental or not, all deviations from the mass line result in either the stagnation or the liquidation of the People's War. And prior to the initiation of armed struggle, all deviations from the mass line result in the miscarriage of the People's War, a revolution killed even before it has been born.

You cannot combat economism with the dogmatism of falsely equating those revolutionary demands and gains of the masses as bourgeois reformism. Reforms, in and of themselves, are only bourgeois under capitalism. Under socialism, reforms are not bourgeoisie; they are revolutionary.

But bourgeois reforms must be contrasted from the revolutionary demands and gains of the masses won through revolutionary violence under capitalism, which the

PCP calls in Spanish "reivindicaciones." Reivindicaciones is often translated into English as "demands" or "claims" or "vindication" and less often as "revinidication."

The PCP was not known for accidentally or sloppily choosing their words. They wrote what they meant and did not mince their words or lazily repeat revolutionary slogans devoid of content. Yet much of the PCP's English translated works substitute "reinvidicacion" with "demand" or "vindication" even though the PCP purposefully added the "re" to show a taking back, a *reclaiming*, because the masses create everything and everything belongs to them. All which they make and do not own is robbed and controlled by the bourgeoisie. Therefore, in order to keep with the true essence of the concept of "reivindicacion" and how it was regularly used throughout all the PCP's written works, we chose to use "revindication" since the English definition according to Merriam-Webster is an accurate translation: to demand and take back.[15]

Revindication is the inevitable struggle on the road to the seizure of power in the People's War. In the absence of the People's War, revindication aids in the mobilization, training and overall militarization of the masses to seize power.

Bourgeois reforms are bourgeois because they serve the bourgeoisie. Revindications are revolutionary because they are won on the road to socialism led by the Communist Party. Once those victories occur outside of that road, they become bourgeois. Revindication, in opposition to bourgeois reformism, can never be separated from the People's War or the struggle in preparing for the People's War. It is not bourgeois reformism. This is the PCP's and the general Marxist resolution to the contradiction between reform and revolution, where the former is subordinate to its dominate opposite aspect, revolution.

We see this a lot in Maoist-led mass organizations like with Serve the People – Los Angeles. A local slumlord, Roger Lee, reduced a rent increase – from \$140 to \$70 – at his apartment buildings at 1330 and 1350 Pleasant Avenue in Boyle Heights earlier in the year after STPLA and his tenants launched a counterinsurgency campaign against him; this was a low-intensity revindication. This was won through low-intensity revolutionary violence. The masses themselves physically intervened against the security guards of Roger Lee's offices. The masses confronted the local property manager. And the organization made it clear to the masses that these small victories can never last as long as capitalism continues to exploit the people. Furthermore, STPLA said the masses must be organized into fighting organizations, like proto-People's Militias, as they are led to attack class enemies. Even though the struggle at Pleasant Avenue is experiencing a bend in the road, according to public summations and reports, STPLA has seen a qualitative growth with direct participation of some of the Pleasant Avenue tenants.

The demand (no more rent increases), while not revolutionary, and the gain (partial rent-increase reduction) of the masses was won as part of a general strategy of preparation for People's War. All Maoist mass-work is for this end. Revindication ceases to be revinidication once the Communist organization abandons the Maoist methodology of revolutionary violence and deviates from the road of People's War.

In answering to some of the dogmatists who would criticize revindication, the PCP explained in the "May Directives for Metropolitan Lima" the difference and relationship between the economic struggle and the political struggle:

Strikes are, we reiterate, the main form of economic struggle. In essence, they are "guerrilla warfare" fighting for wage increases. Marx said that the strike for [revindications for] a part of the class (e.g., a plant or productive sector)... is an economic struggle. But those strikes developed by the general interests of the class (e.g., general wage hikes, in defense of unions, against the economic policy, etc.) are political struggles. Furthermore, we must not forget that nowadays every class struggle is political, and part of the struggle for power. **So when revisionists and opportunists attack the strike movement calling it as merely [revindicative struggles], they (as usual) attack the class and defend the bourgeoisie.** [<u>16</u>]

To struggle dogmatically and recklessly rejecting all forms of gains and victories for the supposed substitution of "revolution" is an infantile rejection of dialectical and historical materialism. It is militarism, insurrectionaryism, Blanquism, Galleanism – all which, at their core, have a scathing hatred and distrust of and arrogance over the masses.

Thus, the key of this struggle, the strike, or localized or general work stoppages, is the surplus value, the wages. Its political essence is to overthrow this old order because it generates hunger and exploitation. **The greatest political [revindication] of all is the conquest of Power.** This guerrilla war prepares for grand moments. It is bonded with the final struggle for the conquest of Power and the main form of a political struggle, the People's War.**[17]** 

# Therefore, we must fight viciously against *the three errors: 1. against revisionism, 2. against economism, and 3. against dogmatism.*

In struggling against economism Maoists must guard against dogmatism and its alluring deviation. It is alluring because it seeks to instantly gratify the supposed "Communist," who is in the final instance really a revisionist, by justifying his confusion, his inaction and overall backwardness as a bumbling incompetent leader.

The New Communist Movement in the U.S. surely left many errors to be resolved, all of which can be located within the three main errors theorized and contained in this document.

As stated previously, Maoists do not wait for conditions to ripen to our satisfaction. We are not accertationists or dogmatic supposed "Marxist-Leninists." We take on the historic task, the most important one in contemporary history, of reconstituting the Communist Party in the U.S. We take on the great task of constructing the People's Army. We take on the protracted struggle of developing the United Front through Party-generated organisms tasks with creating the new proletarian state.

Revolutionary violence will carry us there. The mastery of revindication as part of preparation for the coming Protracted People's War will secure our victories for the masses. And with both, together, they will propel us forward in conquering power, conquering and then developing the Bases of Support through our militarized mass work.

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, gives itself to us and the world as the invincible ideology of the proletariat. The proletariat will wield this ideology principally to wage People's War and seize political power for once and for all, and in doing so it will scorch the heavens and lay to waste all those who would stand in our way.

### Article by – Cajemé Iniciador

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[5] Mao – "On Protracted War." <u>https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2\_09.htm</u>

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