

The Negation of Proletarian Politics: Notes on Maoist Communist Group's “Four Points of Orientation”

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STRUGGLESSESSIONS



Article by S. Mazur

New York City-based Maoist Communist Group (MCG) recently published a piece entitled *Four Points of Orientation On the Present Crisis* which calls for “Communists” [where?] to abide by four general points informing mass work and Party “construction.” These points in fact are decent, but pompous and without any means of implementation. And while these points do generally show a direction organized Maoists nationally have already been proceeding with, there are several incorrect ideas throughout their informal proposal which we must address.

One is the question of Party development and them being without a strategic plan to actively lead the masses around, and two being their cynicism, labeling the masses as subjectively being in the camp of imperialism.

Though it would perhaps be a great temptation to talk in long length about their errors, it would only serve to pass over their merits. One being that they have a wit and literary talent. But Marxist-Leninist-Maoist science is not a matter of literary talent, without the rigor of science it can become easy for

those of low political level to fall for the high style and culture of orators. Another being that they have done some mass work, showing a decisive clarity at times worthy of study, but lacking in much continuity and communication of the outcomes of their “initiatives” over time. As we see, nationally, the development of Maoism here, with its fight against revisionism and the policies of the workers aristocracy, and its outlining of the revolutionary tasks and necessity of the construction their necessary instruments, being the Party, the United Front, and the necessary and appropriate instrument to face the stubborn resistance of the class enemy, it becomes harder for them to treat Party “construction” as a thing confined to New York City.

We see the urgent necessity, flowing from the historical speech Chairman Gonzalo gave after his capture, of fulfilling the pending and delayed task of reconstituting a militarized Marxist–Leninist–Maoist, principally Maoist, Communist Party. We are absent of a proletarian Party because of Earl Browder and William Z. Foster’s revisionism, which liquidated the organization in 1944 and then reconstituted on firm revisionist lines in 1946, cementing its almost exclusive work within yellow trade unions, large scale electoral participation and wide aboveground open work. In the vacantness felt by its absence, the proletariat has been left with no national leadership! Hence any ‘orientation’ that does not place reconstitution at its front is one that is lost. Our readers must know that because the U.S. does not have a Communist Party – we must reconstitute the CPUSA!

As so, insofar that they have a certain influence in the student movement at New School and continue organizing in New York, they thrive on and foster ideological confusion there. Politics are an act of demarcation. As so, we must be open and struggle over the confusion that MCG promotes. We also call for an open debate with the MCG, of which all points of view can be put across and contended. Having a primitive and immature movement is no longer an excuse for such errors.

Mountain strongholds

When the long defunct Liaison Committee for the New Communist Party (LC) broke from the Organizing Committee for the New Communist Party (OC), MCG shoveled up the burnt ashes of OC around them and rebranded themselves, with branches in New England and Virginia formed from the remains of the pyre as well. The New England and Virginia MCG branches would also, soon thereafter, break off to become the now defunct right opportunist Mass Proletariat. Many of the same wrong methods and poor structure for a Party “construction” organization inherited from the OC would be re-imitated by MCG.

MCG refused to struggle, from this point on, with those coming to lead the Party reconstitution effort, or at least engage with anyone in the movement. To hesitate to struggle to build unity and to proceed in a secretive way is to withdraw from taking up one’s post in the world revolution. It is our position that this arrogance only serves to insulate their group that operates from a perfunctory compartmentalism that Chairman Mao called “mountain strongholds.” They take up the label of ‘Maoist’ in an important area of the country, but negate two line struggle, turning one’s back on Maoism entirely and sinking into isolationism.

Who follows, how do they lead

“Party” is mentioned two times, and there is no proof of any organizing they themselves have engaged in around these points. They either show incompetence or amateurishness when they dream up grand schemes out of cloth without first building those organizations over time. There is no sin in planning, but to present a “plan” to reach millions without first showing that they can organize thousands, as if sharing to a largely Internet audience and existing nowhere outside of New York will be enough, reveals bad methods of work and engagement. Digital media dependence is behind these methods of work – in that it largely presumes that such online public appeals will make people flow, like water, through a quickly engineered canal. They should know better on these points.

On this we should study Lenin. In his letter to the Combat Committee of the St. Petersburg Committee in 1905, he talks of how excessive planning leads to perfunctory bureaucracy and harms the insurrection. Upon receiving the memorandum from those organizing the Committee, he thanks them but stresses:

“...[J]udging by the documents, the whole thing threatens to degenerate into office routine. All these schemes, all these plans of organization of the Combat Committee create the impression of red tape— forgive me my frankness, but I hope that you will not suspect me of fault-finding. Schemes, and disputes and discussions about the functions of the Combat Committee and its rights, are of the least value in a matter like this. What is needed is furious energy, and again energy. It horrifies me— I give you my word—it horrifies me to find that there has been talk about bombs for *over six months*, yet not one has been made! And it is the most learned of people who are doing the talking.... Go to the youth, gentlemen! That is the only remedy! Otherwise—I give you my word for it—you will be too late (everything tells me that), and will be left with “learned” memoranda, plans, charts, schemes, and magnificent recipes, but without an organization, without a living cause. Go to the youth. Form fighting squads *at once* everywhere, among the students, and *especially among the workers*, etc., etc. Let groups be at once organized of three, ten, thirty, etc., persons. Let them arm themselves at once as best they can, be it with a revolver, a knife, a rag soaked in kerosene for starting fires, etc. Let these detachments at once select leaders, and as far as possible *contact* the Combat Committee of the St. Petersburg Committee. Do not demand any formalities, and, for heaven’s sake, forget all these schemes, and send all “functions, rights, and privileges” to the devil. Do not make membership in the R.S.D.L.P. an absolute condition—that would be an absurd demand for an armed uprising. Do not refuse to contact any group, even if it consists of only three persons; make it the one sole condition that it should be reliable as far as police spying is concerned and prepared to fight the tsar’s troops. Let the groups join the R.S.D.L.P. or *associate* themselves with the R.S.D.L.P. if they want to; that would be splendid. But I would consider it quite wrong to *insist* on it.”

For any organization to become the Party it must 'lead' a revolutionary movement by having its line be consistent and its slogans correct, in accordance to the strategic interest of the proletariat, demonstrating in *concrete practice* (actions!) that it is apt to unite all those who can be united against the principal enemy. To proceed from one's petty fiefdom and making declarations without showing that its line and its slogans are consistent and apt to unite, is to proceed from a point of arrogance at worst and amateurishness at best. Isolationism is no stand in for unity-struggle-unity.

Have the masses spontaneously tailed imperialism?

A main cynical point that runs through the piece is that the masses have largely rallied behind the imperialist state and that the spontaneous struggle has acted as the first line of defense for the state, calling for the dispensation of more aid. While part of this is correct in exposing Trotskyites and opportunists rallying behind a dangerous Khrushchevite social patriotism, it insults the rebelling workers who have, in fact, not invested any trust at all in the state or its ruling class. The walkouts and work stoppages from 'essential' workers bearing the brunt of imperialism's virus during this downturn, along with the looming rent strikes as the ranks of the unemployed swell, are part and parcel of the masses hating imperialism and showing optimism and unflinching faith in their ability to win as an economic depression hangs over our heads. The masses have not given up resisting, this resistance might be at a low hum or a loud bang, but no matter its volume, MCG is deaf and indifferent to the living struggle, they succumb to pessimism, and lose their quality as militants.

The suggestion that the objective situation has become a negative one and this proposal that the masses cower to the "*spontaneous demands for the extension of the imperialist state*" reveal a deep pessimism and lack of faith in the masses. MCG does not proceed on the lines of Marxism – that in class struggle, the revolutionary situation, and revolutionary crisis, as Lenin noted, whether to take advantage of these factors or not is a problem of *subjective situation*. To argue that the "*opposite*" of crisis is happening is overplaying the

significance of the bourgeoisie's strength, as it is default already and is not somehow strengthened objectively by the persistence of the virus. The Marxist answer is that, in synthesis, there is a revolutionary situation that can increasingly be potentiated by revolutionaries and that will ultimately unfold as a revolutionary crisis. The general crisis that this government will fuel will indeed have some objective basis, especially through the increasingly drastic measures it will apply, and while setbacks are inevitable, our work is to ultimately bring together the broadest popular masses towards struggle at this stage, to learn from them, and to ultimately lead them.

This is, as Mao would say, a time to “create favorable conditions through struggle.” There are sections among the people who are rebelling, who are ready to defend and protect (and even hide) revolutionaries who live and work among them. Our politics are becoming sharply attractive and accessible to the advanced, as our own parliamentary cretins weaken in their influence and prove incapable of responding to the economic crisis. The movement already has been able to take attacks and ultimately bounce back from such attacks with more forces, and with more consciousness among the people about who and what revolution here will represent.

The truth is defended in the color of our flag! We must ensure the color of our flag remains red and is visible to the eyes of the masses!

The masses must have their advanced expressions and our proletarian ideology merged, and this appears as an attack on imperialism and its manifestations but also against all forms of opportunism and reactionary nostalgia which serve it. This is ideological and physical struggle, in which we reconstitute the Party *in actions*. It is developed as an instrument for the collectivization and synthesis of experiences, the coordination between and assistance to different points of struggle, developing through leaps and bounds into a fully reconstituted general headquarters. While the MCG has paid lip-service to all this, there are no concretes laid out anywhere. As so, we get fluff and poetics, but no concretes.

By not explaining what their conception of “exposures” are and by having “points” which do not really go beyond what they themselves describe as “narrow practicalism,” we are left with no impression beyond pretty strings of words describing points of entry into the spontaneous movement.

We must reconstitute the Party, which uses generated organisms it sets up in this mass movement as support points by which to strengthen the proletarian basis. It must boldly confront and expose the plain clothes cops of union officials and revisionist politicians that would sell the masses out for a plate of lentils, it must go beyond the simple growth of legal unions and struggles which are existing only by virtue of police authorization, and we must constantly temper it in the flames of revolutionary violence and deep links with the masses. This is our first task.

Invitation to debate

We call for exchange with the MCG to struggle openly over their positions. We call for them to abandon their isolationism and selfish-departmentalism. To reconstitute the Party there must be a process of elimination of poisoned blood and the infusion of fresh blood on a healthy proletarian basis, having constant ideological struggle to guarantee against the dangers of revisionist sclerosis, opportunist degeneration and bureaucratism.

Whatever good ideas that the comrades at MCG have, are sadly wasted by their go-it-alone approach, their arrogance and ego. They conduct themselves as having the answers, potentially ones which others need but having never proved their actual merits in the tempest of class struggle and its manifestation in two-line struggle, they seek to lead and so we demand they earn that right by vigorously engaging, by placing their micro group into the organic struggles of the movement, and through exchange with the much larger living movement.

We have limited our scope, much more could be written on our disagreements, this should be considered our first remarks, not our last ones.

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