

# El Maoista: Regarding the thought of Lenin

*Proletarians of all countries, unite!*

## Regarding the thought of Lenin<sup>1</sup>

There is dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I stand by the latter.

– Stalin –

In the current document, we tried to show how the thought of Lenin developed, from guiding thought of the Russian revolution to Leninism, the second stage of the development of Marxism. Some might say, that such an effort is unnecessary and only an historical interest, but we think that such persons are wrong, because the correct comprehension of what a guiding thought is, is an issue of live and death of the communists of the world, of victory and defeat.

Without the creative application of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism, to the concrete conditions of each revolution, it is impossible to bring the revolution to its end, might this be of democratic, socialist, or cultural character, and to continue the march until communism. Those who argue against this Marxist affirmation, not seldom claim that the case of the Chinese experience, or to put it more precisely, the process of struggle of the Chinese proletariat and the Communist Party of China (CPCh), what generated Chairman Mao and his guiding thought, what later became Maoism, was a particular case from which one cannot extract a general law; these people claim that “there were no thoughts of Marx, neither was one of Lenin”. They are

profoundly wrong and in what follows, shows this with the case of Lenin.

To go ahead with this issue we consider it necessary to start by having “a common language” – as Chairman Mao said – being the case that there is so much confusion about what a guiding thought is, so we start from there.

### **What is a guiding thought?**

It is necessary to define the terms we use to handle the development of Marxism, so we have a look at what is the difference between line, guiding thought and “-ism”.

A line is a structure system of positions – we differentiate between ideas, criteria, attitudes and positions. Positions are attitudes (taking a position) in face of concrete problems. Decisions, which define the acting, in our case of the communists and revolutionaries, in the areas of ideology, politics and organizational, economical, military matters and so on. Every position is an expression of a world view, of an ideology and therefore it has a class character. When a series of positions is systematized in a complete system, it is a structured line (before the sum of the positions are systematized, it is a non-structured line).

By applying the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism to a concrete revolution, be it in a specific country or the world revolution, its establishing the program of the revolution in its general political line, the communist struggle to establish the laws that rule the class struggle in the particular context.

Regarding these points we know there is a relatively big unity

in the International Communist Movement (ICM).

Every Communist Party has its program and its general political line – both in different degrees elaborated, of the development of the process of application of the universal truth of the ideology of the international proletariat to the concrete conditions of each revolution, accordingly; expressing the degree of development of the process of constitution or reconstitution of every Party, but without program and general political line, there is no Communist Party. Even so, when we look at history, and the current situation of the ICM, we can see, that it is not enough – but that the correct political general line, this is what systematizes the laws of the specific revolution in question, can only exist if its an expression of a guiding thought.

The guiding thought as an application of Maoism, that is universally valid, aims at the particularities of our particular revolution, what is specific and proper to it, because if we don't grasp what is specific, we will badly handle this revolution that the party leads. But since the party is an entity, made up of a system of organizations, it does this through its leaders, its cadres, its militants, who move all the rest of the organizations. Only in this way we serve to initiate and develop the People's War, according to the particular case, in the perspective of conquering power in the whole country. These are very strong practical reasons, reasons of pending and necessary demands, the needs of the revolution.[2](#)

Continuing, the guiding thought has an ideological basis, which sustains it, because without ideological basis, there is nothing. Because a thought also encloses construction. Of course it also encloses construction and without ideological base: what construction can there be.

Regarding theory: “how it handles and applies the three integral parts of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism”, here we have a good example, how to highlight, that its not enough to have a general political line and a program, if you in political economy don't understand the problem of bureaucratic capitalism (in a country dominated by imperialism). Or the problem of understanding the responsibility in front of the own revolution as a part of and in service of the world revolution, which we will see below in the case of Germany. These are problems, which many parties face, when to develop the proper guiding thought, which is the foundation of every great leadership.

It follows a second question: a guiding thought has a content. In the main, expressed in the general political line and the military line, which is its center. It is the problem of the specifications, particularly of the general political line and the military line. Aiming at the question of power. In the country, even being a thought which is enfolding inside Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, necessary it must be “linked inseperately to the conquest of power for the proletariat in the whole country”, without that it would not be communist, it would not be – geometrically speaking, so you understand better – inside Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and guiding thought which maintains the course of the program.

Some words on this. It is the most substantive and most developed part of the general political line, on this we must be very clear. Note that: on this thought, the line and its five parts is sustained and at the end of the day, the military line as its center. It is to say: why, how is it, that the line is sustained by the thought, and a general political line can be developed?

A third question: the program, because the guiding thought “maintains firmly the course of the program” is this clear?

These are three questions that you have to highlight.

The key question of the matter is when we see, how this process is taking place in the practical class struggle and the two line struggle on how to apply. There, the issue is to understand the leap that this implies so to make real the guiding thought.

It was Chairman Gonzalo, who highlighted these three questions in the I. Congress of the PCP in his speech regarding Gonzalo thought, and that we are presented here in a short resume, by referring us to the guiding thought and we continue, below, what was established in this part by the First Congress of the Communist Party of Peru.

In history, we can see, that even when you have a program, and a general political line, and having excellent conditions to move ahead with the revolution, when the specific problems of the revolution in each country are not solved, and one goes further as the general formulations, the communists failed in fulfilling their responsibilities in front of the proletariat and the peoples of the world. In Germany we have a very telling example, where we had the Communist Party, the second largest in the world at the time, which had a highly developed and clandestine military apparatus, the comrade Ernst Thälmann<sup>3</sup>, and other leaders of the Communist Party of Germany (CPG), because they stayed inside the general guidelines of the Communist International and did not sufficiently develop the application of Marxism to the concrete reality of the revolution in Germany, in a creative matter to solve new problems, failed to to initiate and maintain the revolutionary armed struggle, and as a result, the party was left practically annihilated, and could not put up a greater resistance against the fascist beast of German imperialism, which so was able to start its war against the peoples of the world. In the current situation we see that there are many

Communist Parties, who are not advancing in fulfilling their objectives, who do not take the necessary leaps in the revolutionary struggle, be it to initiate or develop the armed struggle, i.e. the People's War, because, they don't advance in the process of a creative application of the universal truth of the ideology of the international proletariat, which solves the new problems of the revolution in question. It would be wrong to pretend calling *tutti el mundi*<sup>4</sup> as "revisionists", because even if there are, in different degrees and different ways, problems with revisionism, we consider that the problem, in general, is with the new, to understand and creatively apply the new, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, with Maoism as the new, third and superior stage of its development, to the specific conditions of each revolution.

It was Chairman Mao and the CPCh who introduced the term "thought" to describe a superior level of development of the line of the Communist Party. In its VII. Congress, the CPCh takes up the thought of Mao Tsetung (using in that given moment the formulation "the ideas of Mao Tsetung") and in its IX. Congress it characterizes it as universal – defining it as "Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to worldwide victory", but officially, the CPCh does not come so far as defining that each revolution must generate its own specific guiding thought.

It has been Chairman Gonzalo, who worked out the Marxist understanding of what a guiding thought is, taking as a starting point, what was advanced by Chairman Mao himself and the CPCh.

In the I. Congress of the Communist Party of Peru it was defined as follows:

“All revolutions, in their process of development, through the struggle of the proletariat as the leading class and, above all, the struggle of the Communist Party that raises their unrenounceable class interests, give rise to a group of great leaders and principally one who represents and leads it, a great leader with acknowledged authority and influence. In our reality this has taken shape, on account of historical necessity and causality, in President Gonzalo, great leader of the Party and of the revolution.

Moreover, and this is the basis upon which all leadership is formed, revolutions give rise to a thought that guides them, which is the result of the application of the universal truth of the ideology of the international proletariat to the concrete conditions of each revolution; a guiding thought indispensable to reach victory and to conquer political power and, moreover, to continue the revolution and to maintain the course always towards the only, great goal: Communism; a guiding thought that, arriving at a qualitative leap of decisive importance for the revolutionary process which it leads, identifies itself with the name of the one who shaped it theoretically and practically.”

Continuing the fundamentation in the same document, the PCP put forward:

“Gonzalo Thought has been forged through long years of intense, tenacious, and incessant struggle to uphold, defend and apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, to retake Mariátegui’s path and to develop it, to reconstitute the Party and, principally, to initiate, maintain and develop the People’s War in Peru serving the world revolution, and that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism be, in theory and practice, its sole command and guide.

It is of substantive necessity for the party to study Gonzalo Thought for a more just and correct understanding of the general political line, and mainly of the military line, aiming at deepening the understanding of the particularities of the Peruvian revolution, what is specific and particular that President Gonzalo has masterfully emphasized.

We must study Gonzalo Thought, starting from the historical context that generated it; examine the ideological base which sustains it; explain its content, more substantially expressed in the general political line and in the military line which is its center; aiming at what is fundamental within it, the problem of political power, of the seizure of power in Perú, which is inextricably linked to the conquest of power by the proletariat in the whole world; and we must pay close attention to its forging in the two-line struggle.”

By specifying the historical context, it put forward, regarding the international context:

“The key point is to see how, in this great class struggle on the world level, Gonzalo Thought considers that a third stage of the proletarian ideology arises: First, as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought; then Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought; and later, it is defined as Maoism, understanding its universal validity; and in this way reaching Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, as the present expression of Marxism.”

Concerning the historical national context:

“It is fundamental how Gonzalo Thought profoundly understood Peruvian society, and focused on the crucial problem of bureaucratic capitalism, and saw the need to reconstitute the Party and to conquer Political Power and defend it with the People’s War.”



Concerning its ideological foundation, the PCP puts forward:

“Without Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought cannot be conceived, because the latter is the creative application of the former to our reality. The key question on this point lies in the understanding of the historical process of the development of the proletarian ideology, of its three stages shaped in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and with Maoism as principal; and, principally, it is the application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as a universal truth to the concrete conditions of the Peruvian revolution; hence Gonzalo Thought is specifically principal for the Communist Party of Peru and the revolution it leads.

The guiding thought, having reached a qualitative leap of decisive importance for the Party and the revolution, has evolved into Gonzalo Thought, thus stamping a milestone in the Party’s life.”[5](#)

The PCP also underscores:

“In Gonzalo Thought we must highlight the remarkable fulfillment of the demands stated by Chairman Mao: theoretical solidity, understanding of history, and a good practical handling of politics.”

So, we see: a system of structured positions is a line. A general line in the program of a Communist Party must correspond to general laws of the revolution. A guiding thought comes to be when, in the process of a Communist Party and a particular revolution, through the struggle of the Party and the proletariat, in the midst of two line struggle and class struggle, new specific and concrete problems which are faced are being resolved, and with this, contributions are made to the development of Marxism, with new elements. This process takes shape, materializes in the struggle in the Party

and its leadership, which is being exercised by a group of leaders, among which – as a consequence of the law of contradiction – one will come forward, who becomes the great leader of the party and the revolution.

It is necessary to note, the very important distinction, which Chairman Gonzalo and the PCP make between “guiding thought”, “guiding thought identified with the name of the great leader of the revolution” and “thought”, because all of these three terms express a different degree of development, according to how many new elements it contains, which has been verified in the practice of the Party and the revolution it leads, to the development of Marxism. Chairman Gonzalo and the PCP do not put forward that every revolution necessary will generate a guiding thought which reaches the degree of development that has had, for example, the very Gonzalo thought, which identifies with the one who has generated it, a development which is not possible to take place in every guiding thought<sup>6</sup>, but each revolution must develop a creative application which resolves the specified problems, handling the particular laws of every particular reality, which implies a leap in the specific application.

What we have to do is to define the difference between a guiding thought in its most developed form, which is the case with Gonzalo thought and a “-ism”. To handle this definition correctly, we take as a starting point what the PCP established in the document “On Marxism-Leninism-Maoism”:

“Nevertheless, while Marxism-Leninism has obtained an acknowledgment of its universal validity, Maoism is not completely acknowledged as the third stage. Some simply deny its condition as such, while others only accept it as “Mao Tsetung Thought.” In essence, both positions, with the obvious differences between them, deny the general development of Marxism made by Chairman Mao Tsetung. The

denial of the “-ism” character of Maoism denies its universal validity and, consequently, its condition as the third, new, and superior stage of the ideology of the international proletariat: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, that we uphold, defend, and apply.

Marxism has three parts: Marxist philosophy, Marxist political economy, and scientific socialism. The development of all these three components gives rise to a great qualitative leap of Marxism as a whole, as a unity on a superior level, which implies a new stage. Consequently, the essential thing is to show that Chairman Mao, as can be seen in theory and practice, has generated such a great qualitative leap

...it is with the GPCR that it intensely spread out and its prestige rose powerfully and Chairman Mao was acknowledged as the leader of the world revolution and originator of a new stage in Marxism-Leninism.”

So, the difference between a guiding thought, particularly in its most developed form, as Gonzalo thought, which means “a great qualitative leap of Marxism as a whole, as a unity” and “-ism” is not, that the first only is of a very particular importance, specific to the concrete reality in one country – because by solving new problems, it gives contributions to the treasury of Marxism in general – but that it has not made “a great qualitative leap of Marxism as a whole, as a unity”, this means a development in its three integral parts, which will mean, that we face a new stage of development of Marxism. When a thought makes this great quantitative leap, it takes the character of “-ism” so to point out the universal valor of it altogether as a new level of Marxism.

Again, in what we just explained, can we see, that the key to differentiate between guiding thought, Gonzalo thought and “-

ism" or a new stage of the universal ideology of the proletariat, is to understand the leap, and the leap is the key in the contradiction. Because every solution of a new problem of the proletarian world revolution means a contribution to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, whatever guiding thought does so, otherwise, it is not as such, in its most developed form, it gives important contributions, which is the case of Gonzalo thought, which are important contributions to the universal ideology of the proletariat, and therefore, these contributions also have a universal character and, being solutions to new problems, contribute to a new development of Marxism, and therefore to a new stage, but still is not a "-ism", because these contributions of universal validity have not meant a new development in every of its three integral parts and therefore in its whole, that has raised Marxism to a new stage. As we will see in the parts that we quote later in the exposition of Chairman Gonzalo regarding Gonzalo thought in the I. Congress (the non-public document):

"But it is important, that in this last part (Regarding Gonzalo thought), in which it says: 'key point is to see how, in this great class struggle on the world level, Gonzalo Thought considers that a third stage of the proletarian ideology arises: First, as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought; then Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought; and later, it is defined as Maoism, understanding its universal validity; and in this way reaching Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, as the present expression of Marxism.'"

Concerning Gonzalo thought: "The key question on this point lies in the understanding of the historical process of the development of the proletarian ideology, of its three stages shaped in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and with Maoism as principal; and, principally, it is the application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as a universal truth to the concrete

conditions of the Peruvian revolution; hence Gonzalo Thought is specifically principal for the Communist Party of Peru and the revolution it leads. (...) the understanding of the historical process of the development of the proletarian ideology" this is key, how the process of ideology of the international proletariat is understood, which leads us to: to what? To Maoism as the main. This is the base that sustains it, that is why it is the main. Without that, there is nothing. And then (...) "the application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as the universal truth to the concrete conditions of the Peruvian revolution". This is what is essential, it is not enough to say the main thing is to take up Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, if you don't add that what is essential is mainly the application to the concrete conditions because without it, Gonzalo thought would have no sense, you have to see the two things, and this in strict application of what chairman Mao has taught us. The problem of Marxism is its application, and that is what Lenin taught and what Marx taught. I think, that this part must be very much being taken in consideration and what is essential; you take this away, and you take away the essence of Gonzalo thought, it will not have an essence.

Following, concern yourself in what it says: consequently, take this foundation, Maoism, from this application which is essential: to what does it lead? "hence Gonzalo Thought is specifically principal for the Communist Party of Peru and the revolution it leads." Here the word is "specifically", that is what you have to catch here. Because if it would not say "specifically principal", then comrades would be negating that the main is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Do you understand what I want to say? It would be not to see its universal validity, and that we cannot do. To be communist, first, we must be Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, and since we act in this country that is called Peru, it is essential to apply it here in Peru, but without the first, you cannot have the second. From this follows: Gonzalo thought is the main for the Party, yes.

Specifically: what does that mean? Regarding the application, regarding the necessity of our revolution, in this specific case, for this concrete question; in this way you cannot in any way leave aside Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, because that is the universal truth and that is the source from which we always have to drink". Digging deeper on the relation between guiding thought and Maoism, Chairman Gonzalo says

"(...) you cannot put forward a thought if you don't take in mind the universal truth which is an integral part".

Content of Gonzalo thought. a. Theory. We need to know well, how to conceive Gonzalo thought: it is a specification of our revolution, of our proletariat, of our Party, of the class struggle and of the war which is its highest form and it must be seen like that. If we see it specifically in this manner, our problem is not to put it at the level of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, because that could not be, it would be a grave error, we could never do it, never, comrades. We should not confuse things. When we treat theory, what we have to see is how its being handled, how Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is being applied, and its three integral parts; if there is a contribution, this is secondary today, might be, that tomorrow it develops, but tomorrow is not today. I think we have to be very clear and very concrete, understand it well, more, when we put forward theory, the theory because here we speak about – I repeat – the three integral parts, of the universal truth and only here we can think about how its being applied, how its being handled; if there are contributions, time will tell. For me, this is the key, comrades, a distant thing is the question about its content – this we are going to see –, there is a difference. (Attention! See the difference that is between theory – the three integral parts, where you have to see in how its being applied – and the content of Gonzalo thought).

Regarding the theory, what did the document say? That is why it puts forward: "how to understand and apply" – that is why they said –, "how it understands and applies the three integral parts of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism" that it what it says. Here its not said, how its developed. I think you have to be objective and yes, there are perspectives, you can see perspectives, but to me, a perspective is a perspective, first the perspective has to be carried out, so to say this is now truth (...) don't take as a reality, what is a perspective. But regarding theory, you must be very careful, because it treats the universal truth. You have to be very clever and careful and therefore it says like that: "how to understand and apply".

In the part regarding content, Chairman Gonzalo himself establishes the relationship between the contributions of universal validity of Gonzalo thought and Maoism. b. "(...) coming to the point of the content of Gonzalo thought – we speak about the part which says "most substantial and most developed" is the general political line – because here is the problem. Where is it? In the specifications of our line, in what we consider typical or peculiar in our revolution, with all the perspective that it has or might have in some points. That is why we only innumerate the specifications of the general political line and the contributions to the world revolution that we must highlight. I told you, that you have to put it in line; comrades, the first is the universal theory, be very careful with this; if there are contributions, look at them in the general political line, which is the substantial or most substantial, most developed. That is why we put it forward like this: specifications of the general political line and contributions to the world revolution that we must highlight". Afterwards, it continues to list the contributions of universal validity of Gonzalo thought to the world revolution, which are contained in the five parts of the general political line, which at the end has the military line

as its center.

Chairman Gonzalo clarifies more, when he smashes some expressions which could be expressed concerning this relation, as follows: "its absurd to compare historic figures, historic persons; everyone of us develops in a different and precise historic context. We could never counter-pose ourselves to our glorious founder Marx or Lenin or Chairman Mao, and not these two with the first, and not one against another, never, I speak about facts; because counter-posing the one who speaks (Chairman Gonzalo) with Chairman Mao, please!, it seems to me as a bad joke and stupid taste. How could you counter-pose the specification to one country with the highest peak of the universal ideology, how? That makes no sense, comrades, that is not even really worth thinking about.

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Summing up: "What has Gonzalo thought done? Two things: a) defined a third, new and higher stage of Marxism, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism, and b) the People's War; which is the main?, well, (...) obviously Maoism".

"About the content, we have to highlight the specifications that we put forward as a question to develop, because we must study more, but somewhere we have to start. Why? Because its the key to treat the content, concerning it being the most substantial and developed part of Gonzalo thought. But there the questions are the specification from which derives the contributions towards the world revolution. The fundamental is the problem of the conquest of power here in Peru, in function of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the world, so to serve communism. It is very concrete. The forge calls us simply to this: to see how Gonzalo thought has been forged and is being developed in the two line struggle; without this two line struggle, there is no Gonzalo thought, it cannot develop, only that way a



thought surges and develops, no other way”.

We ask: should the communists in the world apply the contributions of universal validity of Gonzalo thought? Of course, as has been defined by the Maoist Parties and Organizations of Latin America in their V. Meeting, and the Maoist Parties and Organizations in Europe in their I. Meeting, that means: apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, with the contributions of universal validity of Gonzalo thought!

Now we can, taking as a starting point what has been established, look at the process which took shape with Lenin and how his thought developed until becoming Leninism.

### **Lenin and the creative application of Marxism to the concrete conditions of the Russian revolution**

We understand that the great majority of readers is familiar with the life and work of Lenin and hence, we don't consider it necessary to present a broad biography here and also not a broad bibliography, particularly since in other articles of this magazine, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist position in this regard is laid out profoundly and in a detailed and broad manner. We also do not consider it necessary to show how Lenin analyzed in his smallest detail the Russian society, and how he studied problems which were very specific – with the purpose to show that Lenin was concerned with applying Marxism to the conditions of Russia – we will leave it without saying, because it is an issue the immense majority of our readers already know. Therefore we center the attention in a more concentrated manner to the particular subject of our concern.[7](#)

When Lenin started his theoretical work, he did so in the strictest relation to the most burning problems of class struggle, which the communists and revolutionaries faced in that moment and he did so by starting to develop the two line struggle against positions and lines opposed to Marxism inside

the revolutionary and popular movement.

His theoretical work – “New Economic Developments in Peasant Life” – is an analysis of the economical basis of the Russian society or, to put it more exactly, of the czarist empire of that time, to lay out the foundations, as a concrete synthesis of the document, for the critique of the so called “Friends of the People”. He did so, starting from a necessity that he himself shortly afterwards explained as follows:

“It is impossible to provide a “slogan of struggle” unless we study every separate form of the struggle minutely; unless we trace every stage of the struggle during the transition from one form to another, so that we can define the situation at any given moment, without losing sight of the general character of the struggle and its general aim, namely, the complete and final abolition of all exploitation and all oppression.” (*“What the “Friends of the People” Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats”*)

It is to say, he started with the practical necessities of the revolution, the how to give a correct direction to the practical movement of the time, in the moment, in which it was. But without ever losing the perspective of communism. A completely and totally Marxist position. But with this application, did Leninism have to shape like that? Obviously not.

We will not quote the masterful document “The foundations of Leninism” of comrade Stalin, it would be too much, but its necessary to remember how he defined Leninism so to have a better look on things.

Comrade Stalin, in a conversation with a delegation of North-American workers, in September 1927, put forward six new

contributions to the development of Marxism which Lenin made, on the issues of: 1) monopoly capitalism, of imperialism as the new phase of capitalism, 2) the dictatorship of the proletariat (specifying what was new in relationship to what was established by Marx), 3) the question of the forms and methods of successfully building socialism in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, in a country surrounded by capitalist states, 4) the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution, in every popular revolution, both in the revolution against czarism and in the revolution against capitalism, 5) the national and colonial question, and 6) the party of the proletariat. In all of these issues, comrade Stalin shows, how, what Lenin put forward, was based on Marxism and answering a question from the workers, he said:

“I think that Lenin “added” no “new principles” to Marxism, nor did he abolish any of the “old” principles of Marxism. Lenin was, and remains, the most loyal and consistent pupil of Marx and Engels, and he wholly and completely based himself on the principles of Marxism.

But Lenin did not merely carry out the teaching of Marx and Engels. He was at the same time the continuer of that teaching.

What does that mean?

It means that he developed further the teaching of Marx and Engels in conformity with the new conditions of development, with the new phase of capitalism, with imperialism. It means that in developing further the teaching of Marx in the new conditions of the class struggle, Lenin contributed something new to the general treasury of Marxism as compared with what was created by Marx and Engels, with what could be

created in the pre-imperialist period of capitalism; at the same time Lenin's new contribution to the treasury of Marxism is wholly and completely based on the principles laid down by Marx and Engels.

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It is in this sense that we speak of Leninism as Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions.”

Drawing a demarcation line against every mechanic application, he put forward:

“I think that every popular revolution, if it really is a popular revolution, is a creative revolution, for it breaks up the old order and creates a new one.(...) Marx and Lenin upheld precisely such a revolution, and only such a revolution.”

What is put forward by comrade Stalin illuminates us very much, if we apply it to our subject. None of the six questions put forward by him, understood as the new, what Lenin contributed to Marxism, was put forward in a worked out way by Lenin, in 1893. It was a developing process of his thought, which, when it came to “a great qualitative leap of Marxism as a whole, as a unity”, was concretized as Leninism. Lets see.

Regarding the issue concerning the Party of the proletariat, the Communist Party, the Party of a new type, Lenin develops his thesis fully and completely during the first two years of the 20th century, as a result of a profound evaluation of the errors and limitations in the organization of the proletarian party in Russia. He himself even explained (see chapter 4 of “What is to be done?”) that he in the beginning of his party work made artisan errors and it was precisely learning from these, that he worked out his theory about the party of a new

type. He himself put forward that his plan for the building of the party are due to the particular conditions in Russia, and he didn't put forward, that it was applicable for all the countries. Later, after the triumph of the October Revolution, the communists of the world take up the indispensable universal necessity of the party of a new type and the III. International decides, that all the communist parties must be bolshevized.

Revisionists and anti-Marxists of every type can attack the necessity of the communist party – as they do, headed by Yankee-imperialism in the general counterrevolutionary offensive – but no one, who calls themselves Maoists can do so, without unveiling themselves as charlatans. In the same way, no one can negate the contributions to the development of Marxism which Lenin did with the party of a new type. But in the historical moment, when he did so, there still was no Leninism. So, what was the right thing to do? Was it just “apply the Marxists line in general”? No, it was a creative application to a concrete problem of the revolution in the state in which Lenin acted. With the understanding, that we have today, with the development, that the ideology of the international proletariat has had, as the sole scientific ideology, as it has become Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, mainly Maoism, we would have said – the thesis regarding the party of a new type – was part of the thought of Lenin.

When we look at the issue of the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution and every popular revolution, be it the revolution against czarism or against capitalism, is the problem which Lenin faced, basically since his first theoretical work, it is clear, that he solves it mainly, when he works out *“Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution”* in the year of 1905. It is to say, during twelve years, from 1893 until 1905, he worked intensively, developing a profound analysis of the particular

society in which he was active, giving orientation to the communists and revolutionaries in the whole czarist empire, until he systematized his position on a higher level. Today, when we describe this process, we can say, that even if his guiding thought starts to develop in 1893, we can say, that the year of 1905 we can speak about a thought of Lenin. The other way around would be to say "no, the only thing Lenin did, was to apply the general line of the Marxists" or "no, in 1905, there already was Leninism"; both are absurd claims which no one can seriously sustain, if they call themselves Maoist.

Also, we call the attention to a very important point, that is, how by solving a problem of an apparently specific character of one country, an important contribution to proletarian world revolution can be done, as its said in "*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: (Bolsheviks)*", written under the leadership of comrade Stalin:

"One might assume from its title that Lenin dealt in it only with tactical questions relating to the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and had only the Russian Mensheviks in mind. But as a matter of fact when he criticized the tactics of the Mensheviks he at the same time exposed the tactics of international opportunism; and when he substantiated the Marxist tactics in the period of the bourgeois revolution and drew the distinction between the bourgeois revolution and the Socialist revolution, he at the same time formulated the fundamental principles of the Marxist tactics in the period of transition from the bourgeois revolution to the Socialist revolution."

Regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat, its enough to see the concrete problem of the soviets, as the way of organizing it put forward by Lenin. We can see clearly in this point, the development of the thought of Lenin as an

expression of the class struggle of the proletariat, how the class generates its great leadership. In the document we just quoted, this process is described masterfully:

“In those stormy days of the October political strike, in the fire of the struggle against czardom, the revolutionary creative initiative of the working-class masses forged a new and powerful weapon—the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies.

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The Soviets of Workers’ Deputies – which were assemblies of delegates from all mills and factories—represented a type of mass political organization of the working class which the world had never seen before. The Soviets that first arose in 1905 were the prototype of the Soviet power which the proletariat, led by the Bolshevik Party, set up in 1917. The Soviets were a new revolutionary form of the creative initiative of the people. They were set up exclusively by the revolutionary sections of the population, in defiance of all laws and prescripts of czardom. They were a manifestation of the independent action of the people who were rising to fight czardom.

The Bolsheviks regarded the Soviets as the embryo of revolutionary power. They maintained that the strength and significance of the Soviets would depend solely on the strength and success of the uprising.”

Remember, that the revolution of 1905 was defeated, but it served as a “general rehearsal” of the revolution for the one who had the necessary revolutionary foresight, and that was Lenin. Today we would all laugh, if someone would come and say “the concept of the Soviets cannot have general universality, because the revolution of 1905 was defeated”, position with reason, who would be so stupid to speak like that? It was also with the defeated revolution of 19058 that Lenin developed his

understanding regarding the militias and fighting contingents – important contributions to the military theory of the proletariat. Those who do not understand how the development of Marxism takes place – those who think that things develop in a linear form, in other cases are not ashamed to barf out such atrocities.

The definition of monopolistic capitalism, of imperialism, as a new stage of capitalism. First in 1916, twenty-three years after he worked out his first theoretical work, Lenin systematizes and explains his thesis. It was not, that he first then had understood the problems, the antecedents are very clear, particularly when one studies his struggle against revisionism, but even so “Imperialism” constitutes a leap. It is the fundamental work to sustain Leninism as the second stage of Marxism, Marxism-Leninism, as the Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. It is to say, its Lenin himself, who gave the fundamental theoretical framework, how to understand, how his contributions in general constitutes a new stage. Without Lenin, there is no explanation of Leninism, it was comrade Stalin first, who defined it as such. On this point, Chairman Gonzalo calls upon us to

“Furthermore, we must keep well in mind that when Comrade Stalin justly and correctly stated that we had entered the stage of Leninism as the development of Marxism, there was also opposition by those who rend their garments in a supposed defense of Marxism. There were also those who said that Leninism was only applicable to the backward countries. But, in the midst of struggle, practice has consecrated Leninism as a great development of Marxism, and thus the proletarian ideology shone victoriously in the face of the world as Marxism-Leninism.”

As it said in “History of the Communist Party of the Soviet



Union: (Bolsheviks)”:

“On the basis of the facts concerning imperialist capitalism set forth in his remarkable book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin displaced this view as obsolete and set forth a new theory, from which it follows that the simultaneous victory of Socialism in all countries is impossible, while the victory of Socialism in one capitalist country, taken singly, is *possible*.

The inestimable importance of Lenin’s theory of Socialist revolution lies not only in the fact that it has enriched Marxism with a new theory and has advanced Marxism, but also in the fact that it opens up a revolutionary perspective for the proletarians of separate countries, that it unfetters their initiative in the onslaught on their own, national bourgeoisie, that it teaches them to take advantage of a war situation to organize this onslaught, and that it strengthens their faith in the victory of the proletarian revolution.”

Who, except of the Bolsheviks and a very small number of Marxists abroad, in the year 1916 accepted this “new theoretical viewpoint” as an enrichment of the development of Marxism? No one. On the contrary, the immense majority followed the social-patriots and centrists like Kautsky. The majority followed the biggest party, the party of Germany. Today, does not everyone in the ICM laugh about Kautsky, not to speak about the hatred against the social-patriots? Who is interested today in which was the biggest party at that time? Regarding the question of the forms and procedure in successfully building socialism in a period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, in a country encircled by capitalist states, we can see, that in this issue, we can see that Lenin solved this problem fully and completely. After the October Revolution, when his thinking already had developed

into Leninism. It could not be another way, you could not solve the problem in abstract but only by applying the universal ideology to the concrete problem in midst of the class struggles.[9](#)

Finally, the national and colonial question. Lenin was always a living incarnation of proletarian internationalism, there was never a trace of chauvinism in him. He was always at the side of the oppressed peoples and nations, but obviously he centered his attention to the concrete problems that the revolution he led faced, and the understandings of this issue advanced, from the position true by Marxism, applying these to the concrete conditions of the revolution, always having in mind the class struggle, to make it real, a new development as the recognized great leader of the world proletarian revolution at the head of the III. International. Doing this is enough to remember "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", its written in 1914, based upon the defense of the program of the Marxists in Russia. Its first with the work, theoretically and practically, in and for the III. International, that he formulates in the closest collaboration with the communists of all the continents, completely his new applications on the colonial question. So, in this aspect, we also see how leaps are made in the thought of Lenin.

The brief examples that we have given to show, how it is just and correct, to sustain that also the case of Lenin and Leninism shows how each revolution, so to triumph, needs to generate a guiding thought, nor is so to sustain that there are, a "young Lenin", and an "old Lenin" among who there should be a supposed discordance, but Lenin himself explains, how this process takes place:

"But inasmuch as the criterion of practice, i.e., the course of development of all capitalist countries in the last few decades, proves only the objective truth of

Marx's whole social and economic theory in general, and not merely of one or other of its parts, formulations, etc., it is clear that to talk of the "dogmatism" of the Marxists is to make an unpardonable concession to bourgeois economics. The sole conclusion to be drawn from the opinion of the Marxists that Marx's theory is an objective truth is that by following the path of Marxist theory we shall draw closer and closer to objective truth (without ever exhausting it); but by following any other path we shall arrive at nothing but confusion and lies."

Lenin always went after the path of Marx, that is why his thought arose to, by leaps, to ever higher levels, until becoming Leninism. He was the most faithful disciple of Marx, that is why he knew how to solve new problems and that is how he became the continuator of his work. We communists have the obligation to be like that. True to our principles but always with an open mind to see the new.

## Conclusion

In a synthetic manner, we can sum up the coming to being of the thought of Lenin, taking as a starting point what has been put forward by Chairman Gonzalo, regarding what is a guiding thought, in the following conditions:

– regarding historical context: it was the creative application of Marxism to the reality of Russia, a country which Marx considered as the bastion of counterrevolution in Europe. From the international viewpoint, in western Europe, the relatively peaceful development of capitalism, which led social democracy in general and in particular the one in Germany, to abandon the perspective of the seizure of power and its degeneration in parliamentary cretinism. In face of autocracy in Russia, the electoral tendency was an impossibility for the development of the workers and communist

movement in Russia. This internal context was fundamental for the coming to being of the theoretical and practical basis of the party of new type, which takes on a character of theoretical formulation in 1902, with "what is to be done?" by Lenin, in which the criteria of membership of the party, the iron discipline, the centralization the clandestinity and the professionalization are established.

– regarding its ideological base: Chairman Gonzalo defines the "philosophy as the soul of the ideology". Lenin, in 1984, writes his first printed document, "*What the "Friends of the People" Are*" where he makes a very strong defense of Marxist dialectics, in distinction to the dialectics of Hegel, with which opportunism tries to mix it up. The same way, he defended historical materialism in a demolishing criticism of the subjectivistic sociology of the "friends of the people", and of the "objectivism" of the legal Marxists. From the materialist point of view, there is a clear vision of the necessity of the study of the objective foundations of society, to understand its political process; from the dialectical point of view, Lenin firmly holds on to the necessity of the analysis of the concrete conditions for the development of the thought of the Russian revolution.

– regarding the content: Lenin, in 1899, writes his brilliant *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, in which he did not only showed a deep mastering of Marxism, but how in a rigorous and creative manner, did his application to the study of the economic base of Russian society. From the point of view of two line struggle, this work represented the defeat of the petty bourgeois revolutionary strategy of "the friends of the people" who underestimated the development of the working class and tried to put the peasantry to tail the liberal bourgeoisie. In 1905, as a part of the rupture with the Mensheviks, Lenin writes his famous "*Two Tactics of Social-Democracy*", a creative application of the *Manifesto of the*

*Communist Party*, creative, because Lenin forges the bolshevik tactics of the proletariat of struggling for the democratic bourgeois revolution, uniting with the peasantry and fighting for leading it, with the arming of the masses, and with the uprising, led by the party and the proletariat. Lenin put the question of power in the center of the bolshevik tactics, defining it as the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants. He established the military line, claiming that it is only possible to conquer the power through the destruction of the military force of the old state, which demands the construction of a military force of the proletariat. Two line struggle against menshevikism, in the II. Congress of the bolshevik, they constitute themselves as red fraction and they set themselves the task of building the party, a task that is fulfilled with the bolshevik party in 1912. first then, the revolution in Russia counts upon a party in a new type, able to lead the revolution to victory.

From that date on we have a constituted party, great leadership of Lenin, sustained in his thought, capable of leading the seizure of power by the armed proletariat and defended with the proletariat in arms.

The same way, in a synthetic way, we characterize Leninism, as a new and second stage, taking as a starting point, what Chairman Gonzalo has established: "Marxism has three parts: Marxist philosophy, Marxist political economy, and scientific socialism. The development of all these three components gives rise to a great qualitative leap of Marxism as a whole, as a unity on a superior level, which implies a new stage."

– in Marxist philosophy: in his work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* and *Philosophical Notebooks* in a complete and profound way, he establishes the theory of reflection as the dialectic materialist theory of knowledge, treating as well the thought as a material reflection, as the transforming and

effective action as a criteria of truth. He analyzed the movement of nature, society and knowledge, as a contradictory movement, and developed the concept of unity in identity of the contraries. Regarding dialectics, Lenin establishes, that: “‘Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction in *the very essence of objects.*’ Lenin often called this law the essence of dialectics; he also called it the kernel of dialectics.” (Chairman Mao, On Contradiction). The leap in the Marxist philosophy made by Lenin, during the years from 1909 to 1915, was decisive for working out the later thesis which constitutes the economical and political content of Leninism.

– in political economy: Lenin promoted a leap in the quality of the Marxist political economy by developing imperialism as superior and last stage of capitalism. Lenin explains the phenomenon of monopoly, taking as a starting point the fusion between bank- and industrial capital. Fighting revisionism, which put forward, that this stage made capitalism stronger, Lenin answered, by showing that imperialism is monopoly capitalism; parasitic, or decaying capitalism; moribund capitalism. The birth of imperialism was the economic basis which explains the change in the fundamental contradictions on the world, that the distinguishing character in the epoch of imperialism, is that the world got divided in a handful of oppressing nations, who possessed colonies on one side, and on the other hand, the immense majority of oppressed nations – colonies and half-colonies of those nations of the first characteristic –, and therefore, that the main contradiction became the one between oppressed nations and imperialism; that is the origin of the Leninist conclusion that the center of the revolution moved to the east; and there to we have to add that everything regarding the economy of socialism and the knowledge of its laws, are a totally new experience, the first in the world.

– regarding scientific socialism: Lenin, not only formulated masterfully the Party of a New Type as a fighting organization of the class, based upon democratic centralism and forged the struggle against opportunism in revolutionary violence, but also developed the Marxist theory regarding the State in general and the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. He showed, that in class society, democracy and dictatorship express a unity of contraries and that the dictatorship of the proletariat is when, the first time in history, the state represents the dictatorship of the immense majority over the minority. Lenin also gives the solution, together with comrade Stalin, to the national and colonial problem, as foundations of the world proletarian revolution.

Leninism was forged in the midst of the sharpest class struggle against autocracy and imperialism and in a way that cannot be separated from the two line struggle against the economist opportunism in the years before 1905, Menshevikism and revisionist liquidationism which arose in the bosom of the social democratic party during the stolpinist reaction. Under the great leadership of Lenin, based on the great ideological victory which represented the work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, the Bolsheviks as a red faction founded the RSDLP (Bolshevik), 1912, making real in practice, what has been said since 1905, that is how a Marxist party, apart and different from the others, cleansing the opportunistic, petty bourgeois (Menshevik) waste. Since then, there was a Party of a New Type, but the question of the correct scientific name was still pending: Communist Party. The two line struggle against social-chauvinism of the II. International and its bankruptcy in the following years and during the first world war; the Bolshevik Party – after the triumph, the Communist Party of Russia (Bolshevik) – acted as a red faction in the ICM and moved ahead in the midst of the split of the international socialism. 1917, the Great Socialist October Revolution triumphs, the III. International is constituted, the Communist

International as a world party of the proletariat, of which Lenin is the first great leadership.

Between the thought of Lenin and Leninism, there is no Chinese wall and therefore there cannot be a separation of what is Lenin's thought and what belongs to Leninism. Here we have the case in which the perspective became reality.

Regarding this, we will say, that from its first moment, as a communist thought, it develops with the perspective to serve the necessity of a new development of Marxism, to solve the new problems, which the world revolution faced, this perspective turned into reality: Marxism-Leninism. This is being done through different qualitative leaps, in the midst of national and international class struggle and the two line struggle inside the party, until the moment comes, where, through a great qualitative leap, by which Marxism is being elevated to a new, higher stage, that is Marxism-Leninism, it acquires as a whole universal validity.

Seen like this, the work of Lenin is an integral whole. The thought of Lenin, going through different and successive stages, following its own development progress, becomes Leninism, which arises when a great qualitative leap has been given, which has meant a new development in each and everyone of its three integral parts, and as a whole, Marxism has been raised to a new stage, firstly as an objective necessity of class struggle, as the particular conditions of Russia in the beginnings of the 20th century, showed themselves to be the conditions which became universal with the surge of imperialism and the complete evolution of the bourgeoisie to become reaction all along the line.

Therefore, the questions which came up during the start of the creative application of Marxism to the specific conditions of



Russia and the ingenious solutions of Lenin, which is the case with the Party of the New Type, among many other examples, meant contributions of universal validity to the world revolution, solutions of universal valor in that moment, which later were incorporated to the general treasury of Marxism as a great theoretical development of the pending parts.

Due to the capacity of Lenin, due to the strength of the Bolshevik Party, which adhered with firmness to his great leadership, his guiding thought makes the leap and raises Marxism to a new stage, it becomes an “-ism”, which implies universal validity, and it becomes the second stage of the development of our ideology, which is Marxism. This systematization and definition of Leninism was done by comrade Stalin, whose name is impossible to separate from the saga which is Lenin.

1 This article was originally published in Spanish as a contribution to the second issue of the magazine *El Maoísta* (The Maoist), dated October 2018. We have done some minor editorial adjustments in the English translation. Normally, our criteria regarding translation is to be as true as possible to the original. In this case, we, very consciously, have tried to do a translation that facilitates the understanding of the basic ideas. Therefore, a reader who masters Spanish will find quite a few differences regarding formulation as to the Spanish original. As this is a contribution by the Committee Red Flag, we consider it our right to proceed this way.

2 In writing this article, some comrades gave us access to some documentation of the Communist Party of Peru which has not been published by the Party, in this paragraph and generally in the text, we base ourselves on a document called “Exposition on the fundamentals of Gonzalo thought”, part of the not published documentation of the I. Congress of the PCP. The published document on Gonzalo thought “Regarding Gonzalo

thought" is another document to which we also refer in the present text. When it comes to the references regarding the non-public documents, we use the excerpts as integrated part of our text, since they have not been edited for publication by the PCP itself.

3 It is necessary to underscore, that we don't consider comrade Thälmann to be a revisionist. He was a true defender of comrade Stalin, he was a militant of the III. International, he showed great valor and heroism by giving his whole life to the service of the proletarian world revolution. But even so, he did not have the necessary stature in front of the historical necessity. He was not the leader, the class needed, he did not know how to apply with the independence Marxism-Leninism and under his leadership, the CPG took a series of rightist positions, it is necessary to investigate more, so to be able to conclude if these constituted a structural right opportunist line or not, this work is a part of the process in which the communists in formation in the Federal Republic of Germany are going ahead with in the struggle for the reconstitution of our Party. In this sense, the criticism made by comrade Alfred Klahr are very important to keep in mind and give us good indications to follow.

4 Literally translated: „the whole world“, used here to say everyone.

5 We largely quote the document of the PCP, even if we know that many comrades are familiar with the text, but in question of science, precision and to be exact are indispensable, and therefore some repetition becomes indispensable. For the comrades who are newer to the subject, we recommend to study the base of party unity of the PCP (made up of the *Fundamental Documents* – which are “On Marxism-Leninism-Maoism”, “Regarding Gonzalo thought”, and “Program and Rules” – and the *general political line*). The documents “Regarding Gonzalo thought” is the first document in the history of the proletarian world revolution in which the process in which a guiding thought comes to be in another country as China is being explained correctly, here lies its great relevance and significance.

6 We call to attention, that the main contribution of Chairman Gonzalo is to have defined Maoism as the new, third and superior stage of the ideology of the international proletariat; it was with Gonzalo thought that it was defined, to be Marxist today means to be Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, mainly Maoist. It would be absurd to expect that every guiding thought will make such contributions to the treasury of Marxism, if that will be the case, we would have had an endless number of "-isms".

7 To those comrades, readers who wish a systematic view in a chronological manner, how Lenin developed his theoretical work, we recommend the study of the chronology "*The life and work of V.I.Lenin*". *Important dates*" which are included in the complete works of Lenin.

8 We remember, that the revolution of 1905 was not only an uprising, but covers a period of three years of the most intense class struggle, its importance cannot be underestimated. As Lenin himself said: "Without the tremendous class battles and the revolutionary energy displayed by the Russian proletariat during the three years, 1905-07, the second revolution could not possibly have been so rapid in the sense that its initial stage was completed in a few days."

9 This is one reason – among very many – why this guy Avakian is so ridiculous: some years ago he published a „constitution“ of a „state“ which only exists in his head! The yankee-revisionists say, that their "chairman" (it would be more correct to call him "prophet") is supposedly not a hippie, but anyway, it seems like a world full of pink elephants.