

Proletarian Power: OUR DEFENCE OF MAOISM (Translation updated)

Proletarian Power

M-L-M Party Organisation

Colombia, 29 September 2022

OUR DEFENCE OF MAOISM

Many days ago we sent a proposal of material where we put forward our position on the issue of unity among communists and how it should be done around the principles, and we also proposed some principles that we consider should be the basis for unity in the task of constituting or reconstituting the Party of the proletariat in each country and the New International Organisation of the Proletariat. And, another material, which is a second part that we recently elaborated, in criticism of Avakian's New Synthesis. We note that neither of these two texts has been published in the digital newspaper "Communist International" nor has it been made available to the other organisations that will participate in the International Conference, even though we have requested it through e-mail letters. Lenin said that before we unite we must make clear demarcations. We hope that these materials will be published as soon as possible and discussed. We ask: Shouldn't the Conference make a clear demarcation from Avakianist opportunism? Why have these writings not been made available for consideration by the other organisations (see texts referenced in the following link: <https://poderproletario.blackblogs.org>)?

For a determined and correct line struggle

The first thing that should be determined with absolute certainty, in the debates at the International Conference, is whether or not the line struggle is assumed.

The contradictions that develop between proletarian organisations are contradictions in the ranks of the proletariat and are aimed at defeating incorrect ideas and advancing unity; However, if it can be shown by objective facts and not by preconceived ideas that there exists an incorrigible opportunist organisation, a sworn enemy of the proletariat, a provocateur, with which we must make a clear demarcation, it will have to be unmasked and expelled from the ranks of the Unified Maoist International Conference.

An inadequate handling of the contradictions in the ranks of the proletariat with "merciless fighting", "relentless blows" and/or "personal attacks" does not serve unity, but the dispersion of the proletarian forces, especially when some debates are conducted using only extremely harsh adjectives, accompanied by extremely weak arguments. This is not in accordance to a process of treating the disease and saving the patient.

The Basis for Unity among Communists

From our position, what determines who can be within a proletarian organisation, be it the Unified Maoist International Conference or a Party of the proletariat in each country, should be the ideological principles, not the political line. Consequently, we think that the first thing to define for an event such as an International Conference (and within the proletarian Parties) must be the definition of the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism that are assumed and defended, and which bind the unity of the communists in the class struggle.

The universal cohesive foundations of communists and communist organisations must be ideological principles. It is unity

around principles that gives the proletariat cohesion as an organisation where different political lines and nuances must be confronted in a correct two-line struggle. Failure to understand this dialectic has condemned the proletariat to remain disunited, not over matters of principle but over differences of political line, and in the best of cases, it makes possible only the union of comrades who share a certain nuance, generating a series of extremely artisanal Maoist circles, which end up depriving us of the One Party of the proletariat and a Unified International Organisation of the Proletariat.

The PCP said in "On Marxism-Leninism-Maoism":

*"The party develops and changes according to the stages of the revolution and the periods which these stages may have. **The motor of its development is the contradiction which materialises itself within it as the struggle of two lines, the proletarian line and the bourgeois or in general non-proletarian line, which is in essence and principally a struggle against revisionism. This leads to the decisive importance of ideology in the life of the party and to the development of rectification campaigns which will serve the further adjustment of all systems of party organisation and membership to just and correct ideological and political lines, guaranteeing the predominance of the proletarian line and keeping the leadership of the Party in its iron fist.**"*
(Emphasis added).

It is clear that the two-line struggle (the manifestation of the class struggle in the Party) is the motor of the Party's development; but, in order for it to serve the proletariat, i.e., to guarantee the predominance of the proletarian line, it is absolutely necessary to firmly grasp the proletarian ideology, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles.

In order to determine the principles that must unite the proletariat internationally and in each country, there must be

an ideological struggle to break with the organisations that deny the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. But this determination of the principles must be, fundamentally, by the full acceptance of each and every one, for all organisations must accept the fundamental bases of M-L-M out of conscience. In matters of principle there must be no subjugation by discipline of the minority to the majority, nor subjugation of the lower organisms to the higher ones. But, in order to determine political line, programme, balances, etc., that is to say, to establish how these principles are applied to the concrete reality in the task of building the Party of the proletariat in each country, there must be a two-line struggle, governed by democratic centralism where the minority must submit to the majority and the lower organisms to the higher ones in order to advance, in this aspect, the method of consensus is inconceivable, this would be adhering to vulgar evolutionism.

A clash of ideas or a reconciliation of nuances?

We must all understand that the two-line struggle is absolutely necessary and that the unifying factor between the different lines and nuances must be ideological principles. We think that a proposal of cohesive Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles should be the first material to be discussed and defined at the Unified Maoist International Conference.

The first step we must take in the International Conference, we think, should be oriented towards discussing a proposal of cohesive ideological principles for the international communist movement and not only a proposal of balance which obviously expresses a political line or as some organisations have called it, expresses a certain nuance, generating in some organisations which are clearly of another political line, a feeling of exclusion, which translates into a resistance to participate in the International Conference convened by the CCIMU.

On the other hand, some comrades seem to imply that the CCIMU should elaborate a material of a proposal for a balance of the international movement, expressing not only their views, but those of all those invited to the Conference. How can this be achieved? With a summary text that includes all the positions summed up and leaves everyone happy? If this is the proposal of some comrades, this method is not Marxist.

In this sense we consider the position expressed by the comrades of the Communist Workers' Union (UOC) of Colombia on the Proposal of the Coordinating Committee for a Unified Maoist International Conference – CCIMU – to be an error, since it seems to propose consensus and not ideological struggle for the elaboration of the proposal for the balance of the International Communist Movement and its present General Political Line, or a kind of summary article that includes all the different lines that are manifested in the international Maoist movement. Let's see what the comrades of the UOC have to say:

*“In this sense, we consider that the proposal presented by the comrades of the Coordinating Committee for a Unified Maoist International Conference -CCIMU, does not correspond to the present situation of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoists; that is to say, **it does not represent a common general basis of unity, to continue the struggle around the divergences that for now are legitimate within the revolutionary communists, since such a proposal only expresses the position of a particular shade of the communist movement**“.* (Emphasis added).

To ask for a proposal for material to be written for the International Conference that is unanimously accepted by all shades is to deny the line struggle for this purpose; it is to resort to consensus to determine the bases of unity, in a clear undermining of the ideological struggle, of the process of unity-struggle-unity, in short, a denial of materialist dialectics.

Finally, we would like to add a short reflection to this chapter, to draw attention to another of the teachings of the masters of the international proletariat: the principle of the unity and struggle of opposites or the law of contradiction, where one divides into two. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, we stress, is the scientific ideology of the proletariat and is composed of hundreds of universal truths that correctly interpret reality. However, there are no all-correct lines; they are all divided in two and are therefore capable of being improved, corrected and even fundamentally transformed. Even if we all start from our deepest Marxist convictions and, of course, do not start from the assumption that we are wrong and, perhaps, it does not even cross our minds that we may represent an incorrect or even opportunist line (in some extreme cases), we must all – without exception – recognise that we are divided in two and, therefore, a part of each organisation's line must be improved, corrected or transformed. The two-line struggle and revolutionary practice are the essential methods for refining and correcting our interpretation of reality and deepening our knowledge of M-L-M. We must all be willing to learn, to listen to arguments, to refute what we consider incorrect, to accept the line of the majority and to accept being in the minority, in a process based on the principles of democratic centralism. Lenin said:

“In the theory of knowledge, as in every other branch of science, we must think dialectically, that is, we must not regard our knowledge as ready-made and unalterable, but must determine how knowledge emerges from ignorance, how incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact.”

Who keeps silent, gives?

The comrades of the Coordinating Committee say in the text DEFENCE OF MAOISM II, continuing the debate with the comrades of the Communist Workers' Union:

“...although the organisation Proletarian Power of Colombia takes position for the principality of Maoism and the proposal of the Bases of Discussion, on this and other points of the ideology of the proletariat with its own reservations, it keeps silent or is silent on the class character of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and in politics the saying “he who is silent consents” is true.”

To begin with, it is clear that we recognise with absolute certainty the class character of the ideology of the proletariat, that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism serves the proletariat. To deny this would make our participation as a party organisation in the proletarian revolution and, of course, in the International Conference impossible. We want to recall here that, in several of our materials, we have made it clear that Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology serves the proletariat. One of them we sent for discussion at the UMIC (“Unity among Communists: Struggling for the Party and for the Communist International of a New Type”).

It is not true that the popular saying, “he who is silent, consents”, in politics, behaves like a law. There are often a thousand reasons for not addressing a specific issue in a particular piece of writing and this cannot be interpreted as agreeing, when in other materials the issue has been clearly stated. If we were to take this popular saying as law, we would be obliged to repeat constantly, in all writings, as if it were gospel, all the general truths of Marxism. Or would it be correct if, using the same mistaken logic as the comrades of the CCIMU in this case, we were to interpret the non-publication of our text, “By breaking with Avakian opportunism we are forging unity among communists” in the pages of the online newspaper **Communist International**, as a concession to the “new synthesis” of the renegade Avakian?

But, comrades, the present process is not, nor can it be, a colloquial conversation, much less can Marxism be treated as a confessional belief where it is necessary to permanently

manifest one's faith and say "the CREED". Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is a scientific ideology, and the debates and discussions that it engenders must be conducted as in any other science. We do not accept borrowing popular sayings to pass them off as laws. If a concept is not stated or is not clear in a text, it should simply be clarified in the debate. Nothing should supposedly be made clear by a concession derived from "silence". In inverted commas "silence" because the class character of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism has been clearly established in several of our texts.

On the other hand, the aim of the two-line struggle is precisely to purify and improve the Marxist conception in our ranks, to defeat ideas alien to the proletariat and to make the ideology of the proletariat the main aspect of the proletarian revolution in the world for the construction of communism. No one can accept silence as an argument.

A misinterpretation and a debate on fundamental law

The comrades of the Conference Coordinating Committee in their text DEFENCE OF MAOISM II say:

*"Moreover, on the decisive question of the marrow of our ideology, Marxist philosophy or dialectical materialism as Engels called it, the comrades of Proletarian Power say "We consider Lenin's formulation of dialectics to be accurate, we would neither add to it nor subtract from it", i.e. **we must leave the question forever and ever where he left it.**" (Emphasis added).*

Exactly what we said was:

"We consider Lenin's formulation of dialectics to be accurate, we would neither add to it nor subtract from it. In this regard, Mao says in "On Contradiction": Lenin said: "Dialectics, strictly speaking, is the study of contradiction in the very essence of objects [...]" Lenin used to call this law the essence of dialectics and also the kernel of

dialectics.” If there are sufficient arguments to leave Lenin’s formulation of dialectics behind, and to take up a new one, they must be presented at the Conference for discussion, otherwise we must reaffirm Lenin’s thesis.”

What we say in this paragraph is that Lenin’s approach, in that text and in that context, was correct and accurate. It was not wrong. The CCIMU comrades’ interpretation of our formulation seems to us to be unfortunate and we think it is absolutely contrary to the spirit of what we actually expressed in text.

It cannot fail to surprise us that comrades conclude that we are saying that we **must leave the question forever and ever where he (Lenin) left it**. Nor where Marx left it, or where Mao left it.

From what words in our paragraph or in our text can it be concluded that we are about to leave the question **forever and ever**? In our text DELIMITING AND SPECIFYING (published in the digital newspaper **Communist International** in the section Tribune of Debate), on several occasions we referred to the slight conclusions reached by the comrades of the UOC (mlm) in the debate on the Proposal on the Balance of the International Communist Movement and its Current General Political Line of the Coordinating Committee, because they debated without paying attention to what was written and fought against ideas that were not in the text they criticised, but in their own heads. Now the comrades of the Coordinating Committee, CCIMU criticise an idea that was not, nor could be deduced, from our text and that only springs from their own heads.

With regard to the discussion on the laws of dialectics, we appreciate the effort of the CCIMU in its text *“DEFENCE OF MAOISM III. The marrow of the conception of the proletariat is the contradiction – A historical leap of inexhaustible transcendence”*, in which it elaborates on the contradiction, unity and struggle of opposites, and the fundamental law of

dialectics. Also in our party organisation we had already taken up this discussion when we became acquainted with the text of the comrades of the CCIMU. For the same reason, we want to make some reflections on this matter and participate in this debate for the defence of one of the core ideological principles of m-l-m. To begin with, we think it is necessary to bear in mind the following:

1) That the laws in the social sciences are, in general, interfered with by multiple phenomena which (in contrast to the natural sciences) are fulfilled as predominant tendencies that act on the phenomena that make their way in the midst of fluctuations caused by counter tendencies, by the handling that the subjects make on the basis of their knowledge of these objective laws and their correlation of forces, although – nevertheless – these laws, in the end, *impose themselves with an iron necessity*.

So, to determine scientifically, the existence of objective laws in social processes is not a simple task.

2) What Lenin says about contradiction, later deepened and developed by Mao, is accurate: he used to call this law the essence of dialectics and also the kernel of dialectics. It plays a key and fundamental role as a tool for knowing the world and transforming it.

3) At present, our apprehension of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is, at the present stage, marked and conditioned by the tasks arising from Party building, the constituting of the New International Organisation of the Proletariat and the initiation or development of the people's war. The contributions of Maoism to Marxist philosophy, especially Mao's contributions in "On Contradiction", in these fields or issues, and in other matters, provide us with the theoretical tools in materialist and dialectical philosophy necessary for a correct interpretation of reality and of course for the fulfilment of our tasks.

4) In a quotation from Mao that the CCIMU comrades themselves brought to the debate, in Defence of Maoism II, says:

"It is necessary to go through a process of practice and study to go from ignorance to knowledge. At the beginning no one has knowledge. Foreknowledge has never existed. People must go through practice to gain results, meet with failure as problems arise; only through such a process can knowledge gradually advance. If you want to know the objective laws of the development of things and events you must go through the process of practice, adopt a Marxist-Leninist attitude... It is not easy "to possess and apply these laws fully and consciously."... The text does not recognize the contradictions between appearances and essences. Essences always lie behind appearances and cannot be disclosed except through appearances. The text does not express the idea that for a person to know the laws it is necessary to go through a process. The vanguard is no exception."(Mao Tse-tung, "Reading Notes On The Soviet Text 'Political Economy'.

To know the laws, Chairman Mao taught us, we are obliged to follow a spiral process of practice, study, research and transformation. Here too, there is no exception. But, as we have stressed, it is not just any practice, but precisely the development of the class struggle, of revolutionary practice. Of this there is not the slightest doubt.

5) Mao begins the text "ON CONTRADICTION" (one of the most important contributions to the development of Marxist philosophy) with Lenin's quotation, reaffirming that the law of the unity of opposites is the most fundamental law of materialist dialectics:

*"The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is **the basic law** of materialist dialectics. Lenin said, "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.”” (Emphasis added).

And in the CONCLUSION Mao says:

*“We may now say a few words to sum up. The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is **the fundamental law** of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought.”*

And elsewhere in the same text Mao says that Lenin points out:

“The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.”

What do these statements imply, and how do we interpret them? That the law of dialectics which most affects society, nature, thought and our revolutionary work, because it is the fundamental one, is the law of the unity and struggle of opposites; the others, which Engels had concluded, do not affect in the same way and do not allow us to explain how and why changes and transformations occur in society, in nature and in thought.

And then, what would be the difference between the statement of the CCIMU comrades and what Mao put forward in “ON CONTRADICTION”?

The comrades of the Coordinating Committee state:

“We express our reaffirmation of what was established by the CUMIC in the Basis of Discussion for the Unified Maoist International Conference (UMIC) on contradiction, the “sole fundamental law of the incessant transformation of eternal matter”, which in condensed form expresses the conception of the international proletariat, dialectical materialism: its condition as materialist when it says eternal matter and dialectic when it emphasises the contradiction. Materialism is

the basis, dialectics is the guidance, and **the only fundamental law of dialectics is contradiction, others are derivations.**" (Defence of Maoism II. Emphasis added).

The comrades of the Coordinating Committee then say that there **is only one fundamental law of dialectics** and that is contradiction, the **others are derivations**. That is to say, the CCIMU does not deny, in the way it is worded, in Defence of Maoism II, that there are other laws, one of which is the fundamental one (unity and struggle of opposites) and the others are derivations. Here they seem to be in line with Mao's statements when he addressed this issue very early in the text on contradiction: "the law of contradiction in things, i.e., the law of the unity of opposites, is **the basic law** of materialist dialectics", which by using the word "most" could be interpreted as meaning that for Mao it was not the only one. *[Note CI-IC.org: in the English version of the quote in Selected Works of Chairman Mao the formulation used is "the basic law", but the Spanish formulation "la ley más fundamental" translates to "the most fundamental law";]*

There is no doubt that it is the most fundamental law, and that there are others which are derivations, but which are not fundamental, this is what we must still deepen in the international communist movement. And to do so we must not only take up, quote and contrast what the masters of the proletariat did, wrote and synthesised, but especially apply the conception and method that they and the struggles of the international proletariat bequeathed to us, synthesised in the following principles: practice-theory-practice (transformation) and concrete analysis of concrete reality.

So the difference that we saw in the formulation that the comrades of the CCIMU made in Defence of Maoism II and in Mao's statements lies in the fact that the comrades say: contradiction is the **only** fundamental law; and Mao: the unity of opposites is the **most** fundamental law.

In the text DEFENCE OF MAOISM III, the comrades of the CCIMU further explain and deepen their position on Contradiction as the fundamental and **only** law of dialectics. But in order to do so and to demonstrate that it is so, they have chosen **the hermeneutic method**ⁱ and not the Marxist method which is the one that should start from practice to arrive at the elaboration of concepts and again validates them in social practice which in a spiral development should lead us to a better understanding of theory as a guide for revolutionary action.

On the fundamental contradiction

In the document Bases of Discussion of the CCIMU: For a Unified Maoist International Conference! – Proposal regarding the balance of the International Communist Movement and of its current General Political Line the comrades say:

“Throughout the whole 20th Century, this new phase of capitalism, its superior and last stage, was completely defined. And that the division of the world into oppressed and oppressor countries is a distinctive feature of imperialism. Thus, to understand the current situation we cannot start from the fundamental contradiction of capitalism because we are in its superior and last phase, imperialism.” (Emphasis added)

We think that this idea of the comrades is in open contradiction with several fundamental postulates of the scientific ideology of the m-l-m, which the masters of the proletariat: Marx, Lenin and Mao helped to synthesise and develop. To begin with, we consider it important to point out that the fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the same as that of its highest stage: imperialism. But the principal contradiction can change from one stage to another.

1) Let us begin by recalling one of the central theses of Lenin’s text “Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism”:

“If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition

of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism.”

Also in the same text he posited:

“Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres.”

Imperialism is the highest phase of capitalism, that is, it is the capitalism of this epoch. And in order to understand this epoch of capitalism we cannot ignore the fundamental contradiction of capitalism; we cannot ignore its essence.

2) Mao says in “On Contradiction”:

*“The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and **the essence** of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction **will not disappear until the process is completed**; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process.”*

That is to say, the fundamental contradiction of capitalism will not disappear until communism arrives, and capitalism disappears by resolving precisely its fundamental contradiction. There is no other way.

Also in the same text, Mao summarises the following:

*“When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction **manifests itself** in the contradiction between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat”.*

In conclusion. It cannot be ignored in the analyses of a Unified Maoist International Conference that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, therefore, its *fundamental contradiction is between the social character of production and the private character of property and in terms of class relations, it **manifests itself** in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This has not changed, and will not change, until capitalism ceases to exist. This has not changed, nor will it change, until capitalism ceases to exist.*

The new contradictions that arise are derived from the fundamental contradiction *between the social character of production and the private character of property*, therefore, this contradiction does exist in capitalism from beginning to end, as expressed in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This is not the case with the contradictions which are derivative, although they can become very acute and of course principal.

In other words, the fundamental contradiction is the one that determines the essence of capitalism until its demise. In other words, from beginning to end. The inter-imperialist contradiction and the contradiction between oppressed nations and imperialist powers and superpowers cannot determine the essence of capitalism, because when they arise, capitalism already existed; its essence was already determined, and their

solution is impossible without solving the fundamental contradiction of capitalism. In the case of inter-imperialist contradictions, the contradictions between the oppressed nations and the imperialist powers cannot be resolved without resolving the fundamental contradiction of capitalism; consequently, they are not fundamental contradictions.

Constitute or Reconstitute Parties of the Proletariat and the New Communist International, around the Principles, in the heat of the People's War, through the struggle between two lines and in close connection with the masses!

Long live Marxism Leninism Maoism!

For the construction of the New International Organisation of the Proletariat, long live the Unified Maoist International Conference!

Revolutionarily.

Executive Committee

Proletarian Power – Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Party Organisation

[i](http://www.redalyc.org/journal/4835/483568603007/html/)“The hermeneutic method, offers an alternative for research focused on the interpretation of texts. It implies a dialectical process in which the researcher navigates between the parts and the whole of the text in order to achieve an adequate understanding of the text” (Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata; La hermeneutica como método de interpretación de textos en la investigación psicoanalítica. 2019. En: www.redalyc.org/journal/4835/483568603007/html/)