

Union of Revolutionary Communists (Marxists-Leninists-Maoists)

David Benquis/ "Camarada Velásquez",
Brief outline and evaluation of his revolutionary life

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The main contribution of David Benquis to the struggle for the liberation of the working class and the Chilean people was to have been one of the founders and the main leader of an authentically Marxist-Leninist party, fully based on the thought of Mao Zedong: the Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR).

The PCR was the most serious attempt (from 1966 to 1980) to develop a political party which fully represented the objective interests of the Chilean proletariat on the ideological, political and organizational level.

By pointing out that the PCR was Chile's most advanced communist attempt, we do not deny the efforts and experiences of other communists, who have long felt the absence of a revolutionary party applying a consistent political line.

On the contrary, our obligation as communists is to find out what were the weaknesses and limitations which prevented the success of these attempts, including the experience of the PCR.

David Benquis has never tired of spreading this truth: the only way to resolve the contradiction between the oppressed Chilean people and imperialism and its oppressing allies is through the People's War.

Although the PCR of which he was the head failed to start the armed struggle, this failed experiment left us with a legacy: a revolutionary Communist Program (which could be considered as the first genuinely communist program in Chile), a strategy consisting in the popular democratic revolution, some elements for the military line in Chile, in addition to an abundant documentation in which one can already perceive the Maoist perspective.

In these documents, we find synthesized the experiences of hundreds of anonymous, courageous and persevering militants who gave an important part of their lives in the internal work of the Party, in the work of masses among the workers, the peasants and the Mapuche, in the fight against revisionism, in international work, etc.

In the history of the world workers and communist movement, one can find countless cases of failure.

In the midst of all these failures, only a few have a particular and very special historical significance, that is to say that they are not ordinary failures, but take on, by their circumstances, their implications, and all their challenges, an extraordinary character.

They are announcements of the new, of something that has not been able to fully deploy or culminate, but which leaves an indelible mark on the direction in which the proletarian revolution must march and march.

They signify, at the same time, the death knell which sounds the death of the reactionary classes.

Some examples of this are the Paris Commune in 1871, the Russian Revolution of 1905, the German Revolution of 1918-19, the Canton Uprising in China in 1927.

All these examples are failures which have served and which will certainly serve as the basis for future revolutionary successes.

In our opinion, the experience of the PCR is of such importance in Chile.

It paved the way for the foundation of a new Communist Party of Chile, this time clearly Marxist-Leninist-Maoist.

In this circumstance, the national and international situation is, for the Chilean Maoists, very different from that which existed 50 years ago.

At that time, the revolutionary communists had not completely rid themselves of the revisionist flaws or of the metaphysical ideas contaminating those who claimed to display Marxism-Leninism as guiding thought.

Nor did experience exist on the question of how to solve the problem of starting the armed struggle without falling into the temptation of the guerrilla home, isolated from the masses.

The situation today is quite different. Maoism is engaged in the revolutionary world offensive, despite some setbacks and the appearance within it of revisionist and capitulatory currents.

The experiences of the people's wars in Peru, Nepal, Turkey, the Philippines and India bear witness to this.

They are a clear call, a signal of encouragement to the proletariat, to the peoples of the world so that they rebel, raise arms with the hand, so that they put down imperialism and its allies, so that they seize power for themselves.

David Benquis, "comrade Velásquez" in the period of bourgeois democracy, "comrade Ernesto" during the fascist military dictatorship, or "the skinned" as his comrades called him colloquially, did not experience the liquidation of the PCR.

Cancer, a cruel and painful disease, tore his life from him, years before the disappearance of his dear Party.

To this he devoted his greatest efforts, seeking to develop it to make it an effective instrument for the revolution, protecting it from the corrosive action of the economist ideas which subordinated it to purely union activity, also protecting it from sectarianism that isolated him from the masses.

With his comrades, in the leadership of the Party, he had to face the fractional activity of some leaders of the Central Committee and some regional committees, which arose from time to time to oppose the general political line drawn during the Constitutive Congress.

David Benquis was a comrade with a firm character. Energetic to put into practice the agreements reached, inflexible when it was necessary to defend the principles, hard with the declared enemies, enthusiastic and emphatic when he exposed his ideas.

In view of his personality alone, it is unthinkable to imagine that he could, when the time came, accept the idea of dissolving or liquidating the Party, to which he considered his own life to be linked.

The misunderstanding of Marxism-Leninism and its Maoist stage, as a science of the proletarian revolution, the abandonment from the point of view of the objective interests of the proletariat, the demoralization brought about by successive defeats in the international communist movement then in formation , etc., could be on the whole what explains the disaster.

One fact is undeniable: all this reflects a deep, ideological and political weakening. It is up to the Chilean Maoists of today to elucidate this historical fact and to draw the necessary lessons from it.

The ideological and political contribution of David Benquis to the cause of the communist revolution in Chile seems tiny, as insignificant as a pinion of araucaria [pine from Chile].

This revolutionary communist seed, which was sown in Chile with its own hands, will germinate in a fertile ground, sprinkled with the blood and the sweat of the working class and the revolutionary people.

This red seed, without a doubt, will grow and strengthen in the revolutionary struggle like a mighty pine defying storms.

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