

COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTING COMMUNIST THEORY, PRACTICE AND WORK METHODS (ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION)

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The 94th anniversary of the October Revolution will be arrived soon, and in commemorations of this occasion, the supporter organizations of working class and the workers revolution all over the world celebrate the memory of this great historical event. This of course is a positive way to respect the historical achievements of “the wretched of the earth” who in a period of time went from “being nothing to being all”. But the achievements of the internationalist proletariat in Russia cannot be summed up simply in the victory of the October Revolution; that would ignore its legacy and its underlying reasons:

1 – The conscious proletariat of Russia had a dialectical sharp sightedness to hold resolutely to revolutionary Marxism as the scientific theory of proletarian liberation and to resist the social democratic, petite-bourgeois and anarchistic interpretations of Marxism. These revolutionaries decisively defended this theory, and in their revolutionary practice they further developed revolutionary Marxism. This was evident in their full understanding of the nature of class and of its functions, of class struggle (which is a matter of life and death), and of class rule (which is the dictatorship of one class over the other – either for safeguarding the old system or for the consolidation of new class relations in place of the decadent and retrograde class relations); they benefited from a guiding science (revolutionary Marxism) which they applied in a responsible manner.

2 – The conscious proletariat of Russia in its revolutionary practice focused on the essential revolutionary points which opened the door toward revolution and the seizing of political power; and it focused on its essence which was expressed in revolutionary Marxism. Their practice erected great shining along the path of the proletarian program and its tactics in advancing the class struggle and the strategy for seizing political power.

3 – In addition, after the seizing of power, the conscious proletariat of Russia was confronted with complex contradictions in socialist construction which were not only related to the internal problems of the workers movement but also to international problems, to the international workers and communist movements, and to the movement of oppressed nations against the exploitation and plunder of these nations by imperialism. By confronting these contradictions, and offering solutions, the Russian proletariat displayed the international character of the October Revolution, and they left behind many enlightening lessons.

A more detailed explanation of these three contributions is beyond the scope of this article. But we would like to point out some important issues within the Iranian Left movement which exist at the present time. Many comrades unconsciously, and often thoughtlessly, ignore the critical importance of decisively defending scientific proletarian theory and of teaching its scientific achievements; quite a few of their organizations within the movement no longer include these activities in their adopted programs (1). [notes are found at the end of this article]

a – On “Going back to Marx”:

With the collapse of the socialist camp due to the emergence of revisionism (which basically has its roots in the objective reality of the development and backwardness of these societies), some have drawn the conclusion that they should start over from the beginning – and in this manner they look directly to Marx for solutions. This line of thought ignores the October Revolution: whether from the Right social democratic view that the time for socialist revolution in Russia had not yet arrived in 1917 or from the Left view that the leadership of the October Revolution balked at the immediate establishment of communist relations of production and the abolition of wage labor.

So long as this “return to Marx” is related to scientific communism as expressed by its founding fathers, then it is a rational precept. But more often, this “return” is conceived in such way that the evolution of scientific communism after Marx and Engels, as advanced specifically by Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung, must be rejected or set aside, since these historical achievements do not, in their view, properly reflect proletarian revolutionary practice. There is no serious reasoning behind the statement of such a claim so the misconceptions about the shortcomings of today’s scientific revolutionary theory (if they exist) have no possibility of “clarification”. Science cannot be negated simply by vilification of “scientists”, since doing so simply betrays the magnitude of the individual’s or organization’s irresponsibility in making such claims.

These line of thoughts hold either that the principles of scientific communism do not have a dialectical developmental aspect, or are like religious dogmas “revealed truth”: that is, once such principles have been discovered and have been presented, they remain in human society exactly as their original discoverers presented them. If they perceive the principles of scientific communism otherwise, then they must explain what their Marxism is today, and of what consequence is their Marxism to revolutionary practice, and why is it correct?

The concept of “going back to Marx”, in the absence of an underlying justification, is nothing more than a metaphysical viewpoint which has no scientific value for the advancement of the liberation of the working class and the oppressed masses.

b – In what way is it possible for scientific communism to be taught to the working class?

The one-dimensional aspect of the left-wing sectarian viewpoint within the Iranian Left movement, which creates so much disruption within the working class movement, has been labeled “proletarian pretension”; it believes that the working class in its struggles against the capitalist system is capable on its own of mastering the science of self liberation from within. For them, “bringing scientific communism from outside to the working class” is meaningless. This view is definitely an obstacle in the path of the conscious working class movement, and it sharply limits its potential to learn the science of its liberation. Why?

Classes in human society necessarily do not have any concrete thick walls to prevent the entry or exit of any individuals from one class to another one. Often people, who for different reasons belong to non-proletarian classes, join the ranks of proletarians; and on the other hand, there are workers who are promoted to the petite-bourgeois, or the bourgeoisie, or who become the owners of productive forces. In the meantime, intellectuals who come to serve the working class in its struggles undertake an important responsibility in bringing consciousness to this class. Due to their social position, they have more scientific and cultural knowledge compared to workers. As a matter of fact, the world outlook and the analysis of the historical development

of human societies, as well as the basic principles of scientific communism, were formulated by intellectuals who emerged from the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Those intellectuals summarized the practice of the working class struggle – and this fact is quite clear and understandable to any ordinary worker. But the sectarians wish to erect a “Great Wall of China” to separate the working class from other non-proletarian classes- creating obstacles to the growth of the proletarian revolutionary ranks and isolating the working class.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that the numerous intellectuals who enter the ranks of the proletariat necessarily have not all completely given up their past world outlooks, and there are those who bring with them many corrupting elements such as dogmatism, sectarianism, opportunism, revisionism ...etc. to the workers movement. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they hinder this movement and can inflict heavy damage. However, provided that the working class movement enjoys the benefit of having conscious and revolutionary leaders joining it, and that it implements proletarian work methods, it becomes capable of distinguishing revolutionaries from non-revolutionaries among the intellectuals, and of taking action to cleanse the revolutionary proletarian ranks of non-proletarian ideologies.

In the ranks of communists, class origin does not have an immediate determinative role in being a revolutionary and a communist. It is defense of the revolutionary proletarian line at all times, adherence to revolutionary proletarian policy, participation in vanguard proletarian organizations, and devotion to revolutionary practice that determine who becomes a revolutionary communist.

Although advances of science and technology and the increase of educated workers, the importance of the role of the worker leadership among the ranks of the communist parties grows every day. Nevertheless the material conditions of production, with its days and nights of cumbersome work and the lack of leisure and material amenities, create much more obstacles to enhancing the working class level of education in their class struggle. To overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to rely upon communist intellectuals to raise the level of working class consciousness, and the workers clearly perceive this complexity of their movement. So, the objection to raising the consciousness of the working class itself indicates the presence of non-proletarian ideological disruption within the working class movement.

c – The Role of the Communist Party

The history of the worker’s movement in the recent 160 years and generally, the history of the class struggles during the past thousand years, show that each class, to advance toward its goals, needs vanguards in order to guide these struggles step by step. The Communist Manifesto was drafted by Marx and Engels at the request of the “Communist League” which was the first international vanguard workers party. The theory of the new vanguard proletarian party was developed by Lenin and then by Mao-Tse-Tung and through its victories were achieved in the October Revolution of Russia in 1917 and in the October Revolution of China in 1949 under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of Russia and the Communist Party of China, respectively.

The party is analogous to the central command of the proletarian military army in the class struggle. The concept of a unified war effort in the absence of such a central command, without concentration of forces, is unimaginable; victory in such warfare would be impossible. That is not complex and incomprehensible. Right now, the bourgeoisie in all of the industrialized countries rely upon multiple parties to advance its policies. The existence of different bourgeois parties, with their more or less similar programs, which have no other goal than to serve the

ruling elites, is nothing more than an artful. The bourgeoisie spreads divisions among the people by encouraging allegiance to different parties, thereby preventing the people from earlier seeing the exploitative and oppressive nature of the capitalist system, and from rising up against it. In other words, “divide and conquer!” is the main capitalist strategy to safeguard their hold on power. Of course, the reality in the majority of capitalist countries is such that generally one or two bourgeois parties enjoy the most influence, and in parliamentary elections power merely shifts from one to the other, and the result is “business as usual”.

This manipulation by the bourgeoisie of the petite-bourgeoisie (which is basically formed from different strata of people) is accepted specially, because in that small-property ownership and the competition that small holdings breeds is the basis for safeguarding their social conditions.

Communists, who are the defenders of the specific and general interests of the working class, have the strategy of socialist revolution and, at its later historical stage, the transition to communism, in mind. In opposition to the bourgeoisie, not only communists seek to unite the working class to bring down the capitalist power; but in order to achieve victory in this struggle to free the toiling masses from the yoke of repression and oppression imposed by the capitalist system, they must strive to be organized within the communist party of their country, and to create the broadest united front against this system. The slogans of “Workers of all Countries Unite!” and “Workers of all Countries and Oppressed Nations Unite!” are expression of the historical point of view of communists who seek to abolish “the self alienation” which arises from the existence of the exploitative and oppressive classes in all countries. They seek to create a global society free of all forms of exploitation, oppression, and discrimination.

Therefore, in the interest of ensuring the unity of the vanguards of the working class, communists must unite in a single party in every country. Just as at the level of class society, the working class is the most vanguard of all, at the level of organized political forces in any given country, the communist party is the most conscious and disciplined force, and consequently it is the most revolutionary party which comprises the most vanguard and conscious proletarian elements. We must strive to build such a party.

But this model, which has been validated by practice and confirmed by scientific communism, is denied and ignored by some Iranian Left groups:

- Some of them under the illusion that the workers must organize themselves in workers councils and advance their own precepts; they are totally opposed to, and antagonistic to, building a communist party. One would say that the communist party is not having a class basis but rather it falls from the sky fully formed!
- Some others, operating under the perception that the working class is formed from different strata of people, believe that in order to defend the interests of those different strata, separate parties are required. They then advocate organizational pluralism among the ranks of the communists and oppose the creation of a single party.
- Some others consider themselves to be the only vanguard working class party and practically they tolerate organizational pluralism – but this without having proven that they are the sole defenders of the specific and general interests of the working class movement, or that they are guiding this movement;
- And finally, there are others who, although they accept the single unified party concept, also feel the need to tolerate factional-organizational viewpoints; their tolerance extends to allowing factions to refuse to follow leadership directives and thereby shattering the unity of view and

action of the party. This view disrupts and subverts party building; it is the mother of the three prevailing corrosive deviations described above, and it stems from the petite-bourgeois ideology which intrudes itself among the ranks of the proletariat.

The consequence of these incorrect views so far has been that communists, especially after the emergence of modern revisionism in scientific communism, have been deprived of the weapon of the single unified political party. Instead, they give a movement character to all their actions and the sharp and dynamic dialectic of concentration of forces is sacrificed to a pluralistic movement with full of riot and chaos, which gives way to anarchism and spontaneity in the organizational arena. And in this manner, the proletariat is deprived of a singular commanding leadership in the class struggle.

As long as classes and class struggle exist, dissonance arises from this situation within the classes and divides them into the strata of vanguard/advanced, intermediate, and backward in the class struggle. The vanguard sector of each class would also be mobilized to take up its leadership/command role. This situation for the working class, which intends to overthrow the class system, is more straightforward than for any other class.

d – The Anarchistic View vis-a-vis the Concept of Democracy

In the final analysis, class struggle is the life and death battle between the exploiters and the exploited. Class rule has been accomplished by force and not by leaning to peace between the exploiters/oppressors rulers and the exploited/oppressed who are condemned to subjugation. This axiom is the ABC of class rule which has been clearly identified by scientific communism.

The historic experience of the ruling council which were established in Russia soon after the Revolution shows that after the establishment of this government, the resistance and sabotage of the capitalists, feudal elements, and the powerful church and even of a sector of the petite-bourgeoisie against socialism, whom were initially defeated in the class conflict, flares up in a thousand ways to resist the transition to socialist relations. They do their all to subvert the advancement of the proletarian advanced system. These counterrevolutionaries also enjoyed the unconditional support of the world capitalist system, which intensified the “fist against fist” combat that intensified. It is useful to point out Lenin’s summing up of the period which immediately followed the victory of the October Revolution:

“The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a more powerful enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased tenfold by their overthrow (even if only in a single country), and whose power lies, not only in the strength of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections, but also in the force of habit, and in the strength of small-scale production. It is this small-scale production that continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie. All these reasons make the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and life-and-death struggle which calls for tenacity, discipline, perseverance, firmness and a single determination is impossible”.

But among the Left forces, on the question of the interpretation of democracy, it seems as if competition has occurred, and those who defend “unconditional freedom” for the entire society wish to be recognized as the “champions” of the defense of freedom and democracy!

In a workers council democracy, unconditional freedom exists for the workers and laborers who are the defenders of the socialist system, but not for the enemies of the socialist system who are constantly conspiring against the system to overthrow it. Granting organizational freedom to them means allowing them to wage war to overthrow workers power.

As long as classes and class struggle exist in socialist society, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be established with the goal of the abolition of classes and the class struggle. Otherwise both dictatorship and democracy will be eroded since there would be no ruling authority in society; and as a result, authority over people would be reduced to authority over objects – meaning nothing more than affairs management – and the freedom of the individual is a precondition for the freedom of all.

Advocating “unconditional freedom” in council democracy amounts to backtracking from proletarian democracy to social-democratic and bourgeois democracy – which is a total imposture; it is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. In fact it has been proven to be completely and totally impractical; even in the best light, it is an ultra-class interpretation of democracy in a class society!

This petite-bourgeois interpretation of “unconditional freedom” at the level of society would become reflected within the party and would undermine proletarian democratic-centralism. This would, in turn, generate theoretical dispersion to such an extent that the people who oppose the party’s political line, outside the party, would be entitled not only to criticize, but also to refuse to carry out party directives!

e – On Proletarian Internationalism

Since the working class is an international class that demands the removal of all obstacles in its path to liberation, including national boundaries that were forged by the ruling classes, specifically by the bourgeoisie, in the recent historical era, its struggle must be unified and integrated. The international working class must create its central command of leadership and clarify its fundamental strategy and tactics in its struggle to overthrow the capitalist system, as it does at national level. Therefore, if sympathy, unconditional support and protection for the struggle of the working class and the toiling masses is the necessary condition for the proclamation of international class solidarity for every communist party, then the struggle for the creation of a single global working class center is also a sufficient condition for the realization of the global unity of the world working class.

But, the Iranian Left movement about this subject, as it vacillates, caught up in diversity, and abstention to create a single communist party, also do not have the necessary readiness to attempt to achieve such unity at the international level. Those parts of the Left forces who to some extent are active in international relations, instead of finding a way to eliminate division and dispersion of the organized international communist movements, choose rather to proceed along the path of sectarianism at the international level. As a result they continue to be involved in the perpetuation of dispersion and division of communists internationally.

In this manner, Left Iranian left internationalism has not gone beyond mere words; it has not reached the level of action. This is further indication that many Iranian communists – organized or unfortunately unorganized – refuse to accept the teachings of scientific communism!

f – Struggle and Unity within the Party

According to the teachings of scientific communism, class struggles outside of the party become reflected within the party; and the viewpoint struggles continue continually. The correct handling and guidance of these theoretical struggles promotes the party's knowledge and its ability to scrutinize policies and work methods. The formula of "unity – criticism – unity" (Mao) determines the correct limitations of these ideological struggles within the party. In other words, starting from the position of unity in the party regarding problems which arise, a view may be criticized, and finally, after discussion and dialogue, we strive to reach unity at a higher level. Obviously, it is possible that some do not agree with the majority's view and retain their view. According to the platform of the party, these comrades have the right to continue to struggle within the party and they can even call for more discussion regarding their views. But, outside of the party, they must apply the majority's view. This proletarian style of work ensures that the party acts with unity and power in its class struggle, while at the same time the minority's view does not disappear. Failure to follow this proletarian method of struggle within the party will cause the party to divide and to split, draining its strength and stunting its growth.

It is only when principled differences which have to do with the nature of the party's positions and policies that a split is justifiable and correct. This would include when a proletarian party proceeds with a bourgeois policy, and if the struggle against these positions and policies does not rectify the problem, then it is justifiable to split. Otherwise, the resort to splits is a sign of the non-proletarian nature of the splitters and their decision to split. Naturally, these policies must be related to the proletarian or non-proletarian nature of the party, and not any day-to-day policy.

This style of ideological struggle within the party must be implemented in every Left organization, and even though at this stage many organizations still do not have the qualities of a vanguard working class party, they must try to do away with splits and dispersion as much as possible.

In Iran's Left movement, lack of attention to the importance of organization and its role in service to the growth of the class struggle of the working class has reached horrific levels. Without any regard to principled differences, as soon as a dispute breaks out within their party or organization, these individuals leave their organization. In this manner, ideological struggle within the party does not help to strengthen the party but rather to weaken and divide it. The most recent example of these types of splits can be observed in the "Communist Party of Iran" during the past two decades, in which, despite the claims of the splitters, these splits did not result in more advanced organizations. To the contrary, being at the service of sectarianism, these divisions never produced any positive result for the class struggle of the working class.

The root of these splits lies within petite-bourgeois ideology which stems from the dispersed social existence of the petite-bourgeoisie in relation to production and exchange (2). Also this non-proletarian style of resolving political, organizational and internal party problems presently prevails at the level of the workers and mass movement. This results in Left forces not only not contributing to the unity of the worker's movement but actually slumping further toward the divisiveness that is so highly praised by the local bourgeoisie and world imperialism.

Perhaps it is not out of context to point out that the ideological struggles within the party or within the communist movement must be rational and ideological – political, but not in the non-proletarian style of accusation and defamation which results in a pessimistic and distrustful

atmosphere where nothing can be learned. In the conscious proletarian movement, there is no place for such lumpism.

Unfortunately, the current ideological context is one of conflict of which the revisionists of the “Tudeh Party” were the mother, and of which the forces supporting Mansour Hekmat during the 1980’s became the chief propagators of these methods. Presently, the ideological struggles within the Iranian communist movement which result from this non-proletarian style of work have diminished and silenced. And under the reign of these destructive ideas, the views which are being put forward by the presently weak communist forces (weak from an organizational point of view) need no reply; that they can be somehow disregarded. The tactic of strangling these points of view is being advanced, which has nothing to do with the communist style of work!

This incorrect theory and practice, as partly mentioned above, can be propounded; this fact in itself that shows why the Left forces in Iran have not been able to unite for the creation of a single communist party, and sectarianism occupies the primary place. The struggle against these incorrect, non-proletarian views and practices strives for a principled leap forward in world outlook, policy, organizing, work methods and communist leadership. During the participation of communists in the workers and mass movements; and all genuine communists, both the organized and unorganized, must together proceed to clear away these harmful non-proletarian weeds from the fertile garden of the conscious proletarian movement. To shrink from this revolutionary proletarian task, or to adopt a passive attitude to this intolerable and dissonant situation, provides the opportunity for all manner of revisionists, opportunists and anarchists to further lead the workers and mass movements astray and to spoil the fruits of at least 30 years of struggle against the capitalist system which came at the cost of tens of thousands of communist lives, including those of worker activists who were sacrificed at the altar of sectarianism, for tendencies that soon evaporated.

Endnotes

1 – To fully document this article with quotations from Iranian Left activists – including both the organized and unorganized – would require many pages; certainly, those communists who assign great importance to the ideological struggle within the ranks of Left forces are not unaware of this.

2 – Should we not learn from the Iranian workers, who despite suffering under a police state characterized by torture, imprisonment, arbitrary and punitive terminations from employment and pauperization, bravely and unquestioningly supported the petrochemical workers’ strike at the Port of Imam? They showed that they share each other’s pain and they strive to have an independent organization of their own. But the communist movement in Iran, which should be the role model for the working class in organizational activity, is plagued by sectarianism at the nucleus of the movement!