



Dear friends,

"I would like to offer some friendly criticism concerning your article on ATM. It's not a defense of ATM but a criticism of your approach"

Bourgeois ideology is extremely strong in the U.S. and it really messes up communists (e.g. OL, RCP, CLP, etc.) This ideology manifests itself in communist organizations in that they begin to develop incorrect views on the relationship between the objective and subjective factors. The right deviation places the objective factor "above all things" causing spontaneity, tailism, and even degradation of Marxist-Leninist principles. The "left" deviation puts the subjective "above all things" causing sectarianism, small circle spirit and mechanical application of Marxism-Leninism.

It is expected that a communist organization will make right and "left" errors but if it capitulates to either direction then it becomes pseudo-communist, an anchor to the movement not a compass. Friends, I believe your criticism shows that at this point you have strong shades of "leftism".

I don't know what your practice is but if you carry it out on the premises you establish then you are probably making "left" errors. This is, I say again, a friendly criticism based on my knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and experience in the Chicano National Movement.

Firstly, you seem to base yourself on the premise that the subjective and objective factors are in some way "contradictory". I say this because you seem to analyze them as a "contradiction". The underlying tone of your article is that there is some tug of war between the subjective and objective factors, each trying to take the lead from the other.

The objective and subjective factors are not contradictory but complimentary. Only when communists counterpose them do they become "contradictory" to the communist himself. An incorrect analysis or understanding can make it seem that both processes oppose each other.

Why do I say that you are counterposing them? Because you counterpose Theory vs. Practice, Marxist-Leninists Unite vs. Win Over the Advanced Proletarians, Party Building vs. Mass Struggle and Propaganda and Agitation. By making the subjective factor "primary" you are counterposing.

Theory and Practice should be complimentary to each other. The development of revolutionary theory and movement depends on their interrelationship. Saying that Practice is primary presupposes that practice "teaches you everything". Saying that theory is primary presupposes that theory "teaches you everything". Don't misuse Lenin's quote "Without revolutionary theory, you cannot have revolutionary movement". But without a MOVEMENT you cannot develop a revolutionary theory. Where did Lenin develop his theory on Imperialism, the role of oppressed nations, two stage revolution, etc. Not just from the books of Marx and not just by the world movement, but by both. It was the character of the world movement from which Lenin developed his theories. Marx had the same "subjective" knowledge but Imperialism was not yet born, the objective process present in Lenin's time was barely being born in Marx's. I've read WHAT IS TO BE DONE? and it doesn't say that "Theory is primary over practice, but Lenin does teach that the neglect or overemphasis of either leads to serious errors."

The slogan Marxist-Leninists Unite and Win Over the Advanced, I agree with, but don't counterpose them. The carrying out both is complimentary. It's not a question of "who's more important?" Marxist-Leninists cannot unite by just being in agreement with positions, i.e. I believe in the ERA and so do you, so let's unite. The basis for winning over the advanced is revolutionary practice, i.e. political line carried out and developed in mass struggle. It's not a question of winning people over to ideas but to struggle. The advanced

know mass struggle and they will be won to communism primarily if they see Marxist-Leninists taking mass struggle to a higher more positive level.

On the question of Party Building and Mass Struggle, let me begin with an example. Sometime ago the immigration department was really coming down in California. One of my friends asked a communist from there "why don't you do anything about it?" His answer "We can't, we've got to concentrate on building the party." Party Building is done in struggle not apart from it. The Party is the fusion of the working class movement with socialism. A true proletarian party is born from the masses, not spontaneously as the RU did it but consciously, suffering the pangs of birth of warfare against the enemy. Struggle is the water we must use to nurture the Marxism-Leninism (seeds) we take to the working class.

The role of propaganda and agitation is also distorted in your article. Somehow you seem to think that agitation is a degradation because we should concentrate on the Marxist-Leninists and the advanced. If communists are to forge roots in the working class, to attach themselves to the fetus from which their party will be born, to lead mass struggle, then the political organ must be used to carry out struggle. Its agitational character doesn't mean it will just be like a "big leaflet", but the proletariat as a whole must understand it to learn from it. An organ is a tool for struggle not a forum for polemics unless an organization has no theoretical paper or journal. And please don't shout Iskra at me, at the time it was developed it was used as a theoretical journal but agitation was done in the factories through other organs of the various communist organizations.

Lastly, I would like to comment on "Political Line is Key Link." Everyone from Marx to Mao has held that but they did not say "Political line is a magic wand". The Albanians define political line as the strategy and tactics of the party or Marxist-Leninist organization. Political positions, like yours for ERA, busing, etc. are not "political line" but a subdivision of it. So we have Marxist-Leninist theory, but to implement it we must develop a line. Where is that done? In struggle. For Marxist-Leninists to unite and the advanced to be won over, it must be done on the basis of the strategy and tactics for Proletarian Revolution in the U.S. They must participate in its development and see its development and learn from it.

This development is a complimentary process between the objective and subjective factor, between struggle of the masses and the work of Marxist-Leninists, between the study of Marxism-Leninism and its implementation. No Marxist-Leninist Party has ever been built apart from struggle nor by tailing struggle but by leading struggle. It is not a mechanical process of first we do this then we do that, i.e. first we unite the Marxist-Leninists and Win over the advanced (first uniting Marxist-Leninists) THEN lead struggle. It's a complex dialectical process of we do this WHILE doing that, i.e. Unite Marxist-Leninists and Win the Advanced WHILE participating in and leading struggle.

"The struggle of the Albanian communists themselves created, at last, favorable conditions for the founding of their party. The anti-fascist war waged by the communists of the various groups shook the very foundations of sectarianism and the group spirit, which had prevailed up to that time. This struggle and their common ideology became the decisive factors which led to the 1941 agreement to organize a meeting of all the principal communist groups which would take up the question of amalgamating these groups and founding the Communist Party of Albania." History of the Party of Labor of Albania, pg. 85

En lucha por Tierra y Libertad
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El Paso, Tejas Aztlan

LPR (M-L) ANSWERS COMRADE FROM AZTLAN

We are publishing these criticisms as part of the struggle for the correct political line which must take place in all fronts. We urge other comrades to continue to use COMMUNIST FORUM, to put forward their views, criticisms, sum-ups, suggestions, etc., so that we may move forward in the tasks confronting communists in this period, in particular our central task.

First of all we want to establish that we have unity on the importance of grasping the correct relationship between the objective and subjective factors in the revolution. Absolutizing one or the other factor will lead to serious right or "left" errors. Also we unite in that our party must be built, not apart from the struggle of the masses but, actually providing

correct communist leadership to the spontaneous movement of the masses. Your "communist" from California was liquidating not only the tasks of communists to struggle for our democratic rights but also, party building itself!

Secondly, there are fundamental errors in the line you are putting forward - which we will point out here, as they are very common among other comrades in the communist movement who we believe will also benefit from our doing so.

Over all, your line is characterized by eclecticism. You place everything on a par theory and practice, subjective and objective factors, all tasks facing communists, etc., regardless of the concrete conditions or period in which we are in. This is incorrect.

Communists must analyse the concrete conditions in order to best determine the corresponding tasks and the relationship between them. Otherwise we can only end up losing our bearings and eventually liquidate all tasks. As a matter of fact, the meaning of tasks being "complimentary" is that by grasping which is primary and carrying it out we are better able to carry the others out.

You also contradict yourself. You don't say so, but objectively you are holding the line that in this period practice is primary over theory. In effect, by failing to determine what is primary you have ended up counterposing! For example, look at what you say "It's not a question of winning people over to ideas, but to struggle." And also "An organ is a tool for struggle not a forum for polemics." You are counterposing theory VS practice, struggle VS polemics, etc. What good is it to win workers over to struggle if you don't win them also to the ideas of communism? What good is it to struggle without understanding why or where we are headed? This is the old maxim of the economists of the "movement" is everything - the final aim is nothing."

We hold that to determine what is primary is not equivalent to counterposing, but on the contrary it is to establish correct dialectical relationships between tasks and concrete conditions. In learning there is a constant interrelationship between knowing and doing, between theory and practice and in that process, as in all processes in nature and society, one is primary over the other. Our great teacher Chairman Mao puts it simply:

"The dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge places practice in the primary position, holding that human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice and repudiating all the erroneous theories which deny the importance of practice or separate knowledge from practice."

Four Essays on Philosophy, p. 4

Is Chairman Mao counterposing because he holds practice as primary? Of course not! And again, to show how this is not a mechanical, arbitrary determination but the result of concrete analysis of concrete conditions, allow us to again quote Mao:

"But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, 'Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.' When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy."

Four Essays on Philosophy, p. 58

Such is the period in which we find ourselves a period in which there is as of yet "no guiding line, method, plan or policy" for fulfilling our central and all other tasks around which Marxist-Leninists can unite, advanced workers can be won over, and the broad masses mobilized for Lenin describes the pre-party period in the Soviet Union emphasizing the role of theory at such a time in which Marxist-Leninists are scattered and there is no guiding line. We have to quote again:

We can judge from that how tactless the *Rabocheye Dveto* is when with an air of triumph it quotes Marx's statement "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programs." To repeat these words in a period of theoretical chaos is like wishing, mourning at a funeral many happy returns of the day. Moreover the words of Marx taken from his letter on the Gotha Program in which he sharply condemns eclecticism in the formulation of principles. If you must unite Marx wrote to the party leaders then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement but do not allow any bargaining over principles do not make concessions in questions of theory. This was Marx's idea and yet there are people among us who strive - in his name - to belittle the significance of theory!

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This thought cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet for Russian Social Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three more circumstances which are often forgotten firstly by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation its features are only just becoming outlined and it is yet far from having settled accounts with other trends of revolutionary thought which threaten to divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social Democratic revolutionary trends (which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists would happen) Under these circumstances what at first sight

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appears to be an unimportant mistake may lead to most deplorable consequences and only shortsighted people can consider accidental disputes and a strict differentiation between shades inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social Democracy for many years to come may depend on the treatment of one or other shade.

What Is to be Done?, p. 27

Similarly, the objective and subjective factors must be analysed in their interrelationship. It is a fundamental principle of dialectical materialism that it is the objective conditions which determine the development of nature and society. The subjective factors interact with the objective in this development and, under certain conditions, at certain periods of development, become the decisive factor. Such is the case in the concrete conditions of the U.S. today regarding the party building process. Objective conditions are over-ripe for the building of the party. The spontaneous movement of the masses advances rapidly (the objective factor), while the subjective factor, the consciousness and organization of the working class, lags behind and does not meet up to the tasks of our times. The working class on its own cannot acquire socialist consciousness necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system. It must be through the conscious efforts of Marxist-Leninists through the Party that it will become conscious as a "class for itself", and be able to fulfill its historic mission. Therefore, today, under the present concrete conditions and corresponding tasks that face us, the subjective factor becomes the decisive factor. The objective conditions demand it, so that we may be able to carry out the revolutionary transformation of objective reality

Comrade, your methodology reflects empiricism in the way in which you view the development of line and theory. You ask, referring to the development of line "Where is that done? In struggle." And further you say that advanced elements "must participate in its development and see its development" (your emphasis). The materialist conception of knowledge holds that the process of learning goes from practice to theory and again to practice in a continuous process each time taken to a higher level. A correct line is not simply developed from "struggle." You cannot discard the role of theory in this process, i.e., of the enormous wealth of historical experiences of the International proletariat which has been summed up in its general aspect by the great teachers, and is known as the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. The line is developed both from theory, the sum-ups of struggles shared by other communists, and, our own struggle. We cannot expect to experience everything, to participate in all the process of development of the line, to see that development. This empiricism is very dangerous since we are unable to participate in all struggles, and leads in politics to right opportunism, economism. Remember what the Albanians say in the very passage you quote, that it was the struggle of communists in the anti-fascist war and their common ideology, and not just the struggle, what became decisive factors in building the party.

On propaganda and agitation you distort our line. You say that we "seem to think that agitation is a degradation" and then continue to defend ATM's right line that a communist newspaper in this period should be mainly agitation. ATM talks about making it more "accessible" to the class and you say that "the proletariat as a whole must understand it." The relation between propaganda and agitation as any other dialectical

relation is determined by the specific time, place, and conditions in which it exists. The fact is that you address your newspaper in every period to the particular sector that must be won over to the side of proletarian revolution. We say that these are today the Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers who will compose the bulk of our future party cadres. And as long as this is our task, we hold that propaganda is the chief form of communist activity. Lenin said in "Retrograde Trend" that instead of adapting the paper to the lowest strata of workers, we must develop "different forms of agitation and propaganda" in the form of popular pamphlets, local leaflets, etc. Emphasizing that chief form of activity doesn't mean "only" form, Lenin also warned against "such an exaggeration of one side of our activities to the detriment of the other." We hold that propaganda is a higher level of political education, and that ATM's paper reads like a collection of economist agitation leaflets representing a retrograde trend in our movement.

Finally we would like to clarify some things. By the use of quotation marks on some phrases, you imply that our line is the two stage theory in propaganda and agitation and on MLs unite and win the advanced, etc. None of those quotes are ours nor do they represent our line. We have combatted ATM's two stage theory on propaganda and agitation as it appeared in RC vol 1 #3. (Our position appears in Resistance vol 7 #6. On MLs unite and win the advanced it appears in vol 7 #5 where we establish that both are just as important and simultaneously carried out though the first primary.)

Let us fight against right opportunism which is the main danger, and against "left" opportunism as well! **MARXIST-LENINISTS, UNITE! WIN THE ADVANCED WORKERS TO COMMUNISM!**