In Defence of Revolutionary Socialism, i.e. Trotskyism Part 1

Reply Joshua Moufawad-Paul’s pamphlet, Maoism or Trotskyism 6/08/2016

By Gerry Downing

Unity is strength, L’union fait la force, La union hace la fuerza, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη,
Аттагада ённо дунам, адоан киля са мара, Jedność jest siła, ykseys on kesto, Η ενότητα
eίναι δύναμη, Midnimo iyo waa awood, hundeb ydy chryfder, Einheit ist Stärke,
Всевединство прочность, единстве наша сила, vienybės jėga, bashkimi ben fuqine,
Não há força, unità è la resistenza, 团結は力だ, Α uniāo faz a força, eining er stykur,
Eenheid bexekent sterkte, الوحدة هو القوة, Ní neart go chur le céile, pagkakaisa ay
kalakasan, jednota is síla.

Workers of the World Unite—There Is No Planet B!
and the oppression of women is inextricably tied to the other forms of oppression and discrimination. Sexism sense the oppression of women is different from all last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In

10. We recognise that class society, and capitalism as the last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In that sense the oppression of women is different from all other forms of oppression and discrimination. Sexism and the oppression of women is inextricably tied to the ownership and the inheritance of private property. To achieve sexual and individual freedom women need to fight in the class struggle in general to overthrow class society itself. We cannot leave the struggle against women’s oppression until the revolution but must recognise it as one of the most fundamental aspects of the revolutionary struggle itself or we will never make that revolution. We therefore reject the reactionary “intersectional” theory as hostile to Marxism, to the class struggle and to revolutionary socialism.

11. We also support the fight of all other specially oppressed including lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and transgender people and the disabled against discrimination in all its forms and their right to organise separately in that fight in society as a whole.

12. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence, we support it. 14. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price.

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16. We were and are for the immediate withdrawal and/or defeat of imperialist armies in wars like Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Ukraine. Whilst giving no political support to the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Sunni and Shia militias in Iraq, Hamas or Fatah in Palestine, Gaddafi (as was) in Libya, Assad in Syria, the ‘Islamic State’ in Syria and Iraq, the theocratic regime in Iran or the Donbas leadership in Eastern Ukraine we recognise US-led world imperialism as the main enemy of humanity and so advocate critical support and tactical military assistance from the working class to all those fighting for the defeat of imperialism as part of the perspective of Permanent Revolution.

17. We are for the overthrow of the Zionist state of Israel and for a Multi-Ethnic workers’ state of Palestine as part of the Socialist Federation of the Middle East.

18. As socialists living in Britain we take our responsibilities to support the struggle against British imperialism’s occupation of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland very seriously. For this reason we have assisted in founding the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group and we will campaign for political status these Irish prisoners of war and for a 32-county united Socialist Ireland. We reject all ‘two nations in Ireland’ theories.

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20. We are for the re-creation of a World Party of Socialist Revolution, a revolutionary international, based on the best traditions of the previous revolutionary internationals, critically understood, particularly the early Third and Fourth Internationals, with their determination to combat and overcome both reformism and centrism. ▲
The four key principles of revolutionary socialism

Trotskyism is revolutionary socialism. It affirms with Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky its confidence in the socialist and communist future of humanity. In this polemic we shall defend four key principles of revolutionary socialism:

1. In the future communist society, the level of the productive forces, freed from the death grasp of the antiquated and grossly destructive economic and political system called capitalism, will rise exponentially to produce the super-abundance of life’s necessities in planned production for human need. This is possible only on a global scale, by the victory of world revolution. Then we can obtain from each according to his or her ability and to each according to his or her needs.

2. We recognise that the global class struggle consists in the life or death confrontation between the last two remaining great classes, the capitalist class now guided by the global hegemon, US finance capital and its allied subordinate imperialist powers and their associated transnational corporations, and the global working class organised in national sections whose class consciousness is determined in large part by this world-wide class struggle.

3. To make a socialist revolution the working class must overthrow the capitalist states in their separate national redoubts by mass mobilisations and insurrection with an internationalist perspective and replace them with workers’ states based on democratic workers’ councils/soviets and workers’ democracy to suppress the inevitable counter-revolution of private capitalist private profit against socialist planned production for the satisfaction of socialised human need. In Marxist terminology this is called ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’.

4. With Marx we affirm that the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. No peasant-based or invading ‘Red Army’ or bureaucratic decrees by left Labour/Social Democratic governments with Enabling Acts can substitute for this. As Marx observed in The German Ideology:

“Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is, necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew”. [4]

These four principles in summation are:

1. The necessity to raise the level of wealth to superabundance to satisfy all human need by planned production on a global scale,

2. The class character of the era of imperialism consists of two remaining great classes, the capitalist/imperialist and the working class/proletariat,

3. The indispensable need for workers’ councils/soviets and workers’ democracy to suppress the capitalist class, the real meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and
4. the self-emancipation of the class to achieve social and economic equality. These are the central tenets of Marxism we will defend in this polemic against Joshua Moufawad-Paul’s 2012 pamphlet, Maoism or Trotskyism.

Two competing versions of revolutionary socialism

This work is important because there are really only two competing versions of revolutionary socialism, 1. that emanating for the Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky line and 2. that emanating from the claimed Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao line, with a local hero sometimes tacked on to boost his or her international revolutionary importance. The first group are referred to as Trotskyists, with all their splits and degenerations and the second group are generally referred to as Stalinists but some take exception and wish to be called Maoists only or Marxist-Leninist-Maoist in the case examined here. We will not refer in any great detail to the reformist Stalinists like the Communist Party of Britain and its international co-thinkers who are outright counter-revolutionary and whose visceral hatred of Trotskyism matches, if it does not exceed, that of the capitalist class itself.

They have specifically rejected revolution in a series of national perspective documents for separate national communist parties like The British Road to Socialism, (January 1951) whose general orientation were overseen by Joe Stalin himself, who wrote entire sections, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Of course, revolution was implicitly rejected by Stalinism since Georgi Dimitrov’s Popular Front class collaborating against fascism speech at the 7th Congress of the Comintern in 1935. [5]

We have tackled the various centrist Trotskyists and other centrists like the neo-Kautkyite CPGB mainly on our Socialist Fight website and in the theoretical series of pamphlets, In Defence of Trotskyism.

But since 1984, or more particularly since 1993, a new phenomenon has appeared, critical theoretical Maoists who do not defend Stalin or even Mao in every detail, who do not include the visage of Stalin on their banners and who are certainly subjectively revolutionists. We will try to answer the question what type of revolutionists are these? And how they relate to the working class in the ‘first world’ to use an old Maoist term.

The main ideologue for modern ultra-Stalinist is one Professor Grover Furr, see the endnote for the adulation poured on him by the Stalin Society of North America. [6] In contrast the Kasama Project [7] and Mike Ely in particular, coming from a Maoist tradition, have made some efforts to reassess the legacy of Stalin. There is little to disagree with in the Kasama general statement adopted in March 2015. [8]
Back in 2010 in *Socialist Fight* No. 11 we noted that Mike Ely had taken Grover Furr sternly to task for the abysmal academic standard of his bogus ‘proofs’ of Trotsky’s collaboration with the Germany and Japan before and at the start of WWII. [9] Unfortunately, the Kasama project is no more. Mike Ely’s last posting was November 2015 and in June 2016 Louis Project posted *Notes on the demise of the Kasama Project*. [10] This let us know that it had gone but no political explanations are forthcoming as yet, apart from the speculation that Mike Ely is ill. If so could not someone else take on the burden?

A similar project of honest political opponents is the publication *Maoism or Trotskyism* by Joshua Moufawad-Paul (JMP). We will critique this pamphlet and the ideology on which it is based, particularly the document by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) in 1993, *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism*. This, we are told, was inspired “first with the people’s war carried out by the Communist Party of Peru (PCP, Shining Path), whose experiences led to the foundation of the RIM in 1984. One of the other central founders of the RIM was the Revolutionary Communist Party (USA) led by the redoubtable Bob Avakian. [11]

The 1993 statement led to a split in the forces of international Maoism, or rather a division based on some political considerations as they had never been really united in the first place. The split was between the adherents of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) and the adherents of what might be loosely called Mao Tse Tung Thought who gathered in the *International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations*. MLM was a “new, third and higher stage of Marxism” they affirmed. They saw the first stage as that of Marx and Engels culminating in the Commune of 1871; the second as that led by Lenin and culminated in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the third as the ideology of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese revolution of 1949 in its modern context.

**So what constitutes this “new, third and higher stage of Marxism”**

According to Wikipedia, in Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, “Short Definitions of the Mass Line and a Mass Perspective” the first component is the “Mass Line”. This was “Building on the theory of the vanguard party by Vladimir Lenin, the theory of the Mass Line outlines a strategy for the mass popularisation of revolutionary ideology, consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and strengthening of the party, and for the building of socialism.” [12]

But when summarised is the mass line of the RIM, the first part of their revolutionary plan. It has absolutely nothing to do with “the theory of the vanguard party by Vladimir Lenin.” Its essence, they say, “from the masses, to the masses” has three components (or stages), as follows:

1. gathering the diverse ideas of the masses
2. processing or concentrating these ideas from the perspective of revolutionary Marxism, in light of the long-term, ultimate interests of the masses (which the masses themselves may sometimes only dimly perceive), and in light of a scientific analysis of the objective situation
3. returning these concentrated ideas to the masses in the form of a political line which will actually advance the mass struggle toward revolution

These three steps should be applied over and over again, reiteratively uplifting practice and knowledge to higher and higher stages. [13]

This has little to do Marxism. In the first place the term “the masses” conflates the working class with the peasantry. In this case it is clear that the peasantry and not the working class are the target of the tactic. So ‘gathering the diverse ideas of the masses’ is simply finding what the peasants want. The answer is fairly simple; more and better land and cheap finance to buy seed and fertiliser and a good guaranteed market for their produce.

“Processing or concentrating these ideas from the perspective of revolutionary Marxism” might mean expropriating the big landlords and redistributing the land to the peasants, the only real way to win the allegiance of these masses. Without control of government it’s impossible to influence markets and prices and even a revolutionary government could not determine the price of commodities which are determined by the global market; for that the world revolution is necessary. And only the working class in the big cities can seize control of the means of production and exchange and remain in control.

Unless we can substitute for them by a “Protracted People’s War”, dispensing with the services of the working class entirely, as Mao did and as the Shining Path’s Abimael Guzmán (AKA Comrade Gonzalo) sought to do. So we could take the first step via a revolution in one country but it could not give socialism to the peasantry, let alone the working class. Note the working class are not considered at all in this scenario.

**Socialism in a single country**

And this brings us to our first thesis on the basis for socialism: The necessity to raise the level of wealth to superabundance to satisfy all human need by planned production on a global scale. Marx’s criteria for socialism was specifically rejected in late 1924 by Stalin and Bukharin establishing the fundamental theoretical gulf that separates Stalinism and/or Maoism and Trotskyism, the anti-Marxist theory of socialism in a single country. We insist that the absolutely fundamental criterion for judging the establishment of socialism is the level of the productive forces and their ability to produce suffi-
cient wealth to satisfy basic human needs and open up the road to the communist future of superabundance. In the judgement of Stalin and Bukharin this was no longer necessary and socialism could be created in the USSR alone.

Stalin wrote in the first edition of The Foundations of Leninism in February 1924:

“The overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a proletarian government in one country does not yet guarantee the complete victory of socialism. The main task of socialism—the organization of socialist production—remains ahead. Can this task be accomplished, can the final victory of socialism in one country be attained, without the joint efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries? No, this is impossible. To overthrow the bourgeoisie the efforts of one country are sufficient—the history of our revolution bears this out. For the final victory of Socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of such a peasant country as Russia, are insufficient. For this the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are necessary.

“Such, on the whole, are the characteristic features of the Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution.” (our emphasis)

By the end of 1924 Stalin rewrote the paragraph to read thus:

But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. After consolidating its power and leading the peasantry in its wake the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build a socialist society. But does this mean that it will thereby achieve the complete and final victory of socialism, i.e., does it mean that with the forces of only one country it can finally consolidate socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention and, consequently, also against restoration? No, it does not. For this the victory of the revolution in at least several countries is needed. Therefore, the development and support of the revolution in other countries is an essential task of the victorious revolution. Therefore, the revolution which has been victorious in one country must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity, but as an aid, as a means for hastening the victory of the proletariat in other countries.

Lenin expressed this thought succinctly when he said that the task of the victorious revolution is to do “the utmost possible in one country for the development, support and awakening of the revolution in all countries,” (see Vol. XXIII, p. 385).

These, in general, are the characteristic features of Lenin’s theory of proletarian revolution.

The first quote is standard Leninism, repeated by him countless times since 1906 and correctly summed up by Stalin in February 1924. The second version is the opposite. Note that not only is the “peasant country as Russia” now capable of achieving socialism on its own but the process of confusing and misconstruing the words of Lenin has begun. Lenin refers to the “victory of socialism in a single country” meaning the victory of the socialist revolution in one country not the construction of a socialist society. But Stalin asserts he meant building the socialist society, as if we could have socialism in the midst of universal poverty and even famine for whole swaths of the masses. The necessity for the raising of the level of wealth to at least the beginnings of superabundance is now rejected.
“Finally consolidate socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention” assigns the communist parties of the rest of the world the task of border guards to ensure socialism can be built in the USSR. Increasingly after this Stalin argued that the only threat to socialism in the USSR was foreign invasion.

Of course it eventually fell in 1989-91 to internal counterrevolution led by the Stalinists themselves to ensure the best of the pickings for the oligarchs. And he has now redefined socialism as simply whatever gains may be made for the working class within the USSR and world revolution is now reduced to a pious aspiration and not at all essential for the development of socialism in the USSR. The Maoists of the RIM are far more crude in this regard— the “dictatorship of the proletariat” is socialism as in the following passage from Joshua Moufawad-Paul’s pamphlet, Maoism or Trotskyism:

Well it is true that the Chinese Revolution under Mao did attempt to build socialism in China without a world revolution and so I suppose this, if such is the qualification for “Stalinism”, might make them guilty of the Trotskyist charge. At the same time, though, the Maoist understanding of the Chinese Revolution is such that it accords with a very important theoretical distinction between socialism and communism, a distinction made by Lenin in *State and Revolution* but lacking in Trotsky’s *Permanent Revolution* writings. And this understanding is that socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is possible in a single country and is the transition to communism, but that full communism, since it would necessarily be stateless, requires the entire world to also be socialist. But just because most of the world isn’t socialist does not mean that a single country cannot establish a dictatorship of the proletariat; most significantly, the more storm centers that enter this transitional phase, the more likely world communism becomes.

Footnote:

[16] “Samir Amin once referred to this process as “delinking”, arguing that the emergence of socialisms at the peripheries, by opting out of the global capitalist market, would negatively affect the capitalist economies at centres of imperialism since it would deprive them of global surplus.” [16]

Everything that is wrong with Maoism is contained in this paragraph and footnote. Note the glib equation of socialism with the dictatorship of the proletariat, “that socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat”. This is “actually existing socialism” i.e. not socialism at all because no consideration is given to the level of material wealth available to the masses, no need to eliminate poverty, no need to have the working class in control because Mao *was the working class.*
And note also the later insistence that the resistance of the capitalist class in China becomes even greater as soon as socialism is achieved:

“the theory that class struggle continues under the dictatorship of the proletariat explains both the failures of the Stalinist period and the revisionism of the Khrushchev period. Stalin did not understand the possibility of capitalist restoration as a natural part of socialism—that is, that socialism is still a class society—and that counter-revolutionary political lines come from the inheritance of bourgeois (and even semi-feudal) ideology, preserved in the super-structure. Thus, rather than seeing people who might or might not have adopted bourgeois political lines within.”

Of course the opposite should be true if this was the case. Socialism should be the beginning of the institution of communism, the socially and economically equality society of the future when the state was beginning to wither away and the resistance of the capitalist roaders were becoming ever weaker. But no, Deng gained even more political importance, Mao conceded even more to him during his own lifetime because socialism in the midst of extreme inequality and poverty is a sick joke and it was impossible to hide from the masses the knowledge the American, British, French, German and Japanese workers had far higher standards of living than Chinese workers let alone the desperately poor Chinese peasantry.

**The RIM plan of 1993**

This is the second part of the RIM plan of 1993. A strategy for guerrilla warfare, holds that:

“Any attempt to fight with the bourgeoisie on its own terms, using the same tactics and strategies as they do, will be crushed (Maoists cite that, apart from the October Revolution, every single revolutionary attempt that used conventional warfare was crushed by the bourgeoisie). It cannot be predicted when the objective conditions for revolution will exist. Thus the subjective conditions — i.e. class consciousness — must be built long in advance.

Seizure of state power generally does not happen in one fell swoop. A situation of dual power through the course of protracted people’s war arises when the proletarian vanguard controls sections of the country at the same time as the bourgeoisie. The party cannot possibly hope to lead the proletariat in a seizure of power if it itself has no military experience. Thus, military experience — i.e. experienced gained through actually fighting, even if on a limited scale — must be gained long in advance of a seizure of power. Dual power, in addition to being a necessary development towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, is invaluable in providing this military experience (along with civil knowledge, fuel for propaganda efforts, material aid for the party, and the expansion and improvement of the mass line). On a national scale, protracted people’s war envisions a surrounding of the cities from the countryside, as history has shown that pockets of proletarian control generally develop in the countryside first. The phrase “the surrounding of the cities from the countryside” is sometimes applied on a global scale, with the cities as a metaphor for the first world (both generally the bourgeois hold-outs), and the countryside for the third world (both commonly the first stages of proletarian control).” [14]

The first point is just wrong. The October Revolution did not use conventional warfare to seize power but seized it via an insurrection when it correctly judged a revolutionary situation had arisen. The Civil War came after the seizure of power and
Trotsky was able to lead the Red Army to victory in part because the Bolsheviks held state power. And how would the Bolsheviks have seized power in 1917 if it had applied the gradualist and stagist maxim above?

“These three steps should be applied over and over again, reiteratively uplifting practice and knowledge to higher and higher stages.”

When this quote is taken not as a preparation for insurrection by the working class at the centers of production but as preparing ‘the masses’ to accept the rule of the peasant ‘Red Army’ or the ‘Shining Path’ with no participation let alone leadership by the working class itself.

Here it is clear that the plan is to recreate a Peruvian version Mao’s peasant army and take power without ever referring to the working class, general strike, growing mass mobilisation or eventual insurrection to place the working class in revolution in power. In fact, Joshua Moufawad-Paul himself identifies these two opposing versions of how to take state power in the following sentence:

“Indeed, if Trotskyism was able to demonstrate that it was such a rallying point, that it was kick-starting Bolshevik-style insurrections the world over that, even in their failures, were providing a significant communist challenge to capitalism, then we would have to question the validity of Maoism.”

In fact, in order to defend the line of protracted peoples war and the New Democracy that follows Moufawad-Paul has to attempt to distort the history of the Russian Revolution itself:

“The point here, though, is that none of these failed attempts to make revolution through insurrection were even Trotskyist; that is, Trotskyism has proved itself singularly incapable of even sparking an insurrectionary moment, though it likes to claim other insurrectionary moments as its own—either asserting that the Bolshevik insurrection was all due to Trotsky’s work and he was leading the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution (a claim that ignores the period of guerrilla war that began in 1905 or the fact that Trotsky’s contributions to the revolution were tactical rather than strategic and that the revolutionary strategy that produced the so-called “October Road” was due to Lenin), or naming themselves after an uprising performed by a group whose leading members did not like Trotsky. Every failed insurrectionary attempt has been led by: a) Luxemburgists; b) Marxist-Leninists who often declared fidelity to the Soviet Union under Stalin; c) even anarchists, but only once, in the case of the Spanish Revolution (our emphasis).”

Scholars of the history of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the failed 1905 revolution will be amazed to learn of “the period of guerrilla war that began in 1905” with the implication that it lasted until 1917. It never entered the head of Lenin, Trotsky or any other Bolshevik leader to refer to its importance subsequently, as it was largely over by April 1906. However,
we did find a reference to the fact that the notion of using it on a longer term basis had crossed Lenin’s mind in the quote below but he quickly abandoned it. Apart from that there were only “sporadic peasants’ revolts … isolated from the workers’ attempts”. And it was the working class to which the Bolsheviks were always strategically drawn:

“In that case it is necessary to prepare for rebellion by means of guerrilla attacks, for it would be ridiculous to ‘prepare’ merely by enrollments and drawing up lists.” All revolutionary slogans should be retained and offensive operations organized. All of these views were threshed out at the Fourth Congress of the Russian Party, a unity Congress of both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks taking place in April, 1906. By this time it had become clear that the sporadic peasants’ revolts that had broken out had remained isolated from the workers’ attempts and that, because the revolutionary activity had not been coordinated sufficiently in city and country, both sections temporarily had been defeated. Lenin was now in agreement with the tactics of participation in the elections of the new consultative Duma as the best that could be done under the circumstances.” [15]

New Democracy and the Anti Imperialist United Front

The Maoist theory of New Democracy is an attempt to escape the implications of Mao’s Bloc of Four Classes, which was the theory with which he led the Red Army to defeat the army of Chiang Kai-shek in 1949. Moufawad-Paul here insists that the:

“the national-bourgeois in semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries has a dual character in that although it is an exploitative capitalist force, it can also (though not always) side with the proletariat against colonialism, imperialism, and the comprador-bourgeoisie (whose existence is due to imperialism).”

The bourgeoisie never have a “dual character” and you will never hear that formulation from Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky. What the national-bourgeois in semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries have is a dual, role or function. It is, in Trotsky’s words “a semi-oppressed, semi-oppressing class”. It may be forced to fight imperialism for the preservation of its own right to exploit its “own” working class against the imperialist powers which wants to exploit them more directly themselves. Sections of that bourgeoisie may be direct agents of imperialism at times and then turn against it later. But it is totally wrong to assign it a “dual character” as if there were natural differences between two section of the same ruling class. Some may be forced to fight on the side of the working class but it is entirely wrong to make a separate stage
out of the phenomenon. The proper designation for the tactics here is the Anti Imperialist United Front without political support to those sections of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie who are obliged to struggle against imperialism. As Trotsky observes:

We do not and never have put all wars on the same plane. Marx and Engels supported the revolutionary struggle of the Irish against Great Britain, of the Poles against the tsar, even though in these two nationalist wars the leaders were, for the most part, members of the bourgeoisie and even at times of the feudal aristocracy … at all events, Catholic reactionaries.

When Abdel-Krim rose up against France, the democrats and Social Democrats spoke with hate of the struggle of a “savage tyrant” against the “democracy.” The party of Leon Blum supported this point of view. But we, Marxists and Bolsheviks, considered the struggle of the Riffians against imperialist domination as a progressive war. Lenin wrote hundreds of pages demonstrating the primary necessity of distinguishing between imperialist nations and the colonial and semicolonial nations which comprise the great majority of humanity. To speak of “revolutionary defeatism” in general, without distinguishing between exploiter and exploited countries, is to make a miserable caricature of Bolshevism and to put that caricature at the service of the imperialists.

In the Far East we have a classic example. China is a semicolonial country which Japan is transforming, under our very eyes, into a colonial country. Japan’s struggle is imperialist and reactionary. China’s struggle is emancipatory and progressive.

But Chiang Kai-shek? We need have no illusions about Chiang Kai-shek, his party, or the whole ruling class of China, just as Marx and Engels had no illusions about the ruling classes of Ireland and Poland. Chiang Kai-shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle. [16]

Moufawad-Paul, with Mao, insists that the nationalist bourgeoisie can play a revolutionary role whereas Trotskyists insists that they can only play a temporary, defensive role when under attack by the imperialists and can never be revolutionary allies of the working class:

Moreover, the reason the theory of New Democracy claimed that the national bourgeoisie in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial context could be a “revolutionary class” (but only to a certain extent and always under the direction of the party) was because this class, unlike the comprador bourgeoisie (that is, the bourgeois who represented imperialist interests), often had a vested interest in getting rid of imperialist interference and semi-feudal ideology. In the framework of building socialism in a semi-feudal/semi-colonial, this consciousness was objectively revolutionary. “Being a bourgeoisie in a colonial and semi-colonial country and oppressed by imperialism,” writes Mao in On New Democracy, “the Chinese national bourgeoisie retains a certain revolutionary quality at certain periods and to a certain degree… in its opposition to the foreign imperialists and the domestic government of bureaucrats and warlords.” Note that Mao qualifies that this “revolutionary quality” is only possible “at certain periods and to a certain degree”; indeed, he would qualify the limits of this quality just a few paragraphs later which demon-
strates why the theory of New Democracy has nothing to do with class collaboration and tailing the national bourgeoisie:

“At the same time, however, being a bourgeois class in a colonial and semi-colonial country and so being extremely flabby economically and politically, the Chinese national bourgeoisie also has another quality, namely, a proneness to conciliation with the enemies of the revolution. Even when it takes part in the revolution, it is unwilling to break with imperialism completely and, moreover, it is closely associated with the exploitation of the rural areas through land rent; thus it is neither willing nor able to overthrow imperialism, and much less the feudal forces, in a thorough way.” [17]

The theory of New Democracy does not gell with Lenin and the revolutionary Comintern or with Trotsky on this point. As we explained in In Defence of Trotskyist No. 6:

After the Korean War erupted in 1950 and Mao embarked on the ‘Three Anti’ campaign in 1951, essentially expropriating the comprador bourgeoisie but retaining the nationalist, patriotic bourgeoisie. But the threat from the US invasion of Korea grew ever closer and new capitalists were arising profiting from the war industries in Northern China; he now could not afford to have a ‘fifth column’ in his government whilst the Imperialist armies threatened. He hit back, launched the counter-attack by sending the Chinese ‘Red Army’ to the assistance of the North Korean forces. He then unleashed the ‘Five Anti’ campaign, essentially entirely overturning property relations in 1952-53, modelled on the USSR because he had no choice: “Eventually the Communist Party revealed that it would no longer protect private business, and that Chinese capitalists would receive treatment no better than foreign. The Korean War initially provided opportunities in Northern China, giving rise to a new class of capitalists, many of whom would be prosecuted under the Marxist policies of the Communist Party.” [18]

So the pragmatic Mao abandoned his own theory in the face of the necessity of self-preservation but he never altered his politics or his disastrous advice to other Communist and Maoists groups who still operate the New Democracy. We acknowledge it may seem similar to the Anti Imperialist United Front in many ways, particularly when warnings are heeded about the unreliability of all the bourgeoisie as here:

The Balli Kombëtar in Albania in 1943 and the Kuomintang in China in the 1920s are examples of this. These national bourgeoisie forces temporarily allied with the proletariat of their countries (the Albanian Party of Labor and the Chinese Communist Party, respectively) for the overthrow of imperialism but eventually turned on the proletariat once they felt their
long-term existence in the new society would be threatened. [19]

But it is that reliance on the ‘nature’ of the comprador bourgeoisie and not on their temporary role or function that is its great weakness, seen today in Nepal, to mention just one case. And really there is no semi-feudal mode of production anywhere now in the planet, let alone a feudal or semi-feudal class. Capitalism is the global mode of production, there are absolutely no “pre-capitalist modes of production” anywhere. That is the reason that Permanent Revolution is the only perspective for the semi-colonial world and not New Democracy. Therefore this passage is entirely wrong:

Trotsky’s theory of “combined and uneven development” was fundamental to his understanding of the theory of permanent revolution’s international meaning. Here we have a theory that seems to imply that capitalism is a global mode of production that develops in a combined and uneven manner, rather than a theory (as those influenced by what would become the Maoist tradition have argued) of a world system of capitalism where capitalist modes of production form the centres of capitalism, and impose/control global capitalism through imperialism, and capitalist social formations on the periphery that are still economically defined, internally, as pre-capitalist modes of production. [20]

Moreover, Mufawad-Paul fails to recognise the reasons that the revolution in Nepal failed because he fails to see that the political concessions made to the bourgeoisie on the utterly false basis that it was “a semi-feudal/semi-colonial country” made that failure inevitable. And lacking the perspective of the world revolution compromise with the world’s hegemonic imperialist power and its Indian agents made com-

promise the only pragmatic step to take. And there are still Maoists oppositionists to that betrayal but without a global perspective they MUST go down that same road. A regional all-Indian perspective is a great step forward but it is not sufficient:

The recent events in Nepal are a good example of this problem. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [CPN(Maoist)] launched a successful people’s war and was able to establish something akin to a period of New Democracy when it became the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [UCPN (Maoist)]. Since Nepal was also a semi-feudal/semi-colonial country it needed to establish New Democracy in order to produce the necessary context for socialism but the bourgeois line within the party triumphed earlier than it did in China and even New Democracy was abandoned as the revolution degenerated into what could accurately be called, but only at this moment of degeneration a “bourgeois revolution with red flags.” However, since Maoists argue that a line struggle will always manifest within a revolutionary context—a struggle between those who do not want to go further down the socialist path and those who want to complete the revolution—this line struggle will happen whether or not there is a New Democratic revolution. Indeed, in China the line struggle existed before, during, and after the period of New Democracy; the bourgeois line did not attain victory until the end of the Cultural Revolution where the forces gathered around Deng Xiaoping emerged victorious and capitalist restoration—originally envisioned as a return to the period of New Democracy—began. Thus, the problem with the restoration of capitalism has nothing specifically to do with the theory of New Democracy; it is always, for Maoists, a possibility under socialism because socialism is also a period of class struggle—and this is the key theoretical com-
ponent, that is universally applicable, of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. [21]
You might be forgiven for thinking that if the Chinese New Democracy was abandoned (Socialist Fight agrees with Moufawad-Paul in putting it in 1952-3) and was used as a mechanism for restoring capitalism after the death of Mao in 1976 so it was a very dodgy theory to begin with. And although the ‘line of struggle’ managed to get Mao over the finishing line in 1953 it only lasted until 1976 (Socialist Fight says until October 1992).

**Two Stalinist approached to ‘revolution’**

But there are yet more problems with the New Democracy – it only applies to:

revolutions that emerge at the peripheries of global capitalism. Revolutionary movements at the centers of global capitalism — that is, movements that manifest within completed capitalist modes of production — will not pursue New Democracy since the problem New Democracy is meant to address has nothing to do with the capitalist mode of production where the economic infrastructure necessary for building socialism already exists.

So now Maoism, a third world peasant ideology, sets itself the task of answering the problems of the “centers of global capitalism — that is, movements that manifest within completed capitalist modes of production.” Here they encounter two Stalinist approached to ‘revolution’ – the very clearly counter-revolutionary class collaboration line of Dimitrov post 1935 – Popular Frontism, a cross class alliance with the capitalist class to prevent the victory of fascism and abandon the class struggle for fear of alienating the same capitalists or the more leftist Third Period of 1928-34. [22]

But Moufawad-Paul does not go down that mad sectarian road. In fact, he has many words of praise for Trotskyism and Trotskyists. We could agree with his criticisms of the Grantite IMT/CWI parliamentary road to socialism but where is his own revolutionary road to socialism apart from ‘build the party’? The rest of the pamphlet is a critique of Trotskyists because they have not led third world revolutions like the Maoists have (where are they now?). But he is definitively sure that in any country insurrectionary revolutions are not the ticket:

It is important to note that all attempts to make revolution following the insurrectionist strategy have failed since the October Revolution and this, in large part, is why some Maoists speak of the universality of people’s war as a military strategy for making revolu-
tion. Since this theory is still a subject of debate amongst the international Maoist movement, however, I will not spend time comparing it to the military strategy of insurrection in order to say why Maoism is superior to Trotskyism in this regard. After all, some Maoists and other non-Trotskyists (even some anarcho-communists) uphold the theory of insurrection.

We would say that the October Revolution was the revolution for the advanced capitalist countries we must emulate and surpass. It has not been surpassed since and it was definitively insurrectionary and not surrounding the countryside from the cities, which was what Mao foolishly said the revolution in advanced capitalist countries would look like.

Trotskyism has the United Front and the Anti Imperialist United Front of the revolutionary Comintern up to 1922, we have Trotsky’s Transitional Programme of 1938 and entryism where and when conditions are favorable in bourgeois workers’ parties and always in the trade unions. We do not see your programme for revolution in the “centers of global capitalism— that is, movements that manifest within completed capitalist modes of production”. What should we do with Jeremy Corbyn and the British labour movement so much in political turmoil now that is bound to get worse, or better if your perspective is the socialist revolution, Joshua Moufawad-Paul?

Appendix: Ted Grant and Czechoslovakia

Finally, having rejected many aspects of the politics of Ted Grant there is an issue on which we feel he was absolutely correct. When the Russian Revolution was isolated and the workers’ soviets withered due to the dreadful losses of the best communist in the Civil War and the collapse of industrial production from 1918 to 1924 and consequent rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy it was impossible to sustain workers’ control of industry let alone workers’ control of the state. Moreover the Russian working class were or recent peasant origin with very little culture of workers’ struggle and solidarity, even though much of that struggle was very intense indeed. In advanced capitalist countries and regions that culture was far more developed. Here it is possible for real workers’ democracy, the rule of workers’ councils, whose Russian version were the short-lived Soviets, to be permanent and this is of the real revolutionary perspective. This is the real insurrectionist road to workers’ power in every land, in the semi-colonial world via the Permanent Revolution and the Anti Imperialist United Front (not the Maoist New Democra-
cy) and in the advanced metropolitan countries as everywhere via the workers’ councils. We would note that this perspective by Grant was in his best revolutionary period before the reformist notions of the Enabling Act and he incorrectly dubbed the state forces as “workers in uniform”.

And one such country with a workers’ movement with a long history was Czechoslovakia where the success of the workers’ councils was such that it took the Stalinists seven long years to crush finally in the anti-Semitic Slánský trial (11 of the 14 accused were ‘rootless cosmopolitan’ Jews). The Show trial began on 20 November 1952 and 11 were executed on 3 December 1952. Ted Grant wrote about what led up to it, outlining that possibility and perspective very well in April 1948:

“They have made it clear that the action committees will not play the role which the soviets, or workers’ committees played in the Russian Revolution in 1917. The Russian Bolshevik government under Lenin was based on the soviets, which were the most flexible and democratic form of organisation. These had direct representation of the workers and peasants on its bodies based on the localities. By this means Lenin pointed out there was no need for any separate state structure. The workers and peasants would administer the state. Because of the backwardness of Russia and the isolation of the revolution they did not succeed in carrying this out. In a highly cultured and industrialised country like Czechoslovakia, a genuine Communist regime could be introduced. The workers and peasants could begin immediately to administer the state themselves without a special state apparatus which will be utilised for the protection of privilege.

A parliament elected on a constituency basis is far less democratic than the system of direct representation on the basis of committees. The parliamentary form of representation is the most easily bureaucratised and far removed from the people. The economic basis for a workers’ state has been achieved. But for a state to act in the interests of the working class, the expropriation of the capitalists by itself is not enough. Democratic control of the state apparatus is an essential prerequisite for the march towards a communist society. All the great Marxists emphasised this. Lenin reduced the essence of a workers’ state to four fundamental principles. After the expropriation of the capitalists and the statification of the means of production, there would be: “The election of soviets with the right of recall of all officials. No official to receive a wage higher than that earned by the average worker. The abolition of the standing army and its replacement by the armed people. No permanent bureaucracy. Each in turn would fulfil the functions of the state. When everyone was a bureaucrat, no-one could be a bureaucrat. “

“We organise large scale production, starting from what capitalism has already created; we workers ourselves relying on our own experiences as workers, establish a strict, an iron discipline, supported by the state power of the armed workers, shall reduce the role of the state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, moderately paid ‘managers’ (of course, with technical
knowledge of all sorts, types and degrees). This is our proletarian task, with this we can and must begin when carrying through a proletarian revolution. Such a beginning on the basis of large-scale production, of itself leads to a gradual ‘withering away’ of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of a new order, an order without quotation marks, an order in which the more and more simplified functions of control and accounting will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit, and will finally die out as special functions of a special stratum of the population.” (Lenin, Collected Works, volume 25 page 431)

The backwardness of Russia and the isolation of the revolution rendered this process impossible. But on the basis of the cultural level in Czechoslovakia the advantages of communist methods would be apparent to the whole world. Under real communist leadership they could be immediately implemented. But this is not what Stalinism desires. Stalin has stated that what is required is a stronger and stronger state in Russia. Czechoslovakia under Stalinist leadership will develop in the same direction. There will not be a process of the withering away of the state apparatus and the GPU. [24]

It is clear that the workers of East Europe, China, Vietnam, North Korea or Cuba never got such revolutionary opportunities and what was produced by these bureaucratically controlled revolutions were deformed workers’ states from the inception with no global perspective, only a socialism in a single country perspective. Clearly this will not inspire the workers of Britain, Canada, the USA, Europe of Japan, to mention the main metropolitan countries.

Notes

[3] Gerry Joseph Downing, 27 July 2016, It was pointed out that a Dutch Maoist group had an appalling racist position on immigrants on another thread. https://www.facebook.com/gerdowning/posts/10210312068186025
[5] Wikipedia: Communist International, Seventh World Congress and the Popular Front, “The seventh and last congress of the Comintern was held between July 25 and August 20, 1935. It was attended by representatives of 65 communist parties. The main report was delivered by Dimitrov, other reports were delivered by Palmiro Togliatti, Wilhelm Pieck and Dmitry Manuilsky. The congress officially endorsed the Popular Front against fascism. This policy argued that Communist Parties should seek to form a Popular Front with all parties that opposed fascism and not limit themselves to forming a United Front with those parties based in the working class. There was no significant opposition to this policy within any of the national sections of the Comintern; in France and Spain in particular, it would have momentous consequences with Léon Blum’s 1936 election, which led to the Popular Front government.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_International
[6] See Stalin Society of North America: Why Does the Pseudo-Left Hate Grover Furr? “The answer becomes plain: they hate Grover Furr precisely because his works challenge the hegemony of the Trotsky-Khrushchev-Gorbachev-Cold War anti-communist anti-Stalin paradigm, the dominant paradigm of the bourgeoisie. In other words, they hate Grover Furr because he is a good communist in an age filled with fake ones. They hate Grover Furr because he is an honest researcher in an age filled to the brim with propaganda. They hate Grover Furr because he has evidence for the con-
clusions he draws and presents it openly, rather than relying on emotionalism. They hate Grover Furr because he challenges the bourgeois anti-communist understanding of Soviet history. These days pseudo-leftists are not just dishonest or liberal; they are avowed anti-communists.” http://www.stalinsociety.org/2016/06/10/why-does-the-pseudo-left-hate-grover-furr/

[7] “Kasama is a communist project that, in theory and practice, fights for the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.” from our 2008 Statement of Unity” and “The Kasama Project stands for the revolutionary overthrow of global capitalism and imperialism and the initiation of a socialist transformation leading to the consolidation of a global communist society.” - from our 2014 Statement of Unity http://www.kasamapject.org/

[8] “This vision is not just a dream”: New Statement from the Kasama Project, admin@kasamapject.org / March 22, 2015, http://www.kasamapject.org/2015/03/this-vision-is-not-just-a-dream-new-statement-from-the-kasama-project/

[9] Refutation of Professor Grover Furr’s Evidence of Leon Trotsky’s Collaboration with Germany and Japan


[11] See Mike Ely, Nine Letters to Our Comrades, Letter 4: Truth, Practice and a Confession of Poverty: “The RCP advocates returning complexity to communist analysis, but then, all too often leaches complexity from its own discussion. Here, the real, nagging, structural problems and controversies surrounding the development of correct understandings are minimized. With Avakian’s method and approach, relative truth, objective truth, and absolute truth are pancaked flat, producing a simplified set of ideological assertions. Put another way: The actual thing, the perception of that thing, the latest conception arising from perceptions, and the latest presentation of that concept are effectively muddled. [52] It creates a situation where the RCP can give lip service to critical thinking and yet promote a logic of close-minded zealotry.” (i.e. Bob Avakian’s RCP is a cult – GD).

[52] One handy example: look at Avakian’s definition of instrumentalism in footnote 10 – where he casually refers to “reality” when he is really referring to an ideological presentation of reality. https://kasamaarchive.org/pamphlets/9-letters/letter-4/

[12] Wikipedia, Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, “Short Definitions of the Mass Line and a Mass Perspective”. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) is a political philosophy which builds upon Marxism-Leninism and some aspects of Mao Zedong Thought. It was first formalised in 1993 by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. Maoism was considered synonymous with Mao Zedong Thought (also known as Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought) from the 1960s onwards when many anti-revisionist Marxist organisations sided with China following the Sino-Soviet split until 1993, when the Revolutionary Internationalist
Movement (RIM) formalised Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as a new and higher stage of Marxism-Leninism. This caused a split in the Maoist movement, with the adherents of Mao Zedong Thought leaving the RIM and congregating around the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations. [13] Joshua Moufawad-Paul, Maoism of Trotskyism, http://moufawad-paul.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/maoism-or-trotskyism-free-download.html

[14] Ibid.


[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Wikipedia, Slánský trial. Those sentenced were:
Rudolf Slánský (1901), General Secretary of the KSČ (executed)
Vladimír Clementis (1902), Minister of Foreign Affairs (executed)
Otto Fischl (1902), Deputy Minister of Finance (executed)
Josef Frank (1909), Deputy General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (executed)
Ludvík Frejka (1904), Chief of the Economic Committee in the Chancellery of the President (executed)
Bedřich Geminder (1901), Chief of the International Section of the Party Secretariat (executed)
Vavro Hajdú (1913), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (life imprisonment)
Evžen Löbl (1907), Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade (life imprisonment)
Artur London (1915), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (life imprisonment)
Rudolf Margolius (1913), Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade (executed)
Bedřich Reicin (1911), Deputy Minister of National Defence (executed)
André Simone (1895) (pseudonym of Otto Katz), editor of Rudé právo (executed)
Otto Šling (1912), Regional Party Secretary in Brno (executed)
Karel Šváb (1904), Deputy Minister of National Security (executed)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sl%C3%A1nsk%C3%BD_trial