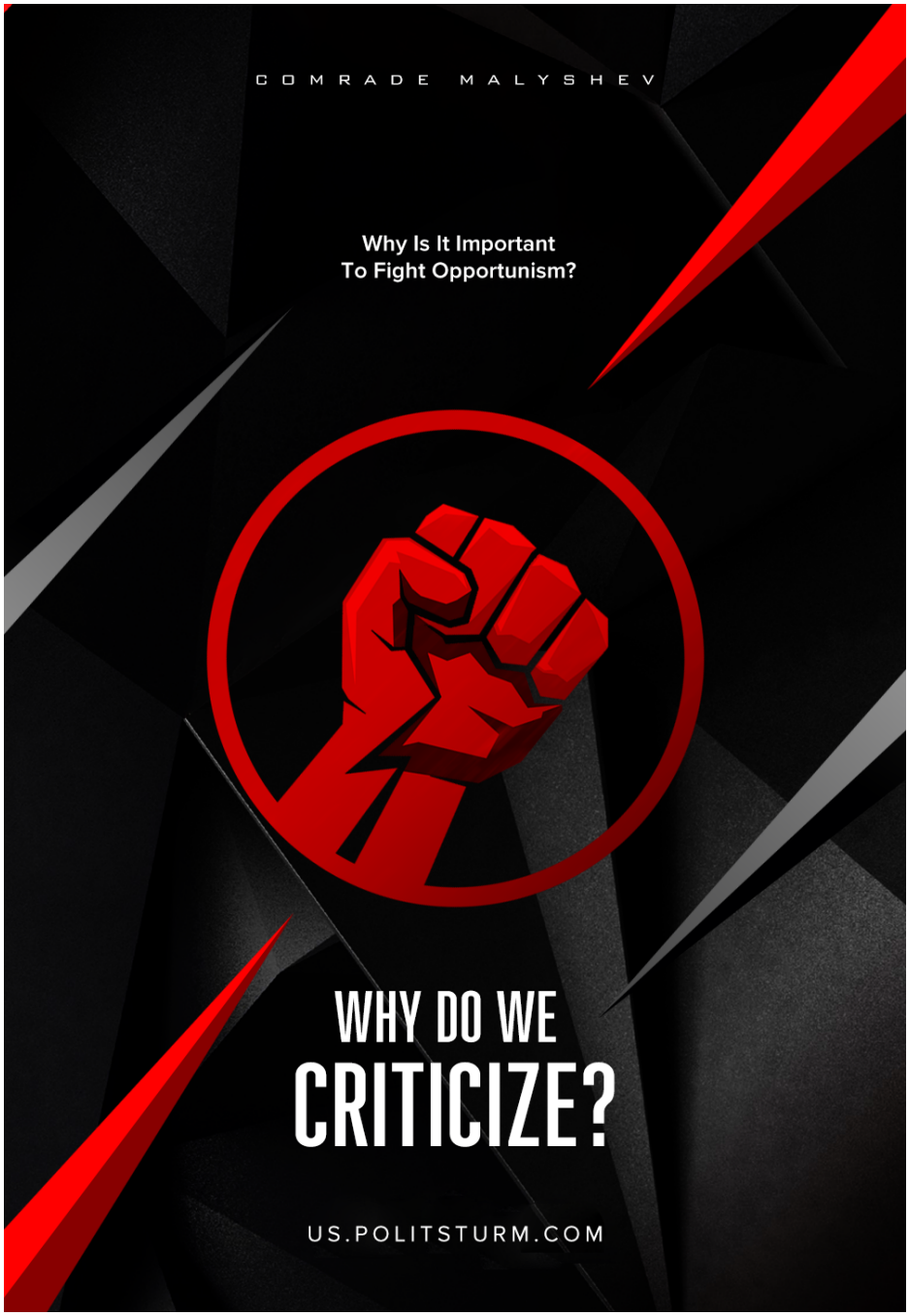
Why Do We Criticize?



Original article

2020-08-18

34 min read

“Why are you criticizing everyone? Are you dogmatic sectarians? We’ll never succeed if you bicker, try to find common ground because we need to unite!”

This line is common currency in Left arguments, endemic to the Internet activists facing the opposition brought against revisionism in the communist movement. These modern authors misappropriate an appeal to the core principle of solidarity, but never the most sophisticated theorists. They have no clue how communism develops or why Marxism-Leninism exists. They conceive ‘communism’ exclusively from an ethical point of view — as a doctrine of their “just world”.

Observing a principled dispute between two individuals — each of whom calls himself a “communist” — such a person fails to understand the conflict. It seems to them that the essence of the debate lies in the petulance and ego of either of the belligerents, and that it is necessary to resolve this development which has arisen by a call to unity. This is, since, “we all stand for the same thing.”

The formulations of this position are not just widespread among the proponents of communist views, but are facets of the dominant ideology. A universal merger, the “reconciliation” of one and all into a broad pluralism, is contradictory to Marxism-Leninism.

Moreover, the practical implementation of these seemingly noble ideas led not to the strengthening of the communist movement, not to the successes of the working class, but rather made progressive revolutionary forces to collapse and disintegration, to paralysis and the most rabid appeasement.

As we are an organisation of Marxist-Leninists, the need falls upon us to briefly discuss the issue of unity and explain the fallacy of a bourgeois-democratic principle to our comrades.

Individualist Approach

First of all, we should point out one common misconception that theoretical disputes are a reflection of interpersonal conflicts. As if people begin to poke around in theory just to harass others, under a mask of a theoretical dispute.

A typical example from history is the confrontation between Stalin and Trotsky, usually explained by bourgeois historians as a conflict between two prominent figures over a matter of personal power. This Great Man Theory approach to the factional struggle within the Soviet Communist party amounts to an insidiously cruel and paranoid Stalin who didn’t like the idea of limiting his personal power on behalf of the party’s “United opposition”, which he mercilessly drove into the ground.

These narrative schemes reduce political struggles to the struggle of particular individuals, clouding the real goings-on. The gist of a political conflict (for the most part) is not in feelings of personal animosity, not in the arrogance of the parties, not even necessarily in the desire for personal power (an idea emerging from Nietzsche’s Will for Power)

The bottom line is that each person – even if he does not realize it himself – expresses and defends the point of view of a certain class. Any political clash between two personalities is actually a clash of two class positions; and behind each of these individuals are the interests of a particular class (or part of a class) whose positions they defend. There are no people hovering above classes, just as there is no above-class point of view in a society divided into classes. Every position, every political or philosophical theory, and every practice that flows from these theories is of a class character.

Error loading image

Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin themselves examined the class roots of this or that theory, this or that philosophy, this or that worldview and demanded that others do so. Only by revealing the class nature of the theory/philosophy/worldview can one find out in favor of which class they serve, the interests of which class they protect. And since the exponent of one or another class point of view is always a certain person, the ideological class clash also manifests itself as a clash of personalities.

Marx against Bakunin, Engels against Dühring, Lenin against Martov, Stalin against Trotsky, etc.: all these are prominent examples of the proletarian revolutionary ideology confronting bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theories, reflected in a clash of specific personalities.

Some people are trying to calm passions, in a fit of bourgeois conciliation, calling for “humanity” and “political tact” in the ideological struggle. However, both Lenin and Stalin, referring to the struggle against opportunism and revisionism, demanded the most decisive defeat of people who expressed a point of view hostile to the proletariat:

> *“A split means a rupture of all organisational ties between the two party groups concerned; it shifts a conflict of ideas from within the bounds of a single organisation to some where outside it, from correcting and convincing comrades to destroying their organisation, to inciting the masses of the workers (and the masses of the people generally) to oppose the breakaway organisation.What is impermissible in members of a united party is permissible and obligatory for sections of a party that has been split. It is wrong to write about Party comrades in a language that systematically spreads among the working masses hatred, aversion, contempt, etc., for those who hold other opinions. But one may and must write in that strain about an organisation that has seceded.Why must one? Because when a split has taken place it is one’s duty to wrest the masses from the leadership of the seceding section. I am told—you carried confusion into the ranks of the proletariat. My answer is—I purposely and deliberately carried confusion into the ranks of that section of the St. Petersburg proletariat which followed the Mensheviks who seceded on the eve of the elections, and I shall always act in that way whenever a split occurs.By my sharp and discourteous attacks on the Mensheviks on the eve of the St. Petersburg elections, I actually succeeded in causing that section of the proletariat which trusts and follows the Mensheviks to waver. That was my aim. That was my duty as a member of the St. Petersburg Social-Democratic organisation which was conducting a campaign for a Left bloc; because, after the split, it was necessary, in order to conduct that campaign, to rout the ranks of the Mensheviks who were leading the proletariat in the footsteps of the Cadets; it was necessary to carry confusion into their ranks; it was necessary to arouse among the masses hatred, aversion and contempt for these people who had ceased to be members of a united party, had become political enemies, and were trying to put a spoke in the wheel of our Social-Democratic organisation in its election campaign. Against such political enemies I then conducted—and in the event of a repetition or development of a split shall always conduct—a struggle of extermination.”(Lenin,Report to the Fifth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. on the St. Petersburg Split and the Institution of the Party Tribunal Ensuing Therefrom)*

And there is no reason to be so much afraid of a struggle: a struggle may cause annoyance to some individuals, but it will clear the air, define attitudes in a precise and straightforward manner, define which differences are important and which unimportant, define where people stand—those who are taking a completely different path and those Party comrades who differ only on minor points.(Lenin,Letter to Appolinaria Yakubova, October 26, 1900)

This document should have been dragged into the light of day and its author should have been given a good drubbing, an ideological drubbing, in full view of the workers, in order to give the Party the opportunity to realise the danger of Trotskyism and to train the cadres in the spirit of Bolshevism;Why did the old Social-Democracy perish as a revolutionary Party? Among other things, because Kautsky and Co. did indeed employ the "fine" tactics of shielding and saving the Rights, the "delicate" tactics of "unity and peace" with Ed. Bernstein and Co. What was the result? The result was that at the crucial moment, just before the war, the Right-wing Social-Democrats betrayed the workers, the "orthodox" became the prisoners of the Rights, and Social-Democracy as a whole proved to be a "living corpse." I think that, in time, this may happen to the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia if you do not quickly and resolutely substitute for Comrade Smeral's "fine" tactics the Bolshevik tactics of ruthless struggle against the Right-wing groups in the communist movement.Expulsion is not the decisive weapon in the struggle against the Rights. The main thing is to give the Right groups a drubbing, ideologically and morally, in the course of a struggle based on principle and to draw the mass of the Party membership into this struggle. That is one of the chief and most important means of educating the Party in the spirit of Bolshevism.(Stalin,The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia)

It seems to me that in the matter of the inner-party ideological struggle, Hansen is preaching a sort of parson's morality, one entirely unbefitting a Communist Party. Apparently, he is not opposed to an ideological struggle. But he would like to conduct it in such a way as not to discredit any of the opposition leaders. I must say that no such struggle ever happens. I must say that one who is prepared to tolerate a struggle only provided that none of the leaders is in any way compromised, virtually denies the possibility of waging any kind of ideological struggle within the Party. Ought we to disclose mistakes committed by party leaders? Ought we to bring those mistakes to light, so as to educate the party masses on the basis of the mistakes of the leaders? I think that we ought to do so. I think that there is no other way of correcting mistakes. I think that the method of slurring over mistakes is not our method. But it follows from this that there can be no inner-party struggle and correction of mistakes without some leader or other being in some way compromised. That may be sad, but nothing can be done about it, because we are powerless against the inevitable(Stalin, The Fight Against Right and "Ultra-Left" Deviations)

Denying the need for such clashes and pursuing a "peaceful" line of "principled neutrality" means give up the class struggle in ideology; support the dilution of the proletarian class theory by alien elements; giving the green light to ideas, opinions and theories that hide behind revolutionary and even ultra-revolutionary phraseology, although in reality only serve to weaken the proletarian revolutionary movement, i.e. maintaining the domination of the bourgeoisie (and therefore express the class capitalists' class interests).

This political pacifism, this false kindness and empty tact towards a misguided approach to our class enemies is the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism.

Error loading image

Ideological Pluralism

Another widespread delusion is the love for pluralism, political eclecticism, freedom to one's opinion on any issue. This final line of rhetoric was expressly used in previous decades to integrate open racism into the political discourse. The fight against this bourgeois prejudice directly relates to the question of truth. What is truth, and what does it mean for one's political stance?

The philosophy of the working class — dialectical materialism — asserts that there cannot be multiple truths. The truth is always one and this truth is concrete, as only true things exist in a universe of real, material things. Anything that does not correspond to truth is a mistake, a deviation from reality to some greater or lesser extent. The assumption of pluralism is the equivocation of truth and falsehood. This is the Liberal desire to dissolve truth in an endless stream of delusional ideas (typically, the political rhetoric which has no real substance in policy). By mixing one jar of jam and another jar of shit, all you get two are two jars of shit. For a substantive political movement, this is the essence of pluralism.

Applying this understanding to political practice, we have established a clear and concrete doctrine of Marxism-Leninism. This is the scientific revolutionary doctrine available to us, which has been applied to all spheres of social life. Most importantly, the proper use of Marxism has revealed the laws of social development for Marxist-Leninists to indicate the path which can lead mankind towards the further step of history.

Synthesising the broad spectrum of opinions of our imagined allies, we must abandon aspects of our theory which we know to be true, and that path definitely leads to a dead end. By allowing deviations from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois positions, without at least trying to correct that course in time, we condone the development of contradictory strategies and failures. These "revolutionary" "Marxist" positions are used by the ruling class to disorient the organization of the proletariat, to either split it from within or lead it whole into the mouth of Capital. Misconceptions in theory invariably create mistakes in practice.

As supporters of Marxism-Leninism, we possess an invaluable method of cognizing reality. This integral worldview results from a clear and well-developed theory that doesn't need augmentations from the liberal social movements. Marxists must defend their discipline, as well as develop and defend a proletarian worldview. If we abandon our class philosophy, our own class's theory, its place is inevitably taken by a hostile ideology.

There is no middle ground in any question of real consequence, no possible third way.

> *There can be no "middle" line in questions of principle. Either one set of principles or another must be made the basis of the Party's work. A "middle" line in matters of principle is the "line" of stuffing people's heads with rubbish, of glossing over disagreements, a "line" leading to the ideological degeneration of the Party, to the ideological death of the Party…The policy of a "middle" line in matters of principle is not our policy. The policy of a "middle" line in matters of principle is the policy of decaying and degenerating parties. Such a policy cannot but lead to the conversion of the party into an empty bureaucratic apparatus, running idle and divorced from the masses of the workers. That path is not our path.(Stalin,Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in our Party)*

Error loading image

Pluralism and freedom of opinion in this particular case contribute precisely to the erosion of the proletarian theory; hence undermining its practice to the erosion of the revolutionary proletarian movement as a whole.

The Need For a Theory

Dialectical materialism tells us that development occurs through the struggle of opposites. No unity of belligerent camps, no peace between rival ideas will mean the development of the successful revolutionary party.

> *It seems that every workers' party of a big country can develop only through internal struggle, which accords with the laws of dialectical development in general. The German party became what it is in the struggle between the Eisenachers and Lassalleans where fighting played a major role. Unity became possible only when the bunch of scoundrels that had been deliberately trained by Lassalle to be his tools had outlived their day, and even then it was brought about by us much too hastily. In France the people who, although they have sacrificed the Bakuninist theory, continue to employ Bakuninist means of struggle, and who at the same time want to sacrifice the class character of the movement to further their special ends, must also first outlive their usefulness before unity is possible again. To preach unity under such circumstances would be sheer folly. Moral sermons avail nothing against infantile disorders, which are after all unavoidable under present-day circumstances.(Engels,Letter to Bernstein in Zurich, 20 October 1882)*

> *It is well known that in all these, as in earlier periods, our Party grew and became strong by overcoming internal contradictions. What follows from this? It follows that the C.P.S.U.(B.) grew and became strong by overcoming inner-Party contradictions. It follows that the overcoming of inner-Party disagreements by means of struggle is a law of development of our Party.Some may say that this may be a law for the C.P.S.U.(B.), but not for other proletarian parties. That is not true. This law is a law of development for all parties of some size, whether the proletarian Party of the U.S.S.R. or the proletarian parties of the West. Whereas in a small party in a small country it is possible in one way or another to slur over disagreements, covering them up by the prestige of one or several persons, in the case of a big party in a big country development through the overcoming of contradictions is an inevitable element of party growth and consolidation. So it was in the past. So it is today.(Stalin, Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in our Part)*

Lenin and Stalin wrote that the Bolsheviks had grown stronger and sharpened their theoretical basis as a revolutionary party solely thanks to the tireless struggle for Marxism against right and left revisionism.

Bolsheviks rallied the broadest masses of working people by keeping to a proletarian theory, correctly considering this or that phenomenon from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism, and formed the tactics adequate for the moment. Doing so, they seized the state and defended the new institutions of socialism in an immense struggle against reaction, fascism, and imperialism. In following a consistent theoretical basis of socio-economic and political reality, this party overcame the vestiges of capitalism in the Soviet Union and built the basis of a socialist economy.

As soon as the struggle against theoretical deviation was weakened, and assumed a formal character in the political functions, a progressive movement began to pull into reverse. Alien class elements introduced into the party's theoretical platform under the guise of "creative development" first deformed its basis in Marxism-Leninism; thereby founding the distortion of the Communist Party's social practice in both economic and political spheres. Refusing to correct their mistakes, after passing an irrevocable stage in politics, inevitably led the Party to catastrophe. The Soviet Union was destroyed and the international communist movement was scattered into pieces.

Bourgeois experts often attribute the death of the U.S.S.R. to the intrigues of the imperialists who bribed the party elite, or to economic depression, or to various accidents such as the Chernobyl disaster or the earthquake in Spitak, to the arms race and other factors, all of which caused serious economic damage. These all had their impact on the decomposition of the country and civil society, but one of the main reasons is, first of all, the erroneous theory adopted by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union after Stalin's death.

In exactly the same way, the numerous communist parties of the world, once mighty enough to conquer political power, have turned into the windbags of the Left or huddled into small sects of radical hysteria, both harmless to the international capitalist class.

Most of these parties, which were the real fighting vanguard of the working class in the Comintern era, are dissolved in the sea of political prostitutes, disbanded and passed from the political scene.

How can we reckon with this? By a total distortion of theory which ceased to meet the interests of the working class, they alienated the masses of working people, demoralized them, and drove them into the arms of undisguised bourgeois ideologies.

Today, in the conditions of the deepest capitalist crisis which is afflicting the working class of the richest countries, the communist parties, the parties of the working class, are in complete decline. Having lost their theoretical guideline, they are unable to develop adequate tactics, unable to manifest practical activity. They aren't even able to carry out a correct analysis of the reality surrounding them. These communists have confined themselves to using stamped phrases from Lenin's works.

The rejection of a struggle for the integrity of a Marxist-Leninist discipline has foreseeably led to the disorientation and disintegration of the international worker's movement. In order to advance the proletarian cause, it is necessary to rely on correct theory from which correct practices flow. Without this coherent theory, perhaps with an eclectic mixture of sloganeering and subjective assumption to replace a theory, the way is shut.

Even with the correct theory, however, it remains necessary to defend this theory's constitution.

In the era of total capitalist hegemony, the capitalist elements of philosophy, socio-political theories and worldviews, all hostile to the proletariat, apply incredible pressure to our most unstable foundations. By these forces, alien influences gradually infiltrate the development of Marxist-Leninist theory, explicitly to cause distortions. This process is unavoidable.

> *The inevitability of revisionism is determined by its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No thinking socialist who is in the least informed can have the slightest doubt that the relation between the orthodox and the Bernsteinians in Germany, the Guesdists and the Jaurèsists (and now particularly the Broussists) in France, the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain, Brouckère and Vandervelde in Belgium, the Integralists and the Reformists in Italy, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia, is everywhere essentially similar, notwithstanding the immense variety of national conditions and historical factors in the present state of all these countries. In reality, the "division" within the present international socialist movement is now proceeding along the same lines in all the various countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous advance compared with thirty or forty years ago, when heterogeneous trends in the various countries were struggling within the one international socialist*

> *movement. And that "revisionism from the left" which has taken shape in the Latin countries as "revolutionary syndicalism", is also adapting itself to Marxism, "amending" it: Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France frequently appeal from Marx who is understood wrongly to Marx who is understood rightly…Wherein lies its inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the differences of national peculiarities and of degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new "middle strata" are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism (appendages to the factory, work at home, small workshops scattered all over the country to meet the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as inevitably being cast again into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world-outlook should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad workers' parties. It is quite natural that this should be so and always will be so, right up to the changes of fortune that will take place in the proletarian revolution. For it would be a profound mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianisation of the majority of the population is essential for bringing about such a revolution.(Lenin,Marxism and Revisionism)*

The only way to remedy the situation and further develop Marxism-Leninism is to tirelessly combat alien class elements. If Marxism-Leninism does not triumph over opportunism and revision, revision and opportunism will destroy Marxism-Leninism. There is no "third way" of syntheses coming out of social compromises between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism.

On the other hand, the petty-bourgeois ultra-left revisionists vulgarly conceive the thesis that the internal struggle is the basis for the development of an ideology and a political party platform. The need for an inter-factional struggle, a struggle between two or more lines, which calls for the direct formation of special "platforms" is an integral part of the ideological and organizational course of Trotskyists and Maoists.

Error loading image

This is the inverse of that familiar bourgeois pluralism strengthened a hundredfold, elevated to a core ideological principle. This new principle didn't lead to further developments in communist theory, but instead greater failures. The endless chaos of dispute arose out of ideological collapse, isolation from the masses and from reality.

The Right seeks to subdue Marxism-Leninism in the mire of bourgeois theories aided by a broadened field of 'contending' opinions and ideological adaptability, in order to clear the path for the bourgeoisie. The ultra-left elevate the "ideological struggle" of the varying opinions to the absolute. Intensifying 'struggle' under empty slogans, they purposefully destroy the undertaking of winning, training, and organizing the working class.

In both the first and in the second cases, we discuss the one-sided exaggeration of one side of a dialectical development. While the Right emphasizes the need for unity, the ultra-left emphasize the struggle of opposites. Bur result turns out to be the same: the demoralization of the proletariat, the revision of Marxism-Leninism, and the disintegration of the revolutionary movement.

It should be understood that both of these tendencies are hostile to Marxism-Leninism and cannot do work in common with it, even when they use Marx's word-bank. Right-wing revisionists strive for the maximum flexibility and maneuverability capable of Marxism-Leninism, forming tailism and opportunism, while ultra-left revisionists bring absolutist principles and the irreconcilable revolutionary character of Marxism-Leninism to establish a method of

simultaneously sectarianism and adventurism.

“Sectarianism” and “Dogmatism”

Needless to say that a firm Marxist-Leninist course likewise will eventually be called “sectarianism” by one or another opportunist. This is by no means a contemporary innovation. These accusations of “sectarianism”, “Jacobinism” or “Blanquism” were lavished upon the Leninist faction by the Mensheviks after the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. It is this Congress where the Bolsheviks took their course towards building a new kind of revolutionary party. By that time, Marxism had already become fashionable, and so masses of young intelligentsia, being weak in critical theory and carrying the dead weight of petty-bourgeois sentiment, had poured into the Marxist organizations.

The Russian Marxist movement in the late 1890’s and early 1900’s was struck by ideological befuddlement, organizational disorientation and political vacillation. This functioned as a general paralysis of their entire movement. Lenin led the fight against the anarchistic methods of theoretical pluralism and its rhetoric to create a serious revolutionary political movement. This faction was immediately subjected to the harshest renunciation from within its own party, from the Mensheviks, who fiercely defended their petty-bourgeois habits, their individualism, and ultimately their bourgeois worldview. In the practical field, they expressed their love for broad-mindedness, a dedication to the unprincipled unity of all the Social Democrats. They despised the doctrinaire Jacobinism which would, in their eyes, lead to the collapse of the “barracks regime” of the Bolsheviks.

But history puts everything in its just place: the desire for an unprincipled unification of all “leftists” led to the transformation of Menshevism into a clumsy and toothless movement, mired in endless squabbles and strife, trailing behind the historical events. Wide pluralism naturally gave rise to the total hegemony of the bourgeois worldview, later expressed in the open transition of Menshevism to the camp of counter-revolution. Thus, seemingly “good” undertakings, like sheer “free-thinking” and “independence”, in fact, played into the hands of the bourgeoisie, destroying a part of the revolutionary movement, even under revolutionary slogans.

Error loading image

At the same time, the “Bolshevik sect”, which adhered to a clear proletarian theory and a practice stemming from it, displayed tactical flexibility and principled revolutionism. These Leninists tirelessly defended their positions against the onslaught of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois revisionists and opportunists, and acting as a professionally integrated whole, they rallied the workers and led them to victory.

The victory of the October Revolution did not end the struggle for an unadulterated Marxist-Leninist theory. As the socialist revolution progressed with the victory of the Red Army all across Asia and Eastern Europe, class elements alien to the proletariat intensified their attempts to distort the theory which drove it. Here again, on the part of both the right and the left opposition factions in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevikii), there were calls for a struggle against the intra-party dictatorship. These sections of the party, of course, sought the expansion of an intra-party democracy. Seeking the return to the true ideals of democratic centralism, the revisionist’s great obstacle was Lenin’s provision against party factions.

The anti-proletarian elements entrenched in the Bolshevik Party again fought to oppose against the dictatorship of the proletariat (which they recorded as the

factional dictatorship of Stalin himself), against Marxist-Leninist theory, and against the socialist revolution. Their aim was to shovel petty-bourgeois adventurism and reformism into the theoretical platform. These forces worked to paralyze the party by imposing endless deliberations in party meetings to raise hysteria on every issue, ultimately confusing the Soviet people over what the party was doing with itself.

Again, as in the pre-revolutionary era, these champions of democracy and pluralism were put on the wayside. These scoundrels, acting like loyal Leninists, demonstrated how “effective” and “revolutionary” their designs were. The right-wing (Bukharinites) and ultra-left (Trotskyists) revisionists, having suffered defeat in both the USSR and the international movement can now longer attribute their failure to Stalin’s intrigues! All the failures of their efforts followed from their revisionistic (unrealistic) political theory, assembled as a matter of their theoretically compromised party-building. And again, as in the pre-revolutionary era, opponents of factional dictatorship and dogmatism ended up defecting to the forces of counter-revolution!

The same song about the struggle against dogmatism was sung by the chorus of the national deviation in socialism composed under Josip Tito, who was rebuked in the 1948 conference of the Cominform. Denying the truth of Marxist-Leninist theory and what it means for practice, the Yugoslav revisionists (and similar right-wing elements in other communist parties) raised the issue that each country should look for an original path to socialism, not looking backwards to some unshakable Leninist dogma.

Each has its own truth — said the Yugoslav revisionists — there is no need for dogma, we must make new compromises. We can now see how this “soft” course ended out: Yugoslavia had taken the path towards an open restoration of capitalism. Coddling relations with the Western imperialists, they strangled the struggle of the Greek people against monarcho-fascist reaction, and brutally suppressed the Marxist-Leninist opposition within Yugoslavia. Through the “Non-Aligned Movement”, they aided the work of the international imperialist clique to stamp out revolutionary developments in the most oppressed peripheries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Error loading image

The death of Stalin and the tragic factional struggle in the CPSU gave second wind to the counter-revolutionary forces lying dormant within the communist movement. With redoubled energy in the Soviet Union itself, in China, and in the countries of the Warsaw Bloc, the struggle against Stalinist dogmatism began a wave of ideological liberalization. Revisionist ideas were given the widest circulation as the part of the program of this de-Stalinization and the communist parties were cleared of dogmatists and sectarians (principled Marxist-Leninists). Practically everywhere, the communist parties became congresses of opportunism. In many places, like Hungary and Poland, this “democratic thaw” led to open counter-revolutionary rebellion under formally revolutionary and socialist slogans. All this was celebrated as the greatest victory of the capitalist West.

Thus, under the slogans of combating “sectarianism” and “dogmatism”, under the sweet sauce of “tolerance” and “compromises”, under the guise of speeches about “creative development”, Marxism-Leninism was destroyed, replaced by its distorted version, which no longer reflected interests of the world proletariat.

The subsequent history of the international communist movement is of exponential decline, which we can see now. The weakening of the class struggle in the field of ideology was the prerequisite for this practical disintegration. Numberless victories of the working class and the oppressed peoples of Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been dashed by our numberless failures in economics, politics, and tactics. These disasters were no accident of history, but the direct results of

mistakes in the international trends of theory and cognition.

Conclusion

We have concluded that the basis of a victorious practice of the proletariat is the strict adherence to Marxist-Leninist theory, with correct application to the moment and its particular conditions.

We must also remember that the bourgeoisie is waging open struggle against the irreconcilable proletarian theory because its execution means death for the capitalist paradise. At the end of the 19th century, their battle was waged from within Marxism.

Pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It is continuing the struggle, no longer on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism. (Lenin, Marxism and Revisionism)

An ever subtler falsification of Marxism, an ever subtler presentation of anti-materialist doctrines under the guise of Marxism—this is the characteristic feature of modern revisionism in political economy, in questions of tactics and in philosophy generally, equally in epistemology and in sociology. (Lenin, Materialism and Empirio-criticism)

By that time, Marxism had hoisted out the noticeably hostile tendencies (anarchism, populism, Fabianism, Christian socialism, etc.) from the revolutionary movement.

By demonstrating their counter-revolutionary nature, Marxism grew from the base of proletarian workers. In reaction, the bourgeoisie turned to the unstable strata of the working class: proletarianized petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and the “labour aristocracy” who are bribed by capital. Class substrates within the movement were utilized to manifest factions hostile to Marxism from within Marxism itself.

Lenin and Stalin were well aware of the dangers posed by deviations of Marxism. They waged a merciless struggle against theoretical distortions from the right and left, regardless of the cries from intellectuals and the bourgeoisie. These critics worked hard to spread stories about the need for unity: unity with revisionists at any cost.

Lenin and Stalin understood that it was only in the struggle against deviation from Marxism-Leninism that their revolutionary theory developed and strengthened itself. Only the struggle against both right-wing and left-wing revisionism could prevent the fossilization of Marxist-Leninist theory into a petrified dogma of formal statements and slogans. Alienated from reality, alien to working people’s experience, theory becomes the root which strangles revolution.

This is what became of Marxism-Leninism upon the triumph of the pluralism and democracy of the Khruschevites. When the time came for a “creative development” of the political theory behind the party, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theoreticians sent the revolutionary movement to its grave. Under their alien class influence, class struggle within the communist ideology was denounced as a manifestation of dogmatism and sectarianism.

We must learn the lessons of the past to understand where positions of pseudo-democracy and factional reconciliation have led. This history reveals that we must expose the right and left deviants within the Marxist discourse, a task which calls us to uncover the class roots of their theoretical constructions. Our obligation is

one of ruthless ideological struggle against these subjects who try – deliberately or out of theoretical ignorance – to obstruct the development of the revolutionary movement.

> *It is the practice of the Social-Democrats to cover up and conceal these contradictions and disagreements. It is the practice of the Social-Democrats to turn their conferences and congresses into an empty parade of ostensible well-being, assiduously covering up and slurring over internal disagreements. But nothing can come of this except stuffing people's heads with rubbish and the ideological impoverishment of the party. This is one of the reasons for the decline of West-European Social-Democracy, which was once revolutionary, and is now reformist.(Stalin,Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in our Party)*

There is no need to fear the monikers "dogmatist" and "sectarian"; these are the awards that liberals and opportunists have always granted to genuine Marxists. We must understand that kindness and tolerance for distortions of Marxism-Leninism (the path of compromise with revision) will not lead to the success of the revolutionary communist movement. This is what the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois champions of "democracy" say themselves. Instead, the road of theoretical compromise leads to labour's disintegration.

History has proven it.

> *War on the Bouncers and to hell with all conciliators, people of "elusive views" and shilly-shallyers! Better a small fish than a big beetle. Better two or three energetic and wholly devoted people than a dozen dawdlers.(Lenin,Letter to I.V. Babushkin, January 16, 1903)*

Error loading image

Original article