

Why MLM

April 20, 2021

Marxism-Leninism is currently the dominant trend of Communist thought and practice in the world, with a significant legacy to back up its validity overall.

But as has been made quite clear by the formal collapse of the USSR, and the uniform reversion of all still-existing states calling themselves 'socialist' towards liberal, capitalist economies, there are serious flaws in Marxism-Leninism which led to this sorry state of affairs.

In light of this, how can we rebuild our strength, and how can we make sure this historic collapse never happens again?

I believe Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) holds the answers.

- Why should you consider learning about and practising Marxism-Leninism-Maoism?
- Why should it be considered superior to Marxism-Leninism?

This is what I aim to answer here.

WHAT

First off, so we are on the same page, let's define what I mean by 'MLM':

- This is the line practised by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI(M)) as well as the Communist Party of Afghanistan among others.
- This line was most concretely articulated in the 1995 document 'Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism', which was authored by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM).

- It is the third and currently highest stage of Marxist theory and practice, featuring a correct understanding of experience of the Russian revolution post-Stalin and the Chinese revolution up to the current day.

WHY

Let's jump straight to the why: "Why should I care about MLM?"

Because the only Marxist line to both survive into the 21ST century in practice and carry forward successful armed revolutionary struggle anywhere in the world is MLM. It's as simple as that.

No other explicitly communist movement has done as much as the Filipino and Indian Maoist movement have been able to past the millennium, and both have been able to solve issues specific to our general period in time through their constant practice and refinement of MLM.

For instance; the single-most essential figure in the Filipino revolution, Jose Maria-Sison, was able as a university student to wed petty-bourgeois student struggles to both working-class and peasant struggles through a vast network of inter-connected organisations sharing common (although not immediately Communist), class-based, democratic ideals.

This was in the 1960s, when the student movements in the Imperial core, although radical, failed to build into anything more than spasmodic movements and clashes with their respective states before running out of steam due to a lack of cohesive class-based understanding and strategy.

This is unfortunately still relevant in the modern day with similar radical student and petty-bourgeois movements in terms of identity (racial, gender and national), environmental and economic struggles.

The other, perhaps more even more universal example is that the Peruvian, Indian and Filipino Protracted People's Wars waged by their respective parties were and are able to survive and thrive without support from any vanguard socialist state, both before and after the collapse of the USSR and reversion of the People's Republic of China back to capitalism.

HOW

Okay then, how is MLM different to ML?

The principle difference between the two systems, which colours every aspect of the MLM understanding of history, current events and practice is their understanding of dialectics.

In short: The MLM understanding of dialectics says that inner contradictions within a thing are primary and exterior pressures (caused also by contradictions) can only influence what contradictions already exist within a thing.

What this means for practical politics is that, to give a historical example, the revision (removing) of the necessity of class struggle in class society (and thus socialist society) out of Marxism in practice as is so often pinned on Khrushchev and the post-Stalin Soviet Union and its eventual, formal collapse in 1991 was not due primarily to outside forces sabotaging it, but internal ones doing it from within.

As history has shown, the revisionism and collapse of the Soviet union post-Stalin was not due primarily to CIA sabotage (not until the tail-end with Yeltsin, at least), but an incorrect understanding of Marxism in practice being left unchallenged and uncorrected with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

This was later proved as pattern of Marxism-Leninism itself revisionism arising from within the party repeated itself with the Right line of the Chinese Communist Party as led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping becoming dominant after Mao's death and instigating sweeping privatising reforms of industry and agriculture which allowed China to integrate itself into the nascent Neoliberal capitalist order and thus totally abandon the project of socialism in all but rhetoric.

You can pretty much extend this to all still-existing Third International Communist Parties across the world and in your own country, who almost all uniformly followed the CPSU's line well past their initial revisionism under Khrushchev. There are many specific reasons why each of those national parties have fallen into irrelevancy, but this incorrect understanding of history and the lessons of the Chinese revolution and Russian revolution post-Stalin is the principle one.

Simply put: The uncorrected errors of Marxism-Leninism itself is primarily to blame.

But does this mean we should throw the baby out with the bathwater? No, Marxism and Dialectical Materialism has proven themselves to be the most powerful tools for understanding and thus changing the world in human history thus far, all that is and was needed was a rupture, which came in the form of 'Maoism'.

WHEN

So, where did Maoism come from?

Maoism, and thus MLM, emerged from the 'New Communist' or 'anti-revisionist' movement that first emerged in the 1950s in response to the abject revision of core tenants of Marxism-Leninism first under Nikita Khrushchev and later his successors.

This movement was lead first by Mao Zedong and the left wing of the CPC until his death in 1974, and later by the Revolutionary Communist Party of the USA and then the Communist Party of Peru under the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (a congress of New Communist parties).

The aim of this movement was to scrub out the revisionism of the USSR under Khrushchev and later the CPC under Deng Xiaoping and all parties that followed their lines; they saw a return to a 'pure' Marxism-Leninism as being the goal of this.

To do this they pooled their knowledge into correctly evaluating the lessons of the Russian post-Stalin and especially the Chinese revolution, as this had not been formally done yet by any collective body.

The conclusion these parties came to was that Marxism-Leninism had not been perverted and transformed by outside actors such as Khrushchev, but that by it's own logic had produced such figures. In other words; ML had sown the seeds of it's own reversion to capitalism.

How could this be overcome, they asked. Their answer was to follow the lessons of the Chinese revolution, which they had just evaluated collectively.

LESSONS FROM CHINA

There were three big takeaways that all RIM bodies gleamed here:

- Mass Line
- Cultural Revolution
- Protracted People's War

Let's go over each:

MASS LINE

The mass line is a organisational technique that is key to every successful revolutionary movement, but was first systematised as such by Mao Zedong during the Chinese Revolution.

This strategy is a key process to making sure that the party, which due to the limits on access to education imposed by capitalism on the working and peasant classes naturally has petty-bourgeois foundation, remains a tool for the exploited classes to maintain class domination over the capitalists above anything else.

This is done by physically going out to the exploited masses and ingratiating yourselves with them, hearing their problems thoughts generally, taking the issues they have and creating a plan of action through a Marxist lens and presenting said plan back to them for further refinement.

This is how the technique gets it's name, it is literally the 'line' of the revolutionary 'mass' of people.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Just practising the mass line isn't enough, even in China, where it was practised throughout the revolution, bourgeois thinking and practice within it's respective Communist party was able to gain strength despite this and a stagnant bureaucracy grew in tandem. This is where the cultural revolution kicks in.

The cultural revolution is an event which takes place after the dictatorship of the proletariat is established and acts as a revolution within a revolution, one within socialist society aimed at scrubbing all the remaining remnants of capitalism from the Communist party and the entire societal superstructure in general.

This is done through a bottom-up mass movement directed not by the party, but organised and carried out by the revolutionary masses in revolutionary committees, who actively criticise every element of the existing socialist society no matter how sacred or seemingly exempt from criticism.

The end-result would be to viciously criticise the Communist party and to ultimately remove those party members belonging the new bourgeoisie that grows within their ranks through bureaucracy and the remaining shreds of capitalist morality and ideology within socialism.

Whilst it's specific expression in China didn't succeed, it did reveal an essential, universal feature of socialism: that class struggle continues and that the masses can and must use their collective strength to continue the struggle until communism is achieved.

PROTRACTED PEOPLE'S WAR

As for actually seizing the capitalist state and achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, Protracted People's War is the strategy to be employed.

This runs counter to the ML strategy of insurrection in the state capital and instead chooses a military strategy of slowly building up power in the countryside to then surround the towns and cities and take them one-by-one.

The decreased ability to surveil and control rural areas due to a lack of development there (an endemic symptom of capitalism), the separation from the sources of capitalist ideology and exposure to market economics as well the ability to procure fresh food and water make them infinitely more viable to carry out this strategy.

While it is contested theoretically whether such a strategy can work outside (neo)colonial, semi-feudal contexts, it is worth noting that modern states are specifically designed against insurrectionary strategies, but almost universally struggle against guerilla warfare and PPW where it has been applied, even in the significantly urban nations of Peru and the Philippines by Maoists, Ireland by Republicans and even in the Middle East and North Africa by ISIS and other Islamic Fundamentalist militants.

This strategy has shown to work particularly well in the absence of a major supporting state in the case of the Peruvian, Filipino and Indian People's Wars, all of which having received no significant aid from the USSR, PRC or any other socialist state as did many national liberation struggles in the 20th Century.

There is a saying that 'Insurrection is an art but Protracted People's War is a science'.

I hope this has piqued your interest and, if not, given you a very basic primer into Marxism-Leninism-Maoism either way!

In closing, I will leave you with this:

ML held to key to achieving socialist revolution, MLM holds the key to maintaining and carrying it forward.

FURTHER READING

- 'Activist Study - Araling Akitbista (ARAK)' by the Communist Party of the Philippines
- 'Continuity and Rupture' & 'Critique of Maoist Reason' by Joshua Moufawad-Paul

- 'Marxism-Leninism-Maoism Basics Course' by the Communist Party of India (Maoist)
- 'Five Essays on Philosophy', especially 'On Contradiction' & 'On Practice' by Mao Zedong
- 'Stand For Socialism Against Modern Revisionism' by Armanda Liwang
- 'Rethinking Socialism: What is Socialist Transition' & 'From Victory to Defeat: China's Socialist Road and Capitalist Reversal' by Pao-Yu Ching & Deng-Yuan Hsu
- 'Selected Reading from the Works of Jose Maria Sison'

(Almost) All of which are available from Foreign Languages Press

If you would like to know more about MLM and start studying it yourself

I would recommend these books:

For audiovisual resources, check out:

- The Peace Report
- Space Babies
- Premier Liles
- On Mass
- Revolutionary Voices

For official party documents from the Peruvian, Filipino and Indian Maoist parties, visit:

<https://bannedthought.net/Peru/index.htm> <https://bannedthought.net/Philippines/ CPP/index.htm> <https://bannedthought.net/India/index.htm>