

Notes on the History of Spanish Marxism-Leninism

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"¡Ay, cigüeña que picas en el viento del mal, fieramente, anhelando su exterminio total!"—Miguel Hernandez.

If we use the situation in 1975, one year before the death of Mao Tsetung, as a point of reference in relation to the situation today, we can see that the International Communist Movement has undergone important changes in the past five years. Today, a good many of the Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations born out of the rupture with revisionism in the 1960s have *not* been able to move beyond the two anti-Marxist waves we have suffered after Mao's death, first Teng's attack centered around the restoration of capitalism in China, and later that of Hoxha aimed at attacking Marxism-Leninism under the pretense of opposing Mao Tsetung. Only five years ago Marxism-Leninism worldwide seemed to be generally going along the correct path, with only some negative phenomena, like the appearance in 1974 of the "three worlds theory." Today the situation is very different.

Because many parties around the world have capitulated to one or another of the two great revisionist assaults mentioned above, we must examine the profound reasons for these facts. We believe that already by 1975, and even since the beginnings of the Marxist-Leninist forces created in the 1960s, there were very important errors that have served as the basis for the current revisionist degeneration in so many parties and groups, errors which are still afflicting us to a certain degree, which we must better delineate and combat.

To demonstrate this we base ourselves on the analysis of a particular case: the history of Spanish Marxism-Leninism, which we believe synthesises and represents, to a certain point, what happened throughout the ICM. For this reason, we believe that this article can be useful not only for those doing work in the Spanish state but for all Marxist-Leninists. In this article we are presenting a summary of our work, *The Theory of Marx is All Powerful Because It Is Correct* (May 1980). It takes ideological problems as a starting point and presents a critical-self-critical *summary* of the causes of the present state of the Marxist-Leninists, from how they grew during the 1960s to their current degeneration and (in many cases) their organisational liquidation.

We can state, by way of introduction, that by 1975, when the situation seemed stable and the ICM homogeneous, those who formed the founding nucleus of our organisation in 1977 already had important disagreements with *all* the parties and organisations that dominated the Marxist-Leninist movement here, with those that later followed the Chinese revisionists (ORT, PTE, etc.), those who support Hoxha (PCE m-l) and those who sail the murky waters of eclecticism, drifting ever closer towards pro-Soviet revisionism (MC, PCEr).⁽¹⁾ With no little amazement our comrades learned step by step that *all of them*, underneath their noisy eulogies of

Mao, Albania and Marxism-Leninism, were simply reformist and economist forces who didn't want to know anything about revolution and who completely misunderstood the cornerstone of Marxism: the theory of the State and the dictatorship of the proletariat, exactly the points on which the first differences centred. Little by little, it became clear that they all held *revisionist positions* on this and other essential questions which made them indistinguishable from the PCE of Santiago Carrillo. This began to be clear at the end of 1976 when they all, in one way or another, fell to their knees before bourgeois "democracy," putting it forward as an alternative to the fascism of Franco's time and of Juan Carlos, his heir.

This is why we weren't very surprised by the later evolution of these parties, some following Teng Hsiao-ping, others falling into the practice of gross eclecticism, and finally the PCE m-l, without any of its own analysis as a party, rapidly falling for Enver Hoxha's irrational attacks on Mao Tsetung. What else could be expected of people who had lost touch with Marxism-Leninism years ago?

Characteristic of the Spanish situation is that the two great worldwide revisionist assaults found fertile ground here that had been prepared beforehand. Something had happened *before* 1976 that had caused the degeneration of these parties which we sought to discover, in the ideological realm in the previously mentioned statement, and in the political and organisational realms in several other statements. The practical and concrete character of this is obvious. If we want to save Marxism-Leninism from its sorry situation, we must begin to analyse the reasons for the complete bankruptcy of the efforts undertaken in the early 1960s to build a genuine vanguard party: these errors should serve as a lesson. Summing up, the dialectical principle, *without destruction there can be no construction*, had to be carried out.

But in addition we must be fully aware of the times which the ICM faces. It faces a peculiar situation characterised by the rapid sharpening of the contradictions leading to revolution and to imperialist war, and because of that it is more important than ever to emphasise the *rectification* of the line and prepare politically, ideologically and organisationally for the coming turbulent times. And that demands a self-critical, *scientific* summation of what the Marxist-Leninists have done since their beginnings, in order to synthesise their positive and negative experiences, drawing useful lessons from them for the present and future problems. In addition, now that Hoxha and his disciples have gone over to the enemy, we believe a whole historical stage is coming to an end. Marxism-Leninism, which has acted under conditions of relatively stable capitalism and a moderate level of the sharpening of all its external contradictions, is entering another new stage of great tensions and vaster possibilities for the advance of proletarian revolution worldwide. It is no accident that in the past few years there has

been an open battle against two major revisionist tendencies. In this way, through internal struggle, the ICM is getting rid of an important part of all the baggage that weighs it down, preparing for the future and strengthening itself. But this tendency has to be put forward in the most conscious form possible, and so we present this contribution, a self-critical summary of what Marxist-Leninists have done here since the 1960s, a summary now fundamentally centred on ideological problems. Furthermore, we believe that all Marxist-Leninist parties must break *consciously* with the errors which, although synthesised in the lines of Teng and Hoxha, to a certain degree also survive among us. In this regard, we do not agree with the comrades who insist one-sidedly on an examination of the Third International and thus neglect the essential summary of the work of the *present* ICM since the split with Soviet revisionism and its successors after the 20th and 22nd Congresses of the CPSU. The errors of the Third International, without doubt, are echoed in the present, but it's undeniable that the present has its own *particularity*, its characteristic concrete nature, which must be understood now, first and foremost in order to understand our tasks. The analysis of the past for us must be subordinate to analysis of the present, serve it and precede it and not the other way around.

Let us begin with the summary of *The Theory of Marx is All Powerful Because It Is Correct*.

The Birth of Spanish Marxism-Leninism

The process of breaking with revisionism, a complex and fragmented process because, among other factors, it was carried out in conditions of strict clandestinity, began here in 1960. In 1963 the first Marxist-Leninist organisations arose, and after that, various others developed either through subsequent splits or by indirect or direct routes.

Certainly there was an organisational rupture, a separation from the revisionist PCE, but how much of a political, ideological and organisational rupture was there? An examination of documents of the time shows that there was and there wasn't a rupture, that there was both split and continuity at the same time. Important questions were posed for the whole ICM: the defence of Stalin, support for the Chinese and Albanian CPs, defense in the abstract (note this) for the dictatorship of the proletariat and revolutionary violence, etc. Also, interest in the study of Marxist classics grew. Criticism of the strategic and tactical line of the PCE achieved some partial successes; for example there was a rejection of the formulations that later took the concrete form of the line of the *Pacto para la Libertad*, etc. But the points of continuity with the revisionist line were *numerous*. In the same way, there was little break regarding ideological questions, on the key question of the use of dialectical materialism. Neither was there a break regarding organisational matters, since there still was an incorrect understanding of the question of democratic centralism and other questions. In the political realm, grabbing our attention even then was the fact that there was no concrete clarification of the problem of the State, and from the beginning a dangerous ambiguity was fallen into, verging on bourgeois democratism (a beast which has haunted the workers' movement here for the last 100 years). The national question received exactly the same reactionary and chauvinist treatment that revisionism gave it, consistently denying *in deed* the right to self-determination of the nations oppressed by the Spanish state (the Canary Islands, Catalonia, Euskadi [Basque country] and Galicia). U.S. imperialist domination was somewhat incorrectly addressed as well. The important agrarian question was completely forgotten (here it could be said the nascent Marxist-Leninists were to the right of the PCE). Fundamental questions of the country's history, of the bourgeois republic of 1931-36 for example, were analysed in a completely opportunist way.

It goes without saying that all the worship of spontaneity of the previous period (when the PCE was still Marxist, and when it had already degenerated) was passed intact to the Marxist-Leninists; it's incredible that such an important point didn't undergo—that we know of—one single criticism! The same *narrow* understanding of

Marxism and the tasks of the party that had been the heritage of the old PCE, passed completely to the new organisations. Likewise the odious "theory of stages" and Bernstein's phrase "the movement is everything, the final goal nothing" remained intact and continued to occupy a basic place when it came to determining the tactics and tasks of the new parties. Much was spoken about the leading role of the party, without understanding what this meant at all, and, in fact, putting into practice a line and methods that denied this leading role.

In summary, the depth of the split was very shallow.

The new parties continued to be slaves of right opportunism, even though they resorted to "leftist" poses and postures, trying to cover up and to *artificially* paint a credible line of demarcation with revisionism. In that framework, for example, the infantile "armed actions" of the PCEm-1 occurred in 1975.

Why did all this happen? In the background was a completely incorrect (pragmatic) idea of what it meant to rebuild a party, an idea that stands out clearly in the material of all the parties and groups of that time. They didn't understand the reconstruction of the party as the reconstruction of a *correct* political, ideological and organisational *line*, but rather as numerical increase, implantation among the masses and the spread throughout the country of each of the organisations created. That the decisive thing, the determining thing is that the line must be correct was not understood, and this was sacrificed for immediate "successes," for cheap numerical and organisational prestige. The political line (an ideological line was never formulated), instead of being the centre of the party's activity, served to make its proselytising more effective... and for that it was concocted hastily, without any scientific basis. Thus, the PCEm-1 confesses that it formulated its political line in a couple of months. To do that, they concocted an unstable mixture of phrases copied from documents of the CP of China, arbitrarily selected dogmatic quotes and empirical facts. With all that, they concocted some cookbooks their authors heroically labelled Political Line which were anything but. There was no understanding of what Mao said, that without a scientific attitude the spirit of the party dies. In addition, given that since the beginning economism and anti-fascism (not the struggle against fascism to replace it with the power of the workers and the people, but a "radical" form of bourgeois democracy) had filled a very important place in party activities, why was a correct line truly necessary?

We have spoken of *pragmatism* and, note, this is very, very important. Spain is a country dependent on U.S. imperialism, to which it is subordinated by a thousand economic, political, military and also ideological ties. Since 1953, when it signed the treaties with the U.S., our country has undergone an invasion of U.S. philosophy, sociology, etc., which became especially intense in the 1960s. Leading members of the PSOE and PCE, among many others, dedicated themselves to poisoning the progressive media with all these imperialist ideological wares, and the intoxication quickly showed up among the nascent and weak Marxist-Leninists. Then there appeared a real rage for achieving "results" and a no less furious contempt towards the step-by-step development of a *scientific, true and correct* line. Numerical strength was valued and political-ideological strength despised.

But there was the traditional metaphysics as well. The rebuilding of the party and the struggle against revisionism was not understood as a *process*, as something necessary to develop step by step, but rather as a phenomenon to be carried out once and for all. This was very important. Actually, even assuming that the initial rupture with revisionism would be weak, it could, in theory, have been deepened and broadened as time went on, but this didn't come to pass. On the contrary, the process was reversed and even where ruptures with revisionism had been made, things tended to move towards revisionism, until the point that, by about 1975, the differences were practically non-existent (except on merely verbal, marginal, demagogic or similar questions). It's clear that the Marxist-Leninists then didn't put forward the question of breaking with revisionism and rebuilding the party in a *dialectical* way, as a process taking place over time, and they hastily concocted

political lines and statutes that they thought of as complete, perfect and finished, to the point that the PCEm-1, 16 years later, has made no correction, development, etc., of importance in its political line. That is to say, it seems that these admirers of the "purity" of Enver Hoxha have found, against all odds, some kind of absolute truth, like that which Engels criticised Hegel for.

The Struggle Against Revisionism

As we have seen in the previous section, even in the beginning, the Marxist-Leninists' struggle against revisionism was quite weak, partial and superficial. These two characteristics continue plaguing us today, since one can't thoroughly criticise a line one fundamentally agrees with. Furthermore, by not seeing the rupture with revisionism as a long-term process and by happily considering it finished after a few months, this decisive question couldn't play the important role that it should.

Soon the struggle against revisionism the Marxist-Leninists were waging turned into a frivolous and treacherous game. Behind the fierce condemnation and insult hurled against Carrillo's PCE, there was nothing serious, scientific nor convincing, only some mediocre attempts to hide the fact that they and revisionism held the same line and agreed on everything fundamental. The MC, in its pamphlet *Marxism and Reformism* (1976), clearly proves this. The PCEm-1 for many years successfully practiced dogmato-revisionism, imitating Enver Hoxha (and Kautsky, among others). The trick is well-known—covering one's own opportunism with pompous and fanatical dogmatic declarations and with unending praise for the "purity" of Marxism-Leninism. In this way, for a long time they were able to partially hide from the eyes of the advanced their incredible agreements with Santiago Carrillo.

Another question that brought out the "differences" with the PCE was that of mobilisation: revisionism did "not" mobilise the masses and they "did" mobilise the masses. In this way they put aside the essential question of the political and ideological *content* of what they were taking to the masses and again put forward the supposed differences with the PCE on a pragmatic basis. But all such mediocre sophisms didn't bear many results and as soon as the PCE made a slight tactical feint to the left, all these parties stood completely exposed. So in 1975 the ORT, PT and MC are found in the same groupings as the PCE, carrying out the exact same line, following its leadership and having to go along with the mocking congratulations of Carrillo, who was well assured that the prodigal sons would return to the fold in the end. The PCEm-1 and others expressed their differences on formal questions: yes, they wanted a bourgeois democracy as did the PCE, but, please, one that would be a republic and not a monarchy.

In this period, early 1976, to call oneself a Marxist-Leninist in the Spanish state was to feel ashamed, because all those self-appointed Marxist-Leninists were reformists of the worst kind, people blind and fanatical in their struggle for political reforms and economism. It was hard to bear hearing them talk with olympian disdain for revolution and their ironic little laughs when someone spoke to them of the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Five years later, now that they are completely bankrupt, it is pleasing to see how badly things have worked out for this band of narrow-minded pragmatists.

The main question, which was never understood or not understood fully, is that a correct line can only be developed through an implacable struggle against revisionism: without struggle, there is no development, and without struggle against revisionism, a correct line can not be created, the party can't be rebuilt. It is an elementary question of dialectics. But Marxist-Leninists, in determining their line and concrete plans, seldom bothered to do so in concrete struggle against revisionism. This also flows from their pragmatism, since what sense does it make to do this when the correctness or incorrectness of your line doesn't matter much?

Another consequence of all this mess is the inability of the Marxist-Leninists to take on the PCE with even minimal success; and that follows logically, since for a long time they've lacked the

fundamental weapon to do so: a correct political and ideological line, truly different from the revisionists' and taken to the masses without bowing down to "the average worker."

Marxism-Leninism, Theory of the Vanguard

Reviewing the basic documents of the Spanish Marxist-Leninists, many times we find the well-known formula of the "vanguard party," but what this means was never really understood. Instead Marxism-Leninism was defined as "the experience of the workers' movement as a whole" and as the synthesis of "the concrete experiences of the mass movement"; unfortunately these latter formulas were broadly applied in practice. They are totally incorrect and constitute a theoretical representation of the old time-worn vice, the worship of the spontaneity of the mass movement and religious adoration of the proletariat's posterior.

Lenin states in his magnificent work, *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*, that the basis of Marxism is not the experience of the workers' movement, but *science*, concretely, English political economy, German philosophy and French socialism, and that scientific socialism was not created by members of the proletariat, but by "educated representatives of the owning classes," like Marx and Engels. Therefore, Marxism is not the experience of the workers' movement, but the synthesis of "human knowledge gained under capitalism" (Lenin). In relation to this, we note Engels' famous definition, that socialism, having become a science, demands to be treated as such, that is, it must be studied.

But now we see the practical consequences of these concrete errors of Spanish Marxism-Leninism in its definitive revisionist degeneration. If we define Marxism only or principally in relation to the experiences of the mass movement, of the working class "in itself" as Marx says, we separate it from its sources, the social and natural sciences, as well as philosophy, and strip it of its fundamental internal basis: *its scientific character*, and negate what it really should be: *the science-ideology of the vanguard in the service of the vanguard class of our time, the proletariat*, and how then can the masses be torn out of the political-ideological grip of the bourgeoisie? Or, more concretely, how can they serve as the basis for a vanguard party? If, facing these fundamental questions, those who consider themselves Marxist-Leninists don't have a scientific outlook based on the most recent experiences and theories arrived at through the three kinds of social practice that Mao spoke of (class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment), then there can't be a vanguard party and in Spain we have seen in practice that these self-appointed Marxists were despicable sects, always trailing behind one or the other variety of bourgeois politics and ideology (today pragmatism, tomorrow bourgeois democratism, yesterday eclecticism), unable to ever give a really independent answer to the big questions at each stage and unable to base themselves on the theoretical, political and organisational independence of the proletariat as a class.

Basing themselves on a *narrow* and *barren* conception of Marxism (that inevitably led to revising or bastardising it), they were not armed to face the continual political, ideological and theoretical attacks of big capital and revisionism and couldn't do anything but lose ground step by step, accumulate one error on top of another and finally change colour: that's exactly what we've seen with our own eyes, here in the Spanish state, in the clearest way, in the last 12 years.

These people who spoke so much of the "vanguard" (the PCEm-1 is a true virtuoso of this empty chatter) held a political line which seemed more like the babbling of a five year-old than something said by more or less serious people who at least understood the world they lived in and had some slight understanding of Marxism, at least more than absurd quotes designed to intimidate the uninformed. And so could they really be vanguard or a rearguard? The answer is obvious. If Marxism ceases to be a science, if someone strips it of its principal aspect, then it becomes absolutely nothing and a party based on it will serve as

nothing except a tool of the ruling class. Studying the history of Spanish Marxism-Leninism, all this stands out clearly, especially the irrationalism Spanish-style (we should say, Torquemada-style) that dominates all its activity since the beginning.

But another consequence of the idiotic definition of Marxism as "the experience of the workers' movement" is that as soon as the party is opened up wide to bourgeois ideology and politics, precisely by taking the workers' movement "in itself" as a guide, under such conditions the proletariat can't help but be dominated by the dominant politics and ideology in bourgeois society which infect the proletariat and which only through the patient and broad activity of the party can be turned around among a majority of the masses (although not among all) in this clearly pre-revolutionary situation. Even after the seizure of power bourgeois ideology continues to dominate society as a whole. Therefore, our pious worshippers of "the masses," falling to their knees before them, in reality fall on their knees before the politics and ideology of the bourgeoisie, and under such conditions, one doesn't have to be too intelligent to understand that they would end up degenerating.

The obsession of these guys with "the masses" was truly pathological (and still is among those who remain). They always talked about them, but always forgot about Marxism-Leninism, about science, about the struggle for truth, about the conscious element, and with all that, inevitably in practice they also forgot the party: they could never build one except some sorry caricatures, in the end pro-Teng, pro-Hoxha or pro-something as bad or worse.

Marxism or Pragmatism?

Spanish Marxist-Leninists have certainly never felt "that passion for truth" that Diderot spoke of, in fact the truth worried them very little and they proved to be devout followers of the fundamental principle of pragmatism: only that which is useful is true.

They never understood that the proletariat as a class, in the process of its struggle against the bourgeoisie, must, through its vanguard, know the world scientifically, understand its laws and apply that knowledge to the destruction of the bourgeois order and the completion of its fundamental goals. For that, scientific truth is completely necessary for revolution: without truth there is no revolution.

The Spanish Marxist-Leninists were only interested in immediate and tangible "results" that could be measured in prestige, numerical strength, etc. The struggle for a scientifically correct line, that gives the proletariat, as Lenin said, a true picture of reality and of its tasks at each moment, interested them little. Such a mentality, very blatant, for example, in the statutes of all of them, separated the party overall and each one of the militants from the decisive battle against errors and against the advance of revisionism *inside* the very party itself. They concentrated on winning "practical results" and so revisionist degeneration was a very difficult process to avoid. This explains the attitude of the PCEm-1 on the question of Mao Tsetung. In reality, as a party, they took from Mao whatever seemed to bring immediate results. But since Hoxha attacked Mao, it suited them to fall in with the PLA which is definitively in power and can provide advantages of all kinds. Of course, it doesn't make sense for them to ask themselves: Are Hoxha's criticisms of Mao true and scientific? In the end, as has already been said by a well-known U.S. sociologist, "Concepts are not true or false. They are more or less useful."

The basic error of pragmatists is that they only see in practice its ability to satisfy their needs and not, at the same time, its role as the ultimate criterion of truth. In practice we materialists, Lenin says, look for proof of the truth of our ideas, and at the same time the transformation of reality. But the pragmatist is only interested in this last point, and understands it only narrowly and in a limited way. From that arises the worst of pragmatism: the total separation between truth and the transformation of reality, in such a way that it fully focuses on achieving the latter without paying attention to the former. But, from the

proletariat's point of view, that is impossible. This view puts forward the following dialectical relation: by transforming reality, we confirm what is correct in our thinking and we develop it, but to transform reality, we need correct ideas. In any case, we transform and we learn: this is key.

Saying "the theory of Marx is all powerful because it is correct," Lenin explains it admirably, summarising: because it is correct, because it is scientific and true, the theory of Marx is able to transform reality, for that reason and no other. If we leave out the scientific character of Marxism, as Spanish Marxist-Leninists have done from the beginning, or if we aren't clear on this point and don't rigorously apply it in the daily work of the party and of every member, then we will *not* transform the world, we will not make revolution and probably will soon become revisionists.

Naturally, speaking of scientific truth, you have to have a dialectical idea of this, not a metaphysical and absolute one, as happened with the line and politics of Marxist-Leninists here, a line and politics they thought were 100% true and valid forever. All truth for Marxists is objective, can reflect reality as it is, but at the same time it is relative, because our knowledge of a thing is never exhaustive and our understanding never completely encompasses what is studied, leaving part of it unknown.

One of pragmatism's worst manifestations, before the degeneration of Spanish Marxist-Leninists, was the way in which the struggles inside the different parties and organisations were focused. Attention was not paid to putting forward questions in terms of the contradiction between the true and the false, and the struggle was not waged for truth and Marxism-Leninism. Instead what was essentially focused on was the organisational and personal aspects of the questions in debate. That sterilised internal struggle and allowed the revisionist line to occupy one position after another. In reality the pragmatic mentality was so powerful that few true polemics arose on key questions. They lived in a world of bickering, gossip and personal squabbles which hid the political-ideological basis of questions. Certainly it didn't arouse much interest in the search for truth.

Summing up, we dare to state that we are against the pragmatic and neo-positivist *revision* of the Marxist theory of knowledge which has meant catastrophe for Spanish Marxism-Leninism. It has a significant historical antecedent in the Kantian revision of Marxist philosophy by the theoreticians of the Second International, which even before Lenin, Plekhanov had to combat.

A generation of Marxist-Leninists has in good measure been wiped out by pragmatism: let this serve as a warning *now*.

Bowing to the Spontaneity of the Movement

This question is extraordinarily important. Spanish Marxism-Leninism has suffered from this since the beginning, inheriting it from the old PCE, and it has been one of the aspects most responsible for its current revisionist degeneration. Already in previous sections we have dealt with that theme, now we will concentrate on certain important points.

For example, an untouchable dogma was that to formulate the line and determine the tasks of the party you must "begin at the level of understanding of the masses," their opinions, mood and the struggles they are carrying out at a given moment. The idealist character of this proposition is clear. As materialists we think that you have to begin with what's objective, with the problems which really exist (whether the masses see them or not) and with Marxism-Leninism. You have to begin with the conscious, not the spontaneous. Well then, with this tiny phrase they opened the doors of the Marxist-Leninist organisations to the ideas of "the average worker," used this as a model (for those who didn't live through it, it's hard to imagine how fanatical this was), and in name of that began to look with contempt and smugness at all attempts (that there were) to introduce consciousness and base oneself on Marxism in response to fundamental questions of the time. We can say without exaggeration that "the average worker" was the prophet and supreme being of those people.

Of course the subjective mood of the masses has to be taken

into account by the party, but not as the only or principal criterion, excluding everything else and negating the vanguard and Marxism. In the strictly philosophical realm that brings us to the well-known polemic over what is principal, the objective or subjective, matter or consciousness, and how this basic thesis is applied in the daily activity of the party members. This got so out of hand that some years ago we had to coin the term "subjective method" for these maniacs of that style of thinking à la Berkeley. It is, as Stalin says, an attempt to lower the party to the level of the masses instead of raising the level of the masses to that of the party.

We want to emphasise something. This error implicitly includes the liquidation of the vanguard party as such, which is in fact what is now happening in the Spanish state in an obvious way.

For those worshippers of spontaneity, the working class, by producing surplus value, through some fantastic and mythical means, produces its own class consciousness and elevates itself to the conscious level of a class "in itself." According to this thinking, the party should restrict itself to proving this and faithfully imitating the masses, remaining at their level, at the level of the economic and political struggle for reforms and in most cases at the level of spontaneous and desperate struggle. This is the complete negation of the Leninist theory of the vanguard party.

All this brings us straight to the famous "theory of stages," to that damned sophism that has been another of the built-in dogmas which blocked the process of building a party begun in the 1960s. The basis for this argument is well known: "the conditions aren't right" now for the revolutionary preparation of the masses, first you have to go through a stage or phase (hence its name) in which "starting at the level of the consciousness of the masses" we dedicate ourselves to the struggle for wages and the general anti-fascist, anti-repressive and reformist struggle (the so-called struggle "possible at this moment") so that later, in another stage, we can shrewdly carry out revolutionary agitation for the final goals. Naturally this stage never arrives.

The opportunists of this country blame the masses for their own cowardice and ineptitude: they say they'd like to carry out revolutionary agitation, now, but clearly the masses don't understand all that, they would avoid us, we would isolate ourselves. In reality, the whole process is exactly the opposite. If the masses don't understand, it is because *we* aren't able to use all the many phenomena of social life to fully educate them, because *we* are lagging behind the objective situation and because furthermore *we* (the Spanish Marxist-Leninists) dedicated ourselves for years to dulling the masses even more and robbing them of their spontaneous attempts to understand scientifically what is happening, obsessively focusing their attention on the economic struggle and the struggle for political reforms and against fascism.

Lenin explains how the vanguard should continually call on the masses to wake up, to understand, and furthermore should go *against the tide*, combatting the prejudices, the revisionist line, the tendency towards simple economic struggle, *among* the masses.

And let's not forget the most classic form the worship of spontaneity assumes: wage the economic struggle and the struggle for reforms in order to, *on that basis* (according to its defenders), create the class consciousness of the proletariat. Lenin's answer is devastating: that is impossible, because the very basis is too narrow, because on the basis of those secondary manifestations of the class struggle, *it is not possible to educate the proletariat to make revolution.*

We have read, heard and seen all this practiced thousands and thousands of times in the Spanish state in the last 12 years, and there is something curious: it is in practice itself that all this has completely failed and, despite that, the opportunist remnants, who still remain here, continue on without changing, relying on those relics. That indeed is a faith that moves mountains!

On the basis of worshipping spontaneity, the tactic of those parties could not but conform to the well-known principle of Bernstein, "the movement is everything, the final goal nothing." They always found some "stage" which, according to them, allow-

ed them to leave until some future time the revolutionary education of the proletariat in Marxism-Leninism and the final goal. Engels already said in *Critique of the Erfurt Programme*, that "This sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present may be honestly meant, but it is and remains opportunism," and Lenin said in *Marxism and Reformism*, "When the 'ultimate goal' . . . is pushed further and further away from our agitation, that is reformism." It is significant that many pro-Albanian parties today in different countries are loyal followers of Bernstein on tactics, such that they focus all their attention on the immediate struggle and totally forget everything else. This very clearly shows that their attacks on Mao are what one would expect a handful of reformists to hurl against a revolutionary, the slanders of neo-Bernsteinians against the genuine Marxist-Leninists who think above all of the *future* of the movement, without being overwhelmed by what *is* today, because tomorrow this will be nothing, since the flow of history forces us to think of what *is not* yet: socialism and communism.

Methods of Thought and Work

Lenin began his brilliant work (and in this case this adjective is correct, not mere Enver Hoxha-style rhetoric) *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* asking, "Does the lecturer acknowledge that the philosophy of Marxism is *dialectical materialism*?" Spanish Marxist-Leninists have heard the point before but without interest or comprehension of its true significance. Let's not forget that they are "practical" people who concentrate on obtaining "palpable results," "successes," through the anti-fascist economic and political struggle. But despite that, it happens that Marxism has its own philosophy, dialectical materialism, and that to make revolution it has to be taken as a basic component of the party's methods of thought and work.

In the rupture with the PCE there was no attention given to breaking with revisionism on this essential question. Except for some general phrases about it to cover appearances, nothing else was done. This attitude is in the framework of the profound contempt for the study of Marxism-Leninism inherited from the old PCE; there was no realisation that it wouldn't do to repeat some isolated and undigested phrases, but rather that what was needed was a thorough understanding of the stand, outlook and method of Marxism-Leninism, and that demanded prolonged, serious study. There was such a haste, an irresponsible frivolity, when it came time to deal with basic questions, that looking back on it now makes one dizzy. This contempt for the science of revolution has its philosophical roots in the predominance then, in Spain, of neo-positivism as a dominant system of thought. This is characterised by a hostility towards all attempts to explain the essence of phenomena through scientific theories and generalisations which go beyond the level of "the facts," of the evidence, of what is immediately perceived.

Thus from the beginning there arose in Spanish Marxism-Leninism a strong empirical deviation whose best example is the PCEm-l's statement, *U.S. Domination of Spain* (1968). This is a vulgar description of "the facts" according to the most orthodox Anglo-Saxon empiricism, in which Marxism only appears as dogmatic quotations that hide the reactionary method and content. With empiricism came the worst superficiality, a kind of ignorant self-satisfaction which overshadowed all questions with a jumble of, on the one hand, "the facts," and on the other, dogmatic quotes. At that time it created a hybrid type of empiricism which we could call empirio-dogmatism.

It's important to see how this empiricism leads directly to economism, reformism and thus to degeneration. Because it sanctifies the obvious, "the facts", it prevents an understanding of the true nature of events, and leads to limiting one's activity to these directly perceived expressions of the class struggle, the economic and political struggle for reforms. There is a contradiction between appearance and essence which only science can resolve. Empiricism, that petty way of thinking, denies such a contradiction and puts forward absolute identity between appearance and

essence. This can only bring disaster to revolutionary activity.

But as we said, empiricism existed together with dogmatism, united in common opposition to dialectical materialism. This appeared as the tendency to juggle Marxist ideas and terms, separating them completely from concrete reality and concrete needs and tasks, a pure, sterile verbalism which converts Marxism into a petrified dogma separate from the real world. In this it seems that the school of the revisionist French philosopher Althusser had much influence here, since some of his books and those of his disciple Marta Harnecker were read quite a bit in certain circles close to Marxism-Leninism. This insufferable dogmatism, as is obvious in Hoxha's case, already masked grave errors and rightist deviations. We find its model in the PCEm-l's work, *The National Question in Light of Revolution in Spain*(2), which, with an abundance of dogmatic quotes from Lenin and Stalin, totally bastardises the Marxist theory of national oppression and upholds positions that objectively can only be classified as fascist.

Of course, all this has led to the negation of concrete analysis of concrete reality. On page 37ff of the statement summarized above, we find numerous examples of the lack, throughout the history of Spanish Marxism-Leninism, of concrete analysis, of the investigation of events in the particular conditions of their time and place. Perhaps the most negative manifestation was the examination of the crisis which the fascist form of the domination of the big bourgeoisie entered after 1970. Reasoning abstractly, bourgeois "democracy" was defined as better than fascism, and logically the former must be supported over the latter. This really meant collaboration with the ruling class in making changes in the form of its dictatorship, more suited to the new period of generalised crisis and the rise in mass struggle. There is no understanding that, by making a concrete analysis, one could see how this "democracy" concretely was a form in which big capital hoped to contain, by political methods, the upsurge of workers' and popular struggles which took place from 1974-77. Not without reason does Lenin say that there are no abstract truths, that the truth is always concrete and that which is true in the abstract can be completely false in the light of concrete analysis.

A result of the abstract method of thought is that it can't solve contradictions and inevitably leads to metaphysics, and that is because only concrete analysis can reveal the essence of phenomena, and only then is it possible to understand contradictions. Spanish Marxism-Leninism was generally unable to think in dialectical terms. A picturesque detail that gives an idea of the level at which it operated then is the refusal to see that its own policies and line had errors, that is to say, that it divided into two, that it had internal contradictions. No, they (concretely the PCEm-l and MC) went on to theorise that Marxist-Leninists couldn't be wrong about anything important and that: . . . therefore they were as infallible as god is said to be! Their line was correct, in its application and everything else: therefore it had no errors. In addition, this proves that already, by around 1972 (when this position was put forward), the mad metaphysics which Hoxha now preaches was in common use among Spanish Marxist-Leninists.

In summary: the lack of concern for the practical supremacy of dialectical materialism, which is never an easy thing, led to a pro-

gressive degeneration of Spanish Marxist-Leninists who, by 1974-77, had already become revisionist, indistinguishable from Eurocommunists. Therefore what resulted after this is easily explained.

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- (1) For those not very familiar with the political scene in the Spanish state, a brief explanation of the present situation of the political forces relevant to the content of this work is useful. The PTE, faithful follower of the Chinese revisionists, which only two years ago had a certain number of members, today is completely liquidated after a frustrated attempt to merge with the ORT. This revisionist organisation is liquidated in fact and there is no real chance that it can escape its present, gravest crisis. Thus pro-Chinese revisionism remains without organised representation in the country, aside from an insignificant little group and Carrillo, who on his trip to China last fall became a close friend of Teng. The MC holds on with great difficulty, sliding into a bottomless opportunism in which all kinds of tendencies are mixed: Trotskyism, Eurocommunism, "Maoism," and pro-Soviet revisionism, among others. This is a consummate model of eclecticism, similar to the Chilean MIR, with whom they maintain cordial relations. Lately they are very close to pro-Soviet forces. The PCEm-l is Hoxha's mouthpiece here and it couldn't be in a tougher situation. Every day it becomes more reformist and more economist, agreeing to work with the most suspicious and equivocating people. Due to the crisis of its whole line and to the internal dissension created by the attacks on Mao and the lurches towards Hoxha, its membership is quite diminished, its press hardly exists, and given these symptoms, it has entered a period of not too far off extinction. The PCE(r) is practically liquidated, due to its reformism and also its absurd practice of "urban guerrilla warfare." Several years ago it moved towards eclecticism and pro-Sovietism. This group is a good example of what we call "reformists with guns," people like those "liberals with bombs" that Lenin criticised. The changing times are leaving all those "Marxist-Leninists" from around here in the lurch.
- (2) This criticism is not without basis, nor an exaggeration of the struggle that we had with these revisionists: it is the most precise. Thus in their work, *The National Question in Light of Revolution in Spain*, on page 73, we read that "the vicious policy" of fascism against the oppressed nations (Canary Islands, Catalonia, Euskadi and Galicia) "has brought the undeniable positive result of the elimination or reduction of many national barriers." This is a *shameless praise of fascist policy which for 40 years has tried to wipe out such oppressed nations by genocidal terror and violence*. Therefore, we don't exaggerate: These are the people who attack Mao Tsetung without letup, the same ones who support and praise fascist terror! And the same ones who never open their mouth without letting out a pedantic and stupid quote of some classical Marxist to better bastardise Marxism!