

Gonzaloism: A “Left” Revisionist Deviation¹

1. Introduction

Within the Maoist milieu, the theories of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) have interested many comrades. The PCP and its supporters consider that PCP Chairman Gonzalo has contributed theories of universal character; Gonzalo's theories are considered to be of the same quality as those of Marx, Lenin and Mao and should therefore be applied universally. However, Gonzalo was arrested and imprisoned in 1992 and the PCP's influence has since drastically declined. There are no credible reports that they control any territory in Peru today. Nevertheless, there are those who still maintain that Gonzalo's theories are correct. Those who promote his theories often use the term "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism" (MLM-pM) or "MLM-pM- universal contributions of Gonzalo thought"² to distinguish themselves from others who use the term "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism" (MLM) or "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought". This article intends to show that Gonzalo's theories constitute a "left" revisionist deviation from the revolutionary science developed mainly by Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong. The article also presents the October Road as a correct strategy in Sweden because it is based on Swedish conditions and the experience of the history of the communist movement.

2. *Jefatura* - idealistic theory of leadership

Mao Zedong, who further developed dialectical materialism, pointed out that real knowledge is achieved only by engaging with concrete reality, i.e. practice:

“Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he **achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice** (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment). If a man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond, he will fail in his practice.”³ (my emphasis)

Success in practice is the only criterion that determines whether an idea or theory is correct:

¹ This article was originally published as “*Om Gonzalos teorier*” (*On the theories of Gonzalo*) on the website of the Communist Association (27/12-21). This article includes two new chapters: "Gonzaloism is 'left' revisionism" and "The strategy for revolution in Sweden" as well as changes to the original text that I felt were necessary to clarify certain points.

² *Lenin and the militarized communist party*, Communist party of Brazil – Red Fraction
<https://www.demvolkedienen.org/index.php/en/t-dokumente-en/3298-el-maoista-lenin-and-the-militarized-communist-party>

³ *On practice*, Mao Zedong

“The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by **objective results in social practice**. Only social practice can be the criterion of truth. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge.”⁴ (my emphasis)

PCP and Gonzalo put forward theories which, on closer examination, appear to break directly with the materialist outlook and instead propagate idealism. An example of this is that PCP believed that

“For us, Gonzalo Thought is the principal thing which we must embody because it is the guarantee of victory that leads us to the democratic revolution, to the socialist revolution, to the cultural revolutions until Communism.”⁵

“It is a Party of the new type which generated the Great Leader of the Peruvian revolution, Chairman Gonzalo, the greatest living Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, who leads the Party. He is the guarantee of the triumph of the revolution who will carry us to Communism.”⁶

This has proved to be wrong, as Gonzalo was captured and the PCP's influence was greatly reduced, and Gonzalo spent 29 years in prison until his death. To elevate one person as the "guarantee of the triumph of the revolution" is an idealistic fallacy that goes completely against the Marxist theory of knowledge, since the correctness of a theory can only be proven in practice and when a revolution has been realized.

Exalting an individual as a guarantor of victory before his political line is proven in practice also leads to problems in relation to democratic centralism. Why should an individual who is, after all, the "guarantee of victory" be subjected to criticism and self-criticism? This is a paradox. From the PCP's own statements, Gonzalo's leadership seems to have a special status in which he stood above the Central Committee:

“Our Party has defined that leadership is key and it is the duty of all militants to constantly work to defend and preserve the leadership of the Party and very especially the leadership of Chairman Gonzalo, our Great Leadership, against any attack inside or outside the Party and to subject ourselves to his personal leadership and command by raising the slogans of ‘Learn From Chairman Gonzalo’ and ‘Embody Gonzalo Thought.’”⁷

“We who follow Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought, subject ourselves to Chairman Gonzalo and embody Gonzalo Thought.”⁸

“The Central Committee of the PCP reaffirms itself in its plain, conscious and **unconditional subjection** to the sole leadership of Chairman Gonzalo and to the entire system of party leadership.”⁹ (my emphasis)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru* (1988), Central committee of the communist party of Peru
<https://www.bannedthought.net/Peru/CPD/Documents/GeneralPoliticalLineOfTheCommunistPartyOfPeru-1988-OCR.pdf>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

To designate something as correct before it has been proven in practice, for example that Gonzalo was "guarantee of the triumph of the revolution", was described by Mao in "On Practice" as an idealistic mistake:

“We are also opposed to ‘Left’ phrase-mongering. The thinking of ‘Leftists’ outstrips a given stage of development of the objective process; some regard their fantasies as truth, while others strain to realize in the present an ideal which can only be realized in the future.”¹⁰

To try to realize an ideal that can only be realized in the future is to apply idealism instead of materialism. PCP promoted Gonzalo and his theories as already correct, even though they were not confirmed by practice. This idealism is basically related to PCP's and Gonzalo's theory of *Jefatura* (leadership). This theory argues that every revolutionary party must have a guiding "Great leader"¹¹, and that the party is based on the "guiding thought" of this leader (in Peru's case, "Gonzalo's thought")¹². The obvious error, as already pointed out, is that the party exalts a leader as infallible if he is the "guarantee of the triumph of the revolution" and exalts a thought that has not proved itself in the practice of class struggle. The theory of *Jefatura* therefore inevitably leads to a cult of personality, no matter how much Gonzalo's followers deny this. Is it not a cult of personality to emphasize Gonzalo as "guarantee of the triumph of the revolution", to give "plain, conscious and unconditional subjection to the sole leadership of Chairman Gonzalo" and that he is "the greatest living Marxist-Leninist-Maoist [*sic*], a great political and military strategist, a philosopher, a teacher of Communists, and the center of Party unity"¹³ Is this not pure idealism and a distortion of Marxist epistemology and an expression of, as Mao called it, "**the thinking of ‘Leftists’**"?

Why do we appreciate Lenin and his works, for example? Because his theories were confirmed by his practical success, i.e. the October Revolution. Lenin's work would not have the same significance or reputation today if the October Revolution had not been carried out. Gonzalo's theory of "leadership" that elevates a guiding thought, "**strain to realize in the present an ideal which can only be realized in the future.**" A guiding thought can only be confirmed as guiding when it "... **achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice**". Thus, only when the line has actually led to victory can it be considered to have been guiding. Mao Zedong's theories were confirmed because Mao *successfully led the Chinese revolution to victory* and were reaffirmed internationally during the Great Polemic against the Soviet revisionists and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Gonzalo's theory of *Jefatura* is basically liberal individualism, and similar theories were also found in revolutionary China where they were mainly advocated by Lin Biao, who claimed, among other things, that:

“Such a genius as Chairman Mao will only emerge after hundreds of years in the world, and after thousands of years in China. Chairman Mao is the the world’s greatest genius.”

“Chairman Mao is much wiser than Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Right now there is no person in the world that can rise to the level of Chairman Mao.”

⁹ *Resolution of the central committee*, Central committee of the Communist Party of Peru, 1992
http://www.redsun.org/pcp_doc/pcp_1292.htm

¹⁰ *On practice*, Mao Zedong

¹¹ *Interview with Chairman Gonzalo*, El Diario, http://www.redsun.org/pcp_doc/pcp_0788.htm

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru*

“One cannot leave the center. The center is the sun. The nine great constellations surround and revolve around the sun, all work surrounds and revolves around the sun. Chairman Mao himself is the sun. Mao Zedong Thought itself is the sun.”¹⁴

In 1970, Mao had criticized Chen Boda and Lin Biao for putting forward the theory of genius and the outstanding leader.¹⁵ Since Gonzalo's theory of *Jefatura* negates Mao's criterion that a theory must be confirmed "**by objective results in social practice**", it is in essence of the same type as Lin Biao's theory of genius. Gonzalo failed to lead the party to victory, this is an indisputable fact. Both Gonzalo's theory of *Jefatura* and Lin Biao's theory of "genius" turn the Marxist theory of knowledge upside down; both overlook evidence in practice as a criterion of truth and thus assume in advance that something is true. Mao defined such theories as "idealist apriorism", i.e. the assumption that a thought is true without practical evidence¹⁶:

“The question of genius is a theoretical question. Their theory was idealist apriorism. Someone has said that to oppose genius is to oppose me. But I am no genius. I read Confucian books for six years and capitalist books for seven. I did not read Marxist-Leninist books until 1918, so how can I be a genius? Didn't I put circles round those adverbs several times over? The Party Constitution was settled at the Ninth Congress. Why not take a look at it? I wrote ‘Some opinions’¹⁷, which especially criticizes the genius theory, only after looking up some people to talk with them, and after some investigations and research. It is not that I do not want to talk about genius. To be a genius is to be a bit more intelligent. **But genius does not depend on one person or a few people. It depends on a party, the party which is the vanguard of the proletariat. Genius is dependent on the mass line, on collective wisdom.**”¹⁸ (my emphasis)

The struggle against idealist apriorism already existed in the time of Marx and Engels, specifically in Engels' polemic against Dühring. Dühring denied the materialist theory of knowledge and argued that the material world is formed according to inherent patterns of thought in man. During the Cultural Revolution there was struggle against the apriorism of Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao, who argued that wisdom and genius were innate human qualities independent of social practice.¹⁹ These reactionaries denied the Marxist, materialist theory of knowledge. Today, it is Gonzalo's apriorism in the form of *Jefa-*

¹⁴ <https://www.bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/AFewOpinionsOfMine-1970-English.pdf>

¹⁵ *A few opinions of mine*. Mao Zedong

<https://www.bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/AFewOpinionsOfMine-1970-English.pdf>

¹⁶ "Apriorism is an idealist theory of knowledge. The materialist theory of reflection holds that ideas are the reflection of objective reality, that all true knowledge originates from experience. So there is no knowledge prior to experience. Yet apriorism holds that the rational includes some 'gifted concept,' 'self-understood reason,' 'born principles,' or logical categories, that it does not arise from experience but is innate in the mind, and that starting from these principles or categories, one can get real knowledge through logical deduction. Apriorists do not admit the dependence of conceptual knowledge upon perceptual knowledge, but think that the former is independent; they oppose proceeding from practical experience, but stand for proceeding from the rational. They do not proceed from facts to concepts but vice versa."

Basic understanding of the communist party of China, s.135 (pdf),

<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/china/basic-understanding.pdf>

¹⁷ *A few opinions of mine*. Mao Zedong

¹⁸ *Summary of Chairman Mao's talks with responsible comrades at various places during his provincial tour*, Chairman Mao talks to the people, p.293

<https://www.bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/MaoZedong/Books/ChairmanMaoTalksToThePeople-Schram-1974-UNDERLINING.pdf>

¹⁹ For a good introduction to Engels' struggle against Dühring's apriorism, see the article "*How Engels Criticized Dühring's Apriorism - Notes on studying 'Anti-Dühring'*" by Wang Che. It also mentions the struggle against idealism in China. <https://marxists.architexturez.net/subject/china/peking-review/1972/PR1972-10a.htm>

tura that challenges the Marxist theory of knowledge. Gonzalo's theory of "guiding thought" assumes that the theories of the "Great leader" will lead to victory and are thus proclaimed to already be correct despite not being proven in practice. Therefore, this theory consists fundamentally of idealistic pre-suppositions ("idealistic apriorism"). In addition, it should be pointed out that an individual who has distinguished himself in the struggle and led the party to success can at any time degenerate ideologically (e.g. Prachanda²⁰). This makes the theory of *Jefatura* particularly harmful, since it leads to the individualistic view that an individual is an eternal, unchangeable embodiment of correct ideological guidance, when history has shown that these individuals can themselves become revisionists.

The basis of dialectics that everything is in constant change, and it is by no means a given that people's thinking changes in step with changes in the objective situation. Mao Zedong pointed out that the thinking of anyone (including the leadership) can lag behind objective changes if one does not rely on a concrete investigation of concrete conditions.²¹ It is not the individual, but the mass line and concrete inquiry, i.e. Marxism as a guide to action, that is crucial to success.

The theory of *Jefatura* in fact revises the Marxist theory of leadership. It is clear that Gonzalo assumed the role of an individual leader to whom the rest of the party instances were subjugated, which is justified in the theory of *Jefatura*. This theory differs radically from the theory of leadership applied by the Communist Party of China (CCP):

“However, Party leadership is a collective leadership and does not come from the arbitrary decisions of particular individuals. It is only by conscientiously implementing the system of collective leadership that we can correctly practise democratic centralism in the Party, and that the committees of the Party can fully play their role as nuclei of leadership in correctly carrying out all tasks. In general, there is a limit to how well a single individual can think about a question and analyse it, so that when decisions on important questions are made by one individual, it is difficult for him not to be subjective and one-sided. Only if we practise collective leadership, if the members of the Party committee reflect the opinions of the Party members and the masses in all their aspects, if they study and discuss questions from every point of view and in depth, will we be able to concentrate the wisdom of the masses to arrive at correct ideas, make decisions that conform to objective reality and avoid or diminish the risk of error.”²²

3. The universality of people's war

Another theory put forward by Gonzalo is the theory of the universality of the people's war and that this is the "military theory of the proletariat". Comrade Turesson has already correctly pointed out that this is a patently false claim,²³ since Mao never mentioned the universality of the people's war. Among other things, Mao has explicitly opposed dogmatic applications of the Chinese People's War:

²⁰ Prachanda was the chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists). Under his leadership, the party applied the Marxism-Leninism-Maoism-Prachanda path and controlled 80% of Nepal's territory before Prachanda concluded a peace treaty with the ruling class and transformed the revolutionary party into a reformist party.

²¹ Mao points this out in "On practice". For example, he writes that:

“It often happens, however, that thinking lags behind reality; this is because man's cognition is limited by numerous social conditions. We are opposed to die-hards in the revolutionary ranks whose thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances and has manifested itself historically as Right opportunism.”

²² *Basic understanding of the communist party of China*

²³ *Poor Mao Zedong, who wasn't even a Maoist*, Rickard B Turesson

“The experience of the Chinese revolution, that is, building rural base areas, encircling the cities from the countryside and finally seizing the cities, may not be wholly applicable to many of your countries, though it can serve for your reference. I beg to advise you not to transplant Chinese experience mechanically. The experience of any foreign country can serve only for reference and must not be regarded as dogma. The universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and the concrete conditions of your own countries--the two must be integrated.”²⁴

Mao was thus open about the fact that the experience of the Chinese People's War, i.e. building base areas and surrounding cities, was not universal. But according to the PCP, the People's War is an expression of the "military theory of the proletariat" developed by Mao:

“President Gonzalo, reaffirming himself on the universal law of revolutionary violence, follows the military theory of the proletariat established by Chairman Mao: The people's war has universal validity and is applicable in all types of countries, in accordance with the conditions of each revolution.”²⁵

That Mao had established that "the people's war has universal validity" is a blatant lie. In addition, Gonzalo claims that base areas are the essence of the People's War:

“The Base Area is the essence of people's war. Without it, people's war cannot develop”²⁶

The concept of "people" in the Marxist sense must refer to a group of people in relation to the class struggle. Mao defined this clearly in relation to the class struggle in China when he described the difference between the People's War against Japan and the People's War against the Kuomintang. These people's wars involved a united front of a class character being pitted against a common enemy, namely imperialism:

“To understand these two different types of contradictions correctly, we must first be clear on what is meant by "the people" and what is meant by "the enemy". The concept of "the people" varies in content in different countries and in different periods of history in a given country. Take our own country for example. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, all those classes, strata and social groups opposing Japanese aggression came within the category of the people, while the Japanese imperialists, their Chinese collaborators and the pro-Japanese elements were all enemies of the people. During the War of Liberation, the U.S. imperialists and their running dogs -- the bureaucrat-capitalists, the landlords and the Kuomintang reactionaries who represented these two classes -- were the enemies of the people, while the other classes, strata and social groups, which opposed them, all came within the category of the people.”²⁷

People's War emerged as a strategic line when the principal contradiction was between a united front of different classes ("the people") against a common enemy: imperialism and feudalism. The principal contradiction in the Chinese People's War was between the people/nation (united fronts of classes) on

²⁴ *Some experiences in our party's history*, Mao Zedong

²⁵ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru*

²⁶ *Interview with Chairman Gonzalo*

²⁷ *On the correct handling of contradictions among the people*, Mao Zedong

the one hand and imperialism (and its lackeys) and feudalism on the other, as described by Mao himself:

“The contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation and the contradiction between feudalism and the great masses of the people are the basic contradictions in modern Chinese society. Of course, there are others, such as the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the contradictions within the reactionary ruling classes themselves. But the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation is the principal one.”²⁸

Mao also pointed out in “On Contradictions” that the *essence* of the CCP's struggle, the fundamental contradiction in this process, was always its anti-imperialist and anti-feudal nature despite the fact that it went through several different stages (including the revolution of 1924-7, the war against the Kuomintang, the defensive war against Japan):

“The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process.

(...) Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, *i.e.*, **in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the process** (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), nonetheless this process has passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years”.²⁹ (my emphasis)

People's war in concrete applications has meant encircling the cities from the countryside, *i.e.* focusing on the poor peasants as the main force of the revolution. The reason for this particular concrete *form* is that where people's wars have taken place, the societies have largely consisted of peasants. The majority of the oppressed peoples thus lived in the countryside. During the Great Polemic of 1963, the Communist Party of China described the struggle in the oppressed countries as follows:

“The oppressed nations and peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America are faced with the urgent task of fighting imperialism and its lackeys.

History has entrusted to the proletarian parties in these areas the glorious mission of holding high the banner of struggle against imperialism, against old and new colonialism and for national independence and people's democracy, of standing in the forefront of the national democratic revolutionary movement and striving for a socialist future.

In these areas, extremely broad sections of the population refuse to be slaves of imperialism. They include not only the workers, peasants, intellectuals and petty bour-

²⁸ *The Chinese revolution and the Chinese communist party*, Mao Zedong

²⁹ *On contradiction*, Mao Zedong

geoisie, but also the patriotic national bourgeoisie and even certain kings, princes and aristocrats, who are patriotic.

(...) On the basis of the worker-peasant alliance the proletariat and its party **must unite all the strata that can be united and organize a broad united front against imperialism and its lackeys**. In order to consolidate and expand this united front it is necessary that the proletarian party should maintain its ideological, political and organizational independence and insist on the leadership of the revolution."³⁰ (my emphasis)

While the form of the people's war has by historical circumstance led to the encirclement of the cities from the countryside, its essence consists of a principal contradiction between a united front of different classes against a common enemy: imperialism and feudalism. Any strategic line is defined first and foremost by the principal contradiction. The first sentence of Mao Zedong's "Selected Readings" asks precisely: **"Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution."**³¹

Gonzalo takes the content of the Chinese People's War strategy, including base areas, and claims that this is a path for the communists in all countries of the world (including advanced capitalist ones where the proletariat is the main force), that the People's War is universal and that Mao has developed the military theory of the proletariat. In fact, a significant part of Mao's military theory is appropriate to a context in which it emerged, i.e. the Chinese People's War and its characteristics. As mentioned earlier, Mao warned in 1956 against mechanically copying base areas in talks with Latin American parties (see previous quote).

In China, the concept of "people's war" emerged mainly because of the new-democratic character of the Chinese revolution, i.e. a class alliance (the proletariat, the peasantry and the national bourgeoisie) under the leadership of the proletariat in struggle against imperialism and feudalism, with the aim of establishing the people's democratic dictatorship. Among other things, Mao also defined the 1950-53 Korean War as a "people's war of liberation"³², a term he also used for the People's War in China³³. Why? Because the principal contradiction was between the Korean people, on the one hand, and the imperialists and the puppet regime in the South, on the other.³⁴ A term he used for the Indochinese people's wars (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia) was "protracted people's war"^{35,36}.

³⁰ *A proposal concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, Communist party of China

³¹ *Analysis of the classes in Chinese society*, Mao Zedong

³² *Order to the Chinese people's volunteers*, Mao Zedong

³³ *Carry the Revolution Through to the End*, Mao Zedong

³⁴ In a telegram, Mao again emphasises the contradiction between the Korean people and imperialism:

"The Chinese people warmly support the Korean people's just war against United States imperialist aggression and for the independence of their nation and the unity of their country."

Telegram to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Selected works of Mao Tse-Tung Volume 7, Foreign Languages Press, p.85

³⁵ *People of the World, Unite and Defeat the US Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs!*, Selected works of Mao Tse-Tung Volume 9, Foreign Languages Press, p.407

³⁶ "A correct answer to the question "Why a protracted war?" can be arrived at only on the basis of all the fundamental contrasts between China and Japan. (...)For neither in theory nor in practice can a struggle become protracted by simply pitting the weak against the strong. Nor can it become protracted by simply pitting the big against the small, the progressive against the reactionary, or abundant support against meagre support.

(...)Therefore when we say that the War of Resistance Against Japan is a protracted war, our conclusion is derived from the interrelations of all the factors at work on both sides."

On protracted war, Mao Zedong

People's wars are thus necessitated by objective conditions, namely that the world is divided into imperialist and oppressed countries, and that in the oppressed countries the proletariat must lead the oppressed masses and ally itself with at least parts of the national bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism.³⁷ Imperialist domination over a country must first be defeated before socialism can be established. The October Road, the universal road to revolution in mainly imperialist countries, is also directly dependent on imperialism: through the plundering of oppressed countries, living standards can be raised to a relatively high level and a revolutionary situation is made possible mainly by the recurrent crises of capitalism.

As mentioned earlier, Gonzalo claims that base areas are the "essence of people's war". The essence of the people's war, i.e. its defining characteristic, is a united front under the leadership of the proletariat waging armed struggle against imperialism and feudalism. It is thus the strategic line of the communist parties in the oppressed countries. This alone is the common denominator to be found in Mao's statements. What is Mao's definition of a base area? In the war against the Japanese occupiers, Mao clearly defined what the base areas of the People's War meant:

“The fundamental conditions for establishing a base area are that there should be anti-Japanese armed forces, that these armed forces should be employed to inflict defeats on the enemy and that they should arouse the people to action. Thus the establishment of a base area is first and foremost a matter of building an armed force. (...) The building up of an armed force is the key to establishing a base area; **if there is no armed force or if the armed force is weak, nothing can be done. This constitutes the first condition.**”³⁸ (my emphasis)

Base areas are primarily areas controlled by an armed force for use against the enemy. If one believes that base areas are universally applicable and an inevitable part of Maoism, one should again consider that Mao, in talks with the Communist Parties, warned against applying them mechanically, and instead urged the parties to think for themselves. Mao had this to say about the Red Areas (base areas) established by the CCP:

“The long-term survival inside a country of one or more small areas under Red political power completely encircled by a White regime is a phenomenon that has never occurred anywhere else in the world. There are special reasons for this unusual phenomenon. It can exist and develop only under certain conditions.

First, it cannot occur in any imperialist country or in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but can only occur in China which is economically backward, and which is semi-colonial and under indirect imperialist rule. For this unusual phenomenon can occur only in conjunction with another unusual phenomenon, namely, war within the

³⁷ “In this respect the Chinese bourgeoisie differs from the bourgeoisie of old tsarist Russia. Since tsarist Russia was a military-feudal imperialism which carried on aggression against other countries, the Russian bourgeoisie was entirely lacking in revolutionary quality. There, the task of the proletariat was to oppose the bourgeoisie, not to unite with it. But China's national bourgeoisie has a revolutionary quality at certain periods and to a certain degree, because China is a colonial and semi-colonial country which is a victim of aggression. Here, the task of the proletariat is to form a united front with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism and the bureaucrat and warlord governments without overlooking its revolutionary quality.”

On new democracy, Mao Zedong

³⁸ *Problems of strategy in guerilla war against Japan*, Mao Zedong

White regime. It is a feature of semicolonial China that, since the first year of the Republic [1912] the various cliques of old and new warlords have waged incessant wars against one another, supported by imperialism from abroad and by the comprador and landlord classes at home. Such a phenomenon is to be found in none of the imperialist countries nor for that matter in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but only in a country like China which is under indirect imperialist rule. **Two things account for its occurrence, namely, a localized agricultural economy (not a unified capitalist economy) and the imperialist policy of marking off spheres of influence in order to divide and exploit.** The prolonged splits and wars within the White regime provide a condition for the emergence and persistence of one or more small Red areas under the leadership of the Communist Party amidst the encirclement of the White regime.”³⁹ (my emphasis)

Hence Mao was very clear that red power areas cannot exist in imperialist countries. Base areas in China had an overwhelming peasant population where people lived and worked in the same place ("localized agricultural economy"), which cannot be said at all about today's Sweden. Are Mao's own words not sufficient to reject Gonzalo's and the PCP's false thesis that Mao had established the People's War as the "military theory of the proletariat" and that "base areas are the essence of the People's War"? Gonzalo's theory is derived from a specific concrete context and turned into an abstract dogma, which has no relevance to the objective conditions in Sweden.

Are there any lessons from Mao's military theories that are useful in a Swedish context? Absolutely. Mao pointed out that there are three types of laws of war: the laws of war in general, the special laws of revolutionary war, and the special laws of the Chinese revolutionary war.⁴⁰ Building base areas in Swedish cities, from which armed forces will attack the enemy, is a dogmatic application of the laws of revolutionary war in China and will only result in catastrophic defeat. Establishing base areas was definitely not a universal law of revolutionary war, *as Mao advised the Latin American parties to avoid dogmatically copying it.* This does not mean, however, that base areas were not necessary in Peru or other countries.

4. Militarization of the communist parties

Related to the theory of the universality of the people's war is Gonzalo's theory of the "militarization of the communist parties", which argues that all the communist parties of the world must carry out armed actions (be militarized) mainly because the "world revolution" is in a "strategic offensive":

“Chairman Gonzalo expounded the thesis that the Communist Parties of the world should militarize themselves for three reasons: First, because we are in the strategic offensive of the world revolution, we live during the sweeping away of imperialism and reaction from the face of the Earth within the next 50 to 100 years, a time marked by violence in which all kinds of wars take place.”⁴¹

Mao pointed out that:

³⁹ *Why is it that red political power can exist in China?*, Mao Zedong

⁴⁰ *Problems of strategy in China's revolutionary war*, Mao Zedong

⁴¹ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru*

“By strategic defensive we mean our strategic situation and policy when the enemy is on the offensive and we are on the defensive; by strategic offensive we mean our strategic situation and policy when the enemy is on the defensive and we are on the offensive.”⁴²

To claim that the world revolution was on the strategic *offensive* in 1988 is pure fantasy. The Soviet Union, the people's democracies of Eastern Europe and Mongolia succumbed to revisionism after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, the capitalist roaders took power after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. Not a single socialist state existed in 1988 and to call this period a strategic offensive is pure subjectivism. Anyone with the slightest grasp of reality can see the ridiculousness of the PCP's claim, which is also an example of mechanical materialism; the world revolution must constantly move forward. In fact, the world revolution can experience setbacks as well as successes. Gonzalo claims that the strategic defensive at the world level was 1871-1945 and strategic equilibrium 1945-1980.⁴³ Comrade Turesson has already correctly pointed out the absurdity of claiming that the world was in a strategic *defensive* between 1871-1945.⁴⁴ The Soviet Union, people's democracies and the victory of the revolution in China between 1917 and 1949 led to the emergence of several socialist states from where there had previously been none. The equilibrium lasted from 1949-1953, and the strategic defensive began thereafter, mainly because the Soviet Union and the people's democracies became revisionist and China thus needed to fight two imperialist superpowers (the US and the Soviets). Despite successful people's wars in Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos), these parties became revisionist when they gained state power (if not earlier). With the degeneration of Albania and China in 1976-77, even the strategic defense on a world level ceased because no socialist states were left.⁴⁵

The need to militarize all the world's communist parties means that the communist parties in each country must carry out mainly military actions:

“That the militarization of the Party can only be carried forward through concrete actions of the class struggle, concrete military-type actions; this does not mean we will only carry out various types of military actions exclusively (guerrilla actions, sabotages, selective annihilation, armed propaganda and agitation) but that we must carry out mainly these forms so as to provide incentive and development to the class struggle, teaching with deeds, with these types of actions as the principal form of struggle in the People's War.”⁴⁶

If all the communist parties of the world must be militarized, the PCP suggests that there is a situation in every country where the oppressed classes are ready to support these actions. It is therefore not surprising that Gonzalo elevates European "left" opportunists⁴⁷ as role models while claiming that there was a revolutionary situation in Europe in 1988 (!):

“As for the armed actions in Europe, we've seen protracted armed struggles. They are an expression of objective reality. Therefore, the task is not to condemn them, but to

⁴² *Problems of strategy in guerilla war against Japan*, Mao Zedong

⁴³ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru*

⁴⁴ *Poor Mao Zedong, who wasn't even a Maoist*, Rickard B Turesson

⁴⁵ A possible exception is Burkina Faso under the leadership of Thomas Sankara in 1983-87, but Sankara seized power in a military coup and his leadership was ousted as easily as it emerged.

⁴⁶ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru*

⁴⁷ For example, the "leftist" opportunist RAF and the Red Brigades were active during this time.

understand, study, and analyze them to see how they are an expression of the fact that there is also a revolutionary situation in old Europe.”⁴⁸

Gonzalo's assertion that there was a revolutionary situation in Europe is utter nonsense and aims to substitute reality for his fantasy that the world revolution is in a strategic offensive. The fact that a few adventurers were ready to take up armed struggle against the bourgeois state certainly does not mean that the working class was ready for revolution. Gonzalo's assertion is an expression of pure empiricism. Mao pointed out that "**Dogmatism is divorced from concrete practice, while empiricism mistakes fragmentary experience for universal truth**".⁴⁹ Empiricism is an erroneous and harmful tendency that diverges from Marxism, and the PCP's claim that militarization and the People's War are universal is fundamentally steeped in empiricism, as the following quote shows:

“It is the militarization of the Party which has enabled us to initiate and develop the People’s War. We consider that this experience has universal validity, and for that reason it is a requirement and necessary for the Communist Parties of the world to militarize themselves.”⁵⁰

The PCP had thus begun the People's War and not completed it to victory, but had already claimed that their experience was universal and should be applied throughout the world. As Mao pointed out in the preface to "On Practice", both empiricism and dogmatism are subjective deviations. It is no coincidence that the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Communist Party of India (Maoists), the two largest Maoist parties today, equate empiricism with revisionism as a pernicious tendency within the party.^{51,52}

In addition to completely misjudging the situation in Europe, Gonzalo also criticized the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Gonzalo advocated the theory of "united people's war" in Peru, i.e. that the people's war would also be waged in the cities as a complement to the countryside. But this theory was, at least partly, based on totally erroneous assessments of the revolutionary situation in other countries in order to ultimately formulate his failed line:

“Furthermore, Chairman Gonzalo specifies that in the cities armed actions should be carried forward as a complement, since international experience, as well as our own, demonstrates that this is feasible. He draws lessons, for example, from what happened to the guerrillas in the Philippines which recast themselves in the countryside and left the cities quiet, especially the capital, resulting in the isolation of the guerrillas.”⁵³

⁴⁸ *Interview with Chairman Gonzalo*

⁴⁹ *On coalition government*, Mao Zedong

⁵⁰ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru*

⁵¹ “C. to criticize and repudiate revisionism, dogmatism and empiricism, Right and ‘Left’ opportunism, sectarianism, liberalism, bureaucratism, ultrademocracy and all other erroneous trends of thinking and action within the Party;”

Constitution and program. Communist party of the Philippines 2016. s.19

⁵² “He/she shall defend and try to develop ideological and political basis of the party and shall consistently wage ideological and political struggle against various types of non proletarian trends, revisionist policies, trends and style of work; ‘left’ and right opportunism, economism, spontaneity, parliamentarianism, legalism, reformism, liberalism, sectarianism, **empiricism**, subjectivism, dogmatism and anarchist concepts and trends.”

Constitution of the CPI(Maoist). <https://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Founding/Constitution.doc>

⁵³ *General political line of the Communist party of Peru*

Carrying out attacks in the cities was an erroneous line in the Philippines that came close to ending the revolutionary struggle. In fact, the conditions of strength were not ripe for this strategy, and this line was considered a "left" opportunist line that was corrected during the "Second Great Rectification Movement".⁵⁴ The fact that Gonzalo was captured in a luxury neighborhood in the capital Lima shows that he underestimated the balance of power between the PCP and the Peruvian state in the cities. Underestimating one's enemy is a typical "left" error and was the same error that the CPP corrected when they stopped attacking the cities.

Given that the most active European adventurers began their actions as early as 1970 (the Red Army Faction (RAF) and the Red Brigades), according to Gonzalo there must have been a revolutionary situation already then, since the armed actions "are an expression of the fact that there is also a revolutionary situation in old Europe". However, as Comrade Turesson points out, the Communist Party of Sweden had relations with the CCP during the time when Mao Zedong was still alive, and the CCP never advocated any people's war or armed action.⁵⁵ Mao had already clearly explained in 1938 the difference between the strategic line in imperialist countries and oppressed countries:

“The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries.

But while the principle remains the same, its application by the party of the proletariat finds expression in varying ways according to the varying conditions. Internally, capitalist countries practice bourgeois democracy (not feudalism) when they are not fascist or not at war; in their external relations, they are not oppressed by, but themselves oppress, other nations. Because of these characteristics, it is the task of the party of the proletariat in the capitalist countries to educate the workers and build up strength through a long period of legal struggle, and thus prepare for the final overthrow of capitalism. In these countries, the question is one of a long legal struggle, of utilizing parliament as a platform, of economic and political strikes, of organizing trade unions and educating the workers. There the form of organization is legal and the form of struggle bloodless (non-military). On the issue of war, the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries oppose the imperialist wars waged by their own countries; if such wars occur, the policy of these Parties is to bring about the defeat of the reactionary governments of their own countries. The one war they want to fight is the civil war for which they are preparing. But this insurrection and war should not be launched until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless, until the majority of the proletariat are determined to rise in arms and fight, and until the rural masses are giving willing help to the proletariat. And when the time comes to launch such an insurrection and war, the first step will be to seize the cities, and then advance into the countryside' and not the other way about. All

⁵⁴ “Left opportunists arose in the 1980s to call for various sorts of urban insurrectionism only to end up in futility and desperation. They have been the subject of study, criticism and correction by the Second Great Rectification Movement.”

Long view of the revolutionary movement and shortsightedness of the Duterte regime, Jose Maria Sison <https://cpp.ph/statements/long-view-of-the-revolutionary-movement-and-shortsightedness-of-the-duterte-regime/>

⁵⁵ *Kan Mao Zedongs vidareutveckling av marxismen-leninismen reduceras till en katekes?*, Rickard B Turesson, Marxistiskt Forum, 2018

this has been done by Communist Parties in capitalist countries, and it has been proved correct by the October Revolution in Russia. “⁵⁶

The CCP continued to apply this line in 1964 in the struggle against the Soviet revisionists during the Great Polemic:

“Marxist-Leninists have always held that under certain conditions the proletarian party should take part in parliamentary struggle and utilize the platform of parliament for exposing the reactionary nature of the bourgeoisie, educating the masses and helping to accumulate revolutionary strength. It is wrong to refuse to utilize this legal form of struggle when necessary. But the proletarian party must never substitute parliamentary struggle for proletarian revolution or entertain the illusion that the transition to socialism can be achieved through the parliamentary road. It must at all times concentrate on mass struggles.”

”It is ‘Left’ adventurism if the party of the proletariat does not accurately appraise both the objective conditions and subjective forces making for revolution and if it rashly launches a revolution before the conditions are ripe. But it is Right opportunism, or revisionism, if the proletarian party makes no active preparations for revolution before the conditions are ripe, or dare not lead a revolution and seize state power when a revolutionary situation exists and the conditions are ripe.

Until the time arrives for seizing state power, the fundamental and most important task for the proletarian party is to concentrate on the painstaking work of accumulating revolutionary strength. The active leadership given in day-to-day struggle must have as its central aim the building up of revolutionary strength and the preparations for seizing victory in the revolution when the conditions are ripe. The proletarian party should use the various forms of day-to-day struggle to raise the political consciousness of the proletariat and the masses of the people, to train its own class forces, to temper its fighting capacity and to prepare for revolution ideologically, politically, organizationally and militarily. It is only in this way that it will not miss the opportunity of seizing victory when the conditions for revolution are ripe. Otherwise, the proletarian party will simply let the opportunity of making revolution slip by even when a revolutionary situation objectively exists.”⁵⁷

Those who deny the necessity of the October Road in imperialist countries, i.e., of waiting for a revolutionary situation (when such a situation does not exist today) and accumulating strength to strike when such a situation appears, openly deny the positions of Mao Zedong and the CCP, and the concrete conditions which prevail in Sweden. Gonzalo's and the PCP's distorted view can be summarized as follows: the world is in a strategic offensive, hence the need to start the armed struggle (the people's war), which is done by the militarization of the party.

The Communist Party of Brazil - Red Faction (CPB-RF), is today the leading international party advocating MLM-pM, i.e. Gonzalo's theories as universal. They argue that the October Road, of amassing strength to strike in a revolutionary situation, is revisionist:

⁵⁶ *Problems of war and strategy*, Mao Zedong

⁵⁷ *The proletarian revolution and Khrushchov's revisionism*, Editorial departments of Renmin Ribao and Hongqi

“Today, some Maoist parties and organizations – which publicly assume that they prepared the initiation of the People's War, **especially in the imperialist countries**, but not only in them – erect a "wall of China" between one phase and another, between the principally unarmed phase of the struggle to the phase of the principally armed struggle, with the construction of the New Power, the People's War, **thus they end up applying the revisionist thesis of the peaceful accumulation of forces, diverting from the path, and even degenerating into revisionist parties.**

These rightist positions claim to defend the necessity of militarization, but just like known revisionists they maintain that before the initiation of the armed struggle, the activity of the revolutionary party of the proletariat must be principally legal and that only after the so called "initiation of the armed struggle" must this party go underground, "militarizing itself."⁵⁸ (my emphasis)

Compare the CPB-RF position with what Mao Zedong wrote in 1938 and the CCP position in 1963 on the strategic line in imperialist countries and the accumulation of strength. Here we see clearly that the CPB-RF are the actual revisionists on the question of strategy in imperialist countries.

5. The concentric construction

According to PCP, Gonzalo has put forward the theory of the concentric construction of the three instruments.⁵⁹ According to this theory, the party constitutes the first and primary nucleus, the army constitutes the secondary, and the united front the tertiary. According to the concentric construction, the great leadership controls the party, and the party controls the armed forces. The gradual expansion of the People's War gives rise to new united fronts. The united fronts (people's committees, etc.) are dependent on the people's war and the people's guerrilla army, and represent organs of power in what is considered to be the "new state".⁶⁰ For the people's war to begin, militarization is required. This is similar to the strategy applied by the CCP in the war against the Kuomintang and the war against Japan. The CCP set up united fronts in the areas liberated by the party, and these represented the new organs of power in these areas.

This organization takes the form of concentric circles:

⁵⁸ *Lenin and the militarized communist party*

⁵⁹ "Chairman Gonzalo expounds the militarization of the Communist Parties and the concentric construction of the three instruments"

General political line of the Communist party of Peru

⁶⁰ "Power is the central task of the revolution and the Front is the third instrument. (...) Starting from the link between State/Front, the Revolutionary Front for the Defense of the People is materialized beginning with the People's Committees in the countryside, and in the cities it is simply the Revolutionary Movement for the Defense of the People (MRDP). (...) The new State and the fluidity of war. The construction of the new State follows the fluidity of the People's War, it can expand or contract, disappear in one place and appear in another. It is fluid. (...) The new State is built amidst the People's War and follows a process of specific development, being built in our case in the countryside first, until the cities are surrounded, and it is formed throughout the entire country. This is a process in which the old State is being destroyed and the contradiction old State-new State is being expressed. (...) As followers of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought, we assume the line of construction of the three instruments of the revolution, of the Communist Party of Peru, the highest form of organization and the first political society; of the People's Guerrilla Army, principal form of organization; and of the Front/New State, central task of the revolution."

General political line of the Communist party of Peru



Figure 1⁶¹

According to the CPB-RF, leadership governs all three instruments, and at the center is the "Great Leadership" (and ultimately the Great "Leader"). The "concentric construction" an organizational fulfillment of *Jefatura* and militarization of the party⁶²; everything emanates, in the last instance, from the "guiding thought" of the individual leader:

“The concentric and militarized construction serves to ensure the Communist Party's absolute leadership of the whole revolutionary process, building and imposing the hegemony of the proletariat throughout the process, it unifies and concentrates all its centralized leadership on the Central Committee and the Party's Great Leadership. The militarized Party means that it leads and manages the other two instruments from within and applies everything through the People's Revolutionary Army, with which it fights and produces, while mobilizing, politicizing, organizing and arming the popular masses, creating and developing the New Power / New State: the Party as the leadership and the Revolutionary Front / New State, having its backbone in the People's Army of a New Type, the instrument where the masses carry out revolutionary actions and transformations. The Party builds the army and itself and, around both, it builds the Revolutionary United Front.”⁶³

The theory of *Jefatura*, militarization of the Communist Party, people's war and concentric construction are interrelated: the great leadership (*Jefatura*) militarizes the party, which then starts the people's war. The armed forces, through their gradual conquest, establish new revolutionary united fronts in liberated areas. Thus everything is concentrated around the party leadership. As the CPB-RF writes:

“Many parties that defend the necessity of the People's War in the imperialist countries do not assume its basic, strategic and essential principle that is the question of Power, the New Power that is built step by step through destroying the old reactionary power, part by part, since the first stage of the war, that of the strategic defensive, going

⁶¹ *Lenin and the militarized communist party*

⁶² "The concentric construction line of the three instruments is the organizational furnishing of the militarization of the party."

Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

through the one of strategic stalemate until the strategic offensive, with the conquest of power throughout the country.”⁶⁴

It is thus clear that the CPB-RF assumes that the people's war in imperialist countries will also take proceed as in China, i.e., a gradual expansion of the people's war to conquer new territories. However, what distinguishes the theory of concentric construction is that it places the idealist theory of *Jefatura* at the center of party building and the theory of "building the party around the gun", i.e. that all communist parties can only be constituted through armed struggle. The CPB-RF writes that:

“From this understanding, the key issue for the constitution / reconstitution of Communist Parties and the initiation of new People’s Wars is resolved: **the need for prior application of the military line, that is, the development of the revolutionary armed struggle, even though it does not assume the principal form of struggle,** simultaneously to the constitution / reconstitution of the communist party, as a concentric construction of the instruments of the revolution and preparation to initiate the People's War.”⁶⁵ (my emphasis)

The armed struggle is elevated as a principle to be applied at all times during the building of the party. The CPB-RF justifies this on the grounds that anything other than militarization will inevitably lead to revisionism.⁶⁶ But the theory of militarization leads to the armed struggle becoming a fundamental principle to be applied in all situations regardless of the circumstances, i.e. a dogma. The only thing that varies is the extent to which it should be applied. This is adventurism and "leftist" opportunism in its purest form. In China's revolutionary war, militarization, i.e. the early application of the armed struggle, was absolutely necessary for the Communist Party to exist at all, since the Party did not have the means to make use of legal forms of struggle and was in direct armed confrontation with the reaction.⁶⁷ The CPB-RF tries to justify their thesis on the basis of a superficial and mechanical understanding of the experience in Russia and China. In other words; the course of events for the parties in Russia and China led them to resort to armed action in different periods up to their victory. According to the PCP and their supporters, these parties were formed under "revolutionary violence", and thus this process ("militarization of the party") has a universal character and all parties must establish an organizational structure ("concentric construction") that allows for a similar development regardless of the objective conditions prevailing in their own countries. The PCP and their supporters further believe that those who deny militarization also deny revolutionary preparation⁶⁸, and therefore militarization

⁶⁴ *Lenin and the militarized communist party*

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “Without the constitution or reconstitution around the gun, that is, as a militarized party and armed struggle (although as a secondary form of struggle at this stage), communists will inevitably fall into the theory of cold accumulation and into revisionist organizations, method, and style.”

Ibid.

⁶⁷ “The characteristics of China are that she is not independent and democratic but semi-colonial and semi-feudal, that internally she has no democracy but is under feudal oppression and that in her external relations she has no national independence but is oppressed by imperialism. It follows that we have no parliament to make use of and no legal right to organize the workers to strike. Basically, the task of the Communist Party here is not to go through a long period of legal struggle before launching insurrection and war, and not to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but the reverse. (...) Without armed struggle the proletariat and the Communist Party would have no standing at all in China, and it would be impossible to accomplish any revolutionary task.”

Problems of war and strategy, Mao Zedong

⁶⁸ See CPB-RFs article *Lenin and the militarized communist party*, but this thesis also appears in PCP’s programme: “In the final analysis, the October Revolution was not only an insurrection but a revolutionary war that

must be applied as an ever-present element in party building. At the same time, they draw a straw man in which they claim that all parties that do not apply Gonzalo's theories are fully open and legal parties.⁶⁹

That a party must be militarized is of course necessary for revolution, but it is up to each party to judge *when* militarization is necessary, according to the concrete conditions of each country. On the other hand, to elevate militarization as a universal precondition for the construction of all parties ("building the party around the gun") regardless of the concrete conditions, is nothing but dogmatism, and in Sweden will only lead to adventurism and defeat. Armed action in Russia (and China) was forced by the objective situation because there was a revolutionary situation; military action was a form of struggle serving the class struggle. In Russia, Lenin advocated military action because there was a revolutionary situation in 1905-7 with the first bourgeois-democratic revolution, but once this situation had passed, the tactics changed to suit the new conditions:

“But the *tactics* of the Party could not remain what they had been during the rising tide of the revolution in 1905. For example, it would have been wrong in the immediate future to call the masses to a general political strike or to an armed uprising, for the revolutionary movement was on the decline, the working class was in a state of extreme fatigue, and the position of the reactionary classes had been strengthened considerably. The Party had to reckon with the new situation. Offensive tactics had to be replaced by defensive tactics, the tactics of mustering forces, the tactics of withdrawing the cadres underground and of carrying on the work of the Party from underground, the tactics of combining illegal work with work in the legal working-class organizations.

(...) "This was a period when our Party turned from the open revolutionary struggle against tsardom to roundabout methods of struggle, to the utilization of each and every legal opportunity—from mutual aid societies to the Duma platform. This was a period of retreat after we had been defeated in the Revolution of 1905. This turn made it incumbent upon us to master new methods of struggle, in order to muster our forces and resume the open revolutionary struggle against tsardom."”⁷⁰

The Gonzaloists do not understand that military action must serve the class struggle, and cannot be applied merely to try to "radicalize" its own members, to teach the party to fight, or for that matter to avoid revisionism. Forms of struggle must be applied according to the concrete conditions of each country. When a revolutionary situation does not prevail, certain forms of struggle (such as military action) will not possibly serve the class struggle; on the contrary, they will hinder it and counteract it, because the forms of struggle do not relate to the concrete circumstances and the struggle of the masses.

Gonzalo's theory of militarization, according to the CPB-RF, should be applied by all the communist parties of the world, which is an open revision of Mao Zedong's theories. The question of differences in conditions between imperialist and oppressed nations, and differences between revolutionary situations and non-revolutionary situations is absent from this dogmatism. As Mao Zedong pointed out:

lasted for several years. Consequently, in the imperialist countries the revolution can only be conceived as a revolutionary war which today is simply people's war.”

⁶⁹ *Lenin and the militarized communist party*

⁷⁰ *History of the Communist party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*

“The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe. The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolution and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what was originally well done.”⁷¹

The PCP claims that all the communist parties of the world must be militarized and start a people's war, but there cannot be a revolutionary situation in all countries at the same time. In fact, the imperialist world system always undergoes an uneven development. This objective process is called the *law of uneven development* and is a fundamental element of Marxist political economy. As Lenin pointed out:

“Under capitalism the smooth economic growth of individual enterprises or individual states is impossible. Under capitalism, there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics. (...) Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone.”^{72,73}

Thus, if there is "**unequal economic and political development**", there can only be different forms of struggle appropriate to the given situation; in all countries there cannot be at the same time the necessity for an identical form of struggle, i.e. armed struggle in the form of militarization. It is important to carry out a concrete analysis of the conditions in one's own country and not to lapse into dogmatism. The "concentric construction" is thus nothing more than a "left" opportunist organizational theory, to apply the theory of the "militarization of the communist parties" and *Jefatura*. The CPB-RF, as typical ultra-"left" sectarians, further claims that anyone who denies the militarization of the party and the concentric construction is a revisionist. In practice, this includes anyone who does not acknowledge Gonzalo's theories:

“The essence of the new revisionism in the question of the party and the line of construction consists in the denial of the necessity of militarization of the communist parties and the concentric construction of the three instruments.”⁷⁴

Mao wrote that "**Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party.**"⁷⁵ To claim that any party can only be built by armed struggle in the form of "militarization of the Communist Party" is precisely to impose a form of struggle under any circumstances and thus to actually allow the gun to take command of the party. As the CCP pointed out, forms of struggle must be adapted to concrete conditions in order to resolve concrete contradictions:

“Dogmatists distort Marxism-Leninism in another way. Divorcing themselves from reality, they contrive abstract, empty formulas, or mechanically take the experience of

⁷¹ *On contradiction*, Mao Zedong

⁷² *On the slogan for a United states of Europe*, Lenin.

⁷³ Lenin also repeated this in *The military programme of the proletarian revolution*

⁷⁴ *Lenin and the militarized communist party*, CPB-RF

⁷⁵ *Problems of war and strategy*, Mao Zedong

foreign countries and force it on the masses. Thereby, they cramp the mass struggle and prevent it from achieving the results it should. **Leaving time, place and conditions out of account, they obstinately stick to one form of struggle.** They fail to understand that in every country the mass revolutionary movement takes highly complex forms and that all the forms of struggle required have to be used simultaneously and complement each other; they fail to understand that when the situation changes it is necessary to replace old forms of struggle by new ones, or to utilize the old forms but fill them with new content. Therefore, they very often cut themselves off from the masses and from potential allies, so falling into errors of sectarianism, and they just as often act recklessly, so falling into errors of adventurism.

If the leading body of a Party commits errors of dogmatism, it becomes unable to grasp the laws of the actual revolutionary movement. In the field of theory, it is bound to be lifeless, and in the field of tactics, it is bound to make all kinds of mistakes. A party of this kind cannot possibly lead the people's revolutionary movement in its country to victory."⁷⁶ (my emphasis)

6. Gonzaloism is “left” revisionism

The divergent theories discussed here, the theory of the "three moments of the world revolution" which claims that we are living in a strategic offensive, the "militarization of the world communist parties", *Jefatura* and the "universality of the people's war" are presented by the Gonzaloists as a coherent ideological tendency in the form of "MLM-principally Maoism" or "MLM-hM- universal contributions of Gonzalo thought". Given that it is Gonzalo who has shaped the deviations that constitute this tendency, it is more reasonable to speak of "Gonzaloism" than "MLM-pM" since Gonzalo's theories only distort the standpoints of Mao Zedong. The Gonzaloists have today coalesced around the CPB-RF and the PCP as their leading proponents. It is thus an explicit ideological tendency, no longer limited to Marx, Lenin, Mao, but also including Gonzalo's theories.

The line advocated by the CPB-RF and PCP is undoubtedly what Lenin called "**revisionism from the left**"⁷⁷, i.e. a fully fledged "left" revisionist line. What characterizes this revisionism as "left"? "Left" deviations are characterized by "left" opportunism, and since Gonzalo's opportunist theories are elevated to universalities that in fact revise the positions of the classics and the *actual* universalities of MLM, it is clear that Gonzaloism is "left" revisionism. On the question of strategy, leadership and party building, the Gonzaloists have presented theories that are completely contrary to the opinions of Mao Zedong and the classics. The Gonzaloist "left" revisionism is most clearly expressed when the CPB-RF claims that:

“So the problem in the ICM is not principally rooted in that Maoism is not formally acknowledged, but how some understand it, and this is why it is important to start with who defined Maoism as the new, third and superior stage of our ideology; because it is only by starting from what was scientifically established by Chairman Gonzalo that we can understand Maoism as one unit, as one harmonic system. If one does not take the

⁷⁶ *More On The Differences Between Comrade Togliatti And Us – Some Important Problems Of Leninism In The Contemporary World*, Editorial department of Hongqi

⁷⁷ *Marxism and revisionism*, Lenin

work of Chairman Gonzalo as a starting point, one falls into eclecticism, counterpoising quotes but not understanding the ideas.”⁷⁸

This is a complete devaluation of Mao Zedong and denies the independence of Mao's theories. According to this logic, Mao Zedong himself was not a Maoist. This is also a complete revision of really everything Mao Zedong ever uttered because we are only allowed to understand Mao through Gonzalo. Again, this is not Maoism at all, but Gonzaloism. In India and the Philippines, the Communist parties do not apply Gonzalo's theories and have been fighting much longer than the PCP and their supporters; have these parties not understood Maoism? There is no limit to the hubris and arrogance of the Gonzaloists. Gonzalo has merely defined a new type of revisionism by merging "left" opportunist, idealist and dogmatic theories into a revisionist ideological-political line.

In addition, the PCP is spreading an open falsification of the history of Maoism, by claiming that the PCP was the only Maoist party in the world in 1982⁷⁹ (!), which has been openly criticized by representatives of the united front of the Communist Party of the Philippines (NDFP).⁸⁰ The PCP's claim reflects their position that Gonzalo's definition of Maoism is the only true one, and that there is a qualitative difference between "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought" and "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism", the latter of which reflects Gonzalo's interpretation. The PCP argued that the term "Mao Zedong thought" denied Mao Zedong's universal contribution, and that only by using the term "Maoism" instead can Mao's contribution actually be recognized:

“Nevertheless, while Marxism-Leninism has obtained an acknowledgment of its universal validity, Maoism is not completely acknowledged as the third stage. Some simply deny its condition as such, while others only accept it as “Mao Tse-tung Thought.” In essence, both positions, with the obvious differences between them, deny the general development of Marxism made by Chairman Mao Tse-tung. The denial of the ‘ism’ character of Maoism denies its universal validity and, consequently, its condition as the third, new, and superior stage of the ideology of the international proletariat: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, that we uphold, defend, and apply.”⁸¹

What the PCP believes has not been recognized are really only Gonzalo's "left" revisionist theories such as the universality of the People's War, the militarization of the world's Communist parties and *Jefatura*, which have no basis at all in Mao's teachings. The fact that the PCP was the first to use the term "Maoism" is irrelevant; what *matters* is what this term *means*. Neither Marx nor Lenin was the first to use the terms "Marxism" or "Leninism". Today the term "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism" is used by many communist parties, including the Communist Party of India (Maoists) and the Communist Party of the Philippines, and these apply Mao Zedong's universal contributions and not Gonzalo's "left" revisionist theories. Moreover, these parties have openly criticized Gonzaloism in different ways.⁸²

⁷⁸ <https://www.bannedthought.net/Brazil/CPB-RF/2019/CombatLiquidationismAndUniteTheICM-20190425-Eng.pdf>

⁷⁹ *General Political Line of the Communist Party of Peru*

⁸⁰ *On the so called universality of people's war*, Andy Belisario

<https://ndfp.org/on-the-so-called-universality-of-protracted-peoples-war/>

⁸¹ *General Political Line of the Communist Party of Peru*

⁸² CP Philippines – See footnote 80 and 84, CPI(M) – *Paper presented by the Communist party of India (Maoist) – On the occasion of the international meeting of maoist parties & organisations*
<https://bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Nepal/CPIM-Paper2007W11.pdf>

There is thus no difference between "Mao Zedong thought" and "Maoism". The CPI(M) has through different constellations been waging people's war since the 1960s, i.e. both during and after Mao Zedong's lifetime. They are quite clear that it was Mao and not Gonzalo who defined Maoism and equate Marxism-Leninism-Maoism with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought:

“Though in our understanding there is no distinction between MLM Thought and MLM and no Chinese Wall can separate the two, we have adopted Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as a new, third and qualitatively higher stage because it is more scientific and appropriate.”⁸³

Former Communist Party of the Philippines Chairman Jose Maria Sison, who was central to the formation of the party in 1969 and who started the People's War in the same year (long before Gonzalo's "definition") has pointed out the absurdity of claiming that Gonzalo has defined Maoism:

“As I have earlier pointed out, Mao himself constituted in his own lifetime Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism by making great contributions to the development of Marxism-Leninism in philosophy, political economy, party building (especially the rectification movement), the people's war and the proletarian cultural revolution in socialist society. Mao Zedong Thought has gained universal significance long before Gonzalo called it Maoism. The universal significance of Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism does not depend in any way on Gonzalo who has not really summed up all the great achievements of the great Mao.

(...) Before, during and after the founding of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the foregoing six components of Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism were already acknowledged and propagated in CPP publications and grasped by CPP cadres and members. What the Gonzaloites are doing is to tear apart Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism and exaggerate protracted people's war as prescription for all countries under all circumstances and require militarization of the party as the principal or essential elements of Maoism. **This is not Maoism but a grotesque Gonzaloite distortion of Maoism.**”⁸⁴ (my emphasis)

Since the CPI(M) and the CPP, among others, insist that "Mao Zedong's thought" and "Maoism" are the same thing, the Gonzaloists' attempt to monopolize and revise the concept of MLM in the international communist movement has failed. They now try to present their theories with the concept of "MLM-principally Maoism- universal contributions of Gonzalo thought", but this only result in their revisionism and sectarianism becoming ever more evident.

The difference between the two concepts is therefore only in the name but not in the content. To distinguish the content of these two concepts, and to falsify the history of Maoism and other parties by claiming that they did not recognize Mao Zedong's universal contribution, is the PCP's insidious attempt to discredit the Maoist movement in other countries in order to make inexperienced and new comrades unconditionally accept Gonzalo's revisionism as the only true "Maoism". New and young

⁸³ *Hold high the bright red banner of Marxism-leninism-maoism*, Communist party of India (Maoist) <https://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Founding/MLM-pamphlet.pdf>

⁸⁴ *Questions on Mao Zedong Thought/Maoism (intervju med J.M. Sison)* <https://ndfp.org/questions-on-mao-zedong-thought-maoism/>

comrades who have not studied the history of the communist movement and the primary sources (the texts of the classics, not interpretations) are therefore most likely to fall under the influence of Gonzaloism. But this is also why Gonzaloism has not taken hold in India and the Philippines, for example; these parties have a continuity that goes back long before Gonzalo's theories. It is thus important to defend that "Mao Zedong thought" has the same meaning as "Maoism" in order to combat the PCP's false historiography and not lapse into Gonzaloism.

In fact, Maoism crystallized mainly in two stages: first during the Great Polemic and split between the CPSU and the CCP/Albanian Workers' Party, and then during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Communist parties all over the world adopted Mao Zedong's theories in their ideological-political line and considered Mao's theories to be universal in character. Many of these parties had contacts with the CCP and their representatives met Mao Zedong. The Gonzaloists thus had to falsify theory as well as history in order to achieve credibility for their line and hide the fact that Gonzalo failed in practice.

In addition to the revisionist theories mentioned, it is obvious that Gonzalo's theories are characterized by idealism. Gonzalo's theory that the world is on the strategic offensive is a type of historical idealism used to justify "left" opportunist and dogmatic policies ("militarization of the Communist Party" and "universality of the People's War"). This approach is not a new phenomenon, but has been done by previous revisionists and opportunists. A similar example is Kautsky's theory of "ultra-imperialism". Kautsky argued that imperialist rivalry would lead to a peaceful "ultra-imperialism" in which imperialist wars would disappear and a permanent peace would emerge. Lenin pointed out that peace between imperialists is only temporary, and that Kautsky's reactionary and false theory only led to the peoples being deceived about a future permanent peace within the framework of imperialism and that this drew attention away from the acute problems of capitalism. While Kautsky's theory justified right opportunism, Gonzalo justifies "left" opportunism by claiming that the world is in a strategic offensive and that all the world's communist parties must therefore be militarized.

As already mentioned, *Jefatura* is also an idealist theory, and is characterized by idealist apriorism. Idealist apriorism assumes something to be true without proof in practice, and *Jefatura* elevates leaders and their "thought" as already correct even though they have not proven their correctness in the practice of class struggle.

* * *

In the Great Polemic against the Soviet revisionists, the CCP clarified the source of splits in the international communist movement and came to the conclusion that "**Every split in the communist movement is invariably caused by the opportunist-revisionist opposition to and betrayal of Marxism-Leninism.**"⁸⁵ The leading Gonzaloists, PCP and CPB-RF, have already openly proclaimed anyone who does not follow Gonzalo's theories to be a revisionist⁸⁶ while they themselves are revising Maoism, thus acting as the major splitters in the international Maoist movement. In an effort to spread

⁸⁵ *The Leaders Of The CPSU Are The Greatest Splitters Of Our Times*, Editorial departments of Renmin Ribao and Hongqi

⁸⁶ "Without the constitution or reconstitution around the gun, that is, as a militarized party and armed struggle (although as a secondary form of struggle at this stage), communists will inevitably fall into the theory of cold accumulation and into revisionist organizations, method, and style."

"The essence of the new revisionism in the question of the party and the line of construction consists in the denial of the necessity of militarization of the communist parties and the concentric construction of the three instruments."

Lenin and the militarized communist party

their revisionist line, they have proclaimed plans for a so-called "Maoist" international⁸⁷ which will in fact be based on Gonzaloism and in which they will hold the baton. However, this development has a positive aspect: the more the Gonzaloists gather themselves, the clearer the dividing lines between Gonzaloism and Maoism. This is much needed in the present situation where the Gonzaloists pose as the only true Maoists.

The question of whether Gonzalo is a revisionist cannot be avoided. The *essence* of this question is precisely that the PCP claimed that Gonzalo had defined Maoism.⁸⁸ Either Gonzalo was right and defined Maoism, or he was wrong and revised Maoism. If one compares Gonzalo's theories with the positions of Mao Zedong and the CCP, it is clear that Gonzalo has indeed revised Maoism. Thus, there is no doubt that Gonzalo is a "left" revisionist. Gonzalo's errors went beyond mere individual dogmatic and idealistic mistakes because he revised Mao Zedong's positions on several issues, and these revisions he put forward as a whole ideological tendency in the name of Maoism. This is thus essentially an attack on revolutionary science and exerts only a negative influence within the international communist movement. However, it was correct to support the struggle of the PCP and the release of Gonzalo, because they were waging a righteous struggle against the reaction. This does not mean, however, that their theoretical basis must be accepted.

Gonzalo allowed himself to be hailed as the world's greatest Maoist, arrogantly ordered all the world's Communist parties to be "militarized" and had a completely wrong view of the situation in other countries and the world revolution. The CCP had already warned in 1963, in "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement", against listening to self-appointed authorities who dictate what everyone else should do:

“If it is not a party that can use its brains to think for itself and acquire an accurate knowledge of the trends of the different classes in its own country through serious investigation and study, and knows how to apply the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and integrate it with the concrete practice of its own country, but instead is a party **that parrots the words of others, copies foreign experience without analysis, runs hither and thither in response to the baton of certain persons abroad,** and has become a hodgepodge of revisionism, dogmatism and everything but Marxist-Leninist principle;

Then such a party is absolutely incapable of leading the proletariat and the masses in revolutionary struggle, absolutely incapable of winning the revolution and absolutely incapable of fulfilling the great historical mission of the proletariat.”⁸⁹ (my emphasis)

"The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything."⁹⁰ If an organization in Sweden adopts Gonzaloism (under whatever name it appears) as its guiding ideology,

⁸⁷ <https://ci-ic.org/blog/2022/01/04/for-a-unified-maoist-international-conference-proposal-regarding-the-balance-of-the-international-communist-movement-and-of-its-current-general-political-line/>

⁸⁸ “But the key point is to see how, in this great class struggle on the world level, Gonzalo Thought considers that a third stage of the proletarian ideology arises: First, as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung Thought; then Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought; and later, it is defined as Maoism, understanding its universal validity; and in this way reaching Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, as the present expression of Marxism.”

General political line of the Communist party of Peru

⁸⁹ *A proposal concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, Communist party of China

it will at best become a phrase-radical sect and playhouse, and at worst an isolated group of adventurers who will meet the same fate as the RAF etc. Comrades who believe in Gonzalo's ideas should carefully read the writings of the classics cited in this article, and learn from them instead of Gonzalo's distorted interpretation of Maoism. Only by studying them can one distinguish between genuine and false Maoism.

7. The strategy for revolution in Sweden

In order to know the actual conditions for revolutionary action, it is necessary to understand Lenin's definition of what a revolutionary situation means. In addition, the concrete conditions prevailing in Sweden must be taken into account. The CCP pointed out that it is only by "**integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of revolution and construction in its own country**"⁹¹ that a correct strategy is achieved. Today, of course, we also include Mao Zedong's universal contribution in this endeavor. Combating dogmatism, and especially theories such as the "universality of the people's war" and the "militarization of the world's communist parties", can only be done by examining the opposite pole of dogmatism, namely the concrete circumstances that prevail in one's own country. In Sweden, the strategic line is the long-term building of the proletarian united front which will result in a revolutionary uprising.

Revolutionary situation

Strategic considerations must inevitably take into account what makes a revolution possible if any serious proposal is to be presented. First of all, it must be established that no one knows when the objective conditions for a revolutionary situation will arise. Lenin lucidly explained that the objective situation changes independently of the will of the political subject, i.e. the proletariat or the party cannot bring about a revolutionary situation without necessary objective changes:

“To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the “upper classes”, a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for “the lower classes not to want” to live in the old way; it is also necessary that “the upper classes should be unable” to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in “peace time”, but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the “upper classes” themselves* into independent historical action.

⁹⁰ *Talks With Responsible Comrades At Various Places During Provincial Tour*, Mao Zedong

⁹¹ *A proposal concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, Communist party of China

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible.”⁹²

Stalin gave some examples of these objective changes and maintained Lenin's thesis that the objective conditions cannot be provoked. In the relationship between the subjective, conscious forces and the objective conditions, Stalin pointed out that strategy can only be based on an examination of concrete conditions:

“Political strategy, as well as tactics, is concerned with the working-class movement. But the working-class movement itself consists of two elements: the objective or spontaneous element, and the subjective or conscious element. **The objective, spontaneous element is the group of processes that take place independently of the conscious and regulating will of the proletariat.** The economic development of the country, the development of capitalism, the disintegration of the old regime, the spontaneous movements of the proletariat and of the classes around it, the conflict of classes, etc.—all these are phenomena whose development does not depend on the will of the proletariat. [my emphasis]

(...) But the movement has also a subjective, conscious side. The subjective side of the movement is the reflection in the minds of the workers of the spontaneous processes of the movement; it is the conscious and systematic movement of the proletariat towards a definite goal. It is this side of the movement that interests us because, unlike the objective side, it is entirely subject to the directing influence of strategy and tactics.

(...) Strategy itself does not study the objective processes of the movement. Nevertheless, it must know them and take them into account correctly if gross and fatal errors in the leadership of the movement are to be avoided. The objective processes of the movement are studied, in the first place, by the theory of Marxism and also by the programme of Marxism. Hence, strategy must base itself entirely on the data provided by the theory and programme of Marxism.

(...) Naturally, a strategic plan suitable for one period of history, which has its own specific features, cannot be suitable for another period of history, which has entirely different specific features. Corresponding to each turn in history is the strategic plan essential for it and adapted to its tasks.”⁹³

Thus, only when there are objective and subjective conditions can a revolutionary situation arise. On the tactics of the peaceful (non-revolutionary) stage, the Comintern wrote:

“When the revolutionary tide is not rising, the Communist Parties must advance partial slogans and demands that correspond to the everyday needs of the toilers, and combine them with the fundamental tasks of the Communist International.”⁹⁴

⁹² *The collapse of the Second International*, Lenin

⁹³ *Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists*, Stalin

⁹⁴ *The Programme of the Communist International. Comintern Sixth Congress 1929*

The partial objectives (partial slogans and partial demands) consist of the defense and promotion of workers' interests in economic, political and international affairs.⁹⁵ The party must therefore apply the mass line to fight for the daily demands and interests of the working class. This peaceful stage is accompanied by the revolutionary upsurge, a transitional process, which culminates in a revolutionary situation. Thus, although the objective situation can only be revolutionary or non-revolutionary, there is a series of quantitative changes in between, which finally leads to a qualitative change in the situation. With this, new tactical contradictions will arise corresponding to this period and the party will have to navigate through them. Only then will it be known which and how many forces the party commands, where and when to deploy them, in order to gain maximum strength and overthrow the bourgeois dictatorship. But a fundamental condition for any success in winning over the masses to the cause of the revolution is that the party must pursue politics in which the masses recognize the necessity of socialism *from their own experience*:

“In passing over to new and more radical slogans, the Parties must be guided by the fundamental role of the political tactics of Leninism, which call for ability to lead the masses to revolutionary position's in such a manner that the masses may, by their own experience, convince themselves of the correctness of the Party line. Failure to observe this rule must inevitably lead to isolation from the masses, to putschism, to the ideological degeneration of Communism into “leftist” dogmatism, and to petty bourgeois ‘revolutionary’ adventurism.”⁹⁶

For a revolutionary situation to arise, the objective conditions must be such that the subjective forces (the proletariat) recognize from their own experience the necessity of revolutionary change. Stalin pointed out, for example, that in the revolutionary period of 1917, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had the support of large sections of the population and participated in the newly formed provisional government, had not yet revealed themselves as incapable of solving the burning issues: ending Russia's participation in the world war and carrying out land reforms. But some “left” opportunists had advocated an uprising as early as April. Stalin pointed out that if this had happened, the Bolsheviks would have alienated themselves from the masses because the provisional government had not yet revealed its incompetence to the masses and therefore the conditions for an uprising did not yet exist. The peasants and soldiers, therefore, had not realized from their own experience the wrong line of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and would not therefore support the Bolsheviks. It was only in October that the Bolsheviks began the armed uprising.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ “In championing universally the current everyday needs of the masses of the workers and of the toilers generally, in utilising the bourgeois parliament as a platform for revolutionary agitation and propaganda, and subordinating all partial tasks to the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Parties of the Communist International advance partial demands and slogans in the following main spheres:

In the sphere of Labour, in the narrow meaning of the term, i.e., questions concerned with the industrial struggle: the fight against the trustified capital offensive, wages questions, the working day, compulsory arbitration, unemployment; which grow into questions of the general political struggle, big industrial conflicts, fight for the right to organise, right to strike, etc.; in the sphere of politics proper: taxation, high cost of living, Fascism, persecution of revolutionary parties, white terror and current politics generally; and finally in the sphere of world politics, viz., attitude towards the U.S.S.R. and colonial revolutions, struggle for the unity of the international trade union movement, struggle against imperialism and the war danger, and systematic preparation for the fight against imperialist war.”

Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ *Foundations of Leninism, Chapter 7: Strategy and tactics*, Stalin

How is the Gonzaloist theory of the "militarization of the party" to take place without completely alienating the masses? The party will totally isolate itself because the masses do not see the necessity of armed struggle on the basis of their own experience. In practice, it will be an isolated little group engaged in adventurism. The situation described by Stalin above in the run-up to the October Revolution is an excellent example of the necessity of winning over the masses by confirming the Party's politics through the masses' own experience.

It is impossible to know in advance what factor will trigger a revolutionary crisis in Sweden, or when it will occur, because no one can see into the future. Those who lapse into dogmatism always start from theories which relate to quite different concrete conditions from those prevailing in their own country, and thus alienate themselves from the reality of the masses and inevitably fail. Only by applying a dialectical-materialist study of the concrete conditions in one's own country on the basis of the universal truths of Maoism can a correct strategy be worked out. However, dogmatists do not treat MLM as a guide to action, but as a religious dogma. As Mao said:

“Even now, there are not a few people who still regard odd quotations from Marxist-Leninist works as a ready-made panacea which, once acquired, can easily cure all maladies. These people show childish ignorance, and we should enlighten them. It is precisely such ignorant people who take Marxism-Leninism as a religious dogma. To them we should say bluntly, "Your dogma is worthless." Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have repeatedly stated that our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action. But such people prefer to forget this statement which is of the greatest, indeed the utmost, importance.”⁹⁸

People's war in the suburbs?

A common thesis is that the people's war will be fought by establishing base areas in the suburbs. As already mentioned, the first condition for base areas, if we are to relate to Mao Zedong and not lapse into eclecticism, is the establishment of armed forces in these areas. Such an attempt will, of course, be crushed. If we are now to give the concept of "base area" a new meaning beyond Mao, such as carrying out mass work in these areas, at most it will resolve issues of a geographical nature, such as the rent struggle. But a revolutionary situation will trigger a crisis in all sorts of social issues, including working conditions, wages, unemployment, subsistence, crisis of production, and will take place in urban and rural areas, industry, service sector, etc. The working class is not geographically isolated in the suburbs; on the contrary, many, if not an overwhelming majority, work outside their residential areas.

"Suburb" defines only a geographical location: a residential area outside or near a major city/city centre and does not provide any class analysis at all. There are mainly bourgeois suburbs, mixed suburbs and proletarian suburbs. There are no statistics to quantify the proletarian suburbs, except for the police definition of "marginalized areas "; these areas are home to 550,000 people nationwide and represent about 5% of the Swedish population.⁹⁹ This does not represent the number of proletarians, but is an aggregation of proletarians, petty bourgeois and bourgeois as well as unemployed, children and pensioners in an area which is "marginalized" according to the police. The proletarian part is therefore smaller. If we use the statistics for the country as a whole to estimate the number of working people

⁹⁸ *Rectify the party's style of work*, Mao Zedong

⁹⁹ <https://polisen.se/om-polisen/polisens-arbete/utsatta-omraden/> (2022-07-30)

(i.e. excluding children and pensioners) aged 20-64, we get 308,000.¹⁰⁰ If we use the same method to exclude the number of unemployed, we get 280 896.¹⁰¹

If we examine the number of industrial proletariat in manufacturing, construction and mining and quarrying, we get the following for the first quarter of 2022¹⁰²:

Mining and quarrying: 9 843

Manufacturing industry: 533 824

Construction: 339 300

Total: 882 967 employees

The number of industrial proletarians in these three branches of production is therefore, in this rather rough calculation, about 3 times as large as the number of employees living in "marginalized areas". If we include those working in transport and storage¹⁰³, this figure rises to 1 109 705.

Although the industrial proletariat has declined in recent decades, it is still a very strong force. A main focus on the suburbs is therefore not a reasonable national strategy, as the industrial proletariat is much larger than the proletariat in the "marginalized areas". On the other hand, there is no contradiction between conducting mass struggles in workplaces *and* residential areas such as suburbs. The struggle in housing areas is of course very important, since rent is the biggest single expense for the workers, and must be combined with the struggle in the workplace. But the idea of focusing on the suburbs as some precursor to waging a people's war in Sweden by militarily occupying the suburbs is absurd. There are absolutely no conditions, among the masses or in the political situation in general, that even in the slightest justify such actions except in the mind of those who are blind to reality. What is needed is a protracted political struggle to consolidate with the masses and raise their consciousness through their own experience, and then to carry out a revolutionary uprising in the cities with the support of the masses.

As for the military question, it is essential to defend conscription and engage in the soldiers' struggle, i.e. propaganda and agitation work among soldiers. The more conscripts there are, the more combat-capable the proletariat is. Even if conscription was abolished, there are other ways of educating the proletariat; that is very much a concrete question. The decisive point, the *point of principle*, is that this knowledge is put to use only when it can be justified by the masses' own experience to support it. Without this criterion, all armed attempts will fail; this is what the advocates of the people's war have not understood, but look upon it as some panacea for all countries, when it is merely old "left" opportunism in new packaging. As Mao pointed out:

“If we tried to go on the offensive when the masses are not yet awakened, that would be adventurism. If we insisted on leading the masses to do anything against their will, we would certainly fail. If we did not advance when the masses demand advance, that would be Right opportunism.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ $0,56 * 550\ 000 = 308\ 000$, <https://www.ekonomifakta.se/fakta/arbetsmarknad/befolkning/befolkningsstruktur/>

¹⁰¹ $0,912 * 308\ 000 = 280\ 896$

¹⁰² *Antal anställda inom näringslivet (KS), efter näringsgren SNI2007. Kvartal 2015K2 - 2022K1*, Statistiska centralbyrån

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse Tung*

The leading core of the proletariat

The theory of leading a people's war in the suburbs with base areas blurs the question of the orientation of the party among the masses, and equates everyone in the suburbs as a homogeneous oppressed mass waiting for the entry of revolutionaries. It underestimates the revolutionization that the working masses undergo during a revolutionary crisis and hides the question of the leading core of the proletariat.

The most advanced sections of the proletariat are the industrial proletariat and mainly those who work in large-scale industry. This, because of their role in production, makes them see most clearly the fundamental contradiction in capitalism, that between social production and private (capitalist) appropriation. This is because they work in large teams, are unionized and participate directly in capitalist production, are long-term employees and are part of an international production chain, and are thus politically aware of the international character of capitalism. The industrial proletariat thus has the greatest potential to achieve advanced class consciousness because of their working conditions. But even those who work alone, but are strongly united by trade union organization, have demonstrated advanced class consciousness. This has been demonstrated by the strikes of bus chauffeurs, for example. Drivers are usually employed by the same capitalist and share similar conditions. In addition, there are also other occupational groups that are not part of the industrial or transport sector, but have similar working conditions, such as placement in large workplaces. One example is healthcare workers, and in Finland 25,000 healthcare workers went on strike this year.

The practical activities of man shapes the consciousness, and far from all proletarians (those who sell their labour power) reach the same level of class consciousness as the above-mentioned groups because their work is characterized by other material circumstances. It is then natural that there is a differentiation within the proletariat, with some more likely to constitute the leadership. As Lenin pointed out:

“True enough, in the era of capitalism, when the masses of the workers are subjected to constant exploitation and cannot develop their human capacities, the most characteristic feature of working-class political parties is that they can involve only a minority of their class. A political party can comprise only a minority of a class, in the same way as the really class-conscious workers in any capitalist society constitute only a minority of all workers. We are therefore obliged to recognise that it is only this class-conscious minority that can direct and lead the broad masses of the workers.”¹⁰⁵

Even if the industrial and transport proletariat are not the lowest paid, this does not mean that their revolutionary potential is lost. When Sweden inevitably falls into economic and political crisis, this will still be the most important strategic stratum of the proletariat - because their actions can cripple the entire Swedish economy and because of their size, collective discipline and cohesion can be recruited in large numbers for the armed insurrection. To deny the role of the industrial proletariat as the leading force is to advocate a variant of the defeatist "bribery theory" - the industrial proletarians are too well paid ("bribed" by the capitalists) and will never rise to revolution. This does not take into account at all the objective changes that occur in a revolutionary situation. The German comrades of

¹⁰⁵ *The second congress of the Communist international*, Lenin

the MLPD have 40% of their members in large-scale industry¹⁰⁶ and have shown that it is quite possible to take root among the industrial proletariat.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, it is a question of the class character of the party - those who are "worst off" in society are not necessarily the most revolutionary part of the proletariat. What is decisive is their revolutionary potential, which depends on their working conditions. Both Lenin and Mao stressed the leading role of the proletariat over the other layers of the working masses who had worse conditions. Mao pointed out that:

“Of all the social strata and political groupings in semi-colonial China, the proletariat and the Communist Party are the ones most free from narrow-mindedness and selfishness, are politically the most far-sighted, the best organized and the readiest to learn with an open mind from the experience of the vanguard class, the proletariat, and its political party throughout the world and to make use of this experience in their own cause. Hence only the proletariat and the Communist Party can lead the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, can overcome the narrow-mindedness of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie, the destructiveness of the unemployed masses, and also (provided the Communist Party does not err in its policy) the vacillation and lack of thoroughness of the bourgeoisie can lead the revolution and the war on to the road of victory.”¹⁰⁸

Lenin noted that:

“The urban and industrial proletariat will inevitably be the nucleus of our Social-Democratic Labour Party, but we must attract to it, enlighten, and organise all who labour and are exploited, as stated in our programme — all without exception: handicraftsmen, paupers, beggars, servants, tramps, prostitutes — of course, subject to the necessary and obligatory condition that they join the Social-Democratic movement and not that the Social-Democratic movement join them, that they adopt the standpoint of the proletariat, and not that the proletariat adopt theirs.”¹⁰⁹

The party must therefore focus on (but not limit itself to) the workers in industry, transport and other occupations with similar material circumstances that make them particularly receptive to the ideas of communism.

The October Road and the proletarian united front

Given that we do not know when the revolutionary situation will appear and that it cannot be provoked, the strategy is to achieve maximum influence on the most burning questions of the proletariat, and thus to prepare the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeois dictatorship by urban insurrection in the

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.mlpd.de/english/about-us>

¹⁰⁷ Germany has a larger share of the workforce (27%) in industry than Sweden (18%) according to World Bank statistics, but the difference is quantitative rather than qualitative; the industrial proletariat is still a minority and both countries are imperialist.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.IND.EMPL.ZS?end=2019&locations=DE-SE&start=1991>

¹⁰⁸ *Problems of strategy in China's revolutionary war*, Mao Zedong

¹⁰⁹ *Social-Democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement*, Lenin

event of a revolutionary situation. This can only succeed if the party builds up mass support for an uprising in a protracted non-military struggle, and this requires the masses to realize through their own experience the correctness of the party's politics. This strategy is the October Road, which is valid in mainly imperialist countries characterized by an urbanized population and reflecting the principal contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

This requires the long-term construction of the proletarian united front that aims to unite militant workers on the basis of class struggle: both "from below" to unite workers on the correct basis regardless of party affiliation, and "from above" between the party and other organizations if necessary.¹¹⁰ When the party unites with workers around the correct demands and slogans, workers will see from their own experience that the Communist Party represents their interests. In Sweden, the building of the proletarian united front is totally incompatible with any people's war; if the latter is started, the organization will discredit itself and be alienated from the masses. The proletarian united front can take many different forms depending on the concrete conditions:

“It goes without saying that the practical realization of a united front will take *various* forms in various countries, depending upon the condition and character of the workers' organizations and their political level, upon the situation in the particular country, upon the changes in progress in the international labor movement, etc.

These forms may include, for instance: coordinated joint action of the workers to be agreed upon *from case to case* on definite occasions, on individual demands or on the basis of a common platform; coordinated actions in *individual enterprises or by whole industries*; coordinated actions on a *local, regional, national or international scale*, coordinated actions for the organization of the *economic* struggle of the workers, for carrying out mass *political* actions, for the organization of joint *self-defense* against fascist attacks, coordinated actions in rendering *aid to political prisoners and their families*, in the field of struggle against *social reaction*; joint actions in the defense of the *interests of the youth and women*, in the field of the *cooperative movement, cultural activity, sport*, etc.

(...) The Communists and all revolutionary workers must strive for the formation of elected . . . *nonparty class bodies of the united front*, at the *factories*, among the *unemployed*, in the *working class districts*, among the small *towns-folk* and in the *villages*. Only such bodies will be able to include also the vast masses of unorganized working people in the united front movement, and will be able to assist in developing mass initiative in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, against fascism and reaction, and on

¹¹⁰ The proletarian united front was not merely a strategy devised in the 1930s as a specific strategy during the threat of fascism. Of course, it was developed and popularized by Dimitrov in particular under these conditions, but it was during the 4th Congress of the Comintern in 1922 that the theory of the united front was put forward and approved by Lenin.

See "Theses on the united front" (1922) by Comintern

<https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/4th-congress/united-front.htm>

and Lenin's "Remarks to the Theses on a United Front" (1921)

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1921/dec/06.htm>

this basis create the necessary *broad active rank-and-file of the united front* and train hundreds and thousands of non-Party Bolsheviks in the capitalist countries.”¹¹¹

These words of Dimitrov were spoken at a period in the history of the Communist International when the main problem hindering the rise of the Communists was the extreme sectarianism which rejected the tactics of the united front and later failed to prevent the seizure of power by fascism.

“In our day this [sectarianism] is often no longer an ‘infantile disorder,’ as Lenin wrote, but a *deeply rooted vice*, which must be shaken off or it will be impossible to solve the problem of establishing the united front of the proletariat and of leading the masses from the positions of reformism to the side of revolution.

(...) Sectarianism finds expression *particularly* in overestimating the revolutionization of the masses, in overestimating the speed at which they are abandoning the positions of reformism, and in attempting to leap over difficult stages and the complicated tasks of the movement. In practice, methods of leading the masses have frequently been replaced by the methods of leading a narrow party group. The strength of the traditional tie-up between the masses and their organizations and leaders was underestimated, and when the masses did not break off these connections, immediately the attitude taken toward them was just as harsh as that adopted toward their reactionary leaders. Tactics and slogans have tended to become stereotyped for all countries, the special features of the actual situation in each individual country being left out of account. The necessity of stubborn struggle in the very midst of the masses themselves to win their confidence has been ignored, the struggle for the partial demands of the workers and work in the reformist trade unions and fascist mass organizations have been neglected. The policy of the united front has frequently been replaced by bare appeals and abstract propaganda.”¹¹²

These sectarian manifestations characterize the people's war line in Sweden; the people's war theory is based on completely different material conditions than those existing in Sweden today and will therefore inevitably become a sectarian line that appeals only to a "narrow party group" and not to the masses. The correct strategic line is not protracted armed struggle, but protracted non-military struggle in building the proletarian united front, thus uniting the working class on the basis of class struggle and preparing for an insurrection in the cities when a revolutionary situation exists. This is also Mao Zedong's position when he pointed out that the proletariat in the imperialist countries should accumulate strength through a protracted mainly non-military period in order to strike when conditions are favorable.¹¹³ The strength of the working class lies in its superior numbers, and in the cities this strength can only be accumulated through a united proletarian front which unites the proletariat and prepares the conditions for revolutionary insurrection.

Whatever form the proletarian united front will take, it is essential that the Communist Party take the lead in it by winning the confidence of the masses, which requires the application of the mass line and line struggle against erroneous ideas. The proletarian united front is absolutely necessary if, especially in an imperialist country like Sweden, the masses are to be won over from the influence of reformism

¹¹¹ *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism*, Dimitrov

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ See chapter “Militarization of the communist parties” and the quotes of Mao Zedong

and the bourgeoisie to the revolutionary movement. This strategy is based on the fact that a large part of the masses are under the influence of the illusions of bourgeois democracy, which characterizes imperialist countries when they are not in crisis and whose material basis is the imperialist exploitation of neo-colonial countries.

The proletarian united front is the realization of a political focus on the principal contradiction in Sweden, that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It is, moreover, a proletarian line, unlike the People's War line, which in Sweden is a petty-bourgeois line; since the great majority of workers will not rally around this line during a period when there is no revolutionary situation, it will at most attract the few extremely marginalized and petty-bourgeois revolutionary romantics. This is in contrast to the building of the proletarian united front, which takes into account the problems of the proletariat at the present stage of the class struggle. The proletarian united front is not an end in itself, but ensures that the party unites with all workers regardless of party affiliation on a correct basis so that they realize from their own experience that the Communist Party is the only party that is the party of the masses. Thus they become ready to support a revolution.

The strategy of People's war and the October Road merely outline the general features (principal contradictions) of the revolutionary process. Since each country has different conditions, it is necessary to constantly apply Marxism as a guide to action in order to correctly solve various concrete contradictions in each country. The people's war is defined as a broad united front that includes all the classes and strata opposed to imperialism and feudalism, since the principal contradiction is between imperialism/feudalism and the people.¹¹⁴ Both these strategies are based on different material conditions reflected in different principal contradictions. The only possibility to apply people's war in Sweden is if the country is invaded by an imperialist invader and the principal contradiction changes. Then the task is for the party to establish a united front that unites all those who want to fight the occupiers and the party strives to take the lead in this united front.

The October Road relates to the conditions prevailing in Sweden, i.e. there is bourgeois democracy, it is an imperialist country and a revolutionary situation does not exist at the moment. From such objective conditions arise certain forms of struggle which are correct, which can win over the working class to the party through their own experience and prepare the proletariat to seize power when a revolutionary situation arises. The transition from a "peaceful" period to a revolutionary situation is characterized by the transition from peaceful forms of struggle to revolutionary forms of struggle. To apply a dogmatic formula such as people' war with base areas and to begin militarization is, of course, to make a total break with this objective reality and thus to cut oneself off from the masses. As Mao remarked:

“Idealism and mechanical materialism, opportunism and adventurism, are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective”.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ When Mao Zedong applied the People's War, he started from the fundamental contradictions in China: “The contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation and the contradiction between feudalism and the great masses of the people are the basic contradictions in modern Chinese society.”

The Chinese revolution and the Chinese communist party, Mao Zedong

¹¹⁵ *On practice*, Mao Zedong

Summary

The objective conditions for a revolutionary situation cannot be provoked. Lenin's theory of the revolutionary situation shows that the party does not create the objective conditions, but these are created by an infinite number of links with all other phenomena in the world. No one knows today what factor will trigger a revolutionary situation in Sweden and what contradictions will arise, nor do we know when this will happen.

On these premises, the only reasonable, and the only possible way for a communist party to triumph in Sweden is to apply the mass line to the concrete problems at "every stage" as Dimitrov mentioned, and thereby win the confidence of the masses. There are different stages in the whole development of the revolutionary process and they all have their specific forms of struggle which are determined by the concrete situation. Only the concrete circumstances can determine when the armed struggle is necessary, not an imposed schema. As Dimitrov lucidly pointed out:

“We are enemies of all cut-and-dried schemes. We want to take into account the concrete situation at each moment, in each place, and not act according to a fixed, stereotyped form anywhere and everywhere, not to forget that in varying circumstances the position of the Communists cannot be identical.

We want soberly to take into account all stages in the development of the class struggle and in the growth of the class consciousness of the masses themselves, to be able to locate and solve at each stage the *concrete* problems of the revolutionary movement corresponding to this stage.”¹¹⁶

The Gonzaloists have no understanding of this whatsoever. The Gonzaloist theory of "militarization", which implies that any party can only be constituted through prolonged armed struggle, is an absurd dogma, and dogmas is exactly what Dimitrov is criticizing. This theory does not arise from the concrete problems of the masses, but is interpreted as some magical panacea that will guarantee victory.

In Sweden, the only correct strategy at the moment is to build up the proletarian united front in the long term in order to carry out an insurrection in the cities when there is a revolutionary situation. This is the October Road and is the only valid strategy in an imperialist Sweden.

8. Final words

Gonzalo's theories are deviations based on dogmatic and idealistic assumptions. They are idealistic because they emphasize the theory of *Jefatura* and the "three moments of world revolution" which claim that the world is in a strategic offensive, and they are dogmatic because they copy Mao's theory of People's War and on this basis advocate "left" opportunism, i.e. armed struggle before the objective conditions are ripe. But at the same time Gonzalo claims that these theories constitute Maoism itself. This false claim makes the Gonzaloists revise Mao Zedong's positions from the "left". Gonzaloism is therefore nothing more than "left" revisionism, i.e. it revises Maoism on the basis of "left" opportunist and idealist theories which it claims are universal but which deny the actual positions of Maoism.

¹¹⁶ *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism*, Dimitrov

As shown, there is an antagonistic contradiction in positions between Mao Zedong and the CCP on the one hand and Gonzalo, the PCP and their supporters like the CPB-RF on the other. Mao's theories call for reconciling the universal truth of Maoism with the specific conditions of each country, while Gonzalo's theories distort Marxism into a dogma. In essence, it is a contradiction between Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and Gonzaloism.

Gonzalo should be appreciated above all for applying the people's war to Peruvian conditions and for leading the righteous struggle of the oppressed masses against the Peruvian reaction. However, this cannot exclude the fact that the PCP was not victorious under his leadership and that his theories represent a deviation from the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Thus it is necessary to reject his revisionist theories which will ultimately only lead the revolutionary movement in Sweden astray. The only valid road to revolution in Sweden is the long-term building of the proletarian united front to prepare the proletariat for a revolutionary uprising when there is a revolutionary situation.

Thomas Berg
September 2022

(Third edition)