

The Final Degeneration of Maoism

Line of March has argued that this trend's maturation is completely bound up with explicitly identifying our break with "left" opportunism as a break with Maoism, and with thoroughly repudiating this retrograde trend. Due to the importance of this question, it is not only targetted for extensive discussion at the upcoming conference, but is the topic of this preparatory workshop as well.

Readings: "The Trial of the Gang of Four and the Crisis of Maoism" in Line of March #6 and "The International Communist Movement: A Reappraisal" in Line of March #9.

1) Line of March argues that narrow nationalism (with a specific anti-Soviet orientation) provides the opportunist thread that has tied together the disparate strains of Maoism from Mao and the Gang of Four to Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai. While this narrow nationalism was largely hidden from view during the national democratic stage of the Chinese revolution, it became more and more apparant after the mid-1950s, particularly coming to the fore after Khrushchev's revisionist bombshells at the CPSU's Twentieth Congress. From the early 1960s on, Maoism pursued a steady course of developing an alliance with the U.S. against the USSR, a path of increasing collaboration with imperialism against socialism. After the U.S. defeat in Vietnam in 1975, this collaboration became qualitative, and the Maoist trend, led by the Communist Party of China (CPC), abandoned any semblance of participation in the world anti-imperialist front and sided openly with U.S. imperialism.

Trace the important junctures of Maoism's deepening collaboration with imperialism since the early 1960s, identifying the most crucial ones marking Maoism's qualitative degeneration to naked class collaboration. Do you agree or disagree that narrow nationalism in the CPC provides the crucial connecting thread behind this anti-Soviet political course?

2) Though narrow nationalism in the CPC provided the underlying cohesive thread of the Maoist trend, infantile revolutionism was actually its most conspicuous feature during the 1960s when Maoism obtained its maximum influence. In China, this infantile leftism was most sharply expressed in the Cultural Revolution, with its idealist and anarchist view of socialist construction and the relationship of the party to the masses. In the U.S., Maoism's ultra-left impulse was located mainly in the New Communist Movement's continuation of an anarcho-syndicalist ideological orientation inherited from the New Left of the 1960s. This orientation was reflected in life as infantile revolutionary posturing and sloganeering, endemic sectarianism, romantic workerism, and a seemingly super-revolutionary anti-authoritarianism. In fact, it was these factors, as much or more than collaboration with imperialism in the international arena, that led many of the forces who initially made up the anti-"left" opportunist trend to initially question the New Communist Movement and seek another path to revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. The repudiation of this strain of anarcho-syndicalism, which has been placed more squarely on the agenda of the trend by the recent efforts of the infantile leftist Communist workers Party (CWP) to enter the trend, is also an integral part of the break with Maoism.

Discuss the line of the Cultural Revolution in China, and argue whether or not it was in the main correct or incorrect. Also, discuss the main forms of infantile leftism that gripped the U.S. New Communist Movement. To what extent can our trend's break with Maoism be complete without a critique of this ultra-leftism - and the Cultural Revolution - as well as of Maoism's international line?

3) Line of March has argued that Maoism's all-sided collaboration with imperialism has placed it outside the boundaries of the international communist movement. This conclusion is based upon the argument that, on the central political question of this era - the struggle of all components of the world revolutionary process against U.S. imperialism, Maoism stands with imperialism against the forces of revolution and socialism.

Discuss whether you agree or not with the assertion that Maoism is outside of the international communist movement. Also discuss the particularity of the Communist Party of China as a Maoist party holding state power in a socialist country, and what this means for the CPC's relationship to the international movement.

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