

*This document is a subsequent reply from the comrade in China, describing aspects of the current situation there, of interest to a wider audience and intended for posting publicly.*

Comrades,

In any case, from New York to Shanghai, from London to Paris, today we can feel that “things are changing”. Although we do not believe the myth of “fifty to one hundred years” that Gonzaloists talk about every day, the darkest nightmare that has lasted for decades may indeed be expected to end in our generation. Admittedly, the real storm is still some distance away, but dark clouds on the horizon are already dimly visible. For any revolutionary youth ready to embrace the storm, without a clear and scientific understanding of their social environment, it will be impossible for them to move forward. However, this essay is not a detailed and rigorous analysis of Chinese contemporary social reality, and may not even constitute a preliminary class analysis. When I planned to write this essay last November, I only planned to talk about the current situation of leftists, especially MLM’s, in China. However, the plan couldn’t keep up with the changes since then. The various mass movements that have sprung up one after another in recent days have led me to derive several areas in my writing. Finally, I have tried to summarize the past experience and lessons in this issue and make an appropriate outlook for the future of our movement.

As we all know, since the defeat of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the end of the socialist China, the revisionists who held military and political power quickly formed a new Chinese bourgeois class and established a powerful fascist bourgeois dictatorship that even could put Hitler to shame, built on the dead body of the revolution. With the forced compromise of the Shanghai militia (or “surrender”, to put it awkwardly), the revolutionary organisations throughout China also disintegrated rapidly; Under the subsequent fascist tyranny, numerous revolutionaries and class-conscious workers were imprisoned, and many of them were directly sent to see Karl Marx.

In the more than 30 years since, although there has been a strong peasant movement (but it is worth noting that “the peasants” as an independent social class no longer exist in China today, but some of our Gonzaloists “comrades” and reactionary “leftists” of the Red China Network can never get this point) and sporadic worker struggles, there have been almost no free Maoists in the land of China. In this period, I may dare to say that even the United States was not as dark as China (at least you had the RCP). The situation described above did not show signs of slight change until 2008. In the first ten years of 21 century, Maoists could be said to at least “exist” in China, because of the release of some old revolutionaries (such as the great Chongqing revolutionary leader Huang Lian 黄廉), the intensification of various contradictions in China, the influence of the ICM and the impact of the world financial crisis. However, at that time, when anyone spoke about leftists in China, people’s first reaction was to think of deceitful and ridiculous things like the “Communist” Party of Russia today. It can be seen how bad the situation was at that time. In this stage, older comrades have given us great helping to publicise MLM in China in the new century, and helping us develop through video conferencing and theoretical writing. They have helped further the recent struggle against Trade Unionists traitors & revisionists represented by 未明子. (That’s very interesting and important for the current line struggle in China, but I cannot talk it here or this issue will be too long). The leftist movement that arose in 2008 did not really end until the failure of the Jiashi movement in 2018. (As for why a series of leftist movements represented by Jiashi Movement failed, we shall discuss later.) In the next year, a series of leftist NGOs and leftist student organisations represented by the Marxist organisation of Peking University (they are the writers of the Journey of the Republic) were

damaged one after another. At that time, many of us felt that the rule of the *characteristic party* was indeed invincible. (Chinese leftists and liberals used to call the Chinese authorities “characteristics” for short, and call the current CPC the “characteristic party”).

At the beginning of COVID-19, the authority quickly exposed its incompetence (for example, the governor of Hubei Province mistook the most basic and essential data such as “the number of infected people”, “the number of masks” and “the number of medical staff” several times when making public reports); The first reaction of the ruling class in the face of this sudden public health crisis was not how to solve the problem, but how to “resolve” the people who put forward the problem; In fact, at the beginning of the outbreak of the epidemic, several doctors in Wuhan warned that a new virus was spreading, but the ruling class actually arrested them in the name of disturbing public order!!! Even when everyone knows that there was an outbreak, these people were still not released. This kind of thing has happened again and again, and will keep repeating. We all know that the authority still adhered to the most extreme and increasingly strengthened fascist lockdown policy until last October, but at the beginning of December, due to the deterioration of local finance, the contraction of the real estate market and most importantly, a series of heroic mass struggles, the fascist epidemic prevention policy was declared completely bankrupt, which forced the authority to abandon the previous policy; However, the response of the authority to the voice of the masses was to suddenly cancel all epidemic prevention policies in a completely irresponsible way, and because the policies of cancelling epidemic prevention in all parts of the country was very chaotic and unregulated (for example, until the end of December, the family residential area of a famous secondary school in Beijing remained locked down even though the policy had been abolished all over the country, and it was not unsealed until the residents did so themselves; similar episodes occurred countless times throughout the whole of China). As a result, more than one billion people in China have been infected and countless poor people and old people have died, a situation I myself have encountered. Of course, for the Chinese ruling class, labouring people are not human beings at all, they are at best “multifunctional humanoid tools”, so they can naturally claim that Chinese epidemic prevention policy is the most successful in the world. (I think the ruling class of the United States should also be experts in this field.)

The intensification of social conflicts caused by the extreme epidemic closure policy had a developmental process. When the epidemic just broke out in 2019, almost everyone believed that we were faced with a very serious virus. Therefore, the epidemic prevention policies such as city lockdowns, whereabouts reporting and endless nucleic acid COVID tests in the early period were acceptable to most people; In a sense, the epidemic prevention policy at that time was basically a technical issue, but this changed greatly by the end of 2021. When people found that only students in universities must strictly implement the so-called epidemic closure policy, and other personnel, including tourists, could enter and leave freely, people felt puzzled; When people found that the government could paralyse an international metropolis with a population of ten million at any time, people felt helpless; When people found that anyone could violate other people’s basic human rights (even from the perspective of the liberals’ understanding of human rights) as long as they wore the white uniform of the epidemic prevention personnel, people felt angry; When people found that the government could ignore the life and death of the people because of the so-called “epidemic prevention policy”, the people chose to rise up against it. Of course, although even the most backward people found that the so-called epidemic prevention policy was at least unreasonable at that time, some “great revolutionary teachers” (including many “principally Maoists”) did not think so. At that time, we often heard some hypocritical “leftists” say that “the lockdown and surveillance policy of the Chinese authority is superior to the policies of Europe and the US and it is responsible towards the people, and thus demonstrates that there are still some “socialist factors” in China at present. Their statement can only reflect their ignorance. And we don’t even need to respond to them now, because the people have

responded to them with practical actions. Of course, the line struggle between us MLM's and them goes beyond that. We often break out into fierce conflict with them on the following issues, such as:

“Is China an imperialist country?” (But now some people even dare to openly distort the nature of imperialism, and talk about that even some “second-level imperialist countries” can also have satisfy the so-called requirements of “progressive nationalism.”)

“Is the strategy of PPW applicable to CONTEMPORARY China?”

“Taiwan issue and ethnic minority issues” (limited by the objective environment, these two issues are rarely discussed even among us, but it can be predicted that when these two issues really become urgent practical issues, there will be many “leftists” who will still be “patriots”)

The issue of women's rights (this issue has basically been distorted in China, but it is different from the “political correctness” of America, but a separate document is needed to analyse this topic).

Of course, there is also the issue of the current Russian-Ukrainian war, on which I think you have analysed very well.

In fact, the previous extreme closure policy of China and the policy of accepting losses in the US and Europe, though they seem different, are essentially different ways of ensuring the maximisation of the interests of the bourgeoisie. These ways can even be converted to each other when necessary, and this conversion has indeed occurred in China. The reason why the Chinese ruling class could take the extreme epidemic prevention policy (I shall use “EEPP” as an abbreviation below) is mainly because of the following two points: Firstly, the Chinese ruling class achieved state power by subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat. In order to restore capitalism in a revolutionary country, they had to adopt the most extreme and reactionary form of bourgeois dictatorship from the very beginning, that is, fascist dictatorship; Therefore, China's bureaucrat monopoly bourgeoisie enjoys almost all power alone, controls the strong organisational capacity left by the socialist China, the national medical and health resources, and has the top industrial capacity in the world, so they can just do it. Secondly, China is different from countries with hollowed-out industry such as the United States and the United Kingdom. (Reference website: <https://bu2021.xyz/t/topic/18120>)

China is a country highly dependent on manufacturing, so its ruling class is willing to control the epidemic in a short time through extreme epidemic prevention policies, so as to make everything “back to normal”. In addition, for many local bureaucrats and enterprises, implementing extreme epidemic prevention policies will also help them to absorb more profits. However, for the majority of workers, considerations are completely different. Many of them would rather be infected than stop working, because for workers, stopping work means losing their basic source of survival. Thus, the main contradiction in Chinese society during that period was “the contradiction between the ruling class's forced implementation of the EEPP and the majority of the labouring people's seeking to remove the relevant policies”. Among leftists, many fake-leftists who shout revolutionary slogans on normal days supported the EEPP of the authority. These people often chose to support Putin's “heroic struggle against the US imperialism” in the current war, and let's not even talk about their position on the Taiwan issue. When the masses were fighting bravely against the reactionary [COVID] policy, these fake-leftists also slandered the movement, accusing it of being under the control of US imperialism, saying that the movement was led by liberals, and argued that the left should oppose the movement. Admittedly, the movements in many places, especially in Shanghai and Chengdu, was greatly influenced by the liberals, but I do not think and do not believe that the liberals in China have the

ability to organise such a huge nationwide mass struggle. They have no such ability! And even if we step back, if the movement is really led by liberals, we should never oppose the mass movement itself, but should oppose the misleading of the liberals. Under the EEPP, except for a small number of vested interests, there is no reason for others to support this reactionary policy; There are indeed some ignorant citizens who are frightened by the reactionary propaganda of the ruling class. They really think (or thought) that COVID-19 is the most terrible existence in the world, so they must implement extreme epidemic prevention policies. But what is the number of those naive and “cute” people who are just like little babies? How many people 【in contrast】 are there among the workers who cannot attain the basic means of survival when they stop working? How many such fools are there after the reactionary authority attacked the people for more than three years? Liberal gentlemen and some “comrades” suddenly lost their senses and their sense of numbers when facing such problems. In fact, most people are more or less disgusted with the EEPP. We are just intimidated by the order and dare not speak up.

When the EEPP impeded the basic order of production and even the life of the bourgeois society, and even hindered the interests of some blocs of the ruling class, they even produced some “vacillations”, but their “vacillations” could not play a decisive role in the face of the entire bureaucratic bourgeois order of China. (Shijiazhuang, for example, briefly cancelled the EEPP on 13th November, but resumed the previous policy only two days later.) What really played a decisive role was the nationwide mass movement. As early as the beginning of 2022, a large number of depositors went bankrupt because the bank in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, refused to withdraw funds from depositors. At that time, a large number of defenceless people went to Zhengzhou to defend their rights by holding up the portrait of Mao Tse-Tung, but were beaten and arrested by the reactionary policemen who are well equipped just under the portrait of Chairman Mao. Then the authority used the method of accurately sending “yellow codes” to all depositors with deposits of more than 500,000 RMB to prevent them from going to Zhengzhou. (The health code has three colors, green represents normal people, yellow represents close contacts with COVID-19, and red represents infected people and highly dangerous people; people with yellow and red codes could travel normally, and even had to be isolated in certain places).

The actions of the authority have seriously undermined their credibility among the masses. Shortly afterwards, in November, also in Zhengzhou, Foxconn workers destroyed a nucleic acid testing pavilion, clashed with policemen who were sent to suppress the workers and rushed to the government department in the center of the city... A simple economic struggle was able to reach such a height here in China, which shows how strong the militancy of the modern Chinese working class is and how strong the revolutionary potential they have. This is undoubtedly a great inspiration for all the leftists in China. However, we self-called MLM “disappeared” in the face of such movements, leaving only the Foxconn workers to fight alone. We are extremely ashamed of this. On 24th November, because of the reactionary epidemic prevention policy, the fire passage was blocked, resulting in many innocent citizens of Urumqi being burned alive by the fire, which completely intensified the contradiction, and all parts of the country “Rose up to fight”! The blank paper movement against the EEPP has rapidly expanded from Nanjing to all parts of the country. Soon after, the powerful authority actually compromised, and the EEPP finally went bankrupt! At this time, some leftists thought that everything would be fine if the EEPP ended, and they could accept the status quo. They did not realise that the victory against EEPP was only a solution to a phased social contradiction, and the real struggle was still ahead. Some comrades who have participated in the blank paper movement have summed this up well.

At this time, the attitude we should take on the left should be “Recognising the achievements and looking forward to the future”, and we should never be satisfied with the status quo and never should have stopped fighting. Indeed, on 8th January 2023, many workers in Dadukou, Chongqing, were

suddenly laid off without any prior notice because of the economic recession; The relevant enterprises refused to pay wages to the workers regardless of whether they would live or die, so a new labour struggle began again. The workers in Dadukou gathered and faced many reactionary policemen without fear, and rout the police using stones. However, at this time, we self-called MLM were still “disappearing”. I hope our American comrades will never be like us.

Why we regard the recent series of movements in China as a great breakthrough? I reckon there are three main points. Firstly, the working class has widely participated in the movements and has shown a strong militancy. Secondly, the scale of the recent series of movements are the largest and broadest since 1989. Thirdly, this is the second time since 1976 that the Chinese people have adopted a large-scale counterattack strategy in the face of the attack of the ruling class, and have achieved a staged victory. (The last time was the 1990s peasant movements, which also achieved a staged victory and abolished the agricultural tax, but the peasantry class has long ceased to exist in contemporary China, so it is far less important than the recent series of movements).

Some Chinese leftists attribute the reason why the Chinese socialist movement has not developed for a long time to the fact that the ruling class is too strong and the progressive force is too weak; So they think that we should do nothing now but wait for the “opportunities”. It is true that revolutionaries will also analyse how strong the enemy is and how weak we are, but the analysis of revolutionaries is fundamentally different from that of the compromisers: revolutionaries analyse the difficulties in order to overcome them, while the compromisers analyse the difficulties in order to escape from them. It is true that Chinese fascist dictatorship is very powerful, because it is, after all, a bourgeois dictatorship established on the basis of subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat. (In other countries, when the bourgeoisie considers it necessary to establish a “fascist regime”, it is often in the face of a huge ruling crisis. When the general bourgeois order is on the verge of collapse, it is often facing an “either Hitler or Thäilmann” question and in this case the bourgeois have no choice but establish the fascist regime; In China, the revisionists within the Party have been under great pressure from the very beginning.

Therefore, if China’s bureaucratic monopoly bourgeoisie wanted to maintain its own rule without becoming compradors, then the establishment of a fascist regime was its only choice. However, after the establishment of this powerful fascist order, contemporary Chinese bureaucrats increasingly believe that they can solve all problems as long as they hide behind this order. They have long adopted a unique arrogant attitude towards the demands of the masses and any voice of dissatisfaction. In their view, as long as they start the violence state apparatuses, they can suppress everything; In their view, as long as they start the ideological state apparatuses, everyone would believe in their nonsense; In their view, they can rely on the fascist order left to them by their predecessors until forever. In this case, whatever they do, they will naturally rely on the fascist order, and the more they rely on it, the more they isolate themselves from the reality, the more they become incompetent and ignorant, and their incompetence in turn forces them to rely more and more on the fascist order left by their predecessors to maintain their rule. In addition, due to the different levels of economic development and different industrial conditions, the contradictions between different interest blocs within the ruling class are also very acute. This kind of contradiction broke out once in 2012, and at the recent 20th National Congress of the CPC, it has exposed the bloody struggle within the ruling class of China to the whole world. In any case, the Chinese ruling class has indeed “degenerated”. Compared with the revisionists who restored capitalism in China, the contemporary Chinese ruling class is much more incompetent both in terms of personal ability and in terms of the whole class, which is the inevitable result of excessive reliance of bureaucrats on the dictatorship machine and their intentional or unintentional disregard of social contradictions; It is also a reflection of the unbalanced development of the economy in various regions in the superstructure under the rule of bourgeoisie. Admittedly, the above analysis is still

slightly rough, but I think the basic logic should have been clarified. Based on the same logic, I guess that the ruling class of the US also seems to be too dependent on the world hegemony established by their predecessors, which may be one of the important reasons for their “degeneration”.

Since the Chinese working class is so militant, and China’s ruling class is not an all-powerful God, why has Chinese socialist movement not achieved a breakthrough for a long time? I think the key problem still lies in our MLM movement. If we observe the new round of socialist revolutionary movement in China from the perspective of historical cycle, we will find that the whole movement is still at a very very early stage. As I mentioned just now, a new generation of leftists and at least self-called MLM’s have appeared in the society, and the number of leftists has increased significantly since 2020. But I’m sure that at present, if not all of Chinese leftists, at least the vast majority of the so-called leftists and our self-called MLM are actually petty- bourgeoisie intellectuals, and very few workers have class-consciousness. Over the years, many of the so-called “propaganda work” we have done on various network platforms under the absolute control of the bourgeoisie is not aimed at the workers, but at the “left-leaning petty- bourgeoisie”. In many cases, we are simply “entertaining ourselves”.

It is worth noting that I am not saying here that because many of our theories originated from the era of Marx and Lenin, so our propaganda means must copy newspapers and telegrams; On the contrary, we believe that modern information technology, if properly used, will be the best revolutionary propaganda tool and organisational tool, which I shall talk about shortly. However, the best weapons on the battlefield can not replace the strategic idea guiding the whole war after all. Our problem is not that we are using modern technology, but that we are separated from the modern workers, and the production and life of them. Of course, we did participate in the workers’ movement. We participated in the Jiashi movement five years ago. But why did a series of attempts represented by this movement failed? Why did the workers dislike student participation so much? Many people refuse to answer these questions, but I think we must overcome them. Both the Jiashi movement and some recent movements have exposed the disjunction between the socialist movement and the workers’ movement. In the Jiashi movement, at the beginning of April, the main force of the struggle was indeed a group of workers represented by seven activists, but soon the workers basically faded out of the struggle. By August, the movement has basically become an aimless leftist student movement with a strong aspect of political performance. Left-wing student associations and various left-wing NGOs all over the country have risen up to express their support for the movement, which basically exposed our full strength to the ruling class.

Some people even put forward political demands that are obviously beyond the current stage of the movement. This is a bit like when the steel strike in 1919 and the coal strike in 1920 in the United States broke out, some Communists (if my memory serves me, this is cited in a manifesto from one of the CPUSA organizations) responded regardless of the level of the development of the struggle, attempting to forcibly raise the level of the movement by them, and they even insisted that “workers must seize the state power...to reply to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the working class”. As Comrade Foster said, “In the long run, these statements are undoubtedly correct in theory, but the workers cannot listen to them.” It is obvious that the problem lies in the fact that we had not implemented the mass line well and have not proceeded “from the masses to the masses.” And so, with the later defection and surrender of some people (particularly a big traitor called He Pengchao“ 鵬超” ) and then a nationwide crackdown, the Jiashi movement was also completely defeated, The organised power of the leftists across the country has also been severely damaged and has not yet recovered. However, this is not completely a bad thing. After all, many people, including me, think that the previous “organisations” should not be recovered.

As for what to do in the future, to be honest, we really don't know the specific route (here I am not talking about the Bolshevik method & PPW), and there is no generally accepted view about this point at present. Therefore, the following contents are only some preliminary opinions of mine and some comrades, and are really "For reference only".

As we have just mentioned indirectly above, at present, we Chinese leftists, even the self-called MLM's, cannot be counted as few in terms of absolute number. From the theoretical level, I believe that we Chinese MLM's can compare with any other foreign comrades. Therefore, some of us including myself believe that if an editorial branch with a certain theoretical level can be responsible for preparing a popular magazine that can attract workers and progressive students, combining MLM with social reality, and a relatively safe MLM network platform or wordpress as one of the communication tool, it may have a certain effect. It is worth noting that I am not talking about mass work here, but about establishing a front for MLM line struggle. Although there have been some leftist magazines in China like IRN (International Red Newsletter <https://irn.red/>), their main content was various foreign movements, and its theoretical level was relatively poor, comparable to that of the Gonzaloists. Therefore, many people only knew its existence but hardly read it. Now we also have some platforms, but basically only a few people pay attention to them. The various platforms and so-called organisations of the Gonzaloists are too formalistic and full of sectarianism, and I'm afraid they can only shout slogans and prepare for the PPW forever. They often turn others into rightists just because of some extremely minor issues, but ignore the fundamental strategic issues; Let alone the exposed fake leftist platforms (particularly the red china net 红中网). In a word, they can't bear the role of establishing a front for line struggle, and we really need a front for line struggle of our own.

This issue is almost over here. And we are very happy to listen to your sharing of experience or any suggestions. Finally, let me revise a paragraph from Lenin's masterwork *What is to be done?* as the end of this issue:

"The Chinese [originally "Russian"] proletariat will have to undergo trials immeasurably graver; it will have to fight a monster compared with which an antisocialist law in a constitutional country seems but a dwarf. History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is the most revolutionary of all the immediate tasks confronting the proletariat of any country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of East Asia [originally "Europe"], but (it may now be said) of the Eastern hemisphere [originally "Asia"], would make the Chinese [originally "Russian"] proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. And we have the right to count upon acquiring this honourable title, already earned by our predecessors, the revolutionaries of the last century, if we succeed in inspiring our movement, which is a thousand times broader and deeper, with the same devoted determination and vigour."

Postscript from the author: *This article is not written according to a strict sequential order of time, so it may give readers the misconception that China has been implementing strict closure policies without any interruption since 2019. In fact, at the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, there was a period with relatively few controls. At that time, the government's goal of "eliminating the epidemic at all costs and continuing production" was indeed achieved.*