

Dongfeng Fang:

"Leninism" or "liquidationism"?

As early as the 1870s and especially in the 1880s, the Russian working class began to awaken to the struggle against the capitalists. The life of workers in Tsarist Russia was very difficult. In the 1880s, the working hours in factories were at least 12 and a half hours, and in the textile industry even 14 to 15 hours. The exploitation of female child labour was widespread. Child labourers work the same number of hours as adult workers, but are paid much less than adult male workers, just like female workers. Wages are very low. Most workers received only seven or eight roubles a month. Even the highest-paid workers in metal-working factories and foundries received at most 35 roubles a month. There was no labour protection at all, resulting in a large number of maimings and deaths. There was no workers' insurance at all, and medical treatment was entirely at one's own expense. Living conditions were appalling. Ten to twelve workers lived in a small, dark room in the workers' dormitory. The factory owners often deduct workers' wages, force them to buy food at exorbitant prices in the shops run by the factory owners, and plunder them by imposing fines.

The workers began to talk and together they made demands to the factory owners to improve their intolerable living conditions. They left their jobs - they declared strikes. The first strikes, in the 1870s and 1880s, were usually caused by excessive fines, payroll fraud, lower piece rates, etc.

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The first Marxist group in Russia appeared in 1883: the "Labour Liberation Society". It was organised by G.V. Plekhanov when he was persecuted by the Tsar for his revolutionary activities and was forced to flee abroad and live in Geneva.

- History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik) short Course

The Russian labour movement emerged in the 1870s and 1880s. The first Marxist groups in Russia also arose in the workers' movement, in addition to the Marxist group founded in 1883, and the "South Russian Workers' Association" in Odessa in 1875, and in 1878 the "Association of Workers of Northern Russia" was founded in Petersburg under the leadership of Haldulin, a carpenter, and Obnorsky, a locksmith. The first was an intellectual organisation, the second two were spontaneous mass economic organisations.

The Leninist "scholars" told us, as the movement was moving forward, that "we should build organisations first, and leave the rallies alone". But history has proved that the workers' movement and workers' organisations are twins. The workers' movement gave birth to workers' organisations, and workers' organisations gave impetus to the workers' movement. The "scholars" also said: "At present, handicraft indoctrination by means of integrating intellectuals into workers and relying solely on oneself or on the strength of a small group has many limitations in terms of comprehensiveness, continuity and stability of content, and it is often difficult to achieve very good results. A truly national political newspaper requires a strong organisation, which is essential both for the better organisation of the economic struggle and for the effective political indoctrination of the workers." Oh! There are so many limitations to the continuity and stability of artisanal groups that we don't need to build artisanal groups, we just build strong political organisations. But how to build a strong political organisation? The Leninist "scholars" have given us a prescription in the form of Lenin's complete works. If you read the complete works of Lenin, everything will be fine, and you will

be able to take part in the political struggle. None of us denies the necessity of a national political newspaper, but the important thing is who is going to put it into the hands of the industrial workers, and the Leninist "scholars" have "forgotten" that both the political newspaper and the Petersburg Society for the Emancipation of the Working Classes are inescapable. Leninist "scholars" have "forgotten" that both the political press and the Petersburg Workers' Liberation Association had to have someone to "instil" political and economic agitation into the heads of the millions of industrial workers. It is not possible to create a "truly national political newspaper" simply by publishing it on an external network that is invisible to the vast majority of industrial workers.

The "scholars" had to admit later: "It would be irresponsible for the cause if we stayed in the crafts because of all our conservative tendencies." And our united front unites all the separate labour integration groups. When the time came to organise ourselves and to build the Party, the Leninist "scholars" got scared and stopped. Instead of fearing the state of the artisanal organisations they were organising, they feared the dangers of the economism that would follow the development of the workers' movement.

Who is doing the political agitation against the workers?

We have also said more than once that our comrades will live with the workers in the factories not just for a short while, but for 10 years and one day, making friends with the hundreds of millions of industrial workers and struggling together with them. To organise and revolutionise the workers. Is this not the "inculcation theory"¹ that Leninist "scholars" talk about day and night? The slander against our economism is also totally untenable. Our comrades, even in the absence of a struggle, never forget to expose to the workers the nature of the state, the darkness of politics Unlike some people who shout "beware of economism and the need for political struggle", our comrades have never forgotten to expose the nature of the state and the darkness of politics to the workers even when there is no struggle. When the opportunity to fight is presented to them, they do not dare to do it. Even though they have made millions of excuses and said thousands of things, they have never been willing to implement Lenin's "inculcation theory". Even though they have made countless excuses, they are still unwilling to implement Lenin's "inculcation theory" that they have always dreamed of. "In ancient times, there was Ye Gong who loved dragons, but now there is intracranial revolution."

Our united front demands that the party should take root in the factories and build a party of workers. Only by making friends with the workers bit by bit will the workers trust you and be willing to follow us on the day of the October Revolution. Uprising is a very realistic thing, and some people fantasise that after the majority of the people know the "truth", they will be able to overthrow the reactionary government by raising their arms together. There were cases where mass movements broke out without vanguards, but revolts were not the goal, the most important thing was to seize power and transform the world towards communism. That's why we had to put down roots in the factories, and every revolutionary was a midwife for the new society. The artisanal state is a period which every revolutionary does not want to go through at the beginning of the revolution, but has to go through, because the political organisation of the revolutionaries, which is really tight, does not

¹ The theory of "inculcation" here means the rejection of the view that the workers can spontaneously generate socialist consciousness; rather it must be brought to them from outside their own spontaneous world-view. Engels once pointed out: "As long as the oppressed class--- which is the proletariat with us--- has not matured enough to emancipate itself, the majority of this class will still recognize the existing social order as the only viable order, and politically become the tail of the capitalist class." Thus, Lenin saw the role of the revolutionary vanguard as inculcating or introducing scientific socialist consciousness from outside the spontaneous workers' movement - Trans.

come out of thin air, but it is built by the united front through our step-by-step work. Unlike the organisation of revolutionary sympathisers, the organisation of proletarian revolutionaries does not tolerate sophistication² (what one cannot know, others cannot see by looking at the sophistication of the world, friends, tell me), nor does it tolerate freedom and slackness. Without a strong and tightly-knit organisation of revolutionaries, they simply could not withstand the brutal blows of the reactionary government. (Note: We have marked in blue the additions made by Dongfeng after modifying the original published version).

During the Russian Revolution, there was no Lenin's Complete Works, and the tens of millions of Bolsheviks mobilised in the factories probably did not read as many books on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as many of us did. Of course, it is certainly a good thing to learn more, but it did not affect in the least the tens of millions of Bolsheviks like Babishkin³ who went ahead and sacrificed their precious lives for the revolution. "Philosophers only explain the world in different ways, but the problem is to change the world?" (Marx).

The Liquidationism of the Chinese Revolution Today

"Water can carry a boat, but it can also overturn it". There is no marshal without a soldier; there is no vanguard of the working class or political newspaper without a close relationship with the working class. If one can hang a VPN and tap one's fingers and call oneself an "Iskra newspaper" or a national political newspaper, who would be willing to sing with them? Who would be willing to sing this one-man show with the workers? For this is not advancing our movement, but pulling it backwards - the performance of a deserter with a trumpet. He says that we don't need to be "indoctrinated" when everyone else is fighting in front of us (in fact, he is trying to say that he doesn't need to be indoctrinated). Who is going to distribute the gentlemen's national political newspaper to the masses? Who will tell the masses their views on "political struggle"?

The labor movement moves forward, but liquidationism pulls us back. They are often the loudest in shouting about the founding of the party, but they do the least in actual work. It has not organized grassroots financial organizations, but it has the fantasy of establishing a "national political newspaper" as a "water without a source, a tree without a root." Gentlemen "scholars" say that there is an economist risk in carrying out the labor movement, just like the risk of spoilage in the vanguard, the risk of choking to death when eating, **and you will never make a mistake without using your brain or thinking. There is no need to worry about revolutionaries becoming new oppressors without revolution. The most suitable way to solve the problems raised by Leninist "scholars" is to do nothing.**

Liquidationism is a deep-seated social phenomenon, indissolubly connected with the counter-revolutionary mood of the liberal bourgeoisie, with disintegration and break up in the democratic petty bourgeoisie. The liberals and petty-bourgeois democrats are trying in thousands of ways to demoralise the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party, to undermine and overthrow it, to clear the way for legal workers' associations in which they might achieve success. And in a time like this the liquidators are ideologically and organisationally fighting against the most important remainder of the revolution of yesterday, against the most

² This is probably a poor translation by me of the proverb "ren qing shi gu" which might also be taken to mean "the ways of the world". It refers to the methods, principles and experiences of dealing with the world, and comes from "Sending the Monk to the Honorable Order" - Trans.

³ Ivan Vasilyvich Babishkin (1873-1906) occupies a prominent place among the glorious fighters for the establishment of the Bolshevik Party, the overthrow of the autocracy, and the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia.

important bulwark of the revolution of tomorrow. The Golosists (from whom the Party asks no more than an honest, straight fight, without reservations, against the *liquidators*) by their prevaricating are *doing the liquidators a service*. Menshevism is put in a difficulty by the history of counter revolution: it must either fight liquidationism or become its accomplice. Menshevism inside-out, i.e., otzovism and ultimatism, also leads in fact to strengthening liquidationism: to continue to “dispute” about Duma and legal activity, to try to preserve the old organisation, not adapting it to the new historical period, to the changed conditions, means *in fact* a policy of revolutionary inaction and destruction of the illegal organisation. (Lenin, “Methods of the Liquidators and Party Tasks of the Bolsheviks”)

Today there are many liquidators who are clamouring to oppose the form of handicraft groups, oppose economism, and want to establish a strict political organization. Their organizational form is precisely the flat model of handicraft groups. Isn't this a form of political dishonesty? The masses can help the revolutionaries to organise for the revolution, but the revolutionaries cannot comfort the masses by sharing some of their organisational secrets because they are "ashamed" to do so. This is why many organisations of revolutionary sympathisers do not make a clear distinction between professional revolutionaries and revolutionary sympathisers.

Revolution is the main occupation of professional revolutionaries. For example, the Russian revolutionary Babushkin published Iskra, was responsible for the city's printing work, and gave speeches... Professional revolutionaries in this period usually work as workers in factories. , Professional revolutionaries should be prepared to lose their heads, instead of thinking that everything will be fine if I direct them at home.

And revolutionary sympathizers are very liberal. What career to choose? The revolutionary organization has no right to interfere with what you do. You can donate money and materials if you are willing, or provide a meeting place, and others will avoid it during the meeting... But in a revolutionary organization, revolutionary sympathizers cannot know the organization's secrets.

If the revolutionary organisations do not strictly draw a distinction between the two and segregate them well, then it is impossible to fulfil the revolutionary task.

Today the workers' movement in China is in a state of extreme underdevelopment, with very few workers' organisations, and workers' work in general is 996⁴. In a situation where workers work almost exclusively except for eating and sleeping, it is seldom possible for them to spend their precious rest time listening to speeches by people they don't even know outside the factory. It is not that the workers are not active, but they have been deceived by the factory management for a long time, and it is hard for them to believe that the well-dressed outsiders are doing it for their own good. Today, we can only gain their trust by making friends with them in the factory, so that we can effectively instil them and lead the struggle.

Our political newspaper:

The experience of the Russian Revolution proved that the agent network existed behind the secret workers in the factory. There may be only one or two agents in a factory, but a huge organization behind it supported its operation.

A national political newspaper produced without a grassroots organization is just toilet paper, because not many people can read this kind of "political newspaper".

⁴ “996” is the common employment condition whereby a person works from 9am to 9pm six days a week.

Our political newspapers today are not just about exposing the reactionary Chinese revisionist government. We also need to systematically use newspapers to unify our thoughts within our organizations and tell our organization members what our mission is and our short-term goals. What is it, what have we accomplished.

Let's quote here from the article "How we run a political newspaper today":

We still use the term "political newspaper" today to show that we fully agree with Lenin's revolutionary strategy of promoting ideological unity through the political press in order to substantiate the building of the party, and we hope to move forward accordingly. Today, the Chinese revolutionary left still needs such a political newspaper to express its ideological and political outlook, to propagandise and agitate in an industrialised way, to promote the exchange of ideas between different groups and to facilitate the proximity and integration of organisations on this basis.

I would also like to point out that when we talk about how to run a "political newspaper" here, some people may attack us as a delusional attempt to become a central organ newspaper and a "self-revolutionary" one. In order to avoid falling into unnecessary abuse and attacks, let Lenin speak for us again. Lenin responded to the accusation that "Iskra wants to give orders": "Gentlemen, if we really wanted to give orders, then we would not write 'Iskra, First Issue', but 'The Worker No. 3'." "We want our lead (if the lead is issued correctly) to be respected because it is issued correctly, not because it is issued by an official organ." Comrades! What we want is not a tattered flag that says "Party Organ". What we want is the ideological unity of revolutionary Marxists across the country to establish a true centralist party; For the Internet Left, what we want is a group of revolutionary workers who have theoretical cultivation, firm principles, use Marxism to analyze and solve problems, and can go among workers to carry out propaganda, agitation, and indoctrination. To accomplish this task, you have to have a political newspaper!

There are many shortcomings in the current handicraft group, but this does not prevent us from having a very broad program and the desire to improve the stage of our organization from the beginning, and in fact we are doing it. In fact, this is how it should be. Even if we are not able at the outset to establish a complete system and to publish frequently, it is possible for us to do simple, regional work of editing, distributing, publicising, agitating, organising and struggling. In addition to this, we should follow the example of the Petersburg Struggle Association by consciously overcoming the barriers between the groups, by consciously combining them, at least at the regional level, in order to constantly solve the problem of insufficient manpower. (No one would deny that one of the problems of the movement at the present time is the lack of manpower, and that it would be possible to expand our real strength by combining different organisations, in addition to the constant development of new people. It is also possible to expand our real power by integrating different organisations, and it is through this Leninist line of party building that we believe we can achieve the re-establishment of a party of the proletariat that will overcome the real problem of the left lagging so far behind the spontaneous movement of the masses).