
Glossary

Introduction

The *Theoretical Review* has embarked upon an ambitious struggle to contribute to the rectification and reconstitution of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism in the USA. In the course of this struggle, *Theoretical Review* has outlined several paths to realize its goal: critically analyzing the foundations of Marxism-Leninism itself, subjecting the present tradition of Marxism-Leninism to a critical and rigorous examination, promoting the recognition of the existence of the "crisis of Marxism," and engaging in a vigorous struggle against deviations within Marxist theory, specifically dogmatism and revisionism.

The tools (and weapons) used in this struggle have been, first of all, the revolutionary contributions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, and Gramsci as expressed in the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism. *Theoretical Review* has also taken up the contributions of more recent theoreticians (Althusser, Bettelheim, Poulantzas, etc.) as they have developed, expanded and fortified Marxist-Leninist theory so that it corresponds to the situations and resultant tasks which face the workers' movement today. The appropriation of the contributions of recent theoreticians is important because, as Louis Althusser explains: "A science which repeats itself without discovering anything is a dead science, it is not even a science but a fixed dogma. A science does not live except in its development, that is, through its discoveries." *Theoretical Review* has tried to introduce to the North American workers' movement these more recently developed aspects of the science of Marxism-Leninism. As Engels comments in his Preface to *Capital*: "Every new aspect of a science involves a revolution in the technical terms of that science." These words could equally apply to the terminology that has been more recently developed in Europe and further applied by *Theoretical Review*. It has indeed taken up many new terms and concepts in the service of theoretical production. This terminology has posed some difficulties to many readers because it appears to be in contradiction to traditionally held concepts, because its "newness" poses difficulty in appropriation, and because of a resistance to the incorporation of new concepts into the pattern and structure of Marxism.

While we must remember Marx's comment in his Preface to *Capital*: "There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits," the following Glossary attempts to aid in that climb by making the terminology more accessible. The appropriation of this new terminology means more than mimicking these terms; it is, in fact, a process of grasping new concepts. The Glossary is an initial step in making these concepts available to the broadest audience. The reader must bear in mind that the separation of these concepts from their expositional content (and theoretical object) can have the effect of lessening their rigor, sharpness and meaning. Nonetheless, the positive benefits should outweigh the limitations as an intervention

in the appropriation of the new terminology and concepts, and therefore this Glossary serves more than a "technical" function.

Theoretical Review readers are encouraged to submit suggestions for concepts and terms they feel would be appropriate to be included in the glossary.

"What is meant by giving a 'definition'? It means essentially to bring a given concept within a more comprehensive concept." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 146.)

Note: Those terms defined elsewhere in the glossary are italicized the first time they appear in other definitions, followed by (q.v.).

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CRISIS OF MARXISM The *crisis of Marxism* emerged in the 1930s with the line and practice of the international communist movement of the Stalin era where *economist* 'solutions' were developed to solve the real problems of communist practice. Concomitant with this economist practice, there developed a dogmatic tradition which froze the contributions of Marxism-Leninism into an uncritical 'orthodoxy'. The critical, scientific, and revolutionary foundation of Marxism, which should have been a living process of development and rectification, became blocked and entrenched in the 'theoretical' formula of the Stalin era. These solutions, created within an economist *problematic* (q.v.), had the effect of blocking the crisis which it had itself provoked and reinforced it, thereby preventing it from coming into view. Thus, the crisis of Marxism is directly tied to the *Stalinian deviation* (q.v.) and the economist problematic.

The crisis of Marxism, closed from the view of the international communist movement under the heavy hand of 'orthodoxy', broke open for all to see with the dramatic events of 1956, and later the Czechoslovakian rebellion, the 1968 French revolt, and the cultural revolution of China. While these events did not develop answers to the problems facing the communist movement, they did demonstrate that the 'orthodox' theories, practices, and *political lines* (q.v.), taken for granted by communists, were indeed in crisis.

This is where the singular and irreplaceable importance of the work of Louis Althusser, Charles Bettelheim, and their followers comes to the fore. They forthrightly recognized the crisis of Marxism and delved into its causes and manifestations. Their work, with all its contradictions, contributes to the further development of *Marxist-Leninist theory* (q.v.) and politics in the context of clear lines of demarcation with the empty *dogmatism* (q.v.) and *revisionism* (q.v.) of 'orthodox' Marxism and its various modern progeny.

For *Theoretical Review*, Marxist-Leninist theory is more than the classics; it is a science and philosophy, only the cornerstones of which were laid by Marx and Lenin themselves. Our task is to return to our theoretical and political roots, to recover the revolutionary elements of Marxism-Leninism, so long suppressed and abandoned by the sterile dogmatism of the Stalin era. Armed with these

revolutionary elements, and the subsequent contributions of others, such as Gramsci and Mao, Althusser and Bettelheim, we can begin to set the science to work, producing and shaping the political line and practice of a new kind of communism free from the fetters of the past.

Our recognition of the crisis of Marxism enables us to openly and honestly probe the contributions and contradictions of our own tradition, the Marxism of the Third International, on the basis of a firm Leninist foundation. For, if this tradition is the source of our present crisis, it also contains elements for our movement's rebirth. Without such an approach, without rigorous theoretical practice, an open critical spirit, and a willingness to honestly examine our own historical tradition, no genuine rectification of errors, no genuine advance of Marxism-Leninism is possible. [Sources: Louis Althusser, "The Crisis of Marxism," *TR* No. 7, pp. 10-20; Paul Costello, "Critical Notes on Trotsky's Marxism," *TR* No. 18, p. 8; Louis Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism*, 1976.]

MARXIST-LENINIST THEORY AND THEORETICAL PRODUCTION

Marxist-Leninist theory is the unity of two distinct but interrelated disciplines: a philosophy—dialectical materialism; and a science—historical materialism. Marxist-Leninist theory approaches the contradictions of society as the expression of class conflict from the scientific vantage point of guiding the working class in revolutionary practice in class struggle.

From this premise, we situate philosophy as the expression of class struggle within the realm of theory—philosophical questions are quite important class questions. The revolutionary philosophy of the working class is dialectical materialism. As such, it struggles to represent and defend positions in the interests of the working class in the theoretical class struggles while simultaneously representing scientific positions in working class politics. Dialectical materialism does this by providing a materialist orientation and a dialectical method which has the ability to defeat idealist and metaphysical notions which tend to uphold the interests of the capitalist system of exploitation. For example, the metaphysical notion that "nothing ever changes, so why try?" is counterposed by the Marxist thesis that change is an inherent characteristic of the material world, especially by *social formations* (q.v.). An idealist notion that "God made us, and God will take care of us" is counterposed by the Marxist thesis of *class struggle* (q.v.) which can provide examples of how people who relied upon themselves and struggled for their own liberation were able to improve their lives by their own efforts, such as the case in China, Cuba, and Angola.

At the same time the Marxist science, historical materialism, utilizes the materialist orientation and dialectical method to produce *concrete* knowledge of class struggle and society from which we can develop a political intervention to change the world. Marxist-Leninist theory produces scientific knowledge, not as an end but as a means; not for itself, but as a guide to the practice of communists.

Marxist-Leninist theory serves to inform, direct and criticize revolutionary *political practice* (q.v.); political practice in turn uncovers and poses political and other questions of practice which must be adequately addressed theoretically before they can be answered in political work,

and thus it has the ability to point up the inadequacies of existing theory.

While economic, political and ideological practice are domains in which struggles develop independently of Marxist-Leninist theory, the domain of theoretical practice is the result of conscious activity of communists. The theoretical practice of the party is the organization and production of Marxist-Leninist theory and its dissemination.

There are two main aspects of theoretical practice; (1) the creation and refinement of the tools of theoretical analysis, that is the conceptual system and methodology; and (2) the creative application of these tools for the production of theoretical analyses.

Theory is produced, not for itself, but as a guide to the practice of communists. In this way Marxist-Leninist theory, in constituting itself as a science, simultaneously creates a new relationship between theory and practice—a complex two sided relationship. First, Marxist-Leninist theory abolishes the characteristic dichotomy existing in dominant social thought between theory and practice, by turning theory itself into a practice alongside the others. By making theory scientific instead of ideological, Marxist-Leninist theory makes its production the result of a determinant practice—a scientific practice—a practice of the transformation of raw materials (raw information) into a finished product (knowledge) through the application of determinate tools (scientific methodology and concepts). Theory becomes a social practice alongside the others, subject to similar constraints, and also subject to *specific* limits.

Second, Marxist-Leninist theory establishes a definite relationship between theoretical practice and the other practices. The social practice of society as a whole (its economic, political and ideological practices) provide theoretical practice with the raw data with which to work. This is what Mao meant when he said that correct ideas (and incorrect ones too, we might add) come from social practice and it alone. After transforming this data into knowledge by theoretical practice, that knowledge is returned to the other practices in the form of analyses, strategies, tactics, slogans, etc., to guide communists in those practices.

The function of Marxist-Leninist theory is to produce knowledge of society in a new scientific way to combat the dominant capitalist ideology. It also uses that knowledge to transform the social practices of society in order to make revolution by using theoretical practice as a guide to the other practices. This is the two-sided relationship between theory and practice, between the theoretical and the other practices. Consequently the truth of theory is tested in practice twice, first in theoretical practice, and then in its guidance of the other practices.

Marxist-Leninist theory is not a self-limiting body of works which is complete and shows its truth to all; it is not a dogma. The cornerstones of this theory were laid down by Marx and Lenin (and their followers). This body of works serves as the foundation for its further development and expansion in order that society might be understood through concrete investigation to achieve the historic goal to change the world. Marxist-Leninist theory is more than the brilliant contributions of two individuals; rather it is a theory which gives us the ability to know and understand the movement, directions, and contradictions that determine

historic events. And from this communists have the ability to intervene in those events to advance the interests of the working class and its allies in promoting social revolution.

The primary task of Marxist-Leninist theory of changing the world is accomplished by the production of knowledge, because it is only through theoretical production that scientific knowledge of a concrete object is produced. And only through concrete knowledge can correct strategies and tactics be based—otherwise communist practice is blind. (Lenin: without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.) This thesis is contrary to pre-Marxist notions which denied that there could be a scientific understanding of social reality.

The production of knowledge presupposes the existence of the concepts and methods relevant to the object under investigation (e.g., to determine what constitutes the proletariat in the US, we need to define a 'class'). Here again, the importance of the constant expansion, development, and rectification of the concepts and methodology within the body of Marxist-Leninist theory shows itself; as the *conjuncture* (q.v.) changes so must the concepts corresponding to it change. For example, Lenin made significant changes in the terms and concepts that Marx used, such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, imperialism, the role of the party, etc. Likewise today the constant changes demand of us the same commitment to create, develop, expand and rectify Marxist-Leninist theory, we must not merely repeat the phrases of yesterday.

After having defined the concepts, it becomes possible and necessary to then use these concepts and methods to transform the ideological notions and raw data gathered from our study and investigation into careful hypotheses through theoretical labor. This aspect of theoretical production is primary: turning raw data and information into knowledge, transforming it through the working of theoretical concepts and methodology in a rigorous and disciplined scientific manner upon the object of investigation.

The knowledge gained from this theoretical production must be tested against the already existing body of Marxist-Leninist theory as a whole to determine if it is consistent with that body which is based in previous social practice and theoretical production. And the knowledge must be tested to insure its correspondence to both the object of the theoretical investigation and to the conjuncture to which it belongs.

Next, the new knowledge (and/or hypotheses) must be tested in social practice to change the world and to verify their correctness. This testing also broadens the practice which provides more raw material from which the knowledge can be both expanded and/or rectified. In this way both our successes and failures provide lessons to help advance our future theory and practice and therefore are not based upon empiricist models (see *empiricism*). This process of testing is in turn tested in the other practices which then reflect back on the theory and rectify and deepen it in a never ending process back and forth.

After being successfully tested in both theory and practice, the new knowledge becomes part of the developing body of Marxist-Leninist theory. The production of knowledge cannot be viewed as a one-way process; rather we must view it as a dialectical process which constantly relates the theory with the specific practices demanded in each

conjuncture. Therefore, Marxist-Leninist theory is an open-ended process and is far removed from the closed and self-limiting positions exemplified by dogma. And the scientific character is far removed too from the incorporation of 'popular' notions and ideas exemplified by *revisionism* (q.v.). [Sources: Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, pp. 167 and 253; "Toward a Genuine Communist Party," Ann Arbor Collective (M-L), 1976, p. 28; Louis Althusser, "Towards Fusion: Theoretical Formation and Ideological Struggle," *TR* No. 2, p. 9; *Theoretical Review* Editorial Board, "An Introduction to Theoretical Practice," *TR* No. 4, pp. 4-8; Tucson ML Collective, "Primacy of Theory and Political Line," *TR* No. 7, p. 6; Marta Harnecker, "Elementary Concepts of Historical Materialism," *TR* No. 7, p. 22; Paul Costello, "Our Differences," *TR* No. 14, p. 29; Boston Political Collective (ML), "Points of Unity," *TR* No. 16, p. 10.]

READING The value of a work of *Marxist-Leninist theory* (q.v.), after one has gotten beyond the basics, can only be ascertained by a rigorous *reading* which examines the text with an eye to reconstructing from it the definite area of knowledge and its corresponding methodology and concepts with which the texts poses its problems and derives its solutions. The popular and idealist conception of what it means to read assumes that truth shows itself immediately in the words used to express it. Every Marxist will agree that the Bible shows its 'truth' differently to the faithful and the atheist, but when it comes to the classics of Marxism-Leninism, the average Marxist never stops to think that the same situation is in effect here. The text is assumed to be transparent with its 'truth' simply showing through.

The way one reads a text, critically or uncritically, will determine what one gets out of it. For those who view the classics as 'revealed truth', these texts are read to provide answers to our current problems. However, all Marxist texts are not answers, so much as they are problems themselves. In them are indeed theoretical and political answers, but also gaps and ambiguities, elements of non-Marxist views and theoretical and political solutions which are not explicit, but rather hidden within the discourse. The key to this process is the reading and transformation of the data through the action exerted on it by the process of *theoretical production* (q.v.). This can only be the result of careful theoretical labor.

It is necessary to read Marx's writings, and the writings of every other Marxist, *critically* to be able to distinguish which analyses, concepts, and demarcations are truly Marxist (corresponding to the theory) and which represent the continuing presence within these works of non-Marxist *ideology* (q.v.).

Only the production of knowledge derived from the Marxist method of critical and rigorous reading is capable of transcending the time in which the work was produced and of becoming a tool with which to analyze and transform our understanding and of becoming a tool with which to analyze and transform our understanding of the present moment into knowledge that is relatively advanced.

A critical reading attempts to point out the strengths of a text as well as its weaknesses and errors. It seeks to use the strengths of the text to make explicit other strengths in it which are not openly articulated, to fill in some of the gaps, to clear up ambiguities, and to exclude erroneous ideas. This

is the way Marx read his sources; this is the way to read Marx and Lenin, Mao and Gramsci, Althusser and Bettelheim.

The ability to develop a critical approach to Marxist-Leninist theory is no easy task. It requires advanced, critical revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theoreticians, knowledgeable in revolutionary science and philosophy, and closely linked to revolutionary *political practice* (q.v.). This theoretical development is necessary for our political practice in order to scientifically take up the central political tasks of communists in the US. [Sources: Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 254; "Toward a Genuine Communist Party," Ann Arbor Collective (M-L), p. 17; *Theoretical Review* Editorial Board, "An Introduction to Theoretical Practice," No. 4, p. 6; Louis Althusser, "The Crisis of Marxism," *TR* No. 7, p. 15.]

FUSION The *fusion* of Marxism-Leninism with the workers' movement is what we mean when we use the term fusion as a Marxist concept. Louis Althusser laid out three principles of this fusion.

The first major principle of this fusion was formulated by Marx, Engels and Lenin: it is the principle of the importation into the existing workers' movement of the scientific doctrine of Marxism-Leninism produced outside the working class. The working class could not, by its own spontaneous practice, break out of the circle of ideological representations of its ends and means of action. The ideological representations of the working class remained dominated by the dominant ideology, that of the capitalist class. The social democratic and trade union organizations have remained in this ideological, reformist tradition to this day. Lenin stated in *What Is To Be Done?*: "class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is only from without the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers."

The second major principle concerns the nature of the historical fusion established between Marx's scientific theory and the workers' movement. There are two aspects to this. On the one hand, we have the workers' movement that existed before Marx developed his doctrine, therefore its existence did not depend on Marx. The workers' movement is an objective reality, produced by the very necessity of resistance and revolt—the economic and political struggle of the working class. It is generated, along with class exploitation, by the capitalist mode of production. On the other hand, we have the fact that Marx produced objective knowledge of capitalist society, he understood and demonstrated the fundamental role of *class struggle* (q.v.), the necessity and the revolutionary role of the workers' movement, and he supplied knowledge of the objective laws of its existence, its goals and its actions. The workers' movement adopted Marxist doctrine because it recognized in it the objective theory of its own existence and its action—because it recognized in Marxist theory that which would enable it to see clearly the reality of the capitalist mode of production, its own struggles, and the possibilities for its liberation.

The third major principle concerns the process by which the fusion was finally produced, as well as the means that are necessary to maintain, reinforce and extend it. If the 'importation' of Marxist theory into the workers' movement

demands a process of great length and effort, it is because a tremendous amount of education and the formation of Marxist theory is needed on the one hand, and at the same time a lengthy ideological struggle is required on the other. It was necessary for Marx and Engels to patiently convince the most conscious and sacrificing militant workers of the necessity of abandoning their existing ideological orientation and of the need to adopt the outlook of scientific socialism.

At the same time they were undertaking this work of education and the formation of scientific theory, Marx and Engels and their followers were obliged to develop a lengthy, patient and intense struggle against the ideologies which then dominated the workers' movement and its organizations, and against the religious, political, and moral ideology of the capitalist class as a whole. Theoretical formation, on the one hand, and ideological struggle on the other, are two tasks which remain vital to fusing communism with the workers' movement.

In the *economist* view of fusion, communists go out and get jobs in shops and factories. In the course of struggle they develop only that theory which serves a relatively narrow range of struggles (economic, trade union); they recruit some workers and they win recognition as leaders of the working class on this basis. The historical experience of the struggle against economism has shown that this definition of fusion does not require a qualitative transformation of the workers' movement; for the workers bring to this fusion only their presence in the economic struggle. Economist fusion does not produce a communist workers' movement; on the contrary, it produces a trade unionist communist movement. Clearly this conception of fusion has nothing in common with that which is held by Marxism-Leninism. [Sources: Tucson ML Collective, "Theory and Fusion," 1977, p. 19; Louis Althusser, "Toward Fusion: Theoretical Formation and Ideological Struggle," *TR* No. 2, p. 2; V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*]

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politics, its economist support for the productive forces theory, and its tailing after Soviet leaders in regards to Poland, the anti-revisionist character of *Line of March* is quite open to question.

At the same time, the PWOC has shown strong tendencies toward a right revisionist drift of which their support for the CPUSA's Gus Hall in last year's election is a prime example.

As these tendencies become more consolidated (they presently show no signs of abatement) the ultra-left dangers once posed by these formations become subordinate to their revisionist orientation.

In this regard, BASOC appears to be developing the kind of lines and practice which help make the delineation of these tendencies a more clearly observable phenomenon—and easier to critique—one which will lend this pamphlet authority, and leave its readers in expectation of those which will follow.

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