

An answer to typically lazy and dishonest “snark”

In previous messages (in particular, numbers One through Eleven) I have spoken to why revolution to overthrow this system of capitalism-imperialism is necessary, and why this is a rare time when—right in this powerful imperialist country, and right in this time we are living in now— this revolution is *possible*, and how that revolution could actually *win*. Whether what I have said about this is right, or not, is clearly a very important question with very big implications. In response to this, instead of seriously dealing with the substance of what I have said in these messages, someone wrote the following: “Correct me if I am wrong but you were saying that revolution in the US was going to happen in the 1980s right? But it didn’t so where is your criticism/self-criticism on this?”

As I will show, this “questioner” is not really taking a serious and honest approach—but I am responding to it in a serious way, because there is something important to learn in relation to this, not only about the actual facts but even more importantly about crucial principles and methods.

First, the facts: We (I, and the Revolutionary Communist Party that I have led for decades) did not say “revolution in the US *was going to happen* in the 1980s.” What we actually said was that the “acute and intensifying contradiction” between the U.S. and the Soviet Union at that time, “interacting with other contradictions, would lead to world war unless prevented by revolution in large and/or strategic parts of the world.”

That is a quote from our document *Notes on Political Economy, Our Analysis of the 1980s, Issues of Methodology and the Current World Situation*. Immediately after that, this document goes on to say: “Plainly, this was not how things worked out” and “We have the responsibility of understanding why we reached certain incorrect conclusions, at the same time that we affirm what was correct about our analysis.” The rest of this document speaks in some depth to this—both the reasons for our error, and what was, in fact, correct in much of our analysis of the development of things in that period. This document was published in 1999—25 years ago.

So, those are the relevant facts. And, along with the facts of what we have actually said (and not said), what I have quoted here, from our 1999 document, is the answer to the “question” from this “critic” about “where is your criticism/self-criticism on this?”

If this “critic” were genuinely seeking to understand how we approached this, they would have gone about it very differently. They could have done a search with the aim of seeing what we actually said about all this. Or, they could have simply asked: “Can you direct me to any statements you have made about this?” But, of course, that would require both a sincere interest in knowing the answer to this, and a willingness to do some work to study what we have said. Instead, this person’s “question” about our “criticism/self-criticism” is not really a question but is more of that all-too-familiar “snark” which responds to serious analysis with intellectually lazy, cheap and smug “dismissal,” rather than real engagement.

The analysis in that 1999 document, and the method underlying that analysis— including its summation of the basis for the error we made in regard to the situation in the 1980s—has been part of the ongoing development of the new communism as a *consistently scientific* approach to bringing about an emancipating revolution in this country and contributing as fully as possible to this revolution in the world overall.

Very importantly, this scientific approach and method is the basis on which the analysis has been made that this is, in fact, a rare time when revolution to overthrow this system of capitalism-imperialism is not only urgently necessary but is possible. And if this “critic” were really interested in understanding the analysis of *why* this is a rare time when revolution is possible—yes, in this powerful capitalist-imperialist country—they could have gone to the website revcom.us and read a number of works that get into this, including “Something Terrible, *Or* Something Truly Emancipating,” where I go into this in some depth. But, again, that would require both a sincere interest in understanding this crucially important analysis, and a willingness to do some work with that objective in mind.

While in itself the “snark” from this “critic” is not serious, it does represent a serious problem, because it reflects the widespread tendency, among far too many, to avoid really big questions affecting masses of people and ultimately all of humanity. What is going on now in this country, and in the world as a whole, and what could be the result of all this—very negatively, *or* very positively—is extremely serious and needs to be recognized as such and taken up in a serious way, as I am doing in these messages. Serious, honest questioning and disagreement is definitely welcome, because that can contribute to principled engagement and debate around these really big questions—engagement and debate that needs to go on urgently among people in growing numbers, in all parts of society, given what are the truly momentous stakes for masses of people and ultimately humanity as a whole.

These social media messages of mine—in particular Numbers One through Eleven—provide an important basis and focus for that engagement and debate.



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