

Josh Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*. Hampshire, United Kingdom: Zero Books, 2016, 312 pp.

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Abstract

A review of Josh Moufawad-Paul's recent book, *Continuity and Rupture*. Through which I present the political salience of this piece as a means of clarifying the terrain of revolutionary politics in terms of the reemergence of proletarian politics, the development of opportunistic critiques of Leninism and Maoism, and the necessity to reassert a scientific understanding of revolution.

Keywords

Marxism; Maoism; Revolution

The conception of continuity and rupture is as important as a title as it is as a philosophical concept. Not only does Josh Moufawad-Paul's book aim to reinforce the conclusions of revolutionary communism of the last century, but also break from its inefficacies. In doing so, he returns to the scientific socialism that Marx and Engel's so vehemently defended, as a means of evaluating changes of history, the propellant of class struggle, and the success of revolt through a lense of finding conclusive lessons and avoidable failures for future means of struggle. Most specifically, Moufawad-Paul takes on the task of overcoming the movement of class antagonisms beyond the limitations of Marxist-Leninism, but also defines the terrain of anti-oppression theory that emerged as capitalism announced the End of History after the failure of the two greatest examples of proletarian revolution in the USSR and China.

The period of the fall of the greatest achievements of communism marked a discontinuity and retreat from communist thought in many parts of the world, where the dogmatic stagnation of Marxism-Leninism in overcoming its limitations was upheld as a conservative force in tying the struggles of oppressed gendered, race and the differently abled people - even in comparison to institutionalized liberal thought. Leninism then upheld a reversion away from its progressive past, that was reified in maintaining a revolutionary continuity through dogma. While its immediate failures had then motivated a rupture with historical materialism and a farcical return to an idealism, through postmodernism, that mirrors the theoretical struggles that Marx and Engels themselves once overcame.

Moufawad-Paul in this book rightly aims to flesh out this terrain of theory by demarcating the erroneous growth of a non-materialist understanding of power and its

expediency in monopolizing on the lack of the theory around sites of oppression that vulgar variants of communism have historically ignored. The response to which must be a reassertion of the living science of class struggle that ruptures with the failures of the old Marxism and reasserts that the power to exploit and oppress must be understood as material force stemming from economic and political power. An understanding that necessitates the resolution of these structures of oppression by the seizure of power by the toiling masses, that then can change the reality of this world around us. That is, it necessitates the raising again of the Red Flag. Though this time, necessarily in the name of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

This requires the development of proletarian parties seeking anti-capitalist revolution. The reassertion of a concerted effort to relinquish power from the concentrated capitalist state, and to overcome the spontaneous and purposefully disorganized movementism that Moufawad-Paul took as main target of his previous book, *The Communist Necessity*.

While the timing of this book being more than significant - beyond the narrative of the End of History that has been propagated by Liberal theorists since the fall of the USSR, the reemergence of experimental leftist projects since the 2007-08 economic crisis has elevated critiques of the historic left's failures with proposals of a correct way forward that historically had never taken wind or new positions that now arise to denounce those that are effective. The point of contention coming not just from the now denied "End of History" but now the opportunity that has ignited anarchists, autonomous and Trotskyite tendencies to reassert their projects for proletarian revolution despite their historic failures, particularly against the rising tide of a clearly defined Maoist theory.

As a result, the emergence of critiques of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, or organizations that uphold this ideology, have now become popular as the struggle for a key position to lead the increasingly politically conscious masses as capitalism turns to expanding emergency measures, imperialism, and, it's last step, fascism to preserve itself. Particularly, Maoism is a target, because as Moufawad-Paul argues, it is the leading scientific understanding of proletarian politics, and thus its correct implementation has led to benefit of revolutionary organizations that uphold its principles.

As Mao Zedong argues: "The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything. When the Party's line is correct, then everything will come its way. If it has no followers, then it can have followers; if it has no guns, then it can have guns; if it has no political power, then it can have political power. If its line is not correct, even what it has it may lose. The line is a net rope. When it is pulled, the whole net opens out." And unfortunately, popularity and gains of power on the left are too often chastised as rhetoric or cleverly presented falsehoods before they are accepted as a material force in service of the proletariat.

While many of these anterior tendencies continue to uphold that the correct politics has not been tried, or tested, MLM shows that parts of them have and that they have failed. So critiques such as Elliot Liu's "Maoists and the Chinese Revolution: A Critical Introduction" serve only as an inaccurate critique to bolster an incorrect politics.

Liu, for example, seeks to focus upon a historical account of Mao, rather than the living praxis of Maoist formations that are building revolution. In doing so, he misses even the target of what a revolutionary ideology is: It is never a cult of personality that rallies the forces of the working class, but a practical evaluation and conception of the concrete conditions and the concrete actions that must be taken to overcome the oppression and domination that exists. While cults permeate latently, taking them as a target has always been both a legitimate critique of revolutionary movements as well as a fetishized focus of detractors among the revolutionary left.

This aside serves to show the significance of Moufawad-Paul's piece, because it does in every way clarify the philosophical terrain of Maoism as it is significant to building revolution, while glossing over the historical inadequacies of Mao that even many Maoists recognize. In doing so, the clarification of the terrain is a clear success in the presentation of his piece. While the clarification of this terrain does nothing less than argue that revolutionaries who uphold the scientific nature of Marxism must conclude that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism proceeds as the forefront ideology of effective revolutionary action.

References

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