

# Collected Criticisms of Struggle Sessions and its Leadership

The following is a list of almost all the recent written criticisms of Struggle Sessions and its editorial board – by readers, contributors and members of the editorial board. I have done my best to present the material without interjecting my subjective interpretation. I have included most criticisms I could find from the past year other than minor corrections such as typos and misspellings. [some have been removed for public release per request – R 1/26/23]

## Documents

### Correspondence on “Bourgeois Culture Is a Cadaver”

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I feel like [the article *Bourgeois Culture is a Cadaver*] makes an enemy out of non-binary comrades unnecessarily. Even if it comes from the movement of post modernist feminism, the putting into quotes of "non-binary" will make it harder to digest for people who find comfort in that label. As long as it isn't thought of as a tool for woman's liberation it is not harmful to the movement.

How does struggle sessions conceive of dysphoria? Is it a real phenomena? If so, why do so many people claim that their dysphoria is lessened through the use of they/them pronouns? It needs to be mentioned to some degree that reaction does do terrible things to the trans working class, a lot of people I know view attacks on their identity as asking them to justify their existence in the face of extermination.

A lot of the criticisms I've seen of the non-binary identity is that gender is based on capitalist oppression of women, and that identifying as non-binary doesn't help the woman's struggle which is true. However the identity itself is fine, feeling more comfortable not identifying oneself as one of the two genders is not counter revolutionary, and is not metaphysically incorrect. I've also seen people say 'things can only transform into their opposites' so non-binary people can't exist. This seems like sophistry to me, people identify that way because it makes them feel more comfortable,

whether or not they 'transform' in the eyes of society needs to be a different discussion than the identity itself which is harmless.

I don't want to have to say this to people to try and preface articles to help them understand post modernism and its harmful effects. Telling people 'how you feel is incorrect' just comes across as closed off and hostile. I bring this up because a position against the non binary identity is not well explained upon and comes off as extremely negative.

[Context: in responding to this email, we said among other things that “Struggle Sessions does not currently hold a line on the non-binary question.” The following is their response.]

Putting air quotes around non-binary is not a criticism or analysis. And when I asked for further clarification I got none. You have not approached it seriously at all. It comes across as blindly antagonistic and unresearched. I'm not criticizing you for making a criticism I'm critical of putting a line forward with no line to back it up. If you claim you have no line on it, that is false. Your line is something along the line of "Non-binary people are either delusional or are men or women who think they are fighting women's oppression." Unless you can tell me a third reason to put non binary in quotes this is what people assume when they read this. You are a public journal that represents the only correct ideology Marxism Leninism Maoism you should be held to a high standard of clarity.

[...]

Divide one into two here, what did you gain from including a remnant of an underdeveloped line? You would've made the same point mostly that this representation is meaningless for the class struggle. What was negative about it? Now it is harder to use that article to combat post modernism in people who want to become revolutionaries. If I gave this to a non-binary comrade they'd ask me to elaborate on this line or get upset depending on their level of development and I'd just have to tell them that I don't have a line on the matter.

There is no struggle here it's just giving us a synthesis with no analysis, it is worse than useless. I think your application of post modernism is too dogmatic, combatting the idea that it can liberate anyone is the point, people identifying as things doesn't hurt the

movement at all as long as they don't think they're changing the superstructure by doing so. But if that is a problem then it needs to be proved, and not just thrown out haphazardly while you don't have a current line on it.

## **Correspondence on “Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation” #1**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email. Attached was the document titled “A Polemic on the Nonbinary Question”]

Hello. In the first place, before mentioning what I would like to say, I would like to address some confusion in our previous correspondence. I fear that you comrades have misconstrued criticism as attack, as splitting. I am aware of the doctrine of "unite, don't split," but I am also aware of another doctrine that all Marxists should seek to follow: "ruthless criticism of all that exists." All that exists includes ourselves and our allies. In [another essay they had submitted] which you accused of "splitting," I criticized you and other communists entirely in the name of the unity of the ICM. It must be understood that I have the deepest respect for you comrades, as important leading figures in the Maoist movement in the US. But as Mao has quite clearly elucidated, contradictions and occasions for criticism arise even within a movement, and this criticism can and should be undertaken in order to further strengthen the movement's unity through line struggle- is this not the basic premise of Unity-Struggle-Unity? I therefore maintain that is not "splitting" to criticize one's comrades, and I stand by the criticisms made in [the other essay].

On this note, I feel the line your publication has taken on the nonbinary question must be criticized. Again, I have the deepest respect for you comrades and recognize the contributions your journal has made to the revolutionary movement in this country- more than I have, certainly. The role of a theoretical journal is a very significant one- but it is precisely because of this significance that it is so disheartening to see you trying to hand-wave away a very complex issue in a single paragraph. This, frankly, comes across as lazy, and as ignoring the oppression and the struggles of a significant portion of the masses. I know, furthermore, that your journal is capable of better analysis than this, because earlier works of yours- like Political Economy and Prostitution- are some of the most valuable and important contributions to the Maoist body of literature in recent memory. I cannot count the number of times I have fallen back on that text when needing

to defend the Maoist view of the sexual exploitation industry against postmodern "sex-work positive" feminism. But the nonbinary question is no less deserving of complex analysis, and in denying it that analysis by dismissing it as a postmodern fantasy you are genuinely harming your own movement by making us look out of touch with issues the masses in this country largely take seriously. This will, ultimately, drive them into the arms of the very postmodernists we should be pulling them away from!

Again, I want to be clear that I am trying to be comradely in my criticism here. I would ask you, as a fellow advocate of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the US, to make a more detailed study of the nonbinary question. Attached is a short polemic on the subject, of my writing- it is not a direct criticism of your work, understand, rather a polemic against a general attitude that many comrades have mistakenly expressed, which I felt was relevant and worth writing and spreading at the present moment. I would be honored if you would read it and consider publishing it. If you decide not to notify me, and please share your criticisms with me, and I will improve it as I see necessary based upon these criticisms and then post it myself.

## **Correspondence on “Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation” #2**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

Due to your recent adoption of a more explicitly enbyphobic position, I've regretfully decided to withdraw my support for your journal. I had very high hopes for your journal, I was even considering asking what I could do to help to propagate your print release when it arrives, and I've tried as hard as I could to reconcile your positions with my own status as a non-binary member of the proletariat because I have trans/LGBT friends whom I wished to bring to Maoism explicitly since many are from an anarchist tendency that I fundamentally disagree with. I consider this a very bitter turn of events.

[...]

I was at work when I wrote that message and now that I'm home I'd like to take time to more thoroughly demarcate myself from your position and express my full disappointment. [...] I've tried to be as faithful as a pupil as I can be, going as far to delete my social media presence in preparation for my duties as a Maoist.

This is not an assumption of your antagonism, you've made your antagonism perfectly clear. Antagonism against non-binary segments of the LGBT population is correctly recognized as an expression of more general transphobia, this is the overwhelming position of the broader LGBT community. You show blatant and callous disregard for their genuine struggles; for all of your talk of going to the masses, you appear to have learned nothing from any of the sections of LGBT peoples you might've come across, and will in the future be rightly categorized as their enemies. Your position, or rather, your limp and gutless non-defense of LGBT sections of the proletariat will make it impossible to unite them under your banner, and they will rightly see you at best as fundamentally uncaring, or at worst, openly hostile. Your pathetic justification for your disregard of non-binary people shows this lack of understanding, and it's sadly something that I would've more rightly expected from my bitterest enemies and the various reactionary transphobes I've encountered, which is why it's the dagger that's cut the deepest. You all seem arrogantly convinced that we need to shut up and make ourselves complacent to our own problems for your sake.

I would still wish to take this as an opportunity to struggle for unity, but considering this is the position of the entire editorial board to my knowledge, I will be formally apologizing to all of my LGBT friends that I've attempted to teach your articles to, and I fully repudiate your position with all of the blackest bile of my guts.

[Context: we responded with an email saying the following:

“We have received multiple criticisms of the article in question, many of which we are taking to heart and we've recognized that we put out bad propaganda--for instance, it is bad propaganda insofar as it does not clearly demarcate between how the reactionaries traffic in the people's rebellion against oppression and discrimination on the one hand, and the effects of this trafficking on the people themselves on the other hand, thus producing something which does not clearly demarcate between friends and enemies. To be clear, we are not trying to publish something which is antagonistic against non-binary people or any of those claiming to have exited the man-woman contradiction.”

The following is their response]

I appreciate your response immensely, I myself was a tad too hasty in my judgement of your journal's position, and I should've rightly taken it as an opportunity to engage in

good faith struggle before making derogatory and hurtful remarks, and for that I apologize and accept full responsibility.

I agree wholeheartedly that the bourgeoisie would absolutely traffic in the supposed "liberation" of LGBT peoples in a way that completely avoids any semblance of class struggle proper, but if I may add my own two cents, I would begin writing within a revised article as soon as possible something that argues for class struggle specifically for the interests and benefit of the most oppressed sections of the LGBT population, as well as addressing some of the concerns many of them have. From maintaining long friendships with many trans women and men, I recognize the damage that's done to them by living in abusive and or non-accepting households, as well as their personal struggles with transitioning due to their lack of legally recognized status as the gender they identify as, along with the financial burden of medically transitioning in our country with abysmal for-profit healthcare; all of this while maintaining the same godawful jobs I've been working! Ideally I'd like to be able to position communism as something that could help alleviate these problems, and give them something to fight for in the process. It burns me inside to see my trans friends and comrades struggling with these issues and feeling drained, isolated, and weak, and I wish I could give them Maoism as something to steel them and make them strong enough to help fight for their revindications against the reactionary transphobes that put them in this position. I eagerly look forward to this revised article as a result.

As for myself, although I might've personally been offended by the journal's position on the existence of non-binary people, my concern is mainly to do with what I've stated before, that LGBT people rightly categorize enbyphobia within the rubric of general transphobia, and this is a charge that I wouldn't wish your journal to be leveled with. I might've also been a little upset because justifying my own existence is something I've had to do enough with genuine transphobes.

### **Correspondence on “Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation” #3**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I have some brief concerns regarding some reason lines presented around transgender people (defined here as people who deal with gender dysphoria, which is an observed phenomenon with ramifications on the health of an individual).

Simply put, "non-binary" (a term which admittedly carries the baggage of postmodernism) colloquially is used merely to describe a subset of trans people who benefit from a social transition which might alleviate dysphoria and its accompanying psycho-social challenges.

Unfortunately it is indeed true that many, especially of the petit bourgeoisie, have inappropriately adopted the practices of singular-they pronouns and gender nonspecific signifiers merely as a means of either self indulgent histrionics or distancing themselves from gender contradictions. The existence of this pervasive phenomenon however does not negate the existence of transgender individuals who benefit on a psycho-social level from gender nonspecific identities.

Those transgender individuals who do benefit from this, and now because it is the language of the time may call themselves "nonbinary," should be treated as though they are intelligent enough to understand they still relate to the gender contradictions generally as male or female, and I am not fully seeing the benefit of treating this as incompatible with personally preferring a gender neutral identification.

I am mainly emailing because I can see a lot of harm that a line such as this-- particularly one which reads as fairly disconnected from the histories of the specific group(s) of people in question-- on the way many younger more advanced members of the masses will relate to what I strongly believe is the necessary line for working class revolution, i.e. Maoism in its proper and complete form including the contributions of Chairman Gonzalo. I would loosely parallel this to the damage done when various "Communist" organizations who in the past took up firmly homophobic lines, such as the RCP-USA.

To be absolutely clear-- I do not want nor expect Struggle Sessions nor any Communist-minded group to tail the Post-Modernists, "Queer Theorists," "Inclusionists," or whatever other chronically-online bourgeois intellectual milieu that opportunistically claims to speak for same-gender-attracted or transgender workers. But I do expect Struggle Sessions to make it crystal clear their intent on focusing in on the self-described non-binary people within trans communities (and again I am explicitly rejecting the "non-dysphoric trans" people who prey vulture-like on trans people). This group of trans

people that prefer to identify in some non-Male non-Female way remain a minority within a minority, and generally speaking are probably capable of being critical of their own position within gender contradictions even if this seemingly doesn't align with whatever personal identity they may prefer.

## **Correspondence on “Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation” #4**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I wish to criticize your article "Letter to the Editor: Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation?" which I think shows a lack of consideration of your audience and fails to provide anything really useful for workers on the questions of homosexuality, being trans or the issue of “non-binary,” which it purports to address. I think your style of writing in this article reveals a lack of close links with the masses. Because of this, you don't write for friends who are wondering about these things in earnest, but in lashing out at perceived attacks you only push friends farther away.

I was initially eager to see this article had been published, and turned to it for answers to help me and my friends navigate the contradictions in our lives. I am friends with all kinds of people among the masses, including proletarians who are gay or trans. I even have comrades who call themselves “non-binary” and who practice polyamory, and I struggle with them on these topics in the hopes of persuading them, respectively, to a dialectical materialist understanding of gender, and to discard decadent and self-serving sexuality. I don't fully understand these things myself yet, so we seek clarity from publications like yours on the pressing questions in our lives.

But in this article, in response to readers who pose such questions, you are defensive and dismissive. In your introduction, you bristle at “accusations,” and refuse to answer directly and plainly, instead telling us: “Questions of sex and sexuality are secondary to the collective demands of revolutionary politics.” Sure! But we do have questions! It's rude to start off answering a question by saying it's not as important as some other questions.

You then spend the first 6 paragraphs talking about “sexual liberation” and how it's “decadent” “promiscuous” “non-conforming” “hedonist” “individualist,” etc. It seems like you're calling LGBT people these things, since your article is poorly written in posing a



question about LGBT people only to talk about something else. This is rude too, because even if you're not calling LGBT people these things, you still kind of are, by lumping it all together into the same topic. If you had instead treated these different questions methodically in turn, even if only briefly, not only would you have actually answered the question, you would have helped readers learn to parse out contradictions themselves too. This would be another way you can be useful to the people, using the journal to ideologically teach a man to fish etc. and not just tell us your line about it.

Anyway, a patient reader comes to understand you weren't intending to refer to LGBT people as "decadent" etc. when you finally get to actually answering the question with: "Hence homosexuality and transition to the social role of the opposite sex has an objective existence that is conditioned by the historical development of society." You will counter, "It didn't take us six paragraphs to get to the answer, we answered the question at the very beginning, when we said 'We take the class stand of the proletariat, applying Marxism to our conditions and putting proletarian politics at the center of our theoretical work.'" No, questions are asked by people, who have particular reasons for asking them, and this was not the question. This is part of understanding your audience. Don't just answer the question you think you're being asked, seek to understand what's really being asked by understanding who's asking-- there may be many more people asking than the person who initially raised the question, and maybe you should answer them.

You confuse friends for enemies, approaching your audience as an enemy accusing you of hating these kinds of people. But there are many good people out here asking "what do Maoists think of trans people?" because they are trans and interested in Maoism, and they just need to hear "You're good-- come on in!" This question is not an attack, it's a search for unity. Is responding to a question about "non-binary" much different? No, not that different-- you must start from a desire for unity and love for the masses. You can struggle over ideas while still assuring someone you are their comrade and care about them. You can't be so defensive, you can't be so afraid of struggling with the masses on these questions! You have an important role you can play in helping ideologically arm the class against the postmodernism and identity politics that seek to divide us. But in this article, you are only helping to divide us more by representing Maoists as unsympathetic to the very real and often life-threatening oppression of LGBT people.

I would like to urge you comrades to develop closer ties to the masses, LGBT or not, because LGBT people are not going to find what they're looking for in this article and

neither are the masses generally. Who are you writing for? If you do not know the masses, and by that I mean actually know a lot of people among the people and live your lives intertwined with theirs, then how are you going to know what they need to hear? You're going to keep going off the mark, you are going to write for imaginary workers not real workers, for yourselves and not for the class. You should reflect on what Mao says in Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art:

“We should esteem the specialists, for they are very valuable to our cause. But we should tell them that no revolutionary writer or artist can do any meaningful work unless he is closely linked with the masses, gives expression to their thoughts and feelings and serves them as a loyal spokesman. Only by speaking for the masses can he educate them and only by being their pupil can he be their teacher. If he regards himself as their master, as an aristocrat who lords it over the "lower orders", then, no matter how talented he may be, he will not be needed by the masses and his work will have no future.”

I don't know your full situations and the relationships you have with the masses, but an article like this shows something's askew. It is present from the very title, where you call this a “Letter to the Editor” and then liquidate the letter in favor of your own response. I wonder how many people you consulted in writing this article. Did you leave your ivory tower and ask proletarians what they think about these questions, or only form your ideas in response to emails and posts on the internet? Did you go to the local college and ask students why they want to be “non-binary”? Did you go to the picket line and ask the steelworkers and their wives about how their relationships support the struggle? Did you run your explanation of metaphysics by the construction workers smoking outside the gas station? Did you invite the supervision of the masses over your work, solicit the opinions of family and friends? I am genuinely curious to know your writing process, how you practice the three withs, and make sure you're writing something the masses need.

I also still have lots of questions about the topic itself which this article didn't answer, but I hope you might explore in the future, after consulting broadly to see which are really relevant to unpack. What is meant by “transition to the social role of the opposite sex”? I've never heard it phrased just this way and am interested to know more-- what is your line on being transgender? Is it correct to say a trans man is a man, or should you say they are ‘a woman who carries out the social role of a man’? How can one transition from a man to a woman or vice versa? I would love to see this explained thoroughly using Marxism. Is it correct to use the term “sexual orientation,” and how do Marxists

understand the emergence of homosexuality? How does a gay relationship fit into this new society we want to build? Could you talk more about why men and women might find something appealing in being non-binary, and what they should pursue instead to find the answers and solace they are looking for? Please don't say "people's war until communism."

If you think these questions are beneath you, that we need to focus on loftier "primary questions," then you don't have to write about them. But if you're going to write about them, investigate the problems people are actually trying to solve in raising these questions and try to bring us something back that we can use that will unite us more closely. And with that greater unity, you'll find us pressing forward together toward those primary questions after all.

## **Correspondence on "Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation" #5**

[Context: The blogger named Queer Bolshevik sent us a criticism that they posted on their blog. It is online at <https://queer-bolshevik.medium.com/an-earnest-criticism-of-struggle-sessions-7f1b23e30a0>.

We sent an email asking for elaboration on some points to which they responded the following.]

Regarding your first question, I would call "Bourgeois Culture is a Cadaver, It Cannot Produce Anything New" another example of editorial and ideological laziness. I cannot indeed think of a word that better describes the dismissal of a whole slough of different thinkers and ideas in a single sentence with no elaboration than "lazy." [...]

With Fanon specifically, dismissing so hastily a thinker so influential in philosophical criticism of colonialism must be called irresponsible. It is lazy in the utmost to dismiss someone like Fanon as a postmodernist without performing an actual in-depth analysis of his work, life, and ideas; indeed had any such analysis been done it would have revealed to you that he wasn't a postmodernist in any meaningful sense of the word.

And certainly you must see that this passage presents no legitimate response to any of the ideas it dismisses as postmodern (several of which it is of course wrong to dismiss thusly). It is quite reasonable to not want to comprehensively address every single thing you denounce (certainly I would not do so in your position), but it is no good to simply

assert that a huge number of things are wrong or right without actually explaining why. If a position is merely stated, but not elucidated or defended, nobody benefits and nothing is achieved.

I also think it is an example of editorial laziness that that essay criticizes the dogma of "representation" to such little depth.

Liberals rejoice at the “inclusivity” provided to them for entertainment from their imperialist masters. The feeling of “empowerment” sweeps over the “marginalized” and of course there is predictable hostility to this from other reactionaries.

Monopoly media has thus created a plethora of programs which include “non-binary” characters, token transgender characters, and at least one or two gay characters in them.

I am quite in agreement with you that the liberal obsession with surface-level aesthetics of inclusion in culture is totally at odds with real justice for the proletariat and the oppressed minorities within it. But this passage does very little to explain why this dogma is useless- indeed, it does nothing. Once again, the position that the dogma of "representation" is bad is stated but it is not elucidated or defended. How does it fall flat? Why is it a problem? What is a better way to promote justice for these people in culture? Without answers to these questions the passage is useless.

I also recall thinking that "Again on The Lumpenproletariat" should have had all its points better elucidated, especially with regard to the cited examples of "lumpen heroes" in bourgeois culture. Each cited type of lumpen idolization in bourgeois culture takes only a few sentences to explain, and frankly I do not feel after reading it that enough ink has been spilled to communicate precisely what each type is, and more importantly how precisely its cultural significance serves bourgeois rule and how precisely it is relevant to proving the central thesis that too much of the broad "Left"'s attention goes toward organizing the lumpenproletariat and not enough to the proles proper. In general, however, I think that piece was interesting and educational- I just would have had it more clearly elaborated.

As pertains to the second, [...] I will elaborate that I was at one time (I am no longer, owing to a desire to spend more time on organizing with people in the street and less on studying alone on my computer) a member of an internet-coordinated discussion group for the study of Maoist thought and philosophy. On a few occasions members of this

group were concerned about statements made by your publication and thought about contacting you with criticisms- on every such occasion there was also fear that your response would be dismissive and that you would not seriously consider their criticisms, and thus often it was felt that sending them was pointless. I should be clear that these were not people wanting to denounce or abuse you or your ideas in any way, they were earnest admirers who had small and genuine queries about what they believed were minor mistakes you had made- this was a desire for constructive criticism of exactly the kind Mao championed, which they did not believe you would be receptive to. One comrade specifically, who though I only knew him tangentially I must say gave every impression of being an earnest and dedicated student of communism who worked hard to promote it in his daily life, expressed genuine anxiety at the thought of the disdain he would receive for any disagreement with your platform. I do not feel that this is the feeling a communist theoretical journal ought to inspire in its readership.

## **Correspondence on “Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation” #6**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I am reaching out about the ~6 month old article entitled Letter to the Editor: Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation? I have personally struggled to understand the general line of the Editorial Board on this issue. I have heard some argue that your line is incorrect because it heavily limits the scope of the issue down to the Man-Woman contradiction and does not recognize non-binary individuals as a legitimate group. Some have argued that your article is too restrictive in its scope, only considering the contradiction between Binary Men and Women, while excluding Non-binary people from the equation entirely. Arguing that Non-binary identification is purely a product of idealism, post-modernism, and alienation. If this is the line held by the board, I would greatly recommend reading Towards a Scientific Analysis of the Gay Question and revising your line, as similar arguments were made against gay people in the process of answering the Gay Question and have been, in my opinion, proven demonstrably incorrect. I would also encourage you all to consider any chauvinistic beliefs you may be holding going into any further analysis (I.e. The proletariat is far too backwards to accept and understand the non-binary question thoroughly). On the other hand, I have also heard that the line the Editorial Board is arguing for is not making a blanket statement about non-binary people, but is

instead tackling the individualistic nature of the concept of sexual liberation and identity opportunism. If it is the latter, I would agree with the notion that there is a broad problem with identity opportunism in political discourse and that personal identity and relationships are not what we struggle through to resolve contradictions within society. I would also agree that the man-woman contradiction can not be "opted" out of, but I do not agree that non-binary Marxists in any way claim to opt out of it. The phenomenon of people's personal identity not aligning with the assigned social role at birth is not "metaphysics" or "idealist", what is idealist, from my understanding, is to limit the scope of the man-woman contradiction to only binary individuals, when the non-binary struggle can be found in the contradiction between men and women. In class society, people have been split into two categories on the basis of reproduction (as the article stated), this and property rights are the foundation of the man-woman contradiction. Would it then not make some sense that non-binary people are also caught in this struggle because they wish to resolve the contradiction between their identity and assigned gender role? How can this understanding be post-modernist? Is there not some material basis for the contradiction between non-binary identity and gender roles as a condition of class society? If not, why is this proposition invalid and wrong? This is by no means a thorough criticism or polemic, but a simple raising of questions and concerns regarding the aforementioned article. Thank you in advance for your response.

## **Correspondence on “Class Struggle or Sexual Liberation” #7**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I am choosing to spend time and energy raising struggle with you in order to better your journal, so please bear with me if I let my anger with your line show. I have been instructed to raise struggle with you under the assumption that you will be receptive to criticism on a topic you clearly know very little about: transgender and nonbinary people. When asked by a comrade who had recently criticized my reticence to raise struggle with your organization, "What is your line on trans and nonbinary people? What do you perceive Struggle Sessions' line to be?" this was my response. I refer to the article published July 12, 2021 by the editorial board.

"I'm frustrated by you [my comrade's] response to what I consider valid concerns about the responsibility of raising struggle which is disproportionately placed on minoritized

people who are constantly asked to defend their humanity. This is a pattern I and other members of minority communities have observed time and time again and your failure to notice this even when it is pointed out to you is surprising. Regardless of how eager I am to raise struggle because I know it is necessary, it is exhausting having to struggle over the validity of my existence with [Struggle Sessions] who have already shown they don't care enough to research that existence before making claims that it is inherently bourgeois. The necessity of struggle for progress doesn't make it less taxing for the people assigned to defend themselves from transphobia framed as "criticism."

Instead of thinking about me as the one splitting from Struggle Sessions over their political line, consider how they initiated the split by forming lazy conclusions and criticizing trans existence in the first place.

'What is your line on trans and nonbinary people? What do you perceive Struggle Sessions' line to be?'

My line is that I'm going to do whatever I want with my body and mind and it's not anyone's business how I decide to exercise autonomy over those things. Gender presentation and perception is self-expression and harmless self-expression at that. It should be protected the same way freedom of discussion is protected. If my gender presentation challenges existing gender norms, then--resoundingly, resolutely--fuck existing gender norms. Gender deviants make the human experience richer and more interesting and if that challenges what already exists, then what already exists had better change around us because we aren't going anywhere.

Struggle Sessions' line, by contrast, is that the conservatives are right about gender: that there's only men and women and that they are polar opposites. This is incorrect. Physicist Richard Feynman spoke on the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger saying "reality must take precedence over public relations, for Nature cannot be fooled." Intersex people, the exact definition of which varies depending on the scholar surveying, make up about 0.5% to 2% of the population. Their bodies, which defy male and female categorization, must not be construed to be an "exception which proves the rule" but a fundamental challenge to the rule itself.

Intersex people have been labelled as monsters before. In medieval times their births were seen as omens of great harm to befall the community. Today, the integrity of their bodies is taken from them at birth through medical "intervention" through genital

mutilation surgeries and involuntary hormone replacement. This half-baked "line" Struggle Sessions presents to the reader is nothing more than a continuation of the same rhetoric gender rule-breakers have heard for the past 500 years, just framed differently. Apparently, if you say you're a Maoist you're now allowed to continue falling into the traps of systemic oppressions that are equally as relevant to note as class in achieving liberation for all people from exploitation.

Dean Spade said in his book *Normal Life*, "[o]ur demands for redistribution, access, and participation must be reflected in our resistance work every day--they can't be something we come back for later." Our work must include trans and nonbinary people because they are members of the working class. They are our friends and neighbors and their insights will be invaluable in the war for communism because they exist in the deepest and lowest trenches of struggle--even within the ICM, apparently.

[Were you] not aware of the vast increase in queer rights in the USSR under Lenin[?] The USSR was the first nation to recognize gay marriage and was the world leader beside Weimar Germany (during the time of Magnus Hirschfeld) in transgender sex reassignment surgery. If [you] had bothered to read anything about trans people before calling them bourgeois by nature perhaps [you] would have noticed this."

Evidence for the claim that Struggle Sessions reduce trans experience to inherently bourgeois:

You call non-binary identity a "hip term cynically used by the bourgeoisie to paper over people's subjective dissatisfaction and their oppression." Ignores the material reality of nonbinary identity. Consider the haptic--an aberrant means of identity formation which invokes material reality as the basis for identity in trans and nonbinary people as elaborated by Halberstam.

You call queerness and polyamory a "a new fad to jump onto." Reductive and ahistorical.

"create a new man and woman and a new society" ignores the existence of gender non-conformance preceding capitalism and gender non-conformance that will inevitably come after.

I am, very frankly, not expecting you to respond thoughtfully based on the thoughtlessness you displayed towards trans people in your article already, but because



nothing is won without struggle I figured I should at least let you know why your article is reductive and offensive.

There is a good basis for your reputation as disconnected from the masses.

## **Correspondence on Fanon**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email. The email asked about the criticisms we received about the non-binary question and then said the following]

Lastly I would like to leave a critique. Now whilst I'm heavily critical of your piece on the queer question, there was one thing I couldn't help but notice. And ironically enough it doesn't have to do with sex or gender, but with a person. Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist you labeled post-modernist. Surely you mean not to call him one, and only mention him as bourgeois professors try to claim him for their own. Surely you have investigated his works and see that he does not represent or even support post-modern thought. Perhaps I misunderstood you comrades, and what you mean is they butcher him like they do marx? Because, if one is regarded to be a post modernist just because bourgeois professors try to butcher a revolutionary, surely marx would be post modernist, no? If again I misunderstood you, then I whole heartedly apologize, but if I am not, I would say you have done little to no investigation on his works. To throw the baby out with the bath water like this is quite foolish, for if we are to call ourselves a communist, we must at least do a thorough investigation, instead of "they teach xyz and xyz are bad." That is void of any dialectical approach. Far be it from me to say Deluze and Foucault are good, but we must explain why these people are wrong instead of dressing them up in the post modernist boogeyman and calling it a day. From my investigation of Fanon, he had opposed Adler, reactionary psychological methods, and applied dialectics to psychology. Is this perhaps because it is his earlier works "black skin white masks" that he often refers to bourgeois philosophy? Well if that is the case, we can critique him there, but still accept the correct aspects of his book (the dialect between colonized and colonizer, black and white, man and woman under colonial society) and I often say black skin white masks is "young fanon" while something such as "Wretched of the earth" is "old Fanon" in that he made mistakes in his early writings but improved in his later works. Also, if it has to do with language, then that doesn't negate the correctness of it. Language doesn't always equate to metaphysics, the language he used in that book (BSWM) clearly

represents a social issue that colonized people face materially. If you still have the position that he is a post modernist, then I will retort with this.

1. No where does he state that nothing has objective meaning.
2. He does not reject the conception of language in favor of “meanings” or “essence”
3. When he uses a linguistic analysis, his intent was not to obfuscate materialism or support an idealist position, but how through material means, the colonizer will use language to psychologically beat down the colonized. We can critique him for his lack of class analysis, but in terms of psychology we can see a clear contradiction between colonizer and colonized
4. Investigate his works, there are parts that must be critiqued, I do not deny this, but a full investigation will show that he was in no way a post-modernist.

My comrades [...] also stated that you made the same mistake with Gramsci, throwing him out due to his works being heavily edited by bourgeois media. Now I have yet to read gramsci, but if this is the case, then I implore you, do a thorough investigation. It is the communist way after all.

## **“Call for Letters” Correspondence #1**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I was happy to read the November call for letters and volunteers. In the spirit of the call, I have a few small suggestions and criticisms. I will list them here and try to be as brief as possible, as I'm sure there are many similar letters to mine filling your inbox!

1. Continued focus on Post-Modernism's influence in contemporary activists culture

To me this one of the strongest areas Struggle Sessions has demonstrated in the last year or two. Post-Modernism is persistent in so called "leftist" circles, presenting itself as an "update" of "stodgy" "old" Marxism. Ruthless criticism of its true counter-revolutionary character should continue and sharpen!

2. More articles on political economy.

The Ongoing Crisis in the Steel Industry and the Coming Capitalist Offensive was a great direction for the journal and similar articles would be welcome. I feel like many budding

and aspiring revolutionaries are not as well verse in their political economy as they are the other three component parts. Personally, this has lead to instances where I myself have been unable to answer questions of fellow workers and in some cases I am talked over by workers and activist with trade union or economistic conscious.

### 3. Dealing with social media and online spaces

Political Education Does Not Come From Reddit: What You “Learn” Will Be Wrong Was a revelation when I read it. I spent several years in the muck of internet "leftist" culture and that article was a sharp knife that cut myself from this insular clique that was keeping me my fellow workers and keeping me from actually grasping the ideology of the proletariat. This article also lead to me distancing myself from social media altogether, but maybe this was overcorrection. the idea presented in the article could be expanded on. How do we deal with social media on an individual level? I was part of a discord server called Six Heads Study Circle for awhile that was dedicated to studying MLM. I eventually left it to focus on study and practice offline. I feel these spaces, though well meaning, are ultimately harmful to building communists. However, that's how many people find journals like Struggle Sessions, through interactions in these types of spaces online. More clarification on these issues is needed.

### **“Call for Letters” Correspondence #2**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

Also, with the November announcement, I have a criticism. There were articles that had audio versions attached, which I thought to be good, it helps hearing how some words are pronounced. Along with being able to listen when reading isn't possible (on the way to work etc). Yet, the audio versions were only on a few articles, I believe "Without Power" and "Revolutionary Optimism." I think that reflects as being inconsistent or half committal, as there was no explanation as to why the audios were started and why they subsequently were stopped. My position is that audio versions are beneficial and that with time there should be audio versions of most readings.

### **“Call for Letters” Correspondence #3**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I've really enjoyed the articles on political economy. They inspired me to finally read Capital and both volumes of Fundamentals of Political Economy. I found the response to the third worldist and the rebuff of Settlers especially useful

I think more articles that focus on political economy would be very helpful, particularly the political economy of imperialism and the current economic situation in the imperialist countries, which you touched on a little bit in "The Ongoing Crisis in the Steel Industry and the Coming Capitalist Offensive".

It seems that those who do not have a good grasp on political economy are more susceptible to being misled by revisionists of all stripes, either towards so called "Socialism With Chinese Characteristics" or third worldism.

### **Correspondence on Communication**

[Context: This email was sent in by a contributor to the journal. The email was sent in September.]

I would like to criticize you for the recent lapse in communication. Our last communication was mid-July. If you're too busy to be in communication for a period of time, you should communicate this so I am kept in the loop.

[Context: We sent an email accepting the criticism and giving the supporter an update on our work. In November they sent us the following email.]

I am criticizing you for a second time. You've fallen seriously behind on communication, I have outstanding assignments with you that I submitted months ago. What's going on? In your last email you mentioned that y'all were struggling to keep up with your tasks as an editorial board. I have offered to help you, whatever it is that needs to be done, let me help you. My availability is more limited than it used to be as I have other writing and editing obligations now, but I'd still like to contribute to the journal.

Also, what's going on with the print edition? You said it would be out in October, it's almost November now. I'm subscribed to the Patreon and I would like to see an update on what the money is going toward and what's been going on with the journal. If you

won't be able to fulfill this stuff in a timely manner, then you should be open about it with your contributors, subscribers and readers rather than not saying anything at all, leaving us to guess and speculate.

[Context: We accepted this criticism again and asked the supporter if they were interested in volunteering, to which they sent the following]

In the future, you should be significantly more transparent about what's going on. You need to rely on your comrades and the masses more, when you're in the weeds you can't just shoulder the work entirely by yourself. There are politically and personally reliable comrades throughout the movement that are capable of assisting you.

[...]

I talk about y'all all the time with comrades, I can tell you what they think. They view y'all as a great resource, but they generally don't think to send in their thoughts to y'all or to let y'all know that they're studying your work. For example, [one comrade] was discussing how [their organization] had been studying some of your work, and I encouraged her to submit her or the group's synthesized thoughts to you. She hadn't considered this, but said she would do that. I spoke with another comrade who has been trying to communicate with y'all, and I encouraged her to criticize y'all for the poor communication. She hadn't thought to do that, but promised to write it and send it in. I think comrades generally view you as a great resource, but don't think to consider y'all as active comrades in the movement that can be spoken to and criticized the way they do with their comrades on the ground.

[Context: In February 2022, the supporter sent the following]

I am sincerely concerned by what I have seen from y'all in these last few months. I criticized y'all in late 2021 in hopes that it would correct what I saw as a negative trajectory in your work, and hoped that it would encourage you to breathe new life into the journal. What has come of that? You haven't published anything in 2.5 months, no updates on the print edition, no updates on how you intend to improve the journal, no responses to criticisms from readers, no new articles. Multiple comrades have asked me what is going on with Struggle Sessions and I truthfully answered that I have no idea. Comrades have submitted poems and pitches to you for several months without response. There are several pressing issues in the US that would greatly benefit from a

theoretical intervention from y'all. For example, many proletarians are very suspicious of covid-19 and many have refused to get vaccinated. I have a rough idea of why this is happening, but this is still something that warrants an intervention from y'all. I wish I could help more directly but I am currently in a temporary period of calm before I return to working systemic overtime.

## **Correspondence on “For Chairman Gonzalo”**

[Context: the following was sent in by one of the contributors to the anthology “For Chairman Gonzalo pt. 3.”]

Your “For Chairman Gonzalo Part 3” collection is not very good and I think you need to publish some kind of correction. The poem I sent in was published without criticism, which isn't correct, and it seems like the other poems had the same lack of consideration. They are overall not good artistically, and some parts are also politically bad. You should study Opposed Stereotyped Party Writing and also Talks at the Yen'an Forum. Publishing poetry or creative works should not be taken lightly just because it's not an essay.

Here are the main parts of the poems I think should be criticized.

“For Chairman Gonzalo” by Mari Roja:

This poem exemplifies stereotyped “Maoist” writing. It starts with a big quote and reads more like prose than poetry, both in its wording and in being too long. It just copy and pastes facts and phrases, it doesn't offer anything vivid or moving. The line “and with his life in his fingertips, he raised his fist” doesn't even copy and paste well, it's “carry our life on our fingertips” not “in” them, which makes less sense. This poem comes across like petty bourgeois fanaticism written for the satisfaction of the writer and not with workers in mind.

“A Poem For Chairman Gonzalo” by Shay:

This poem uses trite rhymes and reads like cliché poetry, twisting language to fit the rhyme. The line “Know that still you must fear the red dawn” is clunky to read and it's not true, I think many capitalists feel secure and do not recognize or fear communism as a real threat at this time.

Politically, the poem's stand is petty bourgeois, and this line is the most serious error in what you published here: "It is easy to see that the world is wrong / And so to despair and mope." This is not proletarian, you are publishing a petty bourgeois line that normalizes pessimism, positing it as a natural response anyone should have regardless of class, rather than condemning pessimism.

Further, the world is not wrong, saying this is not dividing one into two. Mao says "there is a great disorder throughout the world." The world encompasses good and bad aspects. My poem also makes this mistake, calling it a "broken world," I am self-critical for this. I did not think very critically about this ending couplet and spent less time on it than the rest of the poem, I think because of this my poem also sneaks in petty bourgeois pessimism, due to carelessness rather than intention, but like Mao says in the texts mentioned above, the effect the writing will have on the masses is primary over the intention.

I think it's good to encourage and publish poetry and submissions from those whose artistic level and political development may not be very high, for example if "A Poem for Chairman Gonzalo" had the same convoluted lines and rhymes but a message of revolutionary optimism that could still be good to publish while encouraging them to develop as a writer. As the Editorial Board you are primarily at fault for letting revisionist lines sneak in through young people's poetry, you do both the writers and the readers a disservice in not criticizing and correcting these errors

A positive aspect of the collection was the creative nonfiction essay, I think it's excellent and you could have published this alone.

## **Miscellaneous Correspondence**

[Context: A supporter sent us the following email.]

I have a few criticisms.

First, with reports of Chairman Gonzalo being hospitalized and the election of Pedro Castillo, and in light of recent publications on CI-IC to defend the life and health of Gonzalo, I think your journal has a duty to uphold the call to defend Chairman Gonzalo as best you can, like with a relevant poem or an article on the election in Peru versus the People's War.

I also have a criticism on the poem "To the Frontline." By using pronouns and descriptions like "blue eyes" instead of the names of people, it makes it confusing who the poem is referring to. The last line for example is unclear if the "he" is Garrett still present meeting Whitney on the front line, or Perry meeting her in combat, since "he" refers to Perry in the first half of the poem, but then Garrett is referenced in the stanzas leading up to the last "he." The poem makes a point of drawing clear delineations in the "He... she..." stanzas yet because of the ambiguous language ends up conflating Perry and Garrett in our minds as we try to imagine which one is being talked about. I don't think its "poetic" to be vague like this, and aligns with the liberal idea that "don't name the criminal that just increases his influence." I think it should name the enemy and our heroes, not just in the forward but in the poem itself. Being specific does not mean it won't be universal.

[Context: we sent the following email in response:

"For the first criticism, could you elaborate more on your position? In general our journal has not been in the habit of responding to every current issue, but has focused on key theoretical questions where two-line struggle exists between Marxism and revisionism. This is partly a matter of capacity and partly one of orientation. But perhaps we are incorrect in this approach and should be more responsive to pressing issues - what do you think? We of course support the call to defend the life of Chairman Gonzalo and note Tribune of the People's recent coverage of supportive actions in the country.

As regards the recent poem, my interpretation of the decision is that it's an intentional blurring to make the point; we will all meet on the front lines, and the ambiguity serves to say precisely that there are only two sides and that everyone will find themselves on one or the other side. However I can see that it might be unnecessarily vague and confusing, losing the political message in the poeticism. I have forwarded your criticism to the poet who wrote this and will let you know if they send a response."

The following email was sent in response.]

I understand if you can't respond to every current issue, but you have released things on other current issues like important proletarian holidays (DOH for example) and commemorating Garrett Foster. I thought calling attention to the continued attack on Chairman Gonzalo by the reaction would fit into both these categories (current issues and 2 line struggle) of things you would publish on. I don't think you should be responding to



every pressing issue, you're not a news service like Tribune like you mention. I also know you can't churn out poems overnight, but I think that would be a particularly good thing to publish and help instill optimism and show solidarity in the uncertainty of not knowing how Chairman Gonzalo is doing. My line is you should have used your platform to join the call like many other publications of different types have done, which you could do creatively to fit your type of journal. You could even tactically use this in the trouble with the "Red Flag" opportunist freaks who uphold Gonzalo Thought in their country, maybe something like a rundown of the universal contributions of Chairman Gonzalo, like this article [linked to a blog article by "Queer Bolshevik"]. Can you explain more why you disagree, is it principally because of capacity or orientation? If orientation, can you explain more why you see this as a "current issue" that wouldn't be appropriate to take up, when you have taken up other current issues like the ones mentioned above?

I look forward to the poet's response. Reading the poem again, the "he" at the end must refer to Perry, since the poem leads up to "he and she" meeting at the front line, and Garrett is not meeting Whitney but already with her "present in the movement." So I don't think it's intentionally trying to conflate Garrett and Perry here, and if it is I strongly disagree with that approach. I think the problem is that the reader would understand the poem is talking about Perry and Whitney (& the movement) meeting at the front line, except you have the 2 stanzas before the last stanza which introduce the character of Garrett, so there's now two "he's" in the mix. I think the concept of the poem is cool and like a lot of the other devices it uses but I think this lack of clarity has political implications (is not proletarian).

[context: responding to the link to a blog article, we said,

"I don't know if you were linking them as a positive example, but Queer Bolshevik is an internet opportunist who calls the Tribune and SS 'centrists' and the Swiss clowns the 'left,' and had their polemic against us about the nonbinary question published on the Swiss website. We therefore wouldn't trust anything they write, especially about the nature of the ideology."

In response to this they said the following.]

Just to respond about the Queer Bolshevik article, I was linking them as a positive example in form of having an article give a simple rundown on the universal contributions of Chairman Gonzalo. I think you're being defensive again, there are

positive things we can learn even from revisionists and bloggers and I wasn't upholding their political line.

I read the Queer Bolshevik article early on when I was new to Maoism and found it helpful in understanding things like concentric construction, I can't off the top of my head think of anywhere else I've seen the universally valid contributions of Chairman Gonzalo laid out like this, so was recommending your publication might take this up.

## **Internal Correspondence**

[Context: Rita edited the anthology "For Chairman Gonzalo pt. 3" largely alone, not getting a response from the head editor [Sig Hausner]. After the collection was published, S.H. criticized some aspects of it, and a contributor sent in criticisms as well (see above). Rita wrote the following to the head editor.]

To be blunt I hadn't heard from you about any of these poems despite clearly communicating what I needed from you, and getting these published on his birthday was critical so I had to take leadership and make a decision despite having limited knowledge in the area. [...]

[...]

I agree with the criticisms you made of the included poems; to be blunt again it would have been good to receive them several days ago. Considering our struggles with work capacity conditioned by poor communication and disorganization we really need to discuss how we will move forward because stuff like this and how late the print edition is going to be can't keep happening.

[Context: the head editor responded with the following]

You're absolutely right this lateness on all fronts is unacceptable, most glaringly with the poems and the print journal, but it persists across the journal and almost all of it falls on me directly, and in synthesis it all falls on me as the head editor. An example; I needed to have set a political line on the journal's relation to the campaign for Chairman Gonzalo that included what we were doing for his birthday months ago, with regular check-ins on the state of our campaign contributions, etc. Otherwise we only have sporadic and hazily-planned contributions, like we've had so far. They're not bad so far, but they're not great.

And mostly you've been taking initiative on it, not me--the poems just now and the Jacobin response are examples. In a sense you've been acting unfairly as the head editor, when you should be studying under me and learning (we all learn together but it must not be absolute egalitarianism).

I need to set aside a certain number of days a week (perhaps 2 a week) where I only work on Struggle Sessions, and then throughout the week I continue to do check-ins, minor things (basically ramping up drastically the time and effort I put into the journal since for the last few months I've been doing the bare minimum of check-ins and minor things).

[Context: Rita responded with the following]

It's more than a matter of lateness. You haven't been imposing leadership of the journal and have been fostering rightism through your misleadership. I have been putting forward initiatives to correct the consistent rightism within the journal, and have been effectively leading most organizational aspects of the journal and especially in the new initiatives. You're right that I have been acting as head editor and am only held back by my mental illness and lack of knowledge and experience. This is not an okay situation: if I was able to take over the position of head editor I would but I cannot, principally because I am politically immature and don't yet have an all-sided grasp of the ideology.

Objectively speaking a rightist line has been in command within the journal due to your leadership and the positive developments within the journal have been brought about through my struggling for the left line and putting it into practice by imposing de facto leadership, as well as the masses bombarding the headquarters with their many criticisms over the last few months. I've been clear about this in minor aspects and in speaking abstractly but some evaluation of the past few weeks has led me to recognize the political contradiction here. I haven't organized my thoughts about this yet but to lay out some examples:

- Slackness and arrogance when faced with criticism from the masses. Fostering sectarianism with respect to the masses, to fraternal organizations, and to individuals and organizations with which there is a basis for unity.

- A dismissive attitude to my efforts towards professionalism

-Not giving me timely criticism, effective oversight and organizational discipline, meaning that mistakes borne out of my inexperience have been able to negatively impact the journal

-Not fostering a culture of two-line struggle and criticism-self-criticism within the journal. Criticism and self-criticism have rarely happened unless I raised it. Two-line struggle has rarely happened unless I raised it.

-Why have I been leading and carrying out the tasks of self-criticism of the journal while you have dragged your feet every step of the way, when it is principally your leadership of the journal that needs self-criticism?

-Neglecting national and international campaigns where the journal has an important role to play

-Neglecting any question of political strategy in the production of propaganda. Failing to impose political leadership leading to anarchism in production.

-No political education within the journal. Little development of contributors except at my insistence.

-No reliance on the masses, on their ideas; no forging mass links (except through my initiatives). Not bringing the masses and their supervision into our work. Not supporting and building up the people who volunteer and contribute to the journal.

[...] I have been working every day on the journal, sacrificing political responsibilities on the ground as well as my personal life, in order to keep us afloat and I'm not keeping up under the pressure and workload. This would be fine if I had the support and leadership I need to carry it through but I haven't had that and so I have been isolated and made to feel like I need to shoulder the burden of the entire journal. More importantly you need to correct your rightism which is what allows these problems to happen.

[Context: the head editor responded with the following email.]

Your balance sheet here lays out my rightist leadership of the journal. We need to have the left line in command or we'll 1) fall apart from lack of connection to the masses and lack of connection to reality, or 2) stubbornly persist in the current state and turn the journal into a rightist pole over time. So we're in an untenable situation and something has to give one way or the other.

I need to study the criticisms more to fully unite with them and so we as a journal can overcome them. For instance I am not sure I unite with the sectarianism criticism, unless this is referring in particular to insularity and isolation coming from my misleadership, i.e. an effective policy of sectarianism as opposed to a purposeful policy.

I don't feel good about how I've led the journal--I've neglected it, and you, and thus neglected the masses, bringing politics through the journal to the masses. It's a bad situation. A big part of fighting my rightism is sticking to our resolutions on the journal; they are good resolutions, so that means dedicating time to studying them and returning to them consistently, checking the work against them. These resolutions include political training with you, for instance. And if you're going to do political training, you need less "office work". And you definitely shouldn't be picking up my slack.

[Context: Another contributor sent the following email to the editorial board in early January]

I want to open by frankly admitting my errors, which I would principally place as liberalism. I have kept my head down due to my errors as an editor in the past and resolved to distancing myself from the project I have put so much time into, thinking that this would allow better quality editorship and leadership of the journal to emerge in my absence. This has encouraged the ultra-democracy running this project because similar amateurishness is still in command. This has to be stamped out and replaced with a disciplined theoretical organ and if it cannot be, it should be tossed away.

I want to rectify this by becoming a regular volunteer for Struggle Sessions, and working with readers and writers to figure out how we can rectify our problems. I don't think we should view these people as "volunteers" but as members. We are not part-timers who just want to spew out good ideas that we perceive that we have whenever we feel like it.

That being said, the issues that Struggle Sessions needs to work on are moving too slowly to resolve themselves, if there is a left line it is not clear where it is emanating from. I also think that while the "November Announcement" was good in the aspect of wanting to increase participation in theoretical production, it also promotes continued amateurish methods, ultra-democracy in content selection and writing, and that there is still sluggishness as evidenced by the delays taking place in releasing the new print edition.

Here are some questions and criticisms I have. I do not intend to hide criticism in the form of questions, much of this is unclear to me and to other readers.

1. Who is the leading group? Chairman Mao in “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership” emphasized that there must be a leading core that is politically united and links its activity with the masses.

How does this leading group actually lead anyone if there are no masses it’s leading? I have not heard or read of anyone taking up the study of Struggle Sessions recently beyond people purchasing the old magazines through Forth Sword. [...]

2. Why volunteers? We should have members, those who 1) unite with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, with the contributions of universal validity of Chairman Gonzalo, 2) are governed by democratic centralism, and 3) support the reconstitution of the Communist Party of the USA. They can be consistent editors, writers and literature agents.

Capacity is obviously an issue, there may not be many people available to consistently work for Struggle Sessions. There could be monthly meetings of all membership and weekly to biweekly meetings of the editorial board, or whatever works at first, but I think promoting a come-and-go attitude to this work is incorrect and ultra democratic.

3. Why the distance from the on-the-ground work? [...]

This also speaks to broader problems with Struggle Sessions.

This should be a theoretical organ that veteran revolutionary activists and those who are just starting to link up and get involved can sit down and read, being able to understand how their practical work is connected to the ideology. Instead, many pieces are poetry, fiction, or are distant from where many are having problems [...]. Being able to collaborate more with those doing practical work is how the journal can link itself with the masses and their problems.

4. Lack of centralism, no coherent political line, too little theory in light of this. We should not be against submissions and people volunteering to write, but one defect Struggle Sessions has always had is being the community bulletin board as opposed to a theoretical organ. I think a lot of the poetry is often good (“Rats in the Streets,” “The Terror You Sow”) but it seems to be the main thing people have been submitting.

[...] Leadership needs to start assigning writing to contributors with expectations of what the writing should accomplish.

Meetings had with membership can be used to establish democracy (having discussion about recent national and international news, cultural developments, economics to get ideas about what is important to write on), and can also help in establishing political unity, which can then be converted into centralized leadership synthesizing what was learned and providing assignments to writers and promoting study. [...].

5. How are the goals of the journal being explained? How can good criticism, as called for in the November announcement, be given if no one knows what Struggle Sessions is aiming to do in the first place? [...]

6. There has been a lack of synthesis of criticism so far. There have been two criticisms of the sexual liberation article given, and thankfully there has been a response admitting in one to two sentences that the piece was not adequate and came off as arrogant, but there has been no further follow up on this. Likewise, there was a criticism of the failure to produce the print edition at it's due date but no follow up other than an undetermined date it would be prepared on was sent to the person giving criticism.

I know there is a question of tactics on the gender line, and frankly I do not think it is pertinent to write on this question right now. But if the response to criticism is to be so unresponsive and to not do anything, I don't blame readers for becoming unengaged.

7. The page needs cleaned up to reflect professionalism, blog form needs to continue to be updated. I think that it is good Struggle Sessions is producing a print edition and has a Patreon system. We should encourage readers to support Forth Sword and Struggle Sessions.

My position is Struggle Sessions needs significant renovations, not just politically and ideologically but also in its form which reflects its essence. We should study how Tribune of the People News prepares its articles and pdfs so that we can produce four productions next year, each with several articles, poems, and other works in each produced magazine. Look at the German comrade's Rote Press, they make it publicly available to all. As you can see, it has the table of contents on the front cover.

My line is that Struggle Sessions should essentially get rid of its online presence pending these changes, deactivating the page and making content private so that the sloppiness can be improved.

The way it should be structured instead is that it should be similar to Rote Press. Imagine this: there would be an image of the new edition with the table of contents on it.

Underneath that is one of the pieces from this edition. Then there would be a link to Forth Sword so that people can purchase this edition. In the months before the edition is released there can be “sneak peaks” to the upcoming releases.

This also reflects a needed reassessment of how we gauge what we are capacity to do, too. In November it was said there would be a printed edition available at the end of the month, this was a lie. There was no capability of producing that by this time. We need to gauge what we can do and not be productivist. Those editors currently leading Struggle Sessions need to learn their title and take up this work, and I want to take on the role of doing so likewise.