

# SELF-CRIT: ON GUN OWNERSHIP

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Far and away, [On Gun Ownership](#) is the weakest publication on the Lavender Guard website. Its intention was to provide a Marxist defense of mass armament as a policy, which isn't wrong *per se*, but it approaches the subject in a clumsy, haphazard way, and introduces serious theoretical blunders in the process. A criticism of these errors is, therefore, long overdue. The original publication actually begins to grapple with the (mostly) correct conclusion — that socialized gun ownership could guarantee access to firearms and lower gun deaths by replacing private armament with public armories — but fails to commit to this idea, and instead bends over backwards trying to justify the conclusion that private gun ownership doesn't contradict with the abolition of private property. On the contrary, private ownership of firearms implies non-universal armament!

As embarrassing as I find the work in question today, I'm resolved to keep it published and to criticize it thoroughly. If we are afraid to share wrong views — afraid, in other words, to receive criticism — then we not only isolate ourselves from correction, but rob others of the chance to learn from our errors as well.

## 1. Historical Ignorance Regarding Socialist Gun Control Policy

The first error that is present in the publication is a hasty generalization about how gun distribution and ownership was practiced in 20th century communist countries; the premise that “civilian producers have been, as a general rule, left disarmed” is simply not (generally) true. This very point was made the topic of a later pamphlet, [Mao Didn't Take The Guns: Exposing Liberal Lies About Revolutionary China](#), which showed that mass armament of the peasantry was a policy in revolutionary China up until Mao's death and the end of the Cultural Revolution. Likewise, in socialist Albania, mass armament was also state policy until capitalist restoration — though the specifics of the policy are difficult to ascertain due to a dearth of available sources. If more research had been conducted before writing on the subject, this would have been known, and would have provided strong precedent to the argument. Instead, anticommunist propaganda was taken for granted.

In regard to *Mao Didn't Take The Guns*, a correction is also needed. It is stated that “No more than 3 years after Mao's death, the first serious policy of gun control was put into place.” But not *unserious* policies of gun control? The statement is not only weaselly, but, evidently, *not true*:

regulations on guns, hence “gun control,” certainly did exist under Mao. If the intended meaning of “serious gun control” was “gun confiscation” (and truthfully, I cannot recall what I had intended), then it would be true as stated, though it remains unclear. The habit of not distinguishing between firearm regulation and firearm seizure is, unfortunately, one inherited from bourgeois discourses on gun control. In any case, the Chinese legal system went through a variety of changes before and after the reform and opening up period; the [first criminal law code](#) in the latest system was established, as claimed in the pamphlet, in 1979 — and the new criminal law codes did, indeed, include regulations on firearms. The discontinuity between Chinese legal systems probably explains why earlier laws do not appear in the legal database. Here it must be mentioned that the new gun regulations could hardly be characterized as “serious.” Article 100 criminalizes “manufacturing, forcibly seizing or stealing guns or ammunition,” “for the purpose of counterrevolution.” Article 112 further specifies the illegal *manufacture* and *trade* of guns (whether or not for the purpose of counterrevolution), but neither of these articles strictly mention *possession* of guns. Article 163 is the only one that mentions ownership of firearms, and here it only mentions *secretly* keeping firearms, and hence implies a system of permitting and registration, not of forfeiture. Hence, in terms of the modern Chinese legal system, really “serious” gun control, that is to say, sweeping forfeitures of firearms, criminalization of firearm possession, etc, can only be said to have been put into place in 1996, as the pamphlet also states.

What about the law during the Maoist era? It has been difficult to locate reliable sources and documentation on this issue, partially due to a torrent of dis- and mis-information that is much more readily available, and partially because China had no formalized legal system for large chunks of this time period. Among one of the few primary sources I was able to uncover is the People's Police Act of the PRC, passed June 1957, which reads:

Article 5. The responsibilities of the people's police shall be as follows...

( 5 ) To **regulate** explosives, virulent poisons, **guns and ammunition**, radio equipment, the printing and casting trades, and the engraving trade in accordance with law. (Cohen, 1968, 107 — emphasis added).

Another primary source is the Security Administration Punishment Act (SAPA), passed October 1957, which includes the following regulations:

Article 9. A person who commits any one of the following acts interfering with public safety shall be punished by detention of not more than five days, a fine of not more than ten yuan, or a warning:

- (1) Without government permission, purchasing or possessing firearms or ammunition for use in athletic activities, or keeping or using such firearms or ammunition in contravention of safety provisions;
- (2) Without government permission, making, purchasing, or possessing firearms for hunting or opening a workshop for repairing such firearms;
- (3) Establishing or using civilian firing ranges in contravention of safety provisions. (Cohen, 1968, 217).

These were the most reliable sources I could find on gun regulation in the Maoist era, and, as you can see, the regulations are quite reasonable, only mentioning guns of a particular purpose possessed without permission or used in a negligent manner. And as far as the regulations under SAPA are concerned, the entire act only details what were considered minor crimes, essentially equivalent to misdemeanors.

How about unreliable sources? Starting from the most reliable of the unreliable, we have a [paper from the US Law Library of Congress](#) from 1990 that compares the gun regulations of foreign countries. According to the document:

Provisional Measures Governing the Control of Guns were promulgated by the Ministry of Public Security of the PRC on June 27, 1951... Seven years later, the Temporary Provisions Governing the Control and Use of Guns and Bullets for Sport were adopted, covering all kinds of sport shooting, including hunting... There was a provision that public security organs [police] on a local level take inventory of all the guns in the area, **so that permits could be issued to those authorized to have guns** (art. 15)... Any individual, group, or enterprise possessing a gun at the time **that did not receive authorization** was to surrender the weapon to the local people's government (arts. 9 & 10). Anyone carrying a gun had to **obtain a permit** stating the name of the bearer, his or her age, sex, place of birth, occupation, and residence, plus information about the gun, including its serial number (art. 11). **Guns could not be lent, given as a gift, or exchanged** (art. 13). (Nay, 1990, 32-33 — emphasis added).

I consider this the most reliable because it cites its sources and because the content seems consistent with other laws. In particular, the regulation on lending and exchanging firearms gives greater context to what the right to firearms likely entailed; that is, a right to *use* and *access* firearms, but not, strictly speaking, to *own* firearms. At the same time, I consider this source *unreliable* because it is a product of the American government, because it doesn't include full textual citations (it only references, summarizes, paraphrases, etc), and because I am unable to verify the sources listed. Did the temporary and provisional measures regulate firearms owned by the working class, or only those of the defeated,

exploiting classes? Such a distinction is scarcely made in bourgeois sources, and hence, without the full text available, we can't be certain.

The next source is a popularly cited [Snopes article](#), which, in turn, cites *Lethal Laws: Gun Control Is the Key to Genocide*:

According to *Lethal Laws*, a 1912 law made it illegal to possess or import rifles, cannons, or explosives without a permit. The Security Administration Punishment Act of 1957 took the additional step of making it illegal to make, purchase, or possess firearms or ammunition without the government's permission — though by that time at least a million "class enemies" had already died in the name of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution. (Emery, 2017).

In terms of reliability, the comment about The Security Administration Punishment Act is, as I've established, basically true — though if we're being pedantic, guns had already been formally regulated, at least in vague terms, two months prior by the People's Police Act. Two points jump out as seriously erroneous. In the first place, the People's Republic of China wasn't founded until 1949, and yet the quoted passage makes reference to a law from 1912, which is to say, a law from the former Republic of China. Perhaps the authors imagine that the Communist Party of China decided to inherit the laws and legal system of the government that they overthrew? Well this is nonsense. Lest we should be satisfied with common sense, here's what the [Common Program of the PRC](#), adopted in September 1949 just prior to the constitution, says on the subject:

**ARTICLE 17.** All laws, decrees and judicial systems of the Kuomintang reactionary government which oppress the people shall be abolished. Laws and decrees protecting the people shall be enacted and the people's judicial system shall be established. (CPCC, 1949, 4).

So we can see, without a shadow of a doubt, that no law beginning in 1912 could hold any relevance to the legal system of China past 1949. As if this weren't bad enough, another chronological blunder is evident in the Snopes passage: it states that "*by that time [1957] at least a million 'class enemies' had already died in the name of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution,*" and yet the Cultural Revolution didn't begin until nearly a decade later, in 1966. Perhaps those crafty Chicoms had time machines? So much for the reliability of our professional "fact checkers"!

Lastly, we have [Wikipedia](#), which only has this to say on the subject: "The country's [China's] strict centralized stance on gun control was officially instated in the country in 1966." What exactly is a

“strict centralized stance”? We’d have to look at the source to be sure, which is a pain since the citation links to a pay-walled Wall Street Journal article. [Circumventing the paywall](#), we are treated to slightly more detail:

Gun control was introduced in 1966, after children aiming a Spanish rifle at sparrows near Tiananmen Square shot out a window in the Great Hall of the People, according to an official history of the Ministry of Public Security. (Aredy, 2008).

What did this gun control consist of; was it seizure or regulation? Who was impacted — children? Everyone? Well the article doesn’t answer any of these questions either. And in fact, after failing to find the mentioned source, I reached out to the author, Mr. James Aredy, for clarification. Even though he could not find the source himself, he assured me that he’s “confident that the first legislation controlling guns in China was as described in the story,” and that if I could not find the source, it was probably because “China has greatly restricted information in recent years.” Well we already know as a matter of fact that the first legislation was introduced, *at latest*, in 1957, so he’s most certainly wrong about that. Furthermore, without more detail, one can hardly claim, based on this passage, that the legislation introduced a “strict centralized stance.” Such a claim is nothing more than weaselly editorialization by the editor, one “Generallu2,” and, embarrassingly, left unquestioned by other moderators. Prior to Mr Generallu2’s contributions, no specific claims were made about when gun control began in modern China; only a single sentence mentions that private gun ownership is “subject to strict regulation” (without any citations no less!). Even more embarrassingly, it appears that Mr. Generallu2 was [banned a year later](#) for “*Undisclosed paid editing in violation of the WMF Terms of Use*,” and yet his edits remain. Curious! What’s more, Mr. Aredy followed this up in another email with a link to the criminal code that was passed in 1979 (not 1966) and a link to [an article which referred to the 1966 origin](#). Outstandingly, that article, published two years after Mr. Aredy’s, and citing no sources of its own, actually appears to *plagiarize Aredy!*<sup>1</sup> So as far as I can tell, Mr. Aredy is the originator of this alleged 1966 origin, and even then there’s plenty of documentary footage and images of PLA soldiers training rural militiamen and schoolchildren how to use firearms and artillery throughout the cultural revolution of the 70’s — so it seems counter to the facts that this legislation, if it did indeed exist, could have constituted any kind of sweeping forfeiture or disarmament of the working classes, as I suspect the likes of Generallu2 would like to imply.

In summary, we can rest content that Mao really did not take away the guns, even if they were *regulated* by 1957 at the latest, and 1951 at the earliest. Bourgeois discourses, when they don’t outright

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<sup>1</sup> And just in case you were thinking that the article was actually plagiarizing Wikipedia, and not Aredy directly: The reference to Mr. Aredy’s article was [first introduced to Wikipedia in 2019](#), 9 years after the article in question was published.

fabricate things, portray Chinese gun control, and socialist gun control more broadly, as highly restrictive for mainly two reasons. Firstly, because liberal conceptions of natural, human rights make no class distinction. The fact that the landlords and bourgeois elements were disarmed is, therefore, sufficient to liberal legal scholars to suggest that no right to gun ownership existed *at all*. The fact that it was *armed peasants* that seized a landlord's arsenal never seems to enter into their analysis, in part because they'd prefer to imagine that the division between classes is a farcical distinction, and not an objective feature. Secondly, because bourgeois scholars will never differentiate a right to ownership from a right to use. If one isn't free to exchange their property as a commodity, if it isn't theirs to sell without infringement, then they regard the actual item in their home, which is available for them to use, as illusory. What a dismal worldview that can only conceive of an item's exchange-value as "real" and its worldly use-value as phantasmal! In the [words of Marx](#),

Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only *ours* when we have it – when it exists for us as capital, or when it is directly possessed... In the place of *all* physical and mental senses there has therefore come the sheer estrangement of all these senses, the sense of *having...* The less you are, the less you express your own life, the more you *have*, i.e., the greater is your *alienated* life, the greater is the store of your estranged being. (Marx, 1844, Manuscript 3, sections 2 and 3).

## 2. Does 3D Printing Negate Planning?

Leaving the history behind, we now reach more theoretical errors in the second paragraph. It states the following:

Let us begin with the premise that 3D printing represents the beginning of an irreversible revolution in the production of firearms, of which ammunition is sure to follow... In a system of communal producers where weapons can be so easily manufactured, and in particular in such a decentralized manner, it would be as impossible to completely regulate the ownership of firearms as to stop the waves of the ocean — even under a planned economy!

If this passage had actually begun with an analysis of 3D printing, and how this development in the means of production could impact the relations of production, it would have been an interesting premise. Instead, it's merely taken as a given that 3D printing will preclude regulations because of its decentralized nature. This paragraph gives a flimsy, one-sided, materialist-themed argument to a common anarchist/libertarian trope, but is it completely without substance? Let's investigate this problem more thoroughly.

The personal 3D printer is a tool which an individual can use for the private production of a multitude of items — including guns. So far as it is generally employed by hobbyists for private handicrafts, and so far as this kind of production is generally intended for private consumption of the products produced thereby, we can consider it within the sphere of domestic production — that is to say, *provided that its articles do not circulate*. And it's certainly true that the articles of the domestic economy would not, could not be regulated by a social plan. However, we must surely recognize that what *currently* falls under the domain of the domestic economy — productive activities such as cleaning, cooking, and child rearing, for example — will be socialized, brought out of the home and into the formal economy. Hence the conclusion that what is *currently* within the domestic economy will *remain* out of reach of the planned economy is errant. But that's not all: we can only consider 3D printers within the sphere of the domestic economy by way of this simplifying assumption that its products won't circulate, when, in reality, *they do and could*. We can really only imagine this special circumstance will be true if we imagine that every household will have its own 3D printer, and that, therefore, all will have the means to 3D print their own goods, and that, therefore, no one will have the need or incentive to exchange 3D printed items. Universal private production, abundance via mass de-socialized production — what is this if not a summary of the exact kind of utopianism at the heart of certain tendencies of anarchism? This is to say, the statement that 3D printers precludes the possibility of regulation really contains the sentiment that planned production is either no longer possible or no longer necessary, and as such, deserves harsh rebuke.

While I won't claim with any certainty that “garage workshops will be abolished” (I assume hobbyist woodworkers and the like will be the least of the future DOTP's concerns), two circumstances do give me further reason to believe that it won't be so easy to clandestinely 3D print guns and ammo under a socialist economy. Firstly, because it's taken for granted that there will continue to be access to 3D printers as a personal, consumer good. Truthfully, we are really speaking about petty means of production, which may *or may not* be employed to serve domestic (private) consumption. And it was, after all, [Lenin](#) who said that the power of the bourgeoisie lies “in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small-scale production*,” and that “small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.” It goes without saying that private ownership over the means of production will be abolished, and, hence, I can only imagine that the future socialist economy will cease the production of personal 3D printers altogether — that is, only produce large, industrial 3D printers, like that which is [currently being used to print concrete houses](#). It would not only be a waste of productivity to produce small means of production, it would not only risk the proliferation of contraband, but it would also *continuously enable the reproduction of class enemies in the act of small production!* As for the second reason, we also have the illustrative example of the PRC, which, during the Great Leap Forward, attempted to establish

communal canteens *while abolishing private kitchens*. So here, even if we still consider the 3D printer as nothing more than a “high-tech” addition to the arsenal of the domestic economy, we have a concrete precedent to show that strict abolition of domestic production is, indeed, a feasible policy, and that, therefore, we should not discount the possibility that existing personal 3D printers will be seized or destroyed. And once again, this is so whether or not we even begin considering the potential uses of the personal 3D printer for acts of subterfuge.

The essential problem with this paragraph as published is that it takes for granted that means of production under capitalism are commodities. That is to say, it disregards the character of the 3D printer as means of production, and, because it can currently be purchased as a consumer commodity, naively treats it as articles of consumption. Obviously one is entitled to appropriate and consume their own articles of consumption from the social product, but the fact that *this* article produces new use-values should’ve tipped me off to the fact that we are dealing with an essentially different category of item.

### 3. Gun Ownership

The third major error is that the publication takes for granted that universal armament implies a universal right to *personally own* firearms, as though this is the only sense in which universal armament can be carried out. So when the publication says that “it cannot be the case that the property relations of firearms shall contract and become more restricted; gun ownership can not simply be made communal, but personal ownership too, by necessity of the means of producing them, shall have to be assured,” this is nonsense. Firstly because it regards socialization as a “contraction” and “restriction” of property relations, which is such a horrendously misguided statement that I can’t help but wish it had received greater scrutiny before publication. Obviously if ownership is socialized, if *more* people own a given tool, then ownership is *expanded*. Secondly because it confuses a right to privately appropriate and consume articles of consumption — to *use* public property — with a right to private *ownership* of articles of consumption. I suppose what I had originally meant was that if more people own a given tool, then individual authority over how to use it must decrease proportionally. And this would be true for social means of production, which will be subject to a social plan, not the whims of individuals. But a personal tool like a firearm, which requires no division of labor to operate, and which produces no new use-values, would certainly be up to the individual “consumer” to operate at their own discretion, towards their own ends, whether or not they are allowed to *exchange* this tool *as property*.

It is this distinction that bourgeois discourses on firearms refuses to acknowledge. If the right to firearms really means the right to *own* firearms, then it is a narrow, exclusive right, since the private



property of the few entails the non-property of the many. The original publication is therefore unconsciously correct when it argues:

We should understand the highly infringed-upon “right” of gun ownership as incomplete, with socialism bringing about the conditions to, for the first time, fully realize the actual right of the entire people to bear arms.

This is correct on two accounts. Firstly, one will have access to a firearm without having to afford and purchase one — and it is this argument which was made consciously. Secondly because one will have a right to *bear* (use!) arms, but not to *own* them. And these two conditions are mutually dependent, for universal armament really implies socialization of the means of violence. Hence the conflation between *disarmament* and the abolition of *private gun ownership* is erroneous.

#### **4. Dehistoricization of Firearms**

The fourth and last serious problem with the publication is that it treats the right to firearms in an abstract, metaphysical way, and not as a solution to concrete problems under particular, changing circumstances. Which is to say, armament plays different roles before, during, and after the revolution — and even under several other stages in the period following the revolutionary war. And just as the means of violence serve distinct ends in each of these phases, under these differing circumstances, so too must the expression of that right dynamically adapt to the new conditions. In order to properly convey what armament will mean and look like in a communist society, we must afford each of these stages concrete analysis.

What use does a firearm offer a proletarian living under capitalism and *prior to revolution*? In the main, self and community defense. So far as crime — spontaneous violence between the people — is reproduced by society, and so far as the police exist to protect property, not people, then the working people will have to defend themselves in one way or another. And so far as reactionary gangs, fascist goons, and cops (who may or may not fit those two prior categories) terrorize our communities, then the working people must collectively defend themselves, one way or another, as well. In terms of the working people’s movement, gains made through organization and struggle are also in need of defending, though the methods of defense depend on the methods of the enemy state. Not every strike today is immediately met with violence, yet one doesn’t have to look so far back in time to see examples of armed workers fighting, not to overthrow the bourgeoisie, but to wrest and protect gains nonetheless. In 1892, when Andrew Carnegie sent 300 Pinkertons to break a strike, the armed workers of the Homestead steel mill fought back, forcing the Pinkertons to surrender ([AFL-CIO](#)). In 1920’s

China, peasant organizations, under the guidance of Peng Pai, began adopting methods of armed defense, because the peasant movement was getting suppressed before they could even get their legs out from under them ([Spreading Peasant Revolution Across Guangdong](#), 2020). And as should be well known, the Black Panther Party defended their communities from the police (and from gangs too, by the way!) by the use of arms throughout the 70's. Many other examples demonstrate the utility of arms for the working and oppressed people's movements, even when those struggles are not immediately revolutionary struggles; many other examples show that without the means of defense at the movement's disposal, *the movement will be crushed before it ever has a chance to reach a revolutionary capacity*. Hence the conclusion that just because the struggle hasn't reached open, revolutionary war, that the people should accept disarmament or reject arms would be erroneous. Just because the people are not yet prepared to go on the offensive against the capitalist system does not mean they have nothing to gain from firearms — and in fact, one would be a fool to not take advantage of the legalization of firearms to train in pre-revolutionary times.

Now it hopefully goes without saying that once the working masses have achieved requisite consciousness and organization to wage revolution against the capitalist system, they will need to be armed. Yes, perhaps, weapons are not decisive in war — people are. But one would be quite foolhardy indeed to reject a tool simply because it's not "decisive." Furthermore, the more revolutionaries are trained in the art of war, and prepared to teach others, the more readily this active stage of revolution can be carried out. It won't very well serve the revolution if our people and our revolutionaries start learning only once the war has begun, now will it? True enough, most of the arms that will be used in the coming revolution will probably not be those that will have been collected legally, under pre-revolutionary conditions. On the contrary, most will be seized — from military arsenals, police's weapons caches, and the like — and others newly produced, say, for example, *by 3D printers (!)*. But that's to say nothing at all about skills cultivated!

Once the bourgeoisie have been defeated, is it then safe to disarm? *On the contrary!* Even *more* than before the revolutionary war ends, the creation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the red army, the people's militia, etc, will require the universal armament of the whole people. The overthrown exploiters will fight even *more violently than before*, resist *more desperately than before*, to restore the power of capital; the imperialists, those foreign enemies of the revolution, will try to invade and destroy the power of the workers; hence, enemies of the people, both internal and external, will need to be suppressed. And not only are there old exploiters who will need to continue to be suppressed, but *new, aspiring* class enemies will inevitably be generated in the period of early socialist construction. In particular, history shows that they will try to join the party to promulgate a revisionist line. If it should come down to it, if the party is overtaken by revisionists and begins to head down the capitalist road,

then the armed people carrying out a cultural revolution is the last line of defense for correcting course. So long as there remains these class contradictions — contradictions which will persist even when the means of production have been socialized in one country — universal armament shall remain. But I'm getting ahead of myself. In the early stages of consolidation and socialist construction, there will also be substantial contradictions between the people. Poverty will take time to abolish, bourgeois ideology even more-so; hence violent crimes are still to be expected. While most contradictions between the people can and will be resolved by means of unity-criticism-unity, while, in other words, most criminal elements of the people can be resolved through non-violent, non-punitive, non-dictatorial methods, one can expect people to defend themselves against individual, interpersonal acts of violence and aggression. Here's what Lenin says about it in [\*The State and Revolution\*](#) while describing the transition from capitalism to communism:

Only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is nobody to be suppressed--"nobody" in the sense of a class, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. **We ... do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to stop such excesses.** In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this: **this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilized people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted.** And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "wither away". (Lenin, 1918, 63 — emphasis added).

Here Lenin describes essentially two independent phenomena: the withering of the state via the complete suppression and liquidation of class enemies, and the withering of individual "excesses" from among the people via addressing their fundamental needs. Here it is presented as though individual excesses will outlast the enemy class and the withering of the state, though it would be a mistake to regard the withering of the former as *contingent* on the withering of the latter. In an advanced, industrialized country such as the United States, it's not out of the question that addressing people's needs will be a simpler, shorter task than the suppression of class enemies. This is an important point to distinguish on two counts: determining when firearms will become obsolete and can be abolished, and determining when *home armament* will become obsolete and can be abolished. In all likelihood, only when both of these conditions are met can firearms — really armament in general — be abolished. On this subject, Lenin had said two years earlier in [\*The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution\*](#) that:

Only *after* the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historic mission, to consign all armaments to the scrap-heap. And the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but *only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before.* (Lenin, 1916, chapter II).

Chairman [Mao Zedong once said](#) something awfully similar in *Problems of War and Strategy*: “We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, **and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun**” (Mao, 1938 — emphasis added). Neither of these statements clearly relate the abolition of the firearm to personal excesses, only the fact that such abolition will eventually occur, and furthermore it will only occur after our class enemies have been suppressed. Yet, in the passage from *State and Revolution*, Lenin refers to the *armed* people as carrying out the suppression of excesses, implying that he expects armament to continue until such excesses disappear. The ambiguity is understandable, given that from our (and his) vantage in history we can only speculate about the operation of a society in which classes and the state have withered away. Nevertheless, I’d like to emphasize this point because an abstract “right to firearms” takes for granted that firearms are an immortal necessity, while, in truth, we would not only like very much to get rid of them, but, in fact, there will come a time when we are actually able to do so. To summarize, mass armament, armament in general, will naturally end once the state and personal excesses have withered away, once class society and all its ills have finally been abolished.

One final clarification is needed. It is certainly true that both of the previously mentioned conditions necessitate universal armament; yet, only *one of them* necessitates personal, *home* armament. Whether we are speaking of the espionage of class enemies, the infiltration of the party by revisionists, or the death-machine of the imperialists, all of these sorts of threats are *organized, planned, and carried out on a mass scale*. It’s not the enemies of the people who are likely to rob or assault someone on the street, in their home, or, in other words, to carry out acts of violence against *individuals*. Hence these organized, planned acts of violence will be met with similarly organized, planned responses; these are not events that will require constant vigilance in the sense of carrying a gun on your person at all times. Conversely, since personal “excesses” are unplanned and spontaneous, persistent personal vigilance is, unfortunately, necessary. If one isn’t prepared for *this kind* of violence, they will be victimized by it, hence the existence of these excesses imply universal armament expressed as personal armament. On the other hand, when these excesses wither away, when the people are no longer worried about defending themselves against *each other*, there is no longer any need to keep a firearm in the home, where it imposes collective liability on all inhabitants, *but only where it remains accessible for use against class enemies*. That is to say, upon this condition being met, if there is still need for firearms, then they will

very likely leave the home and settle nice and cozy into public armories. I'm imagining something like a library, but for guns. This transition from home armament to public-utility-armament is here expressed as a singular transition, but given the uneven and combined development of society, it's quite possible that certain locales will make that shift before others. Or if personal "excesses" really, universally outlast our class enemies, then we can surely expect this public-utility step to be skipped, and that the firearm will simply wither away, county by county, as personal excesses wither away.

## **5. In Summary**

I believe that should sufficiently rebuke the four main problems with the publication. Socialist universal armament should not be confused with a personal right to own firearms, nor should that right be considered immortal and unalienable, since the complete establishment of communism will entail the abolition of not just the state, but arms in and of themselves. It's these (and other) theoretical nuances that have allowed bourgeois discourses to misrepresent the policies of armament and gun control as they had been practiced in communist countries throughout the 20th century. Furthermore, let us not think that decentralized, small production prohibits the possibility of a planned economy.

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