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**V. Zotov**

# **How to Study Historical Materialism**



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**КАК ИЗУЧАТЬ ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ МАТЕРИАЛИЗМ?**  
(Учебно-методическое пособие)

*На английском языке*

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is addressed to readers interested in Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Like other works of its kind, it does not attempt to examine all the main concepts of historical materialism. It is not a textbook but a comprehensive companion that facilitates the study of historical materialism, especially its major and difficult concepts that require additional explanations. Also, inasmuch as the handbook comments on the main aspects of historical materialism as a separate study course it may be used without a textbook.

In each chapter readers are offered three or four key questions, which are then examined from the methodological point of view. Each chapter concludes with "Questions and Answers"—questions likely to be posed by readers and the answers to them, followed by an assignment and suggestions for further reading.

Recommendations on works by Marx, Engels and Lenin feature prominently in this book. No textbook or handbook can be a substitute for the original works. *Reading Marx, Engels and Lenin is a must in studying Marxism-Leninism.*

Historical materialism, it must be noted, occupies a special place in the Marxist-Leninist teaching. As a constituent part of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, historical materialism is inseparable from its two other parts—political economy and scientific socialism (communism). Engels wrote in his article "Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" that "the essential foundation of ... political economy is the materialist conception of history".<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that Marx provided a

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, pp. 219-20 (all further references to

classical account of the materialist conception of history in the introduction to his book *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.<sup>1</sup> Take Marx's main work, *Capital*, the first volume of which came out in 1867. Undoubtedly, it is primarily a political-economic work; but it also provides economic substantiation of capitalism's inevitable demise and of the victory of socialism and communism. Thus *Capital* deals with scientific socialism. It can rightly be called a philosophical and sociological work, inasmuch as it is based on and develops dialectical and historical materialism. Lenin wrote that "since the appearance of *Capital*—the materialist conception of history is no longer a hypothesis, but a scientifically proven proposition".<sup>2</sup>

These two great discoveries that we owe to Marx—the materialist conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus value—made socialism a science.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, the study of historical materialism is essential if one wants to acquire knowledge in Marxist-Leninist political economy and scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism in general.

No wonder, therefore, that even many non-Marxist historians are influenced by the Marxist theory and historical materialism in particular.<sup>4</sup>

Let us now, proceed to the study of historical materialism.

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works by Marx, Engels and Lenin are to editions by Progress Publishers, Moscow, unless otherwise indicated).

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-23.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> See Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes (further referred to as *Selected Works*), Vol. 3, 1976, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> See *People's History and Socialist Theory*, Ed. by Raphael Samuel, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, Boston and Henley, 1981, p. 313.

## Chapter 1

# HISTORICAL MATERIALISM AS A PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCE OF SOCIETY

This chapter offers an insight into the study of historical materialism. It examines the subject matter of this science, its specific features vis-à-vis other social sciences and relevance to the revolutionary activities of the working class and all working people. Accordingly, it is expedient to distinguish the following topics:

(1) Unity of dialectical and historical materialism. The cardinal principle of the materialist conception of history: social existence is primary and social consciousness—secondary.

(2) The subject matter of historical materialism.

(3) Theoretical and socio-political prerequisites of the emergence of historical materialism—a revolution in the concept of society.

(4) Historical materialism as a guide to the working people's revolutionary and reforming activities.

## Literature

1. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, 1977, pp. 19-26.

2. Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 365-66.

3. V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, pp. 129-332.

4. V. I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980, pp. 23-28.

5. V. I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1974, pp. 55-57.

(1) Most of those who take up historical materialism have

already studied dialectical materialism and, hence, know that Marxist-Leninist philosophy is a science dealing with the general laws governing the development of nature, society and thought. Historical materialism is an integral component of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. As a science concerned with the more general laws of society's development, historical materialism is, as it were, a particular case of dialectical materialism.

Opinions have been expressed to the effect that historical materialism is an extension of dialectical materialism to the sphere of social life and human history. This definition could be acceptable provided it is not understood in the sense that dialectical materialism, with all its laws, categories and the theory of cognition, was created first and later extended to the sphere of social life.

In actual fact, Marx and Engels developed dialectical and historical materialism simultaneously, as an integral philosophical doctrine. Dialectical materialism could not have emerged in the absence of the materialist conception of the natural and historical process—a theory of the mode of material production as the basis of life and society's development, of socio-economic formations, classes and class struggle, the state and revolution, and of social consciousness as a reflection of social existence. One thing must be emphasised: although the word used is *historical materialism*, the materialist conception of history is based on *dialectic*, implies *dialectic*, and is essentially *dialectic*. In 1894 Lenin thus defined materialist dialectic in one of his first works *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*: "What Marx and Engels called the dialectical method—against the metaphysical—is nothing else than the scientific method in sociology, which consists in regarding society as a living organism in a state of constant development (and not as something mechanically concatenated and therefore permitting all sorts of arbitrary combinations of separate social elements), an organism the study of which requires an objective analysis of the production relations that constitute the given social formation and an investigation of its laws of functioning and development."<sup>1</sup>

One may ask: why, then, should a handbook on Marxism

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 165.

consist of two parts—one on dialectical materialism and the other on historical materialism? Why are there handbooks on dialectical materialism and on historical materialism as this one?

This is explained by the following considerations: first, the need for a specific examination of the higher and more intricate form of the development of matter—human society; second, the necessity to specify the multitude of philosophical problems for teaching and research purposes.

The unity of dialectical and historical materialism, on the one hand, and the relative independence of historical materialism, on the other, are apparent from their approach to the basic issue of philosophy. Dialectical materialism, as well as materialism in general, proceeds from the recognition that matter (being) is primary while social consciousness (thinking) is secondary, derivative.

What, then, are social being and social consciousness?

*Social being* is the material life of human beings, the "real process of their life" as Marx put it, i.e. those material relations of men toward nature and one another that emerge objectively, irrespective of their will and consciousness, in the process of production of material things.

*Social consciousness* is the spiritual aspect of the historical process, men's spiritual life: ideas, views, theories, feelings and sentiments reflecting social being.

Developing historical materialism, solving the basic question of philosophy in the realm of social life from the materialist position, Marx and Engels reasoned as follows: before man takes up science, philosophy, literature, art, etc., that is, before starting to think and in order to be able to think, man must eat, drink, clothe himself, have a place to live in, obtain fuel, etc. These things cannot be obtained ready-made but have to be taken from nature. To take them from nature means to work on natural objects in such a way that they should satisfy man's needs. In other words, to be able to live, advance and improve, man must, first of all, produce the necessary things, means of subsistence, i.e., material things.

The proposition that production of material things is the basis of man's existence is but the *initial* assumption of the materialist conception of history. Developing further the materialist approach to the basic issue of philosophy in the realm of social

life, Marx was able to prove what no preceding philosopher had ever arrived at, namely that the mode of production of material life determines the social, political, and spiritual processes of life in general; therefore, the *ultimate reason* for all social changes and political upheavals should be sought not in man's head, not in the growing awareness of "eternal" truth and justice, not in philosophy, but in the economic life of any given epoch, in changes taking place in production and exchange. Engels pointed out that the term "historical materialism" was introduced "to designate that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of these classes against one another."<sup>1</sup>

This was briefly formulated by Marx: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."<sup>2</sup> This is the main law of social development.

Marx and Engels dealt with the interrelation of social being and social consciousness in *The German Ideology* (the first chapter of the first volume "L. Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks")<sup>3</sup>. Engels tackled it in *Anti-Dühring*,<sup>4</sup> and Lenin examined it in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*<sup>5</sup> and also in *Karl Marx*.<sup>6</sup>

(2) The subject matter of historical materialism is human society, not any particular sphere but society as a whole. What is society?

Pre-Marxian sociologists were of the opinion (which many contemporary bourgeois sociologists share) that society is a sim-

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. Special Introduction to the English Edition of 1892", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1976, pp. 27-28.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, pp. 316-17.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 322-323, 325.

<sup>6</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 43-91.

ple arithmetic sum total of individuals. But society cannot be a simple sum total of men. Every person is not just a lone inhabitant of Earth, but a social being. As explained above, to live and develop men must produce material things. No man can produce goods single-handed. People cooperate in producing material goods, that is, they enter into specific and necessary relations—production relations.

But, as the saying goes, man does not live by bread alone. Men are linked by political, legal, moral, religious and other ties besides production relations. Hence Marx's definition of society as the "product of men's reciprocal action"<sup>1</sup> expressing "the sum of the relationships and conditions in which ... individuals stand to one another."<sup>2</sup>

Society is not a simple sum total of ties and relations but a definite and necessary *system* in which *material* relations pertaining to the production of material goods are primary. *Ideological* relations—embracing all other types of social relations—are secondary, derivative. As social being determines social consciousness, so material relations determine ideological relations. This, in Lenin's words, is the basic idea of Marx's and Engels's conception of society<sup>3</sup>.

It is not society as such but society as a definite system of men's material and ideological relationships that constitutes the subject matter of historical materialism. With this in mind we shall examine the laws studied by historical materialism, its specific features vis-à-vis other social sciences, and also its significance for other social sciences.

Society is the subject matter of many disciplines: history, political economy, jurisprudence, ethics, aesthetics, pedagogics, linguistics, ethnography, etc.

Most social sciences study one aspect of society, one area of men's life and work and the laws operating within it. Thus, political economy is concerned with economic relations and the laws governing the production and distribution of material goods at

<sup>1</sup> "Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov in Paris", Brussels, December 28 [1846], Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, "Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1986, p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 151.



various stages of society's development. Jurisprudence deals with the essence and history of the state and law. The subject matter of ethics are moral standards, while aesthetics studies the laws of art and men's artistic activities. Pedagogics embraces the problems of upbringing, education and instruction of men in a given society, and is concerned primarily with younger generations. Linguistics examines language as a means of communication, as well as the laws of its functioning and development. Ethnography deals with nations and cultures, their description, origin and distribution, etc.

Comparing history and historical materialism we shall note the following difference. History is a concrete discipline that chronologically records the development of nations and peoples. History records the changes and events occurring in society; it is mankind's "memory". This is not to say that history deals only with concrete facts and events. Like any other science, it reveals the laws of social development and the essential cause-and-effect connections between historical events. This is particularly true of world history which treats about society's evolution as an integral logical process. Still, history is concerned primarily with events and developments, with when and how they occurred, the people involved, etc.

Historical materialism, however, is specifically concerned with the universal laws and driving forces of mankind's development.

As a general sociological theory, historical materialism is not a substitute for sociology, a discipline which explores relations between a society, collective, and personality, as well as the needs, interests and value orientations of population groups. Such branches of knowledge as sociology of the family, sociology of labour, sociology of leisure, sociology of town and countryside, sociology of science, etc.—each with its own theoretical position and applications—acquire a scientific character only if based on the concepts and conclusions of historical materialism.

Some Western scholars opine that Marxism has produced historical materialism as a general and "abstract" theory, that it disregards everyday realities and avoids concrete sociological research—a province of bourgeois empirical sociology. This is untrue.

Marxism, including historical materialism, emerged and develops in close contact with sociological research. Engels wrote

his first major work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844), proceeding from direct study and interpretation of data supplied by various sources available at the time. In that work Engels made a thorough analysis of labour conditions, wage level, housing conditions, the quality of food and clothing, problems of education, culture, morality, health, etc.—in fact all aspects of workers' life were analysed. All theoretical propositions and conclusions of Marx's main work, *Capital*, are based on sociological examination of a "Mont Blanc" of facts.

Hence, historical materialism is not only a *philosophical* foundation providing materialistic approach to men's life; it is a *methodological* foundation of all other social sciences—if methodology is to be understood as a study of methods, i.e., the general system of principles and ways of cognising and transforming reality. G. V. Plekhanov (1856-1918), a prominent Russian revolutionary and advocate of Marxism, noted that it refers "not to the *arithmetic* of social development, but to its *algebra*; not to the *causes* of individual phenomena, but to how the discovery of those causes should be approached".<sup>1</sup>

Thus, historical materialism is an organic component of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Briefly, it can be defined as a *science about the universal laws and driving forces of mankind's development*. In a more detailed definition, *historical materialism is a social science investigating society as an integral system of human relations as well as the most general laws and driving forces of men's historical development, proceeding from the assumption that social being is primary and social consciousness—secondary*.

(3) Up to the mid-1840s, idealism was the prevailing trend in the conception of social life. Even materialist philosophers—most of whom correctly resolved the fundamental question of philosophy in relation to natural phenomena—approached social life from idealistic positions. One might say that they were materialist "at the base" and idealist "at the top".

In his work "Karl Marx", Lenin emphasised two principal shortcomings in the conception of pre-Marxian sociologists: "In

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<sup>1</sup> Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works* in five volumes, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 137.

the first place, the latter at best examined only the ideological motives in the historical activities of human beings, without investigating the origins of those motives, or ascertaining the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, or seeing the roots of these relations in the degree of development reached by material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not embrace the activities of the *masses* of the population."<sup>1</sup>

This is not to say that historical materialism does not stem from the preceding development of social studies. Historical materialism originated from the critical reassessment of advanced social thought undertaken in appropriate historical conditions. The chief prerequisites for the development of historical materialism are examined in Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* and *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*.<sup>2</sup>

Adam Smith and David Ricardo, classics of the English bourgeois political economy (late 18th-early 19th century) and founders of the labour theory of value, proved that the bourgeois class profiting from capital and the landowners living off rent payments succeed in this by exploiting wage labour. Although they saw the antagonism of class interests as an organic law of social life, their "economic anatomy of classes" in capitalist society was a prerequisite for a materialist conception of history.

Utopian Socialists considerably contributed to introduction of the materialist conception of history. *Saint-Simon*, for example, brilliantly surmised that economic situation is the foundation of political institutions; *Fourier*, a severe critic of the material and moral poverty of the bourgeois world, attempted to investigate human history from the dialectical position; *Owen* took some practical steps to improve the miserable situation of workers (and although his project eventually fell through, as it was bound to, his influence was felt by all social movements in England advancing the interests of the working class that occurred during the first half of the 19th century and accounted for all tangible successes achieved by them).

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 115-151, 337-376.

French bourgeois historians of the 1820s and 1830s sought the key to understanding political history in men's "civil existence", i.e., economic conditions for the existence of different classes. Engels wrote in his letter to Borgius on January 25, 1894: "While Marx discovered the materialist conception of history, Thierry, Mignet, Guizot and all the English historians up to 1850 are evidence that it was being striven for."<sup>1</sup>

The conception of history developed in *Hegelian* philosophy was a direct theoretical prerequisite for its materialist conception. One may wonder: wasn't Hegel an objective idealist holding that the development of the *World Spirit* (non-human and superhuman consciousness reminiscent of a supernatural, divine force) lies at the core of every kind of development? Didn't Hegel confuse historians by asserting that history, man, the objective world exist for the idea to arrive at self-realisation, in the state of the *Absolute Idea*?

This is indeed so. But one must not forget that the rational core of Hegelian philosophy—Hegelian dialectics, the dialectical method—developing on the soil of human history, yielded valuable fruit. This is what Engels wrote on this score: "What distinguished Hegel's mode of thinking from that of all other philosophers was the exceptional historical sense underlying it. However abstract and idealist the form employed, the development of his ideas runs always parallel to the development of world history, and the latter is indeed supposed to be only the proof of the former. Although this reversed the actual relation and stood it on its head, yet the real content was invariably incorporated in his philosophy, especially since Hegel—unlike his pupils—did not rely on ignorance, but was one of the most erudite thinkers of all time. He was the first to try to demonstrate that there is development, an intrinsic coherence in history, and however strange some things in his philosophy of history may seem to us now, the grandeur of the basic conception is still admirable today, compared with either his predecessors or those who following him ventured to advance general observations on history. His monumental conception of history pervades the *Phenomenology*, the *Aesthetics* and the *History of Philosophy*,

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 442.

and the material is everywhere set forth historically in a definite historical context even if in an abstract distorted manner.”<sup>1</sup>

Theoretical prerequisites alone, however, can hardly account for the emergence of historical materialism. Its emergence would not have been possible if the socio-political conditions had not been ripe. Historical materialism came into being with the emergence of Marxism in the 1840s. Its founders—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels—were leaders and ideologists of the working class.

In this connection we shall examine two questions: Was it accidental 1) that historical materialism should emerge in the 1840s?; and 2) that its founders had to be leaders and ideologists of the working class, and not of any other class?

To answer the first question we must remember that historical materialism could not have developed at any time or in any historical conditions: it could not have developed under a slave-owning or feudal system. It could develop, as it did, only under capitalism; to be more exact, at that stage of capitalism's development when its antagonistic contradictions became quite vivid and when the proletariat entered the historical arena of class struggle.

Thus, industrial crises of overproduction, occurring more or less regularly (in 1825, 1837, 1842 and 1847) and accompanied by purposeful destruction of an immense amount of material goods, growth in unemployment and increasing poverty of the working masses, showed that capitalism, that had recently rejoiced in its victory over feudalism and was still ascending, was doomed by history.

In the political sphere, capitalism's antagonistic contradictions made themselves felt in the class struggle commenced by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. In France it culminated in the 1831 and 1834 risings by Lyons workers. The second rising was so powerful that it took a 20,000-strong Royal Force armed with artillery to crush it. 1844 saw a rebellion by Silesian weavers in Germany. In England, the first politically organised revolutionary movement—Chartism—was in the forefront of pol-

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, “Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*”, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, 1980, p. 474.

itical life for two decades (1830s-1850s). The Chartists, though, did not erect barricades as the French workers did; they used peaceful forms of struggle and in 1840, 1842 and 1848 submitted to Parliament petitions demanding universal franchise, reduced working day and higher wages for workers (all of which were rejected by representatives of the ruling classes). This struggle was, in many respects, "preparatory to Marxism, the 'last word but one' before Marxism", in Lenin's words.<sup>1</sup>

Why was Chartism, like other proletarian movements against the bourgeoisie in the 1830s and 1840s, conducive to the development of Marxist revolutionary theory? Evidently, because the workers' struggle against the bourgeoisie would have gone wrong at the very start had they not been fully aware of the goals, the means, the immediate and long-term objectives of the struggle covering many decades and even centuries of social development.

Hence, Marxism was born by necessity, the material requirements of the class struggle waged by the workers against the bourgeoisie.

It is not accidental either that a truly scientific dialectical materialist theory of social development was created by Marx and Engels, leaders and ideologists of the working class. Bourgeois ideologists could not have created this theory. To develop a truly scientific theory of society, to discover and formulate the basic laws of social development means to show the transitory character of the capitalist system and to prove that it is bound to be replaced by a new society—that of social justice—just as capitalism itself replaced feudalism. The new society will have no exploitation of man by man or one class by another. It is clear that, just as no individual will ever devote his life to proving that he or she is bound to die, so bourgeois ideologists could not and did not want to prove the inevitable demise of capitalism.

This was a task for leaders and ideologists of the class, the vital interests of which are linked with elimination of capitalism and which is the grave-digger of the bourgeois society—the proletariat. Marx and Engels emerged as the outstanding thinkers and leaders of the proletariat.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On Compromises", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 492.

When Marx and Engels developed historical materialism, they achieved a veritable revolution in the concept of society and its evolution. Mankind's knowledge about itself was but a fraction compared with what Marxism has given it. Marx and Engels discovered the operation of objective, basically material laws in a sphere where previously everything had been attributed to chance, to arbitrary rule by individuals or to the hand of the World Spirit. They penetrated phenomena and got to the essence of things.

In Lenin's words, Marxism "was the first to put sociology on a scientific basis"<sup>1</sup> and the materialist conception of history is "a synonym for social science".<sup>2</sup>

Every chapter of this handbook contains a detailed examination of the revolution achieved by Marx and Engels in the interpretation of social life.

(4) The fourth topic aims at showing that historical materialism is not an abstract discipline up in the clouds of historical generalisations, but a real and earthly science providing guidance for revolutionary and reforming activities of the working class and all working people, and helping every particular person to understand the essence of the great emancipatory struggle against exploiters and to define his own place in this struggle.

Marx and Engels called their philosophy the proletariat's "spiritual weapons"<sup>3</sup>. At the base of the memorial to Marx at the Highgate Cemetery in London, one can read the famous eleventh (concluding) thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."<sup>4</sup>

Opponents of Marxist-Leninist philosophy use every means available to discredit it, to undermine the working people's faith in the inevitability of the world's revolutionary transformation.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, Introduction", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1975, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 8.

Thus, a theoretician of "African socialism" Leopold Senghor holds that dialectical and historical materialism is a child of history and geography, history being the 20th century and geography—Europe. Hence the assertion that historical and dialectical materialism are "outmoded" and unable to answer the needs of social development in the late 20th century, that they belong to European philosophy and are ill-suited to the specific conditions of the non-European world, i.e. of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Historical materialism cannot become "outmoded" because it is a creative and constantly developing social science absorbing ever new propositions and ideas. This is understandable in itself. Since social life is changing and developing (as anyone can see), a theory reflecting the evolution of social life cannot but change and develop, too.

After laying the foundations of the materialist conception of history in the 1840s, Marx and Engels developed it *themselves* for nearly half a century (Marx died in 1883, Engels—in 1895). Later, their cause was continued by Lenin.

Leninism is Marxism of the modern epoch, the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, the collapse of the colonial system, of nations' transition from capitalism and pre-capitalist forms of social life (in this case bypassing capitalism)—to socialism and communism.

The Address of the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, "Centenary of the Birth of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin" states: "The victory of the socialist revolution in a group of countries, the emergence of the world socialist system, the gains of the working-class movement in capitalist countries, the appearance of peoples of former colonial and semi-colonial countries in the arena of socio-political development as independent agents, and the unprecedented upsurge of the struggle against imperialism—all this is proof that Leninism is historically correct and expresses the fundamental needs of the modern age. . . . Marxist-Leninist theory and its creative application in specific conditions permit scientific answers to be found to the questions facing all contingents of the world revolutionary movement, wherever they are active."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. Moscow, 1969, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 41.*



The experience of world socialism, of the working-class and the national liberation movements has proved the international significance of the Marxist-Leninist teaching. As for historical materialism, it cannot be of a regional or continental character by virtue of its subject matter. There cannot be such a thing as historical materialism confined to a country or a continent and inapplicable to other countries or continents. Here is what Moses Mabhida, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, said on this score: "We in Africa are repeatedly told that Marxism is an 'imported' ideology, alien to our traditions and life-styles. These accusations naturally come from defenders of private ownership, production for profit, colonialism and the exploitation of the many by the few. Such critics of Marxism confine their attacks to the theory and practice of scientific socialism while shamelessly turning a blind eye on the ravages inflicted by agents of imperialism, settlers, missionaries, traders and officials who imposed their rapacious system by force and fraud on millions of peasants in Africa, Asia, America, Australia and Oceania.

"We dismiss with contempt the charge that Communists preach and practice a foreign system of ideas, either in Africa or any other continent.

"In truth, Marxism-Leninism, Scientific Socialism and Communism are different names for an identical body of knowledge that provides the only satisfactory explanation yet produced of social change, the transition from one social formation to another, the conditions that bring about each kind of transition, and the basic laws of social development.

"Because of its universality, Marxism belongs to all peoples."<sup>1</sup>

It should also be borne in mind that the Marxist conception of the world is not a doctrine or a cut-and-dried scheme but a *method* of research.<sup>2</sup> A method is as little dependent on "geography", the place or continent—European, Asian, African or any other—where it is employed, as a continent depends on the people employing this method.

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<sup>1</sup> Moses Mabhida, "Marx Belongs to Everyone", *The African Communist*, No. 95, 1983, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See "Engels to Paul Ernst in Berlin, June 5, 1890", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 390.

## Questions and Answers

*Question.* In contemporary non-Marxist philosophical and sociological works opinions are expressed to the effect that the basic proposition of scientific socialism, "social being determines social consciousness", belittles or even rejects the active role of consciousness and ideas in social development. Is this assertion correct?

*Answer.* No. The materialist conception of history does not in the least belittle or reject the role of consciousness and ideas in society's development.

The distinction between the idealist and the materialist conceptions of history lies not in the fact that the first recognises and the second denies the active role of consciousness. Nothing is more natural and obvious to historical materialism than considering man as an intelligent and consciously acting being, and consciousness and ideas as playing active part in social development. Marx and Engels emphasised the great mobilising and organising role of advanced theories and ideas which open up new horizons for man in the cognition of the world and in his practical activities.

It is also natural and obvious to the materialist conception of history that consciousness cannot exist before and outside of man and nature, as objective idealists (Plato, Hegel, Neo-Tomists) hold, and that human consciousness cannot be the principal and determining reason for society's development, as subjective idealists believe. It is not consciousness that produces nature and human society; vice versa, nature produces man, and man develops consciousness and mind in the course of, and through labour.

*Question.* Could historical materialism, or scientific socialism as a whole, have developed without Marx?

*Answer.* It is said that one day, when the great English scientists Isaac Newton (1643-1727) was walking in a garden, a falling apple struck him on the head. It made the scientist think of a seemingly simple and everyday—and actually universally significant—fact: why should an apple, or any other thing thrown up in the air, drop down? The law of gravity was thus discovered.

And what, may we ask ourselves, if the apple had not fallen exactly where Newton was walking at the time? Would mankind

have discovered the law of gravity? It would be right to suppose that the law would be discovered anyway, that someone was bound to discover it earlier or later, that its discovery was imminent because natural sciences no longer could do without it.

The same goes for social sciences. The historical epoch in need of a certain discovery produces a thinker who would make this discovery. Who that thinker would be is a matter of pure chance but the appearance of such a thinker reflects the demand of the time. As Engels wrote, "that such and such a man and precisely that man arises at a particular time in a particular country is, of course, pure chance. But if one eliminates him there is a demand for a substitute, and this substitute will be found, good or bad, but in the long run he will be found."<sup>1</sup>

Of course, an outstanding person leaves his own unique imprint upon historical developments and scientific activities. The historical demand for the emergence of a science of society does not, in the least, belittle the personal merits of the man who gives it his name. Engels wrote: "Marx stood higher, saw further, and took a wider and quicker view than all the rest of us. Marx was a genius; we others were at best talented. Without him the theory would not be by far what it is today. It therefore rightly bears his name."<sup>2</sup>

### For Homework and Discussion

1. In his *Empirio-Criticism and Historical Materialism*, Lenin writes: "Social being and social consciousness are not identical, just as being in general and consciousness in general are not identical. From the fact that in their intercourse men act as conscious beings, it *does not follow* at all that social consciousness is identical with social being. In all social formations of any complexity—and in the capitalist social formation in particular—people in their intercourse are *not conscious* of what kind of social relations are being formed, in accordance with what laws they develop, etc. . . . Social consciousness *reflects* social being—

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<sup>1</sup> "Engels to Borgius, January 25, 1894", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 361.

that is Marx's teaching. A reflection may be an approximately true copy of the reflected, but to speak of identity is absurd. Consciousness in general *reflects* being—that is a general thesis of *all* materialism. It is impossible not to see its direct and *inseparable* connection with the thesis of historical materialism: social consciousness *reflects* social being."<sup>1</sup>

Point out the arguments Lenin uses to prove the idea that social being is primary and social consciousness secondary.

2. US researcher Nancy Whittier Heer asserts the following: "Marx captured the Hegelian god of history and brought him to earth to reign over a dialectic of modes of production and property relationships. The process of transubstantiation, however, did not destroy the mystical quality of history, which persists in Marxist social theory."<sup>2</sup>

Compare this assertion with the actual views of Marx and Engels, expounded in the following extract from *The German Ideology*: "In direct contrast to German philosophy, which descends from heaven to earth, here it is a matter of ascending from earth to heaven. That is to say, not of setting out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh, but setting out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process demonstrating the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the brains of men are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises."<sup>3</sup>

Proceeding from views set forth in the previous paragraph and earlier in this section, expose the falseness of the assertions concerning Marx's "capture" of the Hegelian conception of history and the "mystical quality" of the Marxian theory of society.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Whittier, Heer, *Politics and History in the Soviet Union*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1973, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 36.

## Chapter 2

# THE LAWS OF SOCIETY'S DEVELOPMENT AS THE LAWS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY

This chapter of the handbook deals with the subject matter of historical materialism. It is being examined separately because of its cardinal importance for the understanding of historical materialism and because of its complexity.

We shall consider the following essential topics:

- (1) The unity and dissimilarity of the laws of nature and society.
- (2) What historical developments are independent of men's will, and why.
- (3) The dialectic of objective conditions and subjective factors in social development. Critique of fatalism and voluntarism.
- (4) Necessity and chance; necessity and freedom in history.

## Literature

1. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, pp. 126-37, 182-90, 291-384.
2. Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 364-68.
3. V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 136-47.
4. V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1977 pp. 373-86.
5. V. I. Lenin, "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1977, pp. 17-361.

(1) We shall begin examining the first question by stating that objective laws of development operate in human society as they do in nature. The basic laws of dialectics—the law of the unity and struggle of opposites, the law of transformation of quantitative into qualitative changes and vice versa, the law of

the negation of negation—operate in nature, in human society and in thought. As Engels pointed out, "it is . . . from the history of nature and human society that the laws of dialectics are abstracted. For they are nothing but the most general laws of these two aspects of historical development, as well as of thought itself."<sup>1</sup>

The laws of nature and society are united by their material foundation. As distinct from idealism, which tries to isolate and set apart nature and society, historical materialism assumes that *the history of society is part of the history of nature*. Whereas nature is eternal and the planet Earth is some 4.6 billion years old, man has been in existence for approximately 2.5 to 3 million years.

*The unity of the world lies in its material nature*. This thesis is expounded by Engels in *Anti-Dühring* (Part I, Chapters III and IV)<sup>2</sup> and by Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (Chapter I, §§ 1-5; Chapter II).<sup>3</sup>

The unity of nature and society and the laws governing them are also demonstrated by Engels' classification of the basic forms of the motion of matter in *Anti-Dühring* (Part I, Chapters IV and VII)<sup>4</sup> and *Dialectics of Nature* ("Basic Forms of Motion")<sup>5</sup>. The classification is based on the development principle: matter develops from lower to higher forms. The lowest of the known forms of the motion of matter is *mechanical motion*, understood as the spatial motion of bodies; next come *physical motion* (electromagnetic motion, gravitation, heat, attraction, repulsion, changes in the aggregate state of substances, sound), *chemical motion* (transformation of atoms and molecules), *biological motion* (metabolism of organic substances), and the highest form of the motion of matter—*social life*, embracing the existence and development of society, men, and human thought.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, 1972, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 45-57.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 40-74, 98-143.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 69-90.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 69-86.

<sup>6</sup> In the 20th century, science discovered new forms of the motion of matter (motion and interaction of elementary particles, processes in atomic nuclei, celestial bodies, etc.); hence certain corrections have been introduced in Engels's classification which, nevertheless, is an up-to-date and reliable guide for natural and social scientists.

Matter develops in such a way that each higher form of motion develops from and includes previous, simpler ones. Thus, the human body, as other living organisms, functions on the basis of interaction of the physico-chemical and biological forms of motion comprising an indissoluble entity. Even human consciousness, thought—supernatural as it may seem—is a process of reflection of reality based on the synthesis of all physical, chemical and biological forms of motion in the human mind.

However, once man emerged from the animal world, he established himself as a being qualitatively different from all others, a being capable of engaging in labour, producing material goods, and of thinking—that is to say, as an agent of the social form of the motion of matter. If society should not be separated from nature (as in the idealist conception), neither should it be identified with nature (as in the naturalist conception). Higher forms of motion, the social form in particular, should not be reduced to the level of lower forms. To explain phenomena which are the property of the higher forms of motion by regularities typical of the lower forms (as in pre-Marxian materialism) is to break with science, to shift to the position of mechanicism. Society—men endowed with an intellect and reason—is the highest product of nature. Marx and Engels did not criticise Hegel for admitting the existence of a “thinking spirit” but for tearing it from the natural foundation and man.

This should be borne in mind if we are to understand the common features and principal differences between the laws governing nature and those operating in human society.

In the first place, what is a law? Opponents of Marxism and of historical materialism reason as follows: what believers call “god”, the Marxists call “law”; there is not much difference between the two. In actual fact, the materialist conception of history has nothing to do with the mystical or the supernatural. A law expresses ties between phenomena and processes. Not simple ties, of course. *A law expresses internal, basic, essential, universal, stable and recurrent ties between phenomena and processes.* Social laws reflect objective and essential ties between men as well as internal, basic, stable and recurrent ties between various processes occurring in society because of and in connection with their activity.

Any social or natural law is so called by virtue of the fact

that it expresses ties and relationships between phenomena and processes that are bound to produce certain results. The Earth's revolution on its axis and around the Sun; the Sun's movement in our Galaxy comprising about 100 million stars; our Galaxy's movement in the system of other galaxies—all this is the result of operation of the law of gravitation. Each stage in society's development, like development in general, is not an accidental manifestation of chance circumstances but the result of the operation of specific laws of the social form of matter's motion.

These natural and social laws are objective. However, there is a principal difference between the objective character of natural laws and the objective character of social laws. Natural laws are objective by virtue of their operation independently of men. Notably, volcanoes will erupt irrespective of man's presence on Earth or his absence. Volcanoes will erupt due to the operation of certain physical laws acting within the Earth; the hot lava emits from the volcanoes and falls down because of the operation of the law of gravity; gradually, it cools due to the operation of other physical (natural) laws.

Hence, *blind, spontaneous, unconscious forces operate in nature in line with the laws of development functioning independently of men's will.*

Society presents a different picture. There do not and cannot exist laws operating in society irrespective of men's will. When there were no people on Earth, there were no laws of social development. With man's descent from the animal world, there emerged laws of social development. By the "emergence" of social laws, we do not imply that they were created by men, just like the wheel, the loom, etc. were created. It would be naive, to say the least, to imagine the primitive man—constantly fighting nature to defend his right to existence—as the creator of social laws.

Does this, then, mean that "somebody else" creates the laws of society's development and imposes them on society, on men? This is the religious view—a view that admits the existence of God as a supernatural force. Actually, such forces do not exist. Though the laws of society's development do exist, they are not created either by men or supernatural powers.

*Laws of social development are laws governing men's activities; in a class society, they are the laws of class activity. These*



*laws are objective inasmuch as they operate independently of men's will and consciousness.*

"But man is a conscious being and history is made by men", an impatient reader may argue, having decided that the last statement contradicts this proposition. We will examine this, too.

(2) History, indeed, is made by men, by their life and death. Men are authors and actors of the self-produced drama. The history of society is nothing else but the history of men. Not abstract men whose only purpose is to be an object of meditation, but live and active persons who eat, drink, dress, who feel, think, enter into matrimony and participate in military campaigns, social conflicts, etc.

The history of society, therefore, is the history of *active* men, that is, men pursuing certain aims. This proposition underlines the materialist conception of history. For Marx and Engels, the objects of research were "real, active men".<sup>1</sup>

"Real, active men" are men endowed with consciousness. Whatever men are engaged in—either growing grain, hunting or producing oil—they are always and everywhere conscious beings. Their everyday activities are purposeful; their conscience finds manifestation in everyday activities, forming the basis of society's life and development. Engels emphasised that "in the history of society ... actors are all endowed with consciousness, are men acting with deliberation or passion, working towards definite goals; nothing happens without a conscious purpose, without an intended aim."<sup>2</sup>

Now, if in the history of society nothing is done without a conscious purpose, without an intended aim, why, then, are some things independent of the will and conscience of men? Why do some historical developments not correspond to or even contradict the people's goals? The issue is of principal significance and not at all easy to understand. It is no accident that it has given rise to various falsifications of historical mate-

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 365-66.

rialism by its opponents. It is a stumbling-block to many of those who want to accept the materialist conception of history.

The following is to be taken into account when dealing with the laws of social development as laws governing the activities of conscious men.

1. The process of thinking is not induced by ideal or supernatural impulses. It is closely linked to its material basis. Thought, concept, or generally "the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought".<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, an idea gives rise to other ideas. Notably, utopian socialism was a theoretical source of scientific socialism. In the final analysis, though, ideas are produced inasmuch as they are demanded by the interests of men or classes. In Marx's words, "The 'idea' always disgraced itself insofar as it differed from the 'interest'."<sup>2</sup> And the interests are rooted in the economic relations of a given society.<sup>3</sup>

2. Men's interests—things that determine their will, goals, aspirations and desires—hardly ever coincide. More often than not, the interests of one person contradict another's and naturally meet with the latter's opposition. This is true even of persons belonging to the same class: each has his own individual goals and interests besides common class interests. The multitude of conflicting desires and interests produces a final average result, something no one has specifically intended, something differing—to a greater or lesser degree—from each individual interest, each particular purpose. Hence, not all the cravings and desires of men come true but also things that fall outside these aspirations, that are manifested not at once but only with the passage of time.

We shall explain this, using as an example the anti-feudal bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Europe during the 17th and early 18th centuries—revolutions carried through by peasants and artisans led by the bourgeoisie. What did each of these social groups fight for?

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *"Capital"*, Vol. 1, 1978, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Holy Family", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Engels, "The Housing Question", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 363.

The peasants fought against feudalism because they did not want to be bought and sold or to give away the bulk of what they produced. They wanted to own land and be free from feudal bondage. Artisans, although not owned by feudals as peasants, were opposed to feudalism because it impeded their productive activity and deprived them of political rights. The bourgeoisie also had scores to settle with the feudal lords. They wanted social life arranged in such a way as to enable them to grab political power, in such a way that peasants could abandon their feudal lords to go to work at capitalist enterprises.

The bourgeois revolutions were victorious; they ended the supremacy of feudalism and ushered in the age of capitalism. What did the new age have in store for the working people? Not better life for the peasants and artisans: in the new conditions they were unable to make ends meet and, eventually, were completely ruined. In Britain the class of peasants even ceased to exist, grinded by the millstone of capitalism.

The bourgeoisie could not rejoice over their victory for long. Ruining peasants and artisans and turning them into proletarians by concentrating them at capitalist enterprises, the bourgeois class was undermining the foundation of its own rule, since the proletariat was the class bound to overthrow the bourgeoisie and eliminate capitalism.

This example shows that the final results of a historical action (a development in which men participate) more often than not occur independently of men's will and consciousness.

The example helps us understand the conclusion made by the founders of Marxism on the arbitrary—*unconscious*—nature of the historical process. Engels wrote: "According to Marx's views, all history up to now, as far as the great events are concerned, has come about unconsciously, that is, the events and their further consequences have not been intended, the ordinary actors in history have either wanted to achieve something different or else what they achieved has led to quite different unforeseeable consequences."<sup>1</sup>

3. Although men's activities are always purposeful and conscious, although men are the makers of history, not everything in

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<sup>1</sup> "Engels to Sombart, March 11, 1895", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 455.

their life depends on their will and conscience, not everything in men's life and activity is determined by the principle "done to expectation". When men set themselves definite goals and begin to work towards their implementation, they have to take into consideration the real possibilities, the objective conditions of their activity. Thus, every new generation meets the established mode of production, social structure, political organisation and ideology, created by the activities of preceding generations, and has to adjust to it at first. Consequently, the way of life existing at a given time in a given society is little or not at all shaped by the will and conscience of the current generation. The results achieved by preceding generations create objective conditions for the activities of new generations. Engels wrote in his work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*: "Everything which sets men in motion must go through their minds; but what form it will take in the mind will depend very much upon the circumstances."<sup>1</sup> In this work, the student of historical materialism will find many of the positions described above.

4. That men communicate as conscious beings does not at all mean that they realise the types of social relationships that are formed as a result and the laws that govern their development. To illustrate this, Engels analyses the emergence and development of commodity production.<sup>2</sup>

As distinct from the primitive communal system (under which men possessed what they produced with their own hands and were pretty sure of consuming it, i.e., at the stage when production could not outgrow the producers), forces mysterious and alien to men emerged in a class society characterised by commodity production. They emerge because in commodity production (i.e., production for exchange instead of internal consumption) produced items must change hands. When a producer gives away his product in exchange for something else, he does not know what happens next to his product. Moreover, when there appeared a medium of exchange (money) and intermediaries (mer-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 367-68.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 330-32.

chants), the exchange process became even more complicated and the destiny of products more vague. There were many merchants who did not know what their colleagues were engaged in. Not only products now changed hands, but also markets. Producers lost grip of the production of things necessary for their own existence and merchants were no better placed to get it in hand. Thus men lost control and power over social activities and social processes.

Lenin takes the same position in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, using the example of a peasant producing grain and selling it on the market.<sup>1</sup>

Hence, the very fact of man's existence, production of goods and their exchange, as well as his *life-style* and the *methods* of production and exchange of products constitute the objective and necessary chain of developments, the chain of historical development which is independent not only of individual but also of social consciousness and which is never totally embraced by the latter.

Now, we can examine the significance of objective conditions and subjective factors in social development.

(3) *Objective conditions* are objects of men's interaction in the process of life and work: natural objects, the mode of production, in particular the level of productive forces achieved as a result of activities by preceding generations, etc. The essential feature of objective conditions is their material character, their existence independently of men's will and consciousness or (natural objects) independently of men as such. However, while all material things are objective, not everything objective is material. The concept of the objective is broader than the concept of the material. Notably, the state is primarily a phenomenon of the class, political and ideological order; however, neither its type nor form depends on the will and consciousness of every individual person. Hence, the state is an objective factor in relation to the individual and his activities.

Objective conditions, moreover, embrace spiritual or intellectual phenomena. For example, when a ruling revolutionary-democratic party spreads the ideas of Marxism-Leninism among

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1977, pp. 323-25.

the working masses, it must not fail to take into account the obtaining level of literacy and education, political awareness, influence of local traditions and religious creeds, spiritual legacy of colonialism, as well as the ideological influence of neocolonialism. Hence, men's spiritual life or social consciousness, as a subjective factor so far as material life or social being is concerned, becomes a component of objective conditions in relation to the individual or, as in this case, a party and its activity.

Lenin emphasised: "In his practical activity, man is confronted with the objective world, is dependent on it, and determines his activity by it."<sup>1</sup>

The *subjective factor* of social development is the conscious and purposeful activities of men, classes and parties, their will and capability of acting in accordance with their interests and objective conditions. In the "object-subject" interaction, the subject is an active part. Its activity is not absolute but relative, since it is realised not in a vacuum but on a *social ground*, where human society develops in interaction with nature. The last proposition requires elaboration.

Conforming its activity to objective conditions, the subjective factor does not leave them intact but interacts with them, thus changing and transforming them. Neither is the subjective factor left intact. By transforming an object, a person acquires new knowledge and experience, which he uses to further change the object. Thus, the thread of social progress is woven on the basis of constant interaction of objective conditions and the subjective factor.

The dialectical materialist conception of history, and Marxism-Leninism in general, is based on a truly scientific solution of the question of interaction of objective conditions and the subjective factor in the course of social evolution. Lenin wrote: "Marxism differs from all other socialist theories in the remarkable way it combines complete scientific sobriety in the analysis of the objective state of affairs and the objective course of evolution with the most emphatic recognition of the importance of the revolutionary energy, revolutionary creative genius, and revo-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 187-88.

lutionary initiative of the masses—and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organisations, and parties”.<sup>1</sup>

The Marxist-Leninist conception of the dialectic of objective conditions and the subjective factor in history is directed, likewise, against fatalism and voluntarism.

*Fatalism* (from Latin *fatum*—fate) is a philosophical conception holding that all processes and developments occurring in the world, just as every human activity, are the inevitable realisation of initial predestination, blind necessity—excluding any degree of creativity or free choice on the part of man. Fatalism makes a fetish of, and absolutises objective laws and conditions, admires the spontaneous character of social evolution, diminishes or rejects the part of man’s conscious activity and ability to cognise the necessity and act in a certain way to realise it.

Fatalism is observable in idealist (Leibniz, Schelling, Hegel) and in materialist (Hobbes, 18th-century French materialists) philosophical systems.

In the sphere of politics, fatalism plays into the hands of opportunism which, for the sake of a “better future”, rejects the necessity of the masses’ revolutionary struggle, as well as their ideological education and class organisation, since it fully relies on the operation of the objective laws of social development.

*Voluntarism* (from Latin *voluntas*—will, volition) stands in complete antithesis to fatalism in that it ignores the objective conditions of man’s activity, regarding human conscience and will as the foundation and supreme principle of all life. This philosophical conception is traceable in objective (Schopenhauer, Hartmann) and subjective (Stirner, Nietzsche) idealism.

In socio-political theory and practice, voluntarism leads to subjectivism, anarchism and adventurism, that is, execution of voluntary decisions and actions not conditioned by objective reality or the objective laws of history, and often even contradicting them.

Western bourgeois ideologists and politicians inclined to voluntarism refuse to admit the presence of profound objective reasons behind the national liberation struggle against colonialism and neocolonialism. It is simpler and more convenient for the imperialists to regard this struggle as “Communist intri-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, “Against Boycott”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, 1972, p. 36.

gues", the "hand of Moscow", or acts of "international terrorism".

Voluntarism and fatalism are incompatible with the truly scientific conception of history and are alien to it.

(4) Recognition of the objective character of the laws of social evolution makes it possible to find a correct, scientifically-grounded answer to the problems of necessity and chance, necessity and freedom in history.

Many idealists say that history never repeats itself: every occurrence is individual and fortuitous and, hence, unknowable. Has history repeated Alexander the Great, who lived in 356-323 B. C. and defeated the Persians at Granicus (334)), Issus (333), and Gaugamela (331); conquered the Achaemenidae; invaded Central Asia; conquered the territory up to river Indus?

No, history has not repeated itself in another Alexander the Great (as it has not repeated itself in any other person, great or ordinary alike); the life and doings of Alexander the Great are individual and unique. We may attribute it to chance that Alexander's teacher was the great Greek philosopher Aristotle; we may also attribute it to chance that Alexander died young and that his empire fell apart soon after his death. Still the processes, in which Alexander of Macedon took part, one may even say which he embodied—the processes involved in the evolution of the slave-owning society—were not at all fortuitous. Varying as they are from country to country, the processes involved in the evolution of the slave-owning system were essentially alike, and repeated each other to the extent to which each society was founded on the exploitation of slaves and to which the ruling class in each of these societies was striving to possess as many slaves as possible.

The materialist conception of history holds that essential (necessary) processes are those processes and phenomena that reflect primarily the internal, stable, recurrent universal links and relations, that is, those determined by objective laws of social development. In other words, necessity is that which is bound to occur under given conditions.

When Marxists say that socialism's victory in all countries is inevitable, being a historical necessity, they voice not only their own volition, hopes and aspirations. By this they express more: understanding of the more essential social relations; their



interaction, interdependence and the inner mechanism of their development; a desire to tailor their own activities to these objective relations and the course of their objective development.

While firmly rejecting the conception of the historical process as a simple chain of individual, unique and chance events Marxists do not reject accidental occurrences as such: rejection of chance amounts to imparting history a mystical character.

Chance developments are such that may or may not occur; or they may occur one way or another. Not even a chance phenomenon is without its reason, though: it expresses certain ties and relationships existing in society. It must be borne in mind, however, that an accident reflects external, inessential, unstable, solitary links and relations, brought to life by specific circumstances and activities by certain persons.

At first glance, necessity and chance are opposite, mutually exclusive things. Thus assert some idealists and metaphysical materialists. In actual fact, the matter is more complicated.

From the standpoint of dialectics the antithesis between necessity and chance is not absolute but relative. The two do not exist without each other, in a "pure" form. In actuality, in historical practice, every development has elements of the one and the other.

This can be illustrated by the following example. Mass-scale ruining of peasants is an objective necessity in the period of emergence and development of the capitalist mode of production, as it can be seen from the history of Western capitalist countries. The same can today be seen in the African and Asian countries that have opted for capitalism.

A matter of chance in this necessary process is which of the peasants get ruined and how; which of them become exploiters and how.

Chance inevitably accompanies necessity; necessity struggles through a mass of chance developments. These views are expostulated in Engels's *Dialectics of Nature*<sup>1</sup> and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*<sup>2</sup>, and in Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 204-334.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1977, pp.153-69.

The category of necessity is also linked to the category of freedom. What is freedom as philosophy interprets it?

Idealists assume that freedom is the self-assertion of the spirit, a person's ability to act according to his inner volition and with no regard for external conditions, for objective laws (if they admit the existence of the latter at all).

In actual fact, the freedom of an individual, collective class or society is not in an imagined independence of objective laws but in the will and ability to cognise them and use them in one's own interests. The materialist conception of history asserts that *freedom is cognised necessity and the practical human activity based on it.*

Man's freedom is not a constant value. It increases with society's evolution. The deeper man delves into the objective laws of social development, i.e. historical necessity, the more free he becomes.

Not a single society preceding socialism developed or develops in accordance with cognised laws. When society develops and an old system is replaced by a new one, this development, this transition (also a historical necessity) has an unconscious, blind and spontaneous character.

Only socialism makes it possible to master objective laws and so makes a person really free. The predomination of social ownership of the means of production makes it possible for socialist society to rid its economy of anarchy and spontaneity, put it on a planned foundation and to develop production in accordance with social interests—the interests of harmonious and comprehensive development of each person. It is in this sense that Marxists believe that *the transition from capitalism to socialism is a leap from the kingdom of blind necessity to the kingdom of freedom.* This is to say that socialism is a society governed in a scientific way: men begin to make history consciously, work to implement present goals. Communism is a result of conscious creative work by the working class and all working people guided by a Marxist-Leninist party.

The following words of Engels provide a résumé to this chapter: "The notion that *the ideas and conceptions of people create their conditions of life* and not the other way round is contradicted by all past history, in which results constantly differed from what had been desired and in the further course of

events were in most cases even the opposite. Only in the more or less distant future can this notion become a reality in so far as men will understand in advance the necessity of changing the social system, on account of changing conditions, and will desire the change before it forces itself upon them without their being conscious of it or desiring it."<sup>1</sup> One can find the fullest scientific explanation of the problem of correlation between necessity and chance in Engels's *Anti-Dühring*<sup>2</sup> and Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.<sup>3</sup>

### Questions and Answers

*Question.* Since objective conditions are defined as those independent of man's will and consciousness, how would will and consciousness correlate?

*Answer.* Will and consciousness are indissolubly linked. It must be borne in mind, though, that not every conscious action is an act of will. Will is man's purposeful orientation towards obligatory actions. Executing an act of will, a person is not guided by what he wants or does not want but by his being bound, being obliged to act in this and not in any other way, even if a great deal of risk and difficulties are involved.

Treating will as a property independent of external influences and circumstances, and not linked to objective necessity, idealism puts forward the idea of free will, of capacity to make decisions proceeding solely from the wish of the subject—man. At first glance, will is indeed determined by man's wish, desire or thought.<sup>4</sup> Going deeper, as historical materialism does, one will see that desires, aspirations and thoughts do not occur spontaneously but have objective foundations. The very possibility of choosing a goal, the possibility of making decisions, of acting in a particular and not in any other way, arises not so much from man's will as on the basis of his practical activity aimed at

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<sup>1</sup> "From Engels's Preparatory Writings for *Anti-Dühring*", in: Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126-38, 182-91, 267-372.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 187-94.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 366.

changing the objective world. In the final count man's voluntary activities stem from the objective world. Hence, free will is not that which chooses goals proceeding from man's desire; free will is that which chooses them correctly, in conformity with objective necessity. "Freedom of the will therefore," wrote Engels, "means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with knowledge of the subject."<sup>1</sup>

*Question.* Bourgeois Marxologists and Sovietologists maintain that Marx reasoned entirely from the point of view of the object, of "economic determinism", and defined the socialist revolution and socialism in general proceeding solely from objective conditions, while Lenin depended in everything on the operation of the subjective factor. What can we say in this respect?

*Answer.* This is not a simple attempt to distort the materialist conception of history but an attempt to distort the doctrine of Marx and Lenin, to oppose Marx to Lenin, Marxism to Leninism.

True, Marx proved that mankind's movement to communism occurs on the basis of objective laws of social development. It is his greatest merit. However, in his famous *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), the first written document containing "the brilliant germ of the new world outlook",<sup>2</sup> Marx puts to the forefront the "active side" of materialism, which he then further develops in his materialist doctrine of society, political economy, scientific socialism and communism.

After the death of Marx and Engels, however, theoreticians of the Second International (Bernstein, Kautsky) undertook to "reassess" (actually, to revise) Marxism, striving to show that the objective course of society's development is everything, man being a simple agent, executor of the "supreme historical necessity". Hence contemporary authors' views of the "objectivism" of Marx.

Lenin firmly opposed the social-reformism of the Second International. He showed that a scientific approach to the problem of the objective and subjective in social evolution presupposes that alongside determinism, directed from the object to the subject, there exists determinism directed from the subject to the

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 336.

object. This means that a person, a party, or a class can significantly change the course and rate of social progress by its purposeful actions. Leninism establishes in the revolutionary movement a truly Marxian dialectic of the objective and subjective in social evolution.

*Question.* It seems necessary to clear another point. If, as shown above, major historical developments depended little or not at all on men's will, must we conclude that the wills of individuals are equal to zero?

*Answer.* No, we must not. Engels emphasised that, "from the fact that the wills of individuals—each of whom desires what he is impelled to by his physical constitution and external, in the last resort economic, circumstances (either his own personal circumstances or those of society in general)—do not achieve what they want, but are merged into an aggregate mean, a common resultant, it must not be concluded that they are equal to zero. On the contrary, each contributes to the resultant and is to this extent included in it."<sup>1</sup>

### For Homework and Discussion

1. Make a synopsis of the texts recommended for reading in sections I and II and write out those words of Marx, Engels and Lenin that refer to the primary nature of social being and secondary nature of social consciousness and to the role of material and spiritual factors in the life and evolution of society.

2. Bourgeois and reformist ideologists accuse Marxism of inconsistency: if, they say, the history of society is governed by objective laws and if socialism is historically bound to replace capitalism, as Marxists assert—then political parties and revolutions are not needed.

Proceeding from the Marxist-Leninist treatment of the correlation of objective historical regularity and men's conscious activity, show the one-sidedness and groundlessness of such assertions by bourgeois and reformist ideologists.

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<sup>1</sup> "Engels to Joseph Bloch in Königsberg, September 21 [-22], 1890", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 395-96.

### Chapter 3

## SOCIETY AND NATURE. THEIR INTERACTION

The previous chapter dealt with the unity and distinctions of nature and society and also the laws governing their development. We recommend that stress be laid on the following:

- (1) Major stages in the interaction of nature and society. Current ecological problems.
- (2) Natural environment and social evolution. Criticism of the theories of geographical determinism.
- (3) The population and social evolution. Criticism of Malthusianism and Neo-Malthusianism.

### Literature

1. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, 1974, pp. 173-80, 574-666.
2. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, pp. 83-99.
3. Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, 1972, pp. 170-83.
4. V. I. Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, pp. 451-507.

The study of this topic should be approached from the Marxist position that the history of nature and the history of men are "inseparable, the history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist".<sup>1</sup> Actually, not only human beings but the entire animal world interacts with nature. However, as distinct from animals—which use their environment and bring about changes in nature simply by their presence—human beings effect purposeful changes, by making nature serve them and also by mastering it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> See Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 179.

(1) Several qualitative stages may be discerned in the history of interaction of nature and society, differing by the level of material production, labour implements in the first place.

At the *first stage* (in the primitive-communal society), man's influence on nature was insignificant. The restricted relation of men to nature, Marx and Engels pointed out in *The German Ideology*, determined their restricted relation to one another, and their restricted relation to one another determined men's restricted relation to nature.<sup>1</sup> Men maintained subsistence economy. They lived by picking berries, hunting and fishing, that is, they did not engage in production but rather took from nature ready-made food needed to sustain their life. Nature opposed men as a totally alien, powerful and unconquerable force, and men at first treated it as animals do. At the end of this lengthy period labour, the making of working implements to sustain life produced a miracle—*Homo sapiens* came into being. Why and how it happened is explained in Engels' remarkable article "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man", constituting part of his work *Dialectics of Nature*.<sup>2</sup>

The *second stage* set in some 10-12 thousand years ago, with the introduction of land cultivation, animal husbandry and, later, handicrafts. At that stage, grinding and drilling of stone labour implements appeared, and so did pottery, spinning and weaving. As a result, there was a switchover from subsistence to *production* economy, with appropriation continuing to play a significant part. It was a veritable revolution in production now termed the *neolithic* (New Stone Age) revolution—from 8,000 to 3,000 B.C.

It must be pointed out that the shift from subsistence to production economy was not confined to one region (Southwest Asia: from Anatolia and Palestine to Iran and Iraq, including bordering European and North African territories, as had been supposed until recently). It was, to all intents and purposes, universal. Notably, the production economy emerged in Southeast Asia (Vietnam, South China, Indonesia and the Philippines), India and Japan more or less at the same time (in some of the regions even earlier than in Southwest Asia). Africa, too, felt the influence of the general trend in the evolution of primitive

<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 170-83.

production. This shows that economic progress—whatever its rates at the first stages—does not stop, and that the history of the primitive community was similar in the basic regions of man's habitation.

The neolithic revolution was a major economic precondition for the emergence of classes, towns, and civilisation in general. This was promoted by the discovery of metals and replacement of stone implements with copper, bronze and iron tools.

At this stage (which embraced slave-owning and feudalism), man's impact on nature grew significantly. When the development of land cultivation and cattle-breeding required the felling of woods, as well as the building of canals and irrigational facilities, nature felt that her human child was growing, tearing out of its control, and becoming capable of harming it.

The *third stage* in the interaction of nature and society opened with capitalism, when the industrial revolution which began in England in the 18th century spread to other European countries and North America. "Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?" wrote Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.<sup>1</sup> What earlier generation did acquire such great power over nature!

However, not more than a hundred years later the scientific and technological revolution of the 20th century which opened the *fourth*, current, stage in the nature-society intercourse, surpassed the 19th-century industrial revolution. According to the Club of Rome<sup>2</sup> President, Aurelio Peccei, the present generation consumes more natural resources than its predecessors did over the preceding million years.<sup>3</sup> In the past hundred years,

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, 1976, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> A prominent nongovernmental and noncommercial organisation embracing researchers, public figures and businessmen of over 30 countries, concerned with research into global problems.

<sup>3</sup> Aurelio Peccei, *One Hundred Pages for the Future. Reflections of the President of The Club of Rome*, Pergamon Press, Inc., New York, 1981, p. 52.



mankind's power resources have increased thousand-fold, and energy consumption is still growing at a fast rate. The world consumed 2.7 billion tons of conditional fuel in 1950, nine billion tons in 1975, and is expected to consume 18 to 23 billion in the year 2000.

Today, we know that the Earth's resources have a limit, that energy resources are rapidly diminishing, and that non-renewable natural resources (including oil) will soon be exhausted. We have found out that by harming nature, ecological complexes man's productive activity is becoming a real threat to his own existence. Taking 100 units of substance from nature, social production uses a mere 3 or 4 units, discharging the remaining 96 into nature in the form of pollutants. In the industrially developed countries, some 30 tons of substance per person is annually extracted from nature; 1 to 1.5 per cent of this ends in the form of useful goods, the rest is waste, likewise harmful to man and nature.

Thus, having highly developed its productive forces, mankind has considerably impaired its environment. The pollution of the air basin and the World Ocean, the soil erosion brought about by tree-felling, extermination of the animal world, the sharp diminishing of drinking water resources and of a considerable number of raw materials, the ruined balance between various processes occurring in nature—this is a far from complete list of current manifestations of the *ecological* crisis (from the Greek word *oikos*—home, habitation).

The ecological situation is becoming more acute not only because of the additional pressure brought to bear on the ecosystems by the scientific and technological revolution and a man's large-scale activities. The subjection of the use of nature to the blind interplay of market forces has detrimental consequences, too. Capitalist monopolies, particularly multinationals—including transnational corporations (TNCs), most of them headed by US capitalists—are prepared to push mankind to the brink of disaster for the sake of superprofits. Nature-saving measures taken by governments of the capitalist countries are not very effective inasmuch as their implementation is opposed by capitalist economic principles and the spontaneous character of the evolution of capitalism as a social system. In this situation, it is becoming increasingly clear that effective *international* mechanisms

and procedures are needed to ensure rational use of the Earth's resources as mankind's common property. It is essential that these mechanisms and procedures should be international, since today global problems cannot be resolved by the national forces of a state or group of states.

The socialist system facilitates the solution of the ecological problem by virtue of its social ownership of the means of production and subjection of production to the interests of the people. *Harmonious* interaction between nature and society (if this is to be understood as a rational and *reasonable* use of nature) is possible only under socialism and communism, with its, in Marx's words, "socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

It is emphasised in the Guidelines for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for 1986-1990 and for the Period Ending in 2000 that it is necessary to improve the effectiveness of environmental protection measures; introduce advanced technological processes on a broader scale; develop industrial complexes that ensure complete and comprehensive utilisation of natural resources, of raw materials, etc. and that exclude or considerably lower harmful effects on the environment.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with this document, the USSR is steadily improving measures for protecting water and air resources, ensuring rational and comprehensive utilisation of land and mineral resources. Green belts around towns and settlements are built and improved; nature reserves, parks, game reserves and other ecological territories are set up and protected by the state. More is done to ensure protection, reproduction and rational utilisation of the country's fauna and flora.

Besides efforts to improve the effectiveness of state control of the condition of natural environment and the sources of pollution, it is important that work is conducted to inculcate in the Soviet people a sense of high responsibility for the protection and growth of natural resources and their rational utilisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3, 1974, p. 820.

<sup>2</sup> See *Guidelines for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for 1986-1990 and for the Period Ending in 2000*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1985, p. 79.

This is in the interest of the present and future generations.

It must be kept in mind that nature is not merely the source and storehouse of the means of livelihood and labour but also a source of joy, love of life, and spiritual wealth of each person.

Socialist countries carry out environmental protection at the international level, too, through the CMEA bodies. In 1981, the United Nations considered and adopted the document, "On the Historical Responsibility of States for the Preservation of Nature for Present and Future Generations", prepared by the USSR. Socialist countries actively participate in the implementation of ecological education programmes sponsored by UNESCO and other international organisations.

(2) An important philosophical and sociological question is that of the role of geographical environment in the life of society, the evolution and development of world civilisation. Geographical environment embraces the climate, soils, relief, mineral deposits, fauna and flora, rivers, seas and oceans—the nature surrounding man and satisfying his needs.

Students of historical materialism must understand that though the mode of production plays the determining role in society's development, other factors can also influence the course of history. The materialist conception of history does not question the idea that a favourable geographical environment may facilitate social development or that an unfavourable geographical environment may impede it.

To prevent any doubts from arising in this connection, we shall have to quote a lengthy extract from Marx's article "The British Rule in India". Analysing the historical destinies of Eastern countries and nations, Marx wrote: "Climate and territorial conditions, especially the vast tracts of desert, extending from the Sahara, through Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary, to the most elevated Asiatic highlands, constituted artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks the basis of Oriental agriculture. As in Egypt and India, inundations are used for fertilizing the soil of Mesopotamia, Persia, etc.; advantage is taken of a high level for feeding irrigative canals. This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water, which, in the Occident, drove private enterprise to voluntary association, as in Flanders and Italy, necessitated, in the Orient where civilisation was too low

and the territorial extent too vast to call into life voluntary association, the interference of the centralising power of Government. Hence an economical function devolved upon all Asiatic Governments, the function of providing public works. This artificial fertilisation of the soil, dependent on a Central Government, and immediately decaying with the neglect of irrigation and drainage, explains the otherwise strange fact that we now find whole territories barren and desert that were once brilliantly cultivated, as Palmyra, Petra, the ruins in Yemen, and large provinces of Egypt, Persia and Hindostan; it also explains how a single war of devastation has been able to depopulate a country for centuries, and to strip it of all its civilisation."<sup>1</sup>

We can see that the specific geographical environment had a tangible influence on the mode of production and on the organisation and functioning of the economic and political life of Eastern countries and, eventually, on the historical destinies of Eastern nations. Still, historical materialism is incompatible with the theories of geographical determinism or geopolitics—the theories holding that the type of geographical environment is the determining factor of society's evolution.

That the East fell behind the West can be attributed not to geographical but rather to economic and socio-political factors, connected primarily with colonial seizures and exploitation. Japan's example graphically proves that in an unfavourable geographical environment (Japan, as is well known, is poor in natural resources and has to import them) a country can reach a high level of industrial and scientific-and-technological progress, given independent development free from colonial exploitation.

Vice versa, a favourable geographical environment itself does not ensure a high level of productive forces or a high social development level. Marx wrote of the 19th century India that in no other country of the world could one find such poverty amidst plenty, explained mainly by the devastating influence of British industry on local production, by Britain's slave-driving rule over India.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 489-90.

<sup>2</sup> See Karl Marx, "The Future Results of British Rule in India", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, 1979, pp. 217-22.

These examples show that there does not and cannot exist a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the geographical environment and the level of a country's social development.

To demonstrate that theories of geographical determinism are unfounded, one may also compare the rates of nature's development with those of evolution of social life. No one can doubt that the geographical environment changes at a considerably slower rate than human life. Europe's geographical environment has changed little in the past three thousand years: the rivers, mountains and the climate are the same; the fauna and flora have changed but quantitatively. Meanwhile, men's life has several times changed qualitatively over the same period: the primitive communal system was replaced—by slave-owning societies in some European regions and by feudalism in others; the latter gave way to capitalism, the current system of Western Europe; East European nations have passed from capitalism to socialism. Hence, the geographical environment—a more or less invariable phenomenon—cannot determine the considerably more fast qualitative changes undergone by society.

A student of historical materialism must clearly see that bourgeois theories of geographical determinism are not only scientifically unfounded but also bear a certain reactionary political trapping. In the era of imperialism these theories—merging with fascism and racism and termed *geopolitics*—clear the way for the forces of militarism and war who aspire for world domination. Thus, according to the Nazi general, sociologist Karl Haushofer, Germans (the “master race”) need the entire planet's *Lebensraum*. Blessing fascist aggression, he wrote that the master of the European territory from the Elbe to the Volga is the master of Europe; the master of Europe is the master of a world island—European, African, and Asian; and the master of the world island is the master of the world.

Geopolitics in fact serves the military-industrial complex of the United States, the country that has declared the entire world a zone of its vital interests.

(3) The extent to which society influences nature depends not only on the level of material productive forces but also on the number of people inhabiting the Earth. It is clear to everybody that, other things being equal, a billion people exert a far

greater pressure on nature than a million. The population problem, although a specific province of demography, embraces the question of the general theory of historical development—of the impact of population density (the number of people per 1 square kilometre) on the development of nature and society.

The materialist conception of history holds that the population is an essential condition and subject of the historical process. Society's development is impossible without a certain minimal number of people. The amount of human resources is bound to influence social processes because people constitute the essential component of productive forces, if not for other reasons.

The population and its distribution play a definite part in society's development, as the geographical environment does. Other things being equal, a country with a bigger population has more favourable conditions for development, and vice versa. However, here again everything depends upon the social system. The population and its distribution cannot by itself determine the level of a country's or nation's development. The population density is more or less equal in the USSR, Norway, Zaire, and Mozambique (11-12 people per 1 square kilometre), whereas their development levels vary. The same is true of the social system of each country: the USSR is socialist; Norway is capitalist; Zaire experiences all the difficulties involved in capitalist orientation and neocolonialist exploitation; Mozambique is firm in its socialist orientation.

The following must be made clear: while life and death occur in accordance with biological laws, the population is primarily a social phenomenon, and its growth is determined not by natural or biological conditions but by the laws governing society, social life and material production. According to Marx, each mode of production has its own laws of population growth.<sup>1</sup> He paid particular attention to the analysis of the laws governing the population growth and distribution in capitalist society.

*Malthusian and Neo-Malthusian conceptions*, holding that population growth constitutes the basic cause of all social conflicts and, hence, hailing all that brings it down (wars, epidemics, etc.), should be exposed from this methodological position.

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<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx, "Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1987.

Marx wrote: "*Utter baseness* is a distinctive trait of Malthus";<sup>1</sup> Lenin called the Malthusian theory a "reactionary and cowardly theory".<sup>2</sup>

Advocates of the materialist conception of history, while firmly opposing the Malthusian man-hating theory and its contemporary adepts (and there are quite a few of them<sup>3</sup>), are far from adopting a nihilistic approach to the problem of population growth in the world. They agree that such a problem exists. Suffice it to recall the following figures: the world's population was 906 million in 1800; 1,170 million in 1850; 1,617 million in 1900; 2,486 million in 1950; and it will be 5 billion in the late 1980s. It is expected to reach 6 billion in the year 2000—with nearly 90 per cent of the growth falling on the developing countries, where the population will grow four times as fast as in the developed countries. We must admit, therefore, that the population explosion is a heavy burden for less developed economies. It is no accident that some 40 per cent of the developing countries have their policies designed to bring down birth rates.

Population growth is not unlimited, although at present it is difficult to estimate its quantitative limit. According to some estimates, 40-50 billion people can live normally on the Earth. What is needed is to bring food production in developing countries up to the level of developed states and, more important still, to change socio-economic conditions in such a way that would make it impossible for the rich to grow richer and for the poor to grow poorer. The latter equally refers to different classes within a single country and to different countries. In his letter to Karl Kautsky dated February 1, 1881, Engels wrote: "There is of course the abstract possibility that the human population will become so numerous that its further increase will have to be checked. If it should become necessary for communist society to regulate the production of men, just as it will have al-

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value* (Volume IV of *Capital*), Part II, 1975, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Working Class and Neomalthusianism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> The book by progressive US analyst Allan Chase, *Legacy of Malthus. The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism* (Knopf, New York, 1977), contains a vivid and convincing criticism of Neo-Malthusianism.

ready regulated the production of things, then it, and it alone, will be able to do this without difficulties."<sup>1</sup>

This refers to the entire complex of man-nature problems, and not only to the population problem. Moving toward communism via socialism, history is moving toward "the reconciliation of mankind with nature and with itself".<sup>2</sup>

## Questions and Answers

*Question.* Are developing countries threatened by an ecological crisis and if so, what are its specific features?

*Answer.* As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the ecological crisis is global. It threatens both developed and developing countries (although leaders of some young African and Asian states prefer, for various reasons, to deny the existence of this problem in their countries). Moreover, the current scientific and technological revolution underway in the developed countries has more adverse consequences for the developing nations. One example is the pollution of seas and oceans: the developing countries satisfy 30 to 40 per cent of their demand in animal protein from marine resources, while the figure for the developed states is 10 per cent.

The specific character of the ecological crisis in developing countries has two aspects: natural and social. The former is manifested primarily in the improper utilisation of fauna, flora, mineral resources and soils (whereas in developed capitalist countries it is seen first of all in the rapidly increasing pollution of the environment as a result of an unchecked development of the productive forces).

It is far more difficult for developing than for developed nations to withstand the social component of the ecological crisis. This is explained by the developing countries' socio-economic backwardness and by the state of want and misery of the overwhelming majority of their population. Aren't want and misery the chief pollutants of nature? wrote Indira Gandhi in this con-

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<sup>1</sup> "Engels to Karl Kautsky in Vienna", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1975, p. 424.



nection. She further wrote that until tribes and peoples in the forests and near regions were ensured an appropriate level of employment and buying capacity, they could not be forbidden to live off the forests, to poach and ruin vegetation. These peoples feel destitute. How can we call upon them to protect animals? Can they be expected to protect the purity of oceans, rivers and air, when their own life is polluted at its very source? The environment could not be improved for the destitute. Their misery cannot be eliminated without the application of modern achievements of science and technology.<sup>1</sup>

It would be hard not to agree with this.

*Question.* Many bourgeois demographers believe that there is only one way out for newly independent countries—to check the birth rate. What can be said in this connection?

*Answer.* A number of countries have considerable experience in the demographic policy of birth control. But a system of “family planning” can at best alleviate—and only temporarily at that—the economic difficulties of newly independent countries. It cannot serve as the basis for overcoming economic weakness.

According to historical materialism, demographic processes are shaped by socio-economic factors of development. Therefore, a rational solution of demographic problems is based on the radical transformation of the obtaining structure of economic relations. Incidentally, the 1974 UN World Population Conference, convened in Bucharest, rejected Neo-Malthusian recommendations and recognised the necessity to approach the population problem in each country on a practical and comprehensive foundation; the conference also emphasised the priority of socio-economic factors over demographic ones.

### For Homework and Discussion

1. Some contemporary bourgeois philosophers and sociologists follow Spencer and Freud in asserting that, inasmuch as man is the highest product of biological evolution, society's development is governed by biological laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Indira Gandhi, *Man and His Environment*. Address of the Plenary Session of the UN Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm, Delhi, 1972.

On the basis of the propositions elaborated in this and preceding chapters, show that these views are erroneous. Use the following statement of Lenin: "Nothing is easier than to tack an 'energeticist' or 'biologico-sociological' label on to such phenomena as crises, revolutions, the class struggle and so forth; but neither is there anything more sterile, more scholastic and lifeless than such an occupation."<sup>1</sup>

Can biological factors be totally excluded from social life?

2. Early in this century, British psychologist and anthropologist Francis Galton voiced apprehension lest the overall improvement of the standard of life and medical services ensured survival for the bearers of congenital diseases, which could gradually lead to mankind's degeneration. Such views are still in circulation today.

What is your attitude to them?

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Empirio-Criticism and Historical Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 328.

#### Chapter 4

### MATERIAL PRODUCTION IS THE BASIS OF SOCIETY'S EVOLUTION

This is a key topic in historical materialism. It is vital for understanding further the material and the logic of its presentation. It is not fortuitous that topics are presented in the following order: the social structure and political organisation of society, social consciousness and the laws governing its evolution. As Marx stressed in his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life."<sup>1</sup>

The following basic issues are recommended for special consideration:

- (1) The concept of the mode of production of material goods and its structure.
- (2) The dialectic of the development of productive forces and production relations.
- (3) Regularities in the switch-over from the old mode of production to the new. Distinctive features of the evolution of the socialist mode of production and transition from capitalism to socialism.
- (4) The current scientific and technological revolution: its conflicting possibilities and social consequences at the turn of the 21st century.

#### Literature

1. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", Chapters II, III, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984, pp. 477-519.

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, pp. 20-21.

2. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1977, pp. 19-22.

3. Karl Marx, "Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1987, pp. 84-86, 89-93.

4. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, Part III, Chapter II, pp. 305-27.

5. V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, pp. 136-47.

6. V. I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", section "The Materialist Conception of History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1980, pp. 55-57.

7. V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chapters VII and X, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1977, pp. 265-76, 298-304.

(1) Working on the materialist conception of history, Marx and Engels did more than introduce a scientific approach to the concepts of society, classes, war, revolution, state, idea, consciousness, etc., employed by preceding sociologists, philosophers and historians. They developed and introduced a number of principally new concepts (categories), without which a scientific approach to social disciplines is impossible. They include the following major categories: the mode of production of material goods; the productive forces and relations of production; the socio-economic formation; the basis and superstructure.

What is the mode of production?

To answer this question, one must take into account the obvious, empirically established fact that permanent production and reproduction of material goods is an essential condition for the existence of men, society. Refutation of the idealist conception of history begins with the obvious fact that man must eat, drink, have a habitation and clothing, obtain fuel, etc., to be able to think. However, man cannot obtain ready-made means of subsistence but has to produce them. Marx and Engels began the elaboration of the materialist conception of history from this premise.<sup>1</sup>

Dealing with the first issue, special attention must be paid to the correlation of the category "production" (material produc-

<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, pp. 30, 31; Frederick Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 162, 163.

tion", "social production") and the category "the mode of production". Using them as synonyms, as we often do, the following point must be kept in mind: production refers to the essential and permanent process needed to sustain human life. Production, though, exists in a definite social form, as a concrete manner of producing things. The manner of producing things necessary to sustain human life, manifested in the historically conditioned forms of social relationships, is called the mode of production.

Whatever the mode of production—primitive-communal, slave-owning, feudal, capitalist or socialist—it manifests itself in the indissoluble unity of two aspects—productive forces and the relations of production.

Productive forces include the means of production (implements and objects of labour) and people (setting the means of production in motion, changing and improving the means of production, labour implements in the first place, and changing themselves in the process of production by acquiring skills, experience and knowledge). *Working people* are the chief productive force in any society. Today, the bulk of working people is made up of industrial and agricultural workers and a section of the intelligentsia.

Productive forces constitute one aspect of the mode of production—its *content*. The other aspect—the *form* of the mode of production—is manifested in the *relations of production*. It is fairly simple to define the relations of production: they are relations formed in the process of production, distribution and exchange of material goods. It must be emphasised that these relations are formed on an objective basis, that is, independently of people's will and consciousness.

Production relations are determined by the form of ownership prevailing in a given society: private ownership of the means of production predetermines the formation of exploiter and antagonistic relationships between men and classes, while social ownership eliminates exploitation; it lays the ground for cooperation of men and classes in the process of production and for distribution of material goods by the quantity and quality of the performed labour. The system of production relations, therefore, comprises (1) relations based on the form of ownership of the means of production; (2) relations that emerge between clas-

ses and other social groups in the process of production; (3) relations established in the process of distribution of material goods.

But didn't pre-Marxian thinkers understand the simple fact that food, water, clothing, habitation, etc. are essential for man to live and develop, a student of historical materialism might wonder. Didn't they know that to sustain life man must produce material goods before everything else?

On the whole, pre-Marxian thinkers recognised this fact. But, at best, they just stated it, never making it a point of departure for further thinking. What has Marxism contributed to the understanding of this fact?

*Firstly*, that the mode of production of material goods, and hence every stage in the economic development of nations and all society, constitutes a foundation on which all other social ideas and relations—political, legal, philosophical, religious, moral, socio-psychological, etc., rest and develop.

*Secondly*, advancing the materialist conception of history, Marxism has shown that a given type of society and way of life stems from the mode of production and that all societies—primitive-communal, slave-owning, feudal, capitalist and socialist—with their specific vital processes and ways of life are based on their particular mode of production of material goods.

*Thirdly*, that the mode of production shapes, generally and to a specific extent, the character of every individual in a given society. Compare a worker and a peasant. The first is free to choose the master and place of work, while the other is not. A worker has a broader horizon, can find his own place in the class struggle occurring in society easier and faster. How can we explain this? First of all, by the fact that a worker is linked with a higher type of production of material goods, with modern technology.

Therefore, whether a person likes it or not, he is bound to be an agent of the mode of production by which he earns his livelihood. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels wrote: "What they [individuals] are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. Hence what individuals are depends on the material conditions of their production."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 31-32.

*Fourthly*, it is to Marxism's credit that it has proved that development of societies and nations is determined by the development of the mode of production of material goods and changes connected with the transition from the lower to a higher mode of production.

(2) The dialectics of the development of productive forces and production relations shows that (a) productive forces are the more changeable and revolutionary and, at the same time, the determining component of production; (b) production relations experience the decisive influence of the productive forces and, in turn, exert an active influence on them.

Why are productive forces *the more changeable and revolutionary* component of production? Because the change of a mode of production invariably begins with a change in the productive forces. The more changeable part of productive forces are labour implements used by men to produce the things needed to sustain life.

Why are productive forces *the determining* component of production? Why do they shape production relations? This is a more difficult question.

Consider the primitive-communal system. Why did the production relations under this system exclude exploitation? Was it because primitive men just did not "hit upon" the idea? No. The answer is that the primitive community employed very primitive labour implements (stone axes, bows and arrows, and fire). It was not possible for any member or members of the community to abstain from work and live at others' expense. Everyone had to work to sustain the life of the community, to provide but a minimum amount of foodstuffs and other means of livelihood for himself.

As a form of production relations, exploitation did not, and could not emerge earlier than at the stage when men began to produce more material goods than they could consume, when, with the division of social labour, work became more productive; when one man could, using an iron plow (and not a stick with a sharpened end) and domesticated animals, sustain himself and someone else.

Take exploiter slave-owning, feudal, and bourgeois societies. Why is bourgeois society incompatible, in principle, with feu-

dal production relations, just as feudal society was not compatible with slave-owning production relations? The answer is that to each of these societies corresponds a definite level of productive forces. With the appearance of factories, railways and other forms of capitalism's productive forces, there arose the demand for free hired workers—not free from exploitation but free to sell their labour power to a capitalist. This put an end to feudal production relations under which the peasant, being the feudal lord's property, could not leave his feudal lord to earn money elsewhere.

History proves that *in any society, production relations correspond to the productive forces*. The windmill (a certain level of productive forces) belonged to a society in which feudal lords were the masters, with peasants constituting the bulk of the exploited class; the steam mill (a higher level of productive forces) belongs to society headed by industrial capitalists, with the proletariat comprising the majority of exploited people.

*The development of productive forces is sooner or later followed by the development of production relations*. The constantly growing productive forces get into contradiction, and then into conflict, with the existing relations of production. With time, the latter become increasingly obsolete, falling more and more behind the new level of the productive forces. It must be kept in mind that the substitution of the old with new production relations occurs spontaneously, under a simple impact of the growing productive forces. Each type of exploiter production relations is defended by a certain class, so the problem of elimination of the old and establishment of new production relations is settled in the course of a severe class struggle. Marx and Engels believed that "all collisions in history have their origin . . . in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse".<sup>1</sup>

Production relations, it must be pointed out, are more stable and conservative than productive forces. Production relations change little within the framework of a specific mode of production. This is not to say that they constitute a passive aspect of the mode of production subject to the determining influence of productive forces. This is not so. Production relations are equally

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 74.



active, since they, in turn, influence productive forces. This influence is two-fold: old production relations impede the progress of productive forces, while new production relations serve as the chief driving force of their development. New production relations do not always remain new: as productive forces develop, production relations grow obsolete, that is, they cease to correspond to the level of productive forces. By the end of existence of every pre-socialist mode of production (the primitive-communal, slave-owning, feudal and capitalist) the prevailing production relations grew obsolete to such an extent that they became fetters impeding the progress of productive forces. Then came the stage of social revolution which eliminated the old and established new production relations—those that gave scope to the development of productive forces.

All the aforesaid is expressed by the general sociological *law of the correspondence of production relations to the character and level of productive forces*. Marx gave a concise definition of this law in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The two principal regularities of the transition from the old to a new mode of production stem from the dialectic of the development of productive forces and production relations.

*First*, all pre-socialist modes of production with their specific productive forces developed spontaneously since men, in the process of improving the old and producing new labour implements, did not consider the social results which their activities were bound to bring.

Here is an example. Did men really understand, when they invented the water-wheel for operating bellows and sledge-hammers, the blast furnace (14th-16th centuries), the treadle spinning-wheel, the loom, the steam-engine (at the time, the most powerful instrument of nature transformation) that by this they were undermining the foundation of the feudal mode of production? That they were killing feudal production relations and laying the ground for new, that is, capitalist production relations? Certainly not. Their sole purpose was to make labour easier and produce more material goods.

<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, pp. 19-23.

*Second*, in all pre-socialist societies, the emergence of a new mode of production (both productive forces and production relations) took place under the old, preceding system. Thus the feudal mode of production (and feudal production relations) did not emerge after, but at the last stage of the slave-owning system. *Colonatus*, a peculiar institute that emerged in slave-owning Ancient Rome, was a predecessor of feudal relations, since *coloni* (the exploited under this system) were in a better position than slaves but were not yet serfs. The capitalist mode of production and capitalist production relations, too, emerged at the later stages of feudalism. Their emergence was the sign that feudalism had become historically obsolete.

Students of historical materialism must clearly understand that this regularity of the transition from the old to a new mode of production stems from the exploiter character of the slave-owning, feudal and capitalist systems. It must be borne in mind that the corresponding three types of production relations are all based upon different forms of *private* ownership of the means of production, and are similar in this sense.

The transition from capitalism to socialism is a different matter. Here we must clearly understand the following Marxian positions: 1) socialism "*has its origin in capitalism, ... it develops historically from capitalism*"<sup>1</sup> and 2) socialist production relations do not (and cannot) emerge within the capitalist system (under imperialism). At first glance, the two statements seem contradictory, but this is not so.

Saying that socialism emerges from capitalism, Marxists mean that in the course of capitalism's development, at its imperialist stage in particular, the material and technological prerequisites of transition to socialism are created and the apparatus of public regulation of the national economy is, in the main, formed. Giant monopolies, capable of maintaining centralised control not only over the principal links of the production process but also the markets and sources of raw materials testify to the level of production socialisation which, to all intents and purposes, renders socialism necessary. Lenin emphasised that "state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for so-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1977, p. 463.

cialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs.*"<sup>1</sup>

Apart from that, as capitalism develops, there develops and grows a social class—the proletariat—destined to overthrow capitalism and effect a transition to socialism.

As to the new—socialist—production relations replacing the capitalist production relations, they cannot emerge within the capitalist system inasmuch as they presuppose the existence of public ownership of the means of production—something incompatible with the reality of capitalism.

But, some would say, there do exist nationalised enterprises and even industrial sectors in many capitalist countries. Since these enterprises are state-owned (not the property of some capitalist or capitalists), the nature of production relations there must be cardinally different.

To correctly assess the facts of nationalisation under capitalism, one must remember that in capitalist society the state is not a supraclass organ, but the most concentrated manifestation of the bourgeoisie's interests. Defining the capitalist state, Engels wrote: "The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians."<sup>2</sup>

It would be appropriate to remember this graphic and profoundly scientific definition: a capitalist state is the "national capitalist". The capitalist system rests on the type of ownership—private and state-capitalist—which economically produces, supports and reproduces the entire system of exploitation of class by class.

Socialist production relations emerge after the power of exploiters is ended, on the basis of nationalisation of the exploiters' property and the basic means of production in general.

The completion of a socialist revolution opens a period of *transition* from capitalism to socialism. The distinguishing feature of its economy is that it is *multistructural*. The basic eco-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 319.

conomic structures of this period are socialist, capitalist and small-commodity structures. The period of transition is needed to transform the capitalist economy into a socialist economy, make the socialist economic structure the predominating one, the basis of a new society, and effect socialist renovation in the socio-political and cultural spheres of life.

The duration of the transition period varies from country to country. In each country, it depends on its particular historical (internal and external) conditions. If the transition is effected from feudalism to socialism, the period for it is bound to be longer because the upcoming society has to implement the objectives (notably, industrialisation) which are resolved by capitalism on an antagonistic foundation. Pointing out "the necessity for a prolonged, complex transition . . . from capitalist society", Lenin emphasised that "the less developed it [the capitalist society] is the longer the transition will take".<sup>1</sup>

The historical experience of socialism shows that mere socialisation of the basic means of production is not enough to establish a new system. It is also necessary to attain a high level of productive forces based on all the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution.

One question that is often asked is: do there exist contradictions between the productive forces and production relations in socialist society? The answer is yes, since in any society productive forces are the more changeable and revolutionary component of production. They change at a faster rate than production relations. Therefore, under socialism, too, there may arise certain disproportions and contradictions between the two components of production.

A socialist revolution opens vast perspectives for society's all-round progress. This is not to say that this progress is achieved spontaneously, or that the productive forces and production relations are brought into line once and for all. The rapid growth of production, science, technology and culture, and the progress of human personality place ever growing demands on the organisation and functioning of society's economic mechanism. The

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1976, pp. 62-63.

problem of *continuous renovation and improvement of socialism relying on its own foundation acquires priority*. Otherwise, there may appear some stagnation phenomena in social life. This conclusion is of a universal, international character.

However, one must keep in mind that the contradiction arising between the productive forces and production relations in socialist society is cardinally and principally different from that in capitalist society. Under capitalism, this contradiction, which exists between the social character of production and private-capitalist mode of appropriation, has an antagonistic character. It grows ever more profound and acute, and turns into a conflict, as testified to by the regular industrial overproduction crises. Capitalist society is incapable of resolving this contradiction without undermining its own foundation—private ownership of the means of production—and the entire bourgeois class' system of power.

Under socialism, the contradiction between productive forces and production relations, the same as other social contradictions, is not antagonistic. It is resolved peacefully by the party and government apparatus with the active support of the working people, the entire people. Under socialism there are no classes or social groups whose interest lies in the preservation of antiquated elements of production relations.

We shall sum up with the conclusion that in the modern epoch the objective economic law of production relations corresponding to the character and level of productive forces (the law regulating the transition from the old to a new mode of production) demands elimination of all exploiter production relations—capitalist, feudal, etc.—followed by society's revolutionary transformation first on socialist and later on communist principles.

(4) Progress of the contemporary generation is linked directly to the scientific and technological revolution (STR). It matured gradually, by degrees, to suddenly—in the last quarter of this century—give rise to the gigantic growth of man's material and intellectual resources.

What is the scientific and technological revolution? It has many definitions, which are constantly improved and added to, inasmuch as every year brings important scientific and technolo-

gical achievements. Perhaps the following is a more general (and hence the more lasting) definition: *the STR implies the deep-going changes affecting all components of the system of productive forces that occur with the help of science turning into a major factor of social progress.*

The STR is significantly changing the nature of relationships between man and nature, man and technology, man and science, and also between man and man. No area of social life is free from the STR's influence. One may say with reason that today, at a turning point in the life of the current generation, much (if not everything) will depend on the direction taken by the STR, on whether it will serve the interests of mankind or give imperialism unprecedented means of warfare to destroy mankind and all life on Earth.

The CPSU Programme states: "The question of what goals the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution should serve has become pivotal in the present-day socio-political struggle. Contemporary science and technology make it possible to ensure abundance on earth and to create material conditions for the flourishing of society and the development of the individual. These creations of the human mind and human hands, however, are being turned against humanity itself owing to class selfishness, for the sake of the enrichment of the elite, which dominates the capitalist world. This is a glaring contradiction which confronts mankind as it approaches the threshold of the 21st century."<sup>1</sup>

To repeat, it is not contemporary science and technology that threaten peace in the world but imperialism and imperialist policies—the policies pursued by the more reactionary, militarist and aggressive forces of our day. Mankind cannot curb this danger unless it restrains these forces.

It is important to understand that the scientific and technological revolution has different consequences in different socio-political systems. In the current age of electronics and informatics, robots and computers, capitalism throws out into the street millions of people, among them the young and the educated. Wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a few

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<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A New Edition*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, p. 22.

people. Militarism, incessantly striving for political levers of power, swells to immense proportions. It is becoming the ugliest and most dangerous monster of the 20th century, turning advanced scientific and technological thought into a weapons of mass annihilation.

Socialism possesses all the necessary means to place modern science and technology at the service of men. In socialist society, the scientific and technological revolution takes a direction promoting the objective requirements of social development and genuine progress of human personality. Socialism eliminates antagonism between man and technology, between man and science. The scientific and technological revolution does away with hard jobs, reduces low-skilled and manual labour, improves production processes and encourages creative attitudes toward work. In socialist society, all objectives and problems involved in the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, production intensification and rational organisation of labour are resolved not at the expense, but for the benefit of the working people.

It would be wrong to assume that the scientific and technological revolution does not pose problems for socialist societies. Experience has shown that the STR's development in socialist societies is not without contradictions. It has put on the agenda problems pertaining to improvement of social relations, new thinking, new psychology, recourse to dynamism as a way of life, as the norm of daily life. The STR requires continuous revision and renovation of the obtaining regulation procedures.

To sum up: the scientific and technological revolution does not only open up new perspectives but also places new demands on the organisation of domestic and international life. While scientific and technological progress does not revoke the laws of social development, it can and does have a great impact on all the current processes in the world and on its contradictions.<sup>1</sup>

## Questions and Answers

*Question.* While it facilitates the progress of capitalism in newly independent African and Asian countries, imperialism also

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<sup>1</sup> See Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, pp. 10, 11.

strives to preserve and maintain pre-capitalist, that is, feudal and semi-feudal relations in these states. Does it not contradict the idea, stated above, of the incompatibility of capitalist and feudal production relations?

*Answer.* There is no contradiction here. Feudal and capitalist production relations are incompatible in the historical period of transition from feudalism to capitalism. Once it became the economically and politically dominant class, the bourgeoisie changed its attitude towards the feudal order, particularly in relation to the Eastern colonies and semi-colonies.

The fact remains that the nodules of the capitalist mode of production established by colonialism had for a long time been alien to the East. The colonies' feudal-partiarchal economic structure had experienced an insignificant impact of capitalist relations. Presently, the development of productive forces in the newly-free states is leading to the disintegration of pre-capitalist relations and their gradual replacement by relations of the capitalist type. However, the pre-capitalist relations do not completely disappear but continue to exist in some areas, agriculture in particular, and in turn exert an impact on emerging capitalism.

Marxian authors have justly pointed out in this connection that the pre-industrial state of the productive forces and production relations in newly-independent countries must be regarded not only as remnants of the past but also as a product of the development of world capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

*Question.* The public ownership of the means of production, predominating in socialist society, has been under severe attacks of the Western countries, and of some developing nations. Notably, there are assertions to the effect that the socialist economy is no better than the capitalist economy, inasmuch as it has its own shortcomings and difficulties.

*Answer.* Which of the two forms of ownership allows for a greater scope of the development of productive forces can be seen from the following data: in the USSR, the average industrial growth rate was 5.6 per cent between 1971 and 1983 and 8.3 per cent between 1951 and 1983, while the respective figures for the US are 2.5 and 3.4.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Pivotal Problems of Developing Countries, Peace and Socialism* Publishers, Prague, 1980, p. 89 (in Russian).



This is not to say that public ownership can spontaneously remove all difficulties and obstacles in the way of productive forces' progress in socialist society. Much, it must be admitted, depends on the initial level of their development, the level reached by the productive forces under the social system preceding socialism—the starting point for the productive forces' development on the basis of public ownership and socialist production relations.

It must be stated in no uncertain terms that the difficulties and shortcomings involved in socialism's economic growth—which the CPSU and other ruling Marxist-Leninist parties discuss openly at their congresses and plenary meetings when outlining measures to overcome them—do not stem from the essence of the newly established form of ownership that has proved its advantages—social collective ownership. The shortcomings and difficulties are, to a considerable extent, the result of deviations from the norms and requirements of socialism's economic life based on social ownership of the means of production. An effective economic system, developing on a planned basis and capable of posing and achieving complicated and large-scale economic and social objectives, can be built only on the basis of public ownership of the means of production.

*Question.* What can be said about the STR and the problems faced by the developing countries?

*Answer.* The STR started in industrially developed countries, but it fairly soon penetrated all regions of the world, including the industrially weak countries. The low industrial level, predomination of old traditional forms of agriculture, shortage of financial means, of qualified labour force, and of literate and educated persons—in short, the less developed economies and backward social structures of African and Asian countries (which to a considerable extent also refers to a number of Latin American countries)—are not, of course, conducive to the origination and unfolding of STR processes on an internal foundation. The scientific and technological revolution is imported to these countries by developed capitalist and socialist countries.

The scientific and technological revolution confronts developing countries with a particularly poignant question: will they be able to utilise in full the achievements of science and technology and through this muster the strength needed to withstand

neo-colonialism and imperialist exploitation, or are they doomed to remain in the outskirts of world development? The scientific and technological revolution throws full light on the failure to resolve many socio-economic problems impeding their progress.

### **For Homework and Discussion**

1. Which of these three aspects characterises the essence of the mode of production: the goods produced, the way they are produced, or the quantity of the goods produced?

2. Think of this question: can every member of society be considered a participant in material production? Which of the statements is more correct: (a) the productive forces embrace the persons directly involved in the process of production; (b) the productive forces embrace not only the direct participants in the process of production but also those who, though not industrial or agricultural workers, are essential to modern production, i.e., planners, accountants, engineers, etc. Can those who consume but not produce material values be considered participants in material production?

3. Which of the following is the basic component of production relations: distribution relations, consumption relations, or relations to the means of production?

## Chapter 5

# MANKIND'S HISTORY AS A REGULAR SUCCESSION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORMATIONS

This topic has a strong connection with the previous one from which it stems. Likewise are linked the categories of the mode of production and socio-economic formation. Whereas the category of the mode of production of material goods pertains to what is absolutely essential to the existence and evolution of human society, the category of the socio-economic formation refers to society's structure and the nature and content of the historical process.

Assimilation of the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the regularity of the replacement of one socio-economic formation by another lays the ground for a scientific approach to mankind's history and enables us to see that capitalism is bound to perish and all countries and nations will make a revolutionary transition to socialism and communism.

The following major topics are recommended for special consideration:

- (1) The category of socio-economic formation. Society's basis and superstructure.
- (2) The socio-economic formation as a rung of historical progress. Acceleration of development rates as a regularity of mankind's advancement.
- (3) The social revolution as a form of transition from one socio-economic formation to another, and also as the "locomotive of history" (Marx).

## Literature

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1976, pp. 477-519.

2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 1977, pp. 163-67.

3. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, 1977, pp. 19-26.

4. "Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov in Paris. Brussels, December 28 [1846]", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, pp. 29-39.

5. V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, pp. 133-61.

6. V. I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1980, pp. 212-17.

7. V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—An Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1982, pp. 84-85.

8. V. I. Lenin, "On Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1973, pp. 476-79.

(1) Pre-Marxian historiography recorded a host of facts and developments that occurred at various stages of mankind's history; pre-Marxian sociology tried to investigate them and find a scientific criterion for breaking history into periods, which it could not achieve inasmuch as it approached the objective from the idealistic position, just as historiography did.

Pursuing a consistent materialist line in his approach to history, Marx introduced to science the concept of socio-economic formation. What is the socio-economic formation? In the words of Marx, it is "a society at a definite stage of historical development, a society with a peculiar, distinctive character".<sup>1</sup> To use this general concept of socio-economic formation two facts must be taken into account. First, society is not a simple sum total of individuals but rather "expresses the sum of the relationships and conditions in which these individuals stand to one another".<sup>2</sup> Second, these relationships form a definite relevant system in which economic and production relations are primary and determining factors.

Lenin emphasised that Marx developed this basic idea of the natural-historical development of socio-economic formations "by singling out the economic sphere from the various spheres of social life, by singling out *production relations* from all social

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Wage Labour and Capital", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1977, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, "Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1858", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1986, p. 195.

relations as being basic, primary, determining all other relations".<sup>1</sup> Production relations are, speaking metaphorically, the skeleton of the socio-economic formation. But, just as the skeleton is but part of a living organism, so production relations are but part of the socio-economic formation. As Lenin wrote of Marx, "while *explaining* the structure and development of the given formation of society *exclusively* through production relations, he nevertheless everywhere and incessantly scrutinised the superstructure corresponding to these production relations and clothed the skeleton in flesh and blood".<sup>2</sup> Lenin further stressed that in his major work, *Capital*, Marx had shown "the whole capitalist social formation to the reader as a living thing—with its everyday aspects, with the actual social manifestation of the class antagonism inherent in production relations, with the bourgeois political superstructure that protects the rule of the capitalist class, with the bourgeois ideas of liberty, equality and so forth, with the bourgeois family relationships".<sup>3</sup> This extensive definition names all the basic components of the socio-economic formation.

It must be stressed that the socio-economic formation is not a mere "collection" of things constituting society at a certain stage of development but a definite *system* of interdependent social relationships. In his letter of December 28, 1846 to P.V. Annenkov, Marx defined the logical chain of the socio-economic formation's structure as follows: "Assume a particular level of development of men's productive forces and you will get a particular form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular stages of development in production, commerce and consumption and you will have a corresponding social system, a corresponding organisation of the family, of social estates or of classes, in a word, a corresponding civil society. Assume such a civil society and you will get a political system appropriate to it, a system which is only the official expression of civil society."<sup>4</sup> It could be further continued as follows: assume all these things, and you

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141-42.

<sup>4</sup> "Marx to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov in Paris. *Brussels, December 28 [1846]*", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 30.

will get the social consciousness (i.e., human psychology and ideology) appropriate to it.

The structure of the socio-economic formation, as one can see, is precise and logical: every link stems from and is determined by another link.

The basis and superstructure are the major components of the socio-economic formation. Marx gave a classic definition of society's basis and superstructure in his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.<sup>1</sup> The basis is defined as the totality of production relations prevalent in a given society; the superstructure is defined as political, legal, moral, religious and other ideas, as well as the appropriate institutions.

The basis determines the superstructure. The type of superstructure depends on the type of basis. Each basis (the slave-owning, feudal, etc.) had its own superstructure. With a change of the basis of society, that is, of the predominating production relations (which, as we have seen, change under the influence of productive forces), the entire superstructure—from the state to ideology—changes, too.

The following is to be taken into account in this connection. Changes in the superstructure, caused by changes in the basis, do not occur instantaneously. It may so happen that after a transition to another basis has occurred and the new basis has developed and consolidated, the old political forces (pertaining to the old basis) remain in the forefront of political life while the new political forces remain in the background for the time being. In his "Fresh Data on German Political Parties", written in 1913, Lenin pointed out that 65 years after the 1848 bourgeois revolution, landlord and clerical rather than purely bourgeois political parties were in power in imperialist Germany.<sup>2</sup> Like Engels in 1848,<sup>3</sup> Lenin saw the main reason for this in the following: the German bourgeoisie, scared of the proletariat's independence and the possibility of its using democratic institutions *to its own advantage* and against the capitalists, turned

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<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, pp. 19-26.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1973, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Berlin Debate on the Revolution", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, 1977, pp. 73-75.

away from democracy, shamelessly betrayed freedom (that it had earlier defended), and kowtowed to landlords and the clergy.

In Britain, Belgium, Spain and some other capitalist states, the institution of royal power has been preserved to a considerable extent due to the fact that the bourgeoisie did not overthrow the aristocracy and gentry but gradually drew it into its own ranks as a decorative top.

It is also to be taken into account that the basis and the superstructure do not remain intact within a given socio-economic formation. They undergo changes, often quite considerable. Notably, the progress of capitalist productive forces effected the transition of capitalist society from the pre-monopolist to the monopolist stage at the turn of this century. Despite the continuing predomination of the capitalist form of ownership, significant changes took place in the economic sphere. This induced certain changes in the superstructure, manifested, in particular, in the crisis of the political structure and ideological forms called bourgeois democracy. Lenin wrote: "The political superstructure of this new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism) is the change *from* democracy *to* political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly."<sup>1</sup>

Modern capitalism, in turn, is considerably different from what it was in the early and even the mid-20th century. The confines of the national state became too narrow for capitalist monopolies. The emergence and growth of transnational corporations (TNCs), deriving enormous profits from the exploitation of the working people of the non-socialist world, was a direct result of the capitalist concentration and internationalisation of production. Militarisation of the economy led to the emergence of a monstrous military-industrial complex, not so much submitted to as supervising its country's government.

In the political sphere, as in all sections of the superstructure, imperialism is characterised by a trend toward the strengthening of reaction all down the line. Examples are fascism, which unleashed the Second World War and was defeated in it, and neofascism, which today is increasingly active on the politi-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1981, p. 43.

cal arena of many countries. In regions where the usual forms of suppressing the working people are not effective, imperialism sets up and supports tyrannical dictatorships for direct military crushing of progressive forces.

The superstructure is not a passive section of the socio-economic formation. Itself experiencing the determining influence of the basis, the superstructure in turn actively influences the former. The purpose of the state, political parties, various organisations and doctrines is to help the basis (and the classes behind it) take shape and consolidate.

The student of historical materialism must also clearly understand that the superstructure is *relatively independent*. It means that the development of the superstructure in general (like its constituent parts: the state, parties, ideology, etc.), while experiencing the determining influence of the basis, is governed by its own specific laws and regularities and that its constituent parts influence one another.

Much depends on the peculiarities of a given nation's historical development. An example is the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 and the emergence of independent Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia—brought about not so much by economic factors as by political ones, by the outcome of the First World War.

(2) The study of the second topic makes it possible to see the history of society as an objective natural-historical process of transition of one socio-economic formation to another, a higher one. From the previous topic—on the development of productive forces and production relations—we have learned why this transition takes place.

According to the dialectical materialist conception, the history of humankind has been a regular succession of the following formations: the primitive-communal, slave-owning, feudal, capitalist and communist. There exists a more general Marxist-Leninist definition of the world historical process admitting its division into three macroformations: the primary (primitive-communal), the secondary (slave-owning, feudalism and capitalism—the socio-economic formations characterised by private ownership), and the highest or communist socio-economic macrofor-



mation.<sup>1</sup> Marx gave the following definition in the Preface to his work *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: "In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society."<sup>2</sup>

All this enables us to say that the important aspect of the materialist conception of history is not the ascertaining of the number of formations<sup>3</sup> but the *logic* of mankind's historical progress, the essence of its main stages, and the *reasons* for the transition from one stage to another. In fact, no social formation collapses before the full development of all productive forces for which there is scope under this specific formation; new, higher production relations will not emerge unless there have emerged the material conditions for their existence under the old social system.

For the prominent theoretician of "African socialism", Leopold Senghor, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and colonialism are "the successive parturitions of history", and the West's colonisation of the East—"a necessary evil, a historical necessity".<sup>4</sup> More than a mere attempt to justify colonialism, this assertion looks like an attempt to praise it, an attempt ungrounded theoretically as well as practically and politically.

The slave-owning system, feudalism and capitalism are indeed formations, "parturitions of history". Colonialism, however, is not a formation but a phenomenon characteristic of capital-

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<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx, "Entwürfe einer Antwort auf den Brief von V. I. Sassulitsch", in: Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1962, pp. 396-406; see also V. I. Lenin, "The State", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1987, pp. 473-88.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Social science has not yet reached a conclusion concerning what Marx meant by "the Asiatic" mode of production: whether he meant the basis of the antagonistic formation peculiar to the East and not fitting in with slave-owning and feudalism, the reflection of certain peculiarities in the evolution of two formations—the slave-owning and feudal, or simply the Eastern variety of feudalism. One thing is clear, though: employing this term, Marx emphasised not so much the geographical as the socio-economic factors that had predetermined the stagnation of the pre-capitalist forms of social life in the East.

<sup>4</sup> Leopold Sedar Senghor, *On African Socialism*, Pall Mall Press Ltd., London, 1964, p. 82.

ism's evolution as a world system at a certain historical stage. Colonisation of the East by the West may be considered a "historical necessity" inasmuch as the capitalist mode of production first emerged and developed in the West; one should not consider colonialism as a separate stage while analysing the succession of socio-economic formations, since in that case it would amount to presenting it as a step forward in colonised nations' social development.

The assertion of colonialism's "progressive role" would have been sound if colonialism had resolved the poverty problem and built a developed society. However, it left a different legacy—hunger, poverty, disease, illiteracy of the bulk of the population, remnants of archaic social relationships. Imperialism, which today pursues neocolonialist policies, is responsible for the vast and growing gap in the levels of economic development of industrialised capitalist countries on the one hand and the majority of the newly independent countries on the other.

*Accelerating rates of social development* are an important regularity of the successive replacement of social formations, of historical progress. Engels, who had taken notice of this regularity, wrote: "History begins its course slowly from an invisible point, languidly making its turns around it, but its circles become ever larger, the flight becomes ever swifter and more lively, until at last history shoots like a flaming comet."<sup>1</sup>

Take the primitive-communal system. What is the "invisible point" from which history begins its course? This cannot be defined for sure. Another thing, however, is definite: man worked his way out (began to work his way out) of the animal world some 2.5-3 million years ago, whereas the first class-antagonistic formation—slave-owning—is comparatively recent. It began to take shape in the 11th-8th centuries B.C. in China (the Zhou Kingdom), in the 9th-8th centuries B.C. in Greece (the Homeric Epoch), and in the 8th-6th centuries B.C. in Italy. It was during the same period (the several centuries difference is insignificant in this case) that the slave-owning society emerged in Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia and the ancient Indian states.

The collapse and demise of the slave-owning formation occurred in the 2nd century B.C. in the East (the Han Empire)

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "Retrograde Signs of the Times", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, 1975, p. 48.

and in the 1st century B.C.-5th century A.D. in the West (the Roman Empire).

It may be assumed that as a world system the slave-owning formation existed for two-three thousand years. Beginning with this formation, the rates of social development grew immensely because of the fast growth of productive forces. The duration of class-antagonistic formations proportionately decreased.

Feudalism, which emerged in China in the 3rd-2nd centuries B.C., in India in the first few centuries A.D., in the Transcaucasia and Middle Asia in the 4th-5th centuries, in Western Europe in the 5th-6th centuries, and in Russia in the 9th century, had exhausted its vital forces over one thousand years in the West and had caused stagnation in the East.

Capitalism as a world socio-economic formation is three-four centuries old and has already passed its zenith. The general crisis of capitalism is deepening, and the sphere of its influence is shrinking. It is becoming increasingly evident that it is doomed.

The more imperialism's positions are undermined by the course of historical development, the more hostile to nations' interests the policies of its extremely reactionary forces become. Imperialism offers fierce resistance to social progress in the hope that it may slow down, if not halt, the course of history. Imperialism tries to undermine socialism's positions and aspires for social revenge worldwide.

The communist socio-economic formation (with its first phase—socialism) is, according to the materialist conception of history, the highest formation in mankind's historical progress, highest not in the sense of attaining the "ultimate goal" (there can be no such thing) but in the sense of its correspondence to the interests and requirements of people.

When communism is attained society will not, of course, terminate its onward movement. On the contrary, the communist formation (to which transition is effected through a socialist revolution) opens the stage of unprecedentedly rapid development of society. As Lenin emphasised, "*only* socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1977, p. 477.

There is every reason to believe that, as socialism advances from one stage of socio-economic development to the next, so will communist society proper advance from one qualitative state to another, higher state. Notably, when class differences completely disappear, national distinctions, and subsequently racial distinctions, will also disappear with time.

Having once and for all rid itself of the exploitation of class by class and nation by nation, social progress, in Marx's graphic expression, will cease to be the monstrous pagan idol refusing to drink nectar otherwise than from human skulls. In this sense, communism closes mankind's prehistory and opens its genuine history—the stage at which production is carried out for the sake and in the interest of man.

(3) When we stress the objective character of processes involved in the transition from the old to a new formation (that is, when we assert that these processes are independent of men's will and consciousness and reflect objective laws of social development), we do not want to carry the matter to the extremes and assert, as reformists do, that the transition from capitalism to socialism is a spontaneous social process.

The following is to be clearly understood: there is no spontaneous collapse of the old, obsolete socio-economic formation, no spontaneous substitution of the new formation for an old one. As pointed out in the second topic, all events that occur in society are linked to men's activity; so all events that occur in a class-antagonistic society are linked to the activities and struggle of different classes.

We must understand what *depends* and what *does not depend* on men's will and consciousness, their activities and struggle in the process of transition from the old to a new socio-economic formation.

That every generation lives in particular conditions of this and not any other socio-economic formation does not depend on the will and consciousness of the given generation. They inherit the formation, so to speak, from preceding generations as a result of the former's activities.

That human society passed from the slave-owning system to feudalism and from feudalism to capitalism did not depend on the will and consciousness of men and classes. Assuming that some-

body in slave-owning society suggested a transition to capitalism and showed the way to effect that transition, men would have still been unable to do it because of the obtaining level of productive forces and the nature of production relations in slave-owning society.

However, the process of transition from an old formation to a new one is always accompanied by vigorous and conscious activities of men united and divided by class membership. History has as yet known no case (and will not know any case, we may assume) of an old formation and the old classes behind it voluntarily ceding their positions and going off the stage. They have to be "helped" to go. This can be done only by new classes, representing a new socio-economic formation.

It is in the period of transition from the old to a new formation that the class struggle reaches its peak. Then comes the time for a social revolution.

Thus, the social revolution, whose economic foundation is formed by contradictions (a conflict would be more exact) between the grown productive forces and old production relations, and whose driving forces are the classes interested in the victory of the new over the old, is a form of transition from one socio-economic formation to another.

Once we have settled the initial questions of *why* and *how* social revolutions occur, we can proceed to the next, no less important question of *when* a social revolution takes place.

It is common knowledge that *revolutionary*, that is, cardinal and qualitative changes in society do not occur every day or every year, not even every decade. What occurs every day and for a fairly lengthy period are gradual evolutionary changes. When they have reached a certain level and, not infrequently, acquired new qualitative features, these evolutionary changes lead to acute, radical, revolutionary transformations.

The question is when does a social revolution take place? Lenin elaborated the concept of revolutionary situation as an aggregate of objective political conditions essential for a revolution to break out and subjective factors ensuring its victory.

In Lenin's article "The Collapse of the Second International" the reader will find the definition of the three major symptoms of a revolutionary situation, and in Lenin's work "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder" the student will find

the definition of the *fundamental law of all great revolutions* generated by the interaction of objective conditions and subjective factors.

It is in the latter work that Lenin puts forward the idea that it is not enough for a revolution to break out that the exploited and oppressed masses realise the impossibility of living in the old way and demand change; it is essential that the exploiters be unable to live and rule in the old way. A revolutionary situation takes shape only when the "lower" classes *do not want* the old order and the "top" classes *cannot* rule in the old way; then and only then a revolution breaks out that may end in victory.

In other words: a revolution is impossible without a national crisis (involving both the exploited and the exploiters). Hence, to effect a revolution it is necessary (1) that the majority of workers (at least, the majority of politically aware and active workers) fully understand the need for a revolutionary overthrow and are prepared to wage a resolute struggle to achieve it; (2) that the ruling classes are in a state of governmental crisis, which draws even most backward masses into the orbit of politics (a feature of any real revolution—a sudden ten-fold or even hundred-fold increase in the number of formerly passive, oppressed working people now capable of political struggle), weakens the government and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it in a short time.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's basic law of revolution is of a universal character and unsurpassed significance. It is used by Communists of many countries to analyse the revolutionary process. Notably, defining the current situation in South Africa, *The African Communist* pointed out that "many features of a revolutionary situation have emerged and are maturing. The general crisis of the apartheid system has thus continued to deepen." Workers' class awareness is growing, socialist ideas acquire wide currency. "The stark and dismal failure of the capitalist system to meet the most basic needs of the working people points exactly to the need to replace this socio-economic formation with another non-exploitative one."<sup>2</sup>

One can hardly disagree with this conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1982, pp. 84-85.

<sup>2</sup> *The African Communist*, No. 105, 1986, pp. 10, 6.

Thus, Marxism-Leninism holds that a revolution cannot be made at any time individuals or groups so desire. For a revolution to occur in society (country), certain objective—economic and political—conditions and subjective factors must exist. The objective conditions manifest the *possibility* of a revolution which becomes a *reality* only if the subjective factors are present.

Major propositions of the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialist revolution will be considered on the basis of Lenin's work *The State and Revolution* in Chapter 8.

### Questions and Answers

*Question.* Many bourgeois sociologists point to historical materialism's conception of successive replacement of socio-economic formations, trying to distort the idea of possibility for the less developed countries to pass to socialism skipping the capitalist stage. Marx is ascribed the view that Eastern nations will only attain progress after they pass through their own stage of capitalist development. To them, Lenin is a "voluntarist" who ("contrary to Marx") advocated in theory and practice backward countries' non-capitalist progress toward socialism.

What can be said in this connection?

*Answer.* Marx, who had elaborated and all his life defended the theory of successive replacement of socio-economic formations, was nevertheless firmly against the vulgarisation of historical materialism as a theory of "the general path of development prescribed by fate to all nations, whatever the historical circumstances in which they find themselves. . .".<sup>1</sup>

History has confirmed the Marxist tenet that it is possible for one or several nations to bypass some socio-economic formation that has become historically obsolete and ceased to play a progressive role.

For example, the German tribes, unlike those of Greece and Roman Empire, did not know the slave-owning formation. They passed from the primitive-communal system directly to the feudal system, skipping the slave-owning formation, which was already in the state of decline in the West Roman Empire at the

<sup>1</sup> "Marx to the Editorial Board of the *Otechestvenniye zapiski*, in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 293.

time it was conquered by the Germans. Other countries and nations that bypassed the slave-owning formation include England, the Scandinavian and Baltic states, Poland and Russia. In some Asian countries—Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Burma, Indonesia—elements of the slave-owning structure, which emerged in the period of decline of the tribal system, did not develop into a slave-owning formation either. In this region, too, feudalism was the first class formation.

Of special interest is the process of transition to socialism of nations found at various stages of pre-capitalist development—feudal, feudal-patriarchal, and even tribal. Marx and Engels linked the possibility of “shortening” the advance of backward nations with the victory of a proletarian revolution in the West.<sup>1</sup> When the world’s first proletarian revolution won in Russia, Lenin declared that, aided by the proletariat who had taken over state power, “backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage”.<sup>2</sup>

To understand the major conditions for less developed countries’ non-capitalist development toward socialism, one may study the report of the Commission on National and Colonial Questions made by Lenin to the Second Congress of the Communist International on July 2, 1920<sup>3</sup> and his talk with a delegation of the Mongolian People’s Republic on November 5, 1921.<sup>4</sup>

The economic and cultural flourishing of the equal and sovereign Soviet Eastern Republics within the family of Soviet peoples over the years of Soviet government, and the fact that once-backward feudal Mongolia has become a dynamically developing socialist state with modern multi-branch national economy are a graphic proof of the indisputable advantages of the non-capitalist, socialist path of development over the capitalist.

*Question.* How is the non-capitalist path of development—the socialist orientation chosen by some newly-independent countries—practically implemented?

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, “On Social Relations in Russia”, in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, 1973, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, “The Second Congress of the Communist International”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240-245.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, “Talk with a Delegation of the Mongolian People’s Republic”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1971, pp. 360, 361.



*Answer.* To date, there are 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America whose social development is oriented towards socialism. Many of these countries' ruling parties have declared their adherence to Marxism-Leninism. The countries of socialist orientation are trying to eliminate the rule of imperialist monopolies, tribal nobility, feudal lords and the reactionary bourgeoisie, as well as to encourage the public sector of the national economy and the drive for cooperation in the countryside. They are likewise determined to increase the working people's participation in economic and political life. To protect their independence from the onslaught of imperialism, these countries extend cooperation with the USSR and other socialist countries.

Despite the fact that in some countries internal reaction and international imperialism succeeded in thwarting the course towards socialism, it has on the whole proved viable. Socialist orientation meets the true interests and aspirations of the working masses, reflects their desire for a just social order, and concurrently opens up broad perspectives of social progress.

*Question.* Western propagandists often present the socialist orientation of newly-independent countries as a result of "Moscow's plot". What is the actual correlation between the domestic efforts and international factors—Soviet aid in particular—promoting socialist orientation?

*Answer.* It must first of all be stressed that the choice of orientation is a purely internal matter of newly-independent nations, their sacred and inviolable right. No external power must impose the choice of development orientation on these countries. The Soviet Union builds its relations with all newly-independent countries on the principle of genuine respect for their independence and equality; it extends and consolidates its cooperation with all young states, irrespective of their political orientation.

Needless to say, the Soviet Union maintains closer ties of cooperation with the countries that have opted for socialism and declared their adherence to Marxism-Leninism. As pointed out in the CPSU Programme, the Soviet Union has helped and will continue to help countries that have chosen this path in the economic and cultural spheres; it will help train their national cadres, increase their defence capability, etc.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, each

<sup>1</sup> See *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 70-72.

country lays down the material and technological foundation of a new society and achieves a higher material and cultural level chiefly through its own efforts.

### For Homework and Discussion

1. On the basis of the material expounded in this chapter and the history of your country, define (a) the socio-economic formations passed by your country; (b) its current stage of development; (c) the general regularities and specific features of your country's development.

2. The opponents of the materialist conception of history in developing countries call in question the anti-colonialist tenets of the founders of scientific socialism and opine that Engels "justified" slavery. Read carefully the following quotations from Engels's works, compare them and, using a concrete-historical approach, show the untenability of such views.

In his work *Anti-Dühring* (Part II, Chapter IV), Engels, *comparing slavery with the primitive-communal system*, wrote: "It was slavery that first made possible the division of labour between agriculture and industry on a larger scale, and thereby also Hellenism, the flowering of the ancient world. Without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art and science; without slavery, no Roman Empire. But without the basis laid by Grecian culture, and the Roman Empire, also no modern Europe."<sup>1</sup>

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels, *dealing with the period at which slavery had been exhausted as a form of development of productive forces*, and hence the transition to feudalism was in the order of the day, wrote as follows: "Slavery no longer paid, and so it died out; but dying slavery left behind its poisonous sting by branding as ignoble the productive work of the free. This was the blind alley in which the Roman world was caught: slavery was economically impossible, while the labour of the free was under a moral ban. The one could no longer, the other could not yet, be the basic form of social production. Only a complete revolution could be of help here."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, pp. 207-08.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, p. 310.

## Chapter 6

### CLASSES AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The Marxist-Leninist theory of classes and class struggle is rooted directly in the materialist conception of society and its history. Engels wrote that "all historical struggle—in political, religious, philosophical or any other ideological area—is, in fact, a more or less clear manifestation of the struggle waged by social classes, whereas the existence of these classes and their confrontation are, in turn, conditioned by the degree to which their economic position, as well as the character and mode of production and exchange determined by it, have been developed".<sup>1</sup>

The importance of this topic is obvious. According to the Marxist conception of history, all human history, following the disintegration of primitive community, has been one of class struggle—the struggle between exploiters and the exploited, between dominated and dominating classes; now this struggle has reached a stage at which the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression, and class struggles.<sup>2</sup> Hence, *the theory of classes and class struggle underlies the Marxist-Leninist parties' strategy and tactics of the revolutionary transformation of the world.*

The following issues are recommended for consideration:

(1) The origin and essence of classes. Criticism of the force theory.

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Engels, "Vorrede zur dritten Auflage [von Karl Marx' Schrift 'Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte']", in: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Band 21, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1973, S. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, Preface to the 1883 German Edition of the "Communist Manifesto", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, 1976, p. 101.

- (2) Class struggle and its role in history.
- (3) The basic forms of the proletariat's class struggle. Criticism of bourgeois and reformist theories of classes and class struggle.
- (4) Socialism and classes.

### Literature

1. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984, pp. 477-519.
2. "Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer in New York, London, March 5, 1852", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, pp. 62-64.
3. Frederick Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 191-334.
4. V. I. Lenin, "Our Immediate Task", in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1977, pp. 215-220.
5. V. I. Lenin, "Liberal and Marxist Conceptions of the Class Struggle", in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980, pp. 119-124.
6. V. I. Lenin. "A Great Beginning", in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, pp. 409-434.
7. V. I. Lenin, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat", in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, pp. 93-106.

(1) According to a myth found in many national cultures, the class-antagonistic society with its unjust, exploiter relations, impoverished majority and rich minority, was preceded by the Golden Age—a period when all were equal and prosperous. This myth is not absolutely groundless. It reflects the historical fact that classes, private property and, hence, exploitation of men by men and social injustice had not always existed but came into being at a certain stage of society's evolution. When and why?

Pre-Marxian social science was unable to give a theoretically grounded answer to this question. The so-called force theory had been widely acknowledged. The reader will find a critical analysis of this theory and a profound elaboration of the materialist conception of the origin of classes in Engels' work *Anti-Dühring* (Part II, Chapters II, III and IV).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 195-225.

To make his theory digestible, Dühring used the well-known adventure novel *Robinson Crusoe* by the English author Daniel Defoe. The adventures of the traveller Robinson are still fascinating, particularly to children. The plot, in short, is as follows. After a shipwreck, young seaman Robinson Crusoe finds himself on an uninhabited island. He manages to save some instruments and weapons from the sinking ship, and is able to sustain his life. After a while, an aborigine from a neighbouring island appears on Robinson's island, and Robinson calls him Friday, after the day of the week on which he appears on the island.

As seen by Dühring, the relations between Robinson and Friday indicate the basic reason for the emergence of classes—force, subjugation of an unarmed person by the armed. He asserted that it was a weapon—the sword—that turned Robinson into a slave-owner and Friday into a slave, that weapons created private property acquired through force.

Regarding this example as childish and hardly scientific, Engels nevertheless analysed it to prove the untenability of the force theory.

Where did Robinson get his sword, asks Engels. Swords do not grow on trees even on islands. Since Robinson was able to procure a sword for himself, one is entitled to assume that one fine morning Friday might appear with a loaded revolver in his hand, and the situation would reverse: Friday commands, and it is Crusoe who has to drudge. Since it is obvious that the owner of a more sophisticated instrument of force gets the better of the owner of a less sophisticated weapon, another thing becomes obvious, too: these weapons have to be *produced*. The triumph of force, therefore, is based on the production of arms which, in turn, is based on production in general and the material means which force has at its disposal.

Another question: What was the point in enslaving Friday? Did Crusoe enslave Friday just for the fun of it? By no means. Robinson enslaved Friday for the sole purpose of making the latter work for him. Friday produced by his labour more essential items than Crusoe gave to keep him fit to work.

Engels further shows that to make a slave of Friday Robinson needs something else besides his sword: instruments and materials for his slave's labour and the means of subsistence for him. "Therefore," infers Engels, "before slavery becomes pos-

sible, a certain level of production must already have been reached and a certain inequality of distribution must already have appeared. And for slave-labour to become the dominant mode of production in the whole of a society, an even far higher increase in production, trade and accumulation of wealth was essential."<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, the possession of a certain amount of property over and above the average level, possession of private property may be the result of plunder, i.e. acquisition by force.

There is no force, however, which is capable of producing private property as such. The institution of private property must already *be in existence* before the plunderer can grasp the property of other people. As Engels points out, "Private property by no means makes its appearance in history as the result of robbery or force." Alluding to the history of the Celts, the Germans, and the Indian Punjab, Engels draws the following conclusion: "Wherever private property evolved it was the result of altered relations of production and exchange, in the interest of increased production and in furtherance of intercourse—hence as a result of economic causes."<sup>2</sup>

In *Anti-Dühring*, Engels deals with the origin of classes in connection with the criticism of the force theory. His work *The Origin of the Classes, Private Property and the State* contains a profound and positive analysis of this issue. (Chapter IX, "Barbarity and Civilisation",<sup>3</sup> deserves special attention.) Engels shows that, as men learned the art of producing fire by friction, invented the bow, string and arrow, mastered the art of pottery, replaced stone implements with metal ones, built canoes and wagons for travelling on water and on land, domesticated animals and began to cultivate land and grow edible plants—in short, as men passed from the *appropriation* to the *production* type of economy—more products were produced than consumed and the communal relations began to grow obsolete. The higher the level of production and the number of goods, the less the social system depends on communal ties.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 186.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 316-334.

Whereas in the pre-class society division of labour was a pure and simple outgrowth of *nature* (it existed only between the sexes: men went to war, hunted and fished; women cared for the house and prepared food and clothing), the origin of classes is linked to the *social* division of labour.

Engels described three major social divisions of labour: (1) the separation of agriculture from cattle-breeding; (2) agriculture from handicrafts; (3) trade from handicrafts, with trade becoming a separate area of activity, which led to the emergence of a class "peculiar to itself ... that took no part in production but engaged exclusively in exchanging products—the merchants".

The social division of labour also resulted in the emergence of towns and intensified the contrast between town and country; it brought about intellectual labour and intensified the contrast between it and manual work.

Thus, an answer to the question of what brought about classes must include the following chain of cause-and-effect connections and interdependencies: development of productive forces (social division of labour—surplus product—private property), emergence of the rich and poor, propertied and unpropertied classes, and also slave-owners and slaves. As material production developed, the latter gave way to feudal lords and peasants who, in turn, were replaced by the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

What are classes? Lenin defined classes in his article "A Great Beginning". He earmarked the following basic economic features of classes: (1) the place occupied in a historically determined system of social production; (2) the relation (in most cases, fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production; (3) the role in the social organisation of labour; (4) the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes, inferred Lenin, are groups of people, one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.<sup>1</sup>

One should bear in mind that the second class-forming feature mentioned by Lenin is the principal one: the relation to the means of production determines all other differences between classes. To dispel all doubts (considering that at first glance it

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 421.

may seem that, inasmuch as it is named second, it stems from the first feature) we shall refer to Lenin's work *The State and Revolution*. Pointing out that in communist society "there are no classes", Lenin explains, in brackets, that it means "no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's definition of classes leads to important conclusions as concerns practical revolutionary activities. Since classes differ principally by their relation to the means of production, and since exploitation is based on private ownership, in order to eliminate exploitation of one class by another it is necessary to eliminate private ownership and establish public ownership of the means of production; to overcome class differences, it is necessary to place men in the same position relative to the means of production.

Classes are, undoubtedly, differentiated not only by economic and social features. As dictated by living conditions, every class develops a consciousness and psychology more or less peculiar to itself. "Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence," wrote Marx, "rises an entire superstructure of different and distinctly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations."<sup>2</sup>

The next important point to remember is that classes can be basic (i.e., linked with the prevailing mode of production) and non-basic, and that classes are not socially homogeneous (the bourgeoisie, for example, falls into major and the average, the former comprised of monopoly and non-monopoly bourgeoisie). A certain degree of social heterogeneity is present in the working class as well. It is worthwhile understanding what is meant by social strata (the intelligentsia), social estates (found in feudal societies), and castes (to date, still observable in many Asian and African states).

(2) The second topic will be approached with the definition of the new aspects introduced by Marxism in the theory of clas-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1977, p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, 1979, p. 128.



ses and class struggle. In a March 5, 1852 letter to Joseph Weydemeyer in New York, Marx wrote that no credit was due to him for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. "What I did that was new was to demonstrate: (1) that the *existence of classes is merely linked to particular historical phases in the development of production . . .* (2) that class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a classless society."<sup>1</sup>

This allowed Marx to draw a scientifically founded conclusion concerning the role of class struggle in history, and in social development.

It is to the credit of Marxism that it was the first doctrine to approach the history of class-antagonistic society from the point of view of class struggle. Take the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The first sentence of the first chapter reads as follows: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."<sup>2</sup>

Marxism advanced the thesis that *class struggle is the driving force of the development of antagonistic formations (i.e., slave-owning society, feudalism, and capitalism) and of the transition from capitalism to socialism*. This proposition is not a praise of force and its role in mankind's history, as some of Marxism's unscrupulous critics would like us to believe, but a statement of an obvious and endlessly proven fact that old ruling classes never willingly give place to new classes but wage a fierce fight to preserve their economic and political domination, rights and privileges.

The period of transition from feudalism to capitalism knew

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984, p. 482.

not a single instance of feudal nobility willingly giving its place as the ruling class to the bourgeoisie. The same applies to the current period—that of transition from capitalism to socialism. It would be utopian thinking to suppose that the bourgeoisie of some capitalist country would one day feel “ashamed” of its role as an exploiter class and voluntarily hand over all its factories, railways, banks and trading stores to the working class and all working people, ceasing to exist in the socio-economic if not in the physical sense.

Here a person with knowledge of Marxism may argue that Marxism *does* recognise the possibility of a *peaceful* transition from capitalism to socialism. Indeed, it is an important principle of Marxism-Leninism<sup>1</sup> that has found expression in many documents of communist and workers’ parties. However, Marxist-Leninists understand peaceful transition not as the absence of class struggle in the course of transition from capitalism to socialism, not as the bourgeoisie’s “favours” to the working people, but as the absence of *armed*—sanguinary—struggle, an outcome which is possible because, by virtue of the obtaining conditions, the bourgeoisie is *compelled* to prefer this outcome to any other.

Elaborating on the definition of class struggle as the driving force of the development of antagonistic formations, it is pertinent to emphasize the following point: class struggle is a process involving at least two classes. It would be wrong to suppose that only one class engages vigorously in class conflicts while the other is reduced to passive defence. Both classes fight vigorously. Therefore, by class struggle, that is the driving force of the development of antagonistic formations (societies), we mean *revolutionary* class struggle, the struggle waged by revolutionary forces or revolutionary classes against reactionary forces or reactionary classes. As for the class struggle waged by reactionary forces against revolutionary forces, it does not facilitate society’s development; rather, it impedes it.

The driving force of revolutionary class struggle is vividly

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, “Principles of Communism”, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 349; V. I. Lenin, “A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1977, p. 276.

manifest at the current stage of class struggle waged by the proletariat (which is leading other classes and population strata) against the bourgeoisie. This is so because the present time is not just a period of transition from one formation to another; it is also the period of transition from capitalism, *the last antagonistic formation in history*, to socialism, the first phase of non-antagonistic formation—communism.

(3) Before proceeding to the next topic—the basic forms of the proletarian class struggle—it is relevant to clarify the meaning of the term “proletarian class struggle”. It is not as easy to understand as it might seem at first glance. The explanation is given in Lenin’s article “Our Immediate Task”.<sup>1</sup> Is it class struggle when the workers of a factory or guild engage in a conflict with their master or masters, asks Lenin, and answers: No, this is only its early beginnings. Further he stresses that workers’ struggle becomes class struggle only at the point when all advanced representatives of the entire working class feel that they are members of a single class, and turn not against some individual master or masters, but against *the entire class* of capitalists and the government protecting this class. Only when every individual worker realises that he is a member of the working class, when he sees his daily small-scale opposition to individual masters and individual officials as a struggle against the bourgeoisie and the government—then and only then his struggle becomes class struggle in the full and accurate sense of this term.

Here it is relevant to point out that the bourgeoisie not only oppresses workers economically by depriving them of the means of production, but also suppresses them politically by concentrating state power in its own hands and influencing workers ideologically to promote its own ends. Likewise, the workers’ class struggle against the bourgeoisie is not confined to a particular realm of social life. It unfolds in the economic, political, and ideological areas, i.e., it takes three basic forms.

*Economic struggle* involves workers’ fight for a shorter work day, higher wages, better housing, social security, in other words, efforts to improve the terms on which their labour is sold to capitalists.

*Political struggle* is aimed at dismantling the political (state)

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 215, 216.

power of the bourgeoisie and establishing that of the working class and all working people.

*Ideological struggle* emancipates workers from the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie and enables them to develop their own political consciousness, self-awareness, and ideology of emancipation.

As proved by the history of the workers' movement in different countries, the workers' movement's progress may be impeded by the wrong correlation of the economic and political forms of class struggle. There have always been leaders and ideologues of the workers' movements in capitalist and developing countries claiming that economic struggle is the principal form of class struggle for the proletariat. Communists and all adherents to Marxist-Leninist ideology, without belittling the significance of the working class' economic struggle, hold that the principal form of the proletarian class struggle is not economic but political struggle. This is so because not even the most successful economic struggle (this, as the capitalist reality shows, happens but rarely) can eliminate the exploiter system inasmuch as the latter is upheld by the state which safeguards the political power of the bourgeoisie.

It is easier to understand this with the help of Lenin's article "Liberal and Marxist Conceptions of the Class Struggle."<sup>1</sup> Lenin explains that the bourgeoisie would like to distort and narrow the concept of class struggle, to blunt its sharp edge. For this purpose bourgeois liberals and their agents in the workers' movement—opportunists and reformists—reduce the proletarian class struggle to purely economic demands, the struggle for a wage increase "of five kopeks on the ruble", refusing to recognise a higher, more developed, nation-wide *class* struggle, the struggle for *political* aims.

In this connection, it is relevant to explain the idea advanced in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that "every class struggle is a political struggle",<sup>2</sup> an idea which opportunists have invariably tried to distort. Is this to say that Marx and Engels saw no difference between the economic and political forms of class struggle, trying to "elevate" the former to the level of the

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980, pp. 119-124.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 493.

latter? No, it is not so. As Lenin explained, "‘Every class struggle is a political struggle’—these famous words of Marx are not to be understood to mean that any struggle of workers against employers must *always be* a political struggle. They must be understood to mean that the struggle of the workers against the capitalists inevitably *becomes* a political struggle *insofar as* it becomes a *class* struggle."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Marxism holds that class struggle becomes a real, consistent, and mature struggle only if and when it embraces politics. Even this is not enough, however, since in politics, too, the struggle can be reduced to individual and insignificant demands (just as opportunists do if the need arises) or it can be made to embrace the very substance—the state structure—as the revolutionary proletariat strives to do. Marxism-Leninism, the philosophy reflecting the cardinal interests of the working class and all working and exploited people, incorporates in its conception of class struggle the recognition of the need to overthrow the bourgeoisie’s political power and establish a working-class political power. This principle sets apart true Marxist-Leninists, true revolutionaries from those who, due to some reasons, pay but lip service to the proletarian class struggle and the need to satisfy workers’ interests.

At this point it is appropriate to *critically analyse the bourgeois and social-reformist, opportunist theories* of the social structure of contemporary capitalist society.

Western bourgeois and social-reformist ideologues claim that the time is past (or is passing) when capitalist society was divided into hostile, antagonistic classes. They claim that the “dispersion” of private property and “redistribution” of profits has brought about the era of “extinction” of the class struggle and the “reconciliation” of labour and capital in the capitalist countries. Formerly antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, have become “social partners” maintaining cooperation in the name of economic growth and “common welfare”.

Thus, the theory of social stratification holds that contemporary capitalist society falls not into classes but into social strata (the term *stratum*, pl. *strata*, in geology means bed or layer of

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, “Our Immediate Task”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 216.

earth). Actually what to call a large group of people is not as important as the principle according to which society is divided into classes or strata, i.e. the chief criterion of this division.

Bourgeois and social-reformist ideologists have advanced quite a number of criteria of society's division into strata—degree and type of employment, type of housing, place of residence, source of income, education level, relation to the church, etc., but do not see (refuse to see would be more exact) the principal class-making feature—relation to the means of production.

Further, they talk of "social mobility" as the principal characteristic of capitalist society. According to bourgeois ideologists, social mobility is the possibility—allegedly open to every person—of passing from one (lower) strata into another (higher) one. Whether this possibility becomes reality depends entirely on the individual himself, on his energy, drive, determination, fortune, etc., they assert. No one can doubt that a certain number of persons can indeed pass from the "bottom" to the "top" of bourgeois society; it is to these cases that the champions of capitalism allude, trying to play them up to the utmost. However, never and nowhere has the majority of a nation's working masses joined the ranks of the bourgeoisie, and never and nowhere has the capitalist class renounced its exploitation of the masses.

The theory and practice of social partnership cannot withstand the capitalist reality: the early 1970s saw the end of the period of relatively high economic growth rates, more or less full employment and rising living standard of some sections of the population in developed capitalist countries. Present-day capitalist economy is "feverish": as soon as it gets well after a regular crisis, it is gripped by yet another one. Unemployment has reached the highest postwar level. The current stage is witnessing an impressive redistribution of incomes in favour of monopoly capital, and the level of workers' wages is decreasing. *The bourgeoisie has launched a long-term onslaught on workers' vital rights.*

(4) We shall begin the last topic of this section by identifying the processes that affect classes and the class struggle after the victory of a socialist revolution and during the transition from capitalism to socialism. What happens is as follows. The proletariat, previously downtrodden and divested of the means of pro-

duction, now becomes the ruling class. As a class wielding political power, it turns private ownership of the means of production into public ownership. It is on this basis, says the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, that "expropriators are expropriated". The expropriators, comprising the overthrown exploiter capitalist and landlord classes, do not leave the scene willingly and immediately. The more aware they become of their downfall and the more positions they lose, the greater their opposition to the worker-and-peasant government. Lenin analysed the first five years of Soviet government and concluded that there had appeared new forms of the proletarian class struggle which did not renounce but specified the three basic forms of this struggle—economic, political, and ideological—in the new historical conditions.

The *first* of the new forms is the proletariat's suppression of the resistance offered by overthrown exploiter classes, resistance that manifests itself in economic sabotage, revolts, conspiracies, espionage and other counter-revolutionary acts. The bourgeoisie and landlords, divested of political power and economic might, are still a threat to the new society that is just learning to stand on its own feet. Their strength lies in their knowledge, experience, and ties with international capital and reaction.

The *second* form of class struggle is a civil war that might possibly be unleashed by the capitalists and landlords against the working class and its allies—peasants and other working people. This is the most bitter (armed) form of class struggle that settles the principal question: Who wins—the revolutionaries or the counter-revolutionaries?

The *third* form of class struggle considered by Lenin was the "neutralisation" of petty bourgeoisie, its peasant section in the first place. This is not in the least a struggle *against* the peasantry and all petty bourgeoisie by the proletariat. On the contrary, it is the proletariat's struggle *for* the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie, waged in order to draw the non-proletarian masses to the side of the revolution.

Lenin explained that the peasantry was a two-faced class lingering at the crossroads of the great emancipatory struggle between labour and capital. On the one hand, the peasants are a class of small-scale owners, and in this it is similar to the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, it is a class of agricultural workers,

earning livelihood by its own labour and, in this sense, it is similar to the proletariat. The peasants' dual economic situation cannot fail to give rise to doubts and political vacillations in their effort to choose between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The important thing is that, notwithstanding all this, peasants and proletarians have common vital and cardinal interests shaped by the struggle against exploitation. The community of vital interests is stronger than the differences between the two classes, while the similarities between peasants and the bourgeoisie do not produce any community of vital interests.

Therefore, the objective is to break all links between the peasantry and the bourgeoisie, making the former the proletariat's conscious and active ally in the effort to build a socialist society.

The *fourth* of the new forms of struggle involves the drawing of old specialists (trained and educated under the old system) into the process of building a new society. Old specialists show different attitudes towards a new government: some sections willingly and conscientiously serve the worker-peasant state, the majority are for a long time unable to make a choice, and some representatives of the old technological and military intelligentsia turn against the people.

The *fifth* form of class struggle is shaped by the objectives involved in the effort to inculcate a new type of discipline and new attitude to work, society, the state. It is very difficult to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords, wrote Lenin, and it is no less difficult to discard one's own inertia, dissipation, petty-bourgeois egotism, and other leftovers of confounded capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin described the new forms of class struggle that shaped in his own country in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. However, in each of the countries going through the same process, class struggle assumes forms peculiar to it.

Take, for example, such a cardinal question of the transition period as attitude to the petty bourgeoisie, to peasants. In countries like Angola and Mozambique vanguard parties, firmly forging and consolidating the alliance between the working class

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 411.



and the peasantry, effecting socialisation of agricultural production and cooperation of peasants, encounter attempts by the reactionary sections of the petty bourgeoisie to become big national bourgeoisie as well as to impede and thwart revolutionary changes. The mass-scale retreat of trained Portuguese staff from Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, and the destruction and abandonment of industrial enterprises by the owners after these countries attained independence is yet another manifestation of class struggle.

As dictated by particular historical conditions, there may appear, and do indeed appear, other forms of class struggle specific to each particular country.

The exploiter capitalist and landlord classes are neutralised during the transition period through the establishment of public ownership of the means of production. Collectivisation in agriculture makes it possible to rid society of the most numerous exploiter class—rich peasants opposed to socialist changes.

With the completion of the transition period and total neutralisation of the exploiter classes and elements, class struggle, logically, ends in a socialist society but it continues in the international arena.

Socialism is the first ever and the sole class society free of class antagonisms; it has only two but friendly classes—industrial workers and the peasants, and also a social stratum of the intelligentsia.

The working class of a socialist society is not the proletariat in the old sense of the word. It is the owner of the means of production constituting national (state) property. This class holds state power and plays the major role in society.

Likewise, the peasantry of a socialist society is a qualitatively new class, it is linked not with the private but a collective, co-operative form of socialist ownership and actively participates in the running of the state.

The intelligentsia is undergoing radical changes, too. The bulk of it is of worker or peasant origin comprising a truly national layer of the intelligentsia.

The unbreakable alliance of workers, peasants and the intelligentsia constitutes the social base and powerful driving force of socialist society.

The following table traces the changes in Soviet population's

social composition after the victory of socialism (in percentage terms).

	1939	1959	1970	1979	1984
Total population (including dependants)	100	100	100	100	100
Of which					
industrial workers					
and office employees	50.2	68.3	79.5	85.1	87.5
industrial workers	33.7	50.2	57.4	60.0	61.5
cooperated peasantry and handicraftsmen	47.2	31.4	20.5	14.9	12.5
non-cooperated peasants and handicraftsmen	2.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

A major regularity of the development of social relations at the stage of existing socialism (as demonstrated by the latest history of the USSR) is the drawing together of the working class, the peasantry and intelligentsia and the formation of a classless social structure with the working class playing the determining role in this process.

The working class consolidates society and makes the major contribution to the advancement of socialism and the building of a communist society, due to its specific position in the system of socialist production, political experience, high political awareness and organisation, and a high level of labour and political activity.

The steady implementation of the agrarian policy promotes the transformation of agricultural labour into a variety of industrial work and eliminates cardinal social differences (including those in the sphere of culture, daily life, etc.) between urban and rural areas. The peasants' way of life and methods of work are becoming increasingly similar to those of industrial workers.

Tangible qualitative changes in productive forces have been increasing the relative weight of skilled labour in the activities of broad masses of industrial and agricultural workers. The level of their general education, culture, and professional training continues to rise. The intelligentsia, which significantly contributes to the development of education, culture, science, and

technology, is also growing strong numerically. As science turns into an immediate productive force, the intelligentsia acquires an ever greater role in material production and other realms of social life. This gradually eliminates all significant differences between intellectual work and manual labour and facilitates the unification of all social groups. At the same time, the CPSU believes that, as long as such differences exist, specific interests of various classes and social groups must be taken into account.

A scientific analysis of the development of Soviet society makes it possible to infer that class differences will be eliminated and a classless society will assert itself, in the main, within the historical framework of the first (socialist) phase of the communist formation. These differences will completely disappear and a socially homogeneous society will be established at the higher phase of communism. This provision is contained in the Programme of the CPSU.<sup>1</sup>

### Questions and Answers

*Question:* What do the concepts "class in itself" and "class for itself" mean?

*Answer:* The concepts "class in itself" and "class for itself", widely used in Marxist writings, have a profound theoretical, practical and political meaning. They are indicative of the fact that a class, like any other large group or social formation, is in a permanent state of change and development, and is subject not only to quantitative but also to qualitative change.

A "class in itself" is the initial stage of the development of a class. Though formed, it is yet unaware of its objectively conditioned interests and its attitude towards other classes and their interests; it has yet to develop its own ideological system, advance its own socio-political programme, political organisation, and party. Dwelling on this stage in the proletariat's development, Marx wrote as follows: "Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The domination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as

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<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 45-47.

against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, ... this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself."<sup>1</sup>

A "class for itself" is the second and higher stage of the development of a class. At this stage it becomes class-conscious and aware of its class interests; this finds expression in the development of its ideology, socio-political programme and the creation of a political organisation. It must be emphasised that, unlike the bourgeoisie (which, having overthrown feudalism and become a "class for itself", attached paramount importance to the pursuance of its own, narrow, class interests), the proletariat, once it becomes a "class for itself", expresses and protects the vital interests of other toiling classes, peasants in the first place, becomes their ally and leader in the struggle against exploitation for the rearrangement of social life along socialist lines, and for a classless society.

*Question:* What must be our attitude to the claim of some theoreticians and political functionaries in developing countries—African countries in particular—that their societies know no classes and class struggle?

*Answer:* The social structure of developing countries in the East is quite different from that of the developed capitalist West. Multistructured developing economies have resulted in the current exceedingly motley population composition of developing countries. Practically all social strata, groups and classes known in history are found in these countries. Class relationships are not as strong and clearcut as in the West and, more often than not, are pushed into the background by tribal, caste or racial ties. The myths and theories of the absence of classes and class struggle in the "traditional" African and Asian societies (widely current in the 1950s and 1960s) are rooted in this soil.

Today, there are less such myths and theories. This is no accident, since a vigorous class formation and socio-class differentiation has been going on in the newly independent countries. The process has been particularly pronounced in the past fifteen to twenty years.

Kwame Nkrumah, criticising in his time the theory of "African socialism" that denies the existence of classes and class

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, "The Poverty of Philosophy", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 211.

struggle in pre-colonial, colonial and, even post-colonial Africa, wrote: "Nothing is further from the truth. A fierce class struggle has been raging in Africa... Socialism can only be achieved through class struggle."<sup>1</sup>

The MPLA—Party of Labour views the current stage of popular-democratic revolution as a period of transition to a socialist revolution and the building of socialism in Angola. Its programme emphasises that "the period of transition is characterised by a grand scale of class struggle".<sup>2</sup>

### For Homework and Discussion

1. In his book *Indian Socialism*, Doctor Sampurnanand, a prominent Indian philosopher and political leader of the 1950s-1960s, asserts as follows: "Marx considers the perpetual conflict between classes an impediment to progress and would have it come to an end." Further Dr. Sampurnanand states that, according to Marx, the class struggle "will not cease as long as classes continue to exist."<sup>3</sup>

On the basis of the views set forth in this section, show how Sampurnanand distorts the true teaching of Marx on classes and class struggle.

2. Dr. Sampurnanand holds that "the relationship between the classes can be horizontal instead of vertical—not that of employer and employee but of colleagues and partners in a common enterprise".<sup>4</sup>

He describes "horizontal relationship" as follows: "The capitalist and the entrepreneur should not look upon themselves as masters entitled to get all that they can manage to wrest from other men. They should, rather, place themselves in the position of the general who places his special genius at his country's disposal. He wins empires but does not set himself up as an emperor. The business talents of the capitalist should also be treat-

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<sup>1</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa*, International Publishers, New York, 1970, pp. 10, 84.

<sup>2</sup> MPLA—*Partido do trabalho. Estatutos e programa*, Luanda, 1977, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Sampurnanand, *Indian Socialism*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay etc., 1961, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

ed by him as his contribution to his country's welfare. He is not the master of the concern, any more than the engineer or any other technical expert, and the worker is not his servant. Both are active members of a cooperative venture and both are entitled to a fair remuneration."<sup>1</sup>

Demonstrate the untenability and the true political meaning of these assertions relying on real facts of life in capitalist countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Sampurnanand, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

## Chapter 7

### CLASSES, NATIONS, AND RACES

Along with class community and class differences, social life knows other types of community and differences: gentile, national and racial. Of vastly different origins, time, and even, nature, they frequently intersect, overlap, and are entangled in a knot of social contradictions. We daily learn of national and racial conflicts in capitalist and developing countries.

Let us examine the following:

(1) Nation as a historical form of community. Criticism of reactionary nationalism.

(2) Race as a territorial and biological form of community. Criticism of racism.

(3) The struggle against class oppression as the foundation of the struggle against the national and racial oppression.

### Literature

1. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984, pp. 477-519.

2. Frederick Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Volume 3, 1973, pp. 255-267, 316-326.

3. V. I. Lenin, "Critical Remarks on the National Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, 1977, pp. 17-51.

4. V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 359-404, 451-464.

5. V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, pp. 151-162.

6. V. I. Lenin, "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, 1971, pp. 605-611.

(1) Before tackling the first topic, it would be appropriate to give a short description of the historical forms of community preceding a nation—gens, tribe, and nationality.

Gentile ties characterise a pre-class, primitive community, notably, the stage at which *Homo sapiens* appeared. The gens is a relatively small group of blood relatives. Several gens form a tribe. The economic activity of the gentile and tribal type of the primitive commune was founded on collective ownership of the means of production and uniform distribution of products. A commune was governed by the council of elders and the general meetings of tribe members.

The decay of the gentile commune caused by the emergence and development of differences in the wealth of commune members resulted in the commune's break-up into the rich and the poor, exploiters and the exploited. Consanguine ties began to lose their significance, and were replaced by class-based relationships. Man ceased to be a member of a gens or tribe; he became, first and foremost, a member of a certain class. The rich members of all gentes constituted the exploiting class; the poor members—the exploited class. The consanguinary strife gave place to class struggle.

The exploited and exploiters, divided by class interests but linked by a common production process, language, habitation area, cultural distinctions, customs, and morals form a more complex and numerous type of community—nationality. A logical product of socio-economic development, this type of community was characteristic of the slave-owning and feudal formations. It facilitated further progress of productive forces and production relations, and also of other realms of social life.

The next, and still higher, type of community is the nation (from Latin *natio*—race, people, nation), developed as a result of integration of various nationalities and primitive communes still in existence. As classics of Marxism-Leninism pointed out, a nation forms when the feudal system disintegrates and capitalist society takes shape.<sup>1</sup>

What is a nation? It is a *stable historical community charac-*

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, p. 489; V. I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1980, p. 73.



*terised by community of literary language, territory, economic life, some cultural and mental traits.*

All these properties should be treated as an entity. That the community of language and territory are placed first is not to indicate their primary significance, but rather points to the historical record of a nation's formation and as a continuation of the preceding forms of community—nationality and tribe.

A nation is distinct from the gens and tribe in that its members are not of common origin. On the contrary, practically every modern nation is the result of integration of several nationalities and peoples. John F. Kennedy justly called his nation "a nation of immigrants": since 1607, when the first English settlers appeared in the New World, some 42 million people from all over the world had immigrated to the United States, that is to say, "every American who ever lived, with the exception of one group [the Indians], was either an immigrant himself or a descendant of immigrants".<sup>1</sup>

Incidentally, the formation of the North American nation is a graphic example of immigration under capitalism. Theodore Roosevelt, the US President in 1901-1909, stated as follows: "I do not believe in German-Americans or Irish-Americans. We have a right to ask, all of these immigrants . . . that they become Americans and nothing else . . . the wise thing for the immigrant is to become thoroughly Americanized. He who is not with us . . . is against us."<sup>2</sup> Hundred-per-cent Americans, he believed, were agents of supreme civilisation. He would have liked to establish US rule over other nations with the help of a "big stick".

The principal distinctive feature of every nation is community of economic life. It was, needless to say, found in other national entities as well—the gens, tribe, nationality (more pronounced than in the former two), since social production is not at all possible in the absence of economic community. A nation presupposes the existence of a significantly higher type of economic community, the type shaped by growing exchange among areas and regions, their integration into an entity, increasing

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants*, Harper & Row, N. Y. and Evanston, 1964, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *The Americanism of Theodore Roosevelt. Selections from His Writings and Speeches*, Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston, 1923, pp. 199-210.

commodity circulation, development of a single market in place of small-scale local markets. The community of a nation's economic life is founded on the development of industrial production, means of communication and transportation, and other productive forces created by capitalism and developing within it.

The aforesaid shows that Marxism, contrary to what its adversaries claim, does not deny the existence of national culture, character, traits or ideas. Marxism, logically, proceeds from the idea that all these are, in the final count, shaped by economic factors.

History, including modern history, shows that the development of national ties and national entities based on the capitalist mode of production is accompanied by the spread of nationalism—of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, policy and mentality as regards the national question. Unlike bourgeois ideologues seeking to prove that nationalism is a permanent property, mentality, and conduct of every nation, Marxists regard nationalism as a phenomenon intrinsic to a society characterised by exploitation.

The essence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism can be vividly traced in two assertions. First, that a nation is some sort of large family, an overgrown gens which does not know (must not know) inner antagonisms or contradictions. When antagonisms arise, they must be settled peacefully, as befits close relations. Nationalism, therefore, stems from a non-class approach to nation, the approach unwilling, or rather unable, to admit that every nation developing on the foundation of bourgeois relationships has rich and poor, exploiters and exploited.

A student of historical materialism must clearly understand that every capitalist nation is an antagonistic entity inasmuch as it has classes pursuing different interests and leading different ways of life. The diametrically opposed interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat split a capitalist nation into two nations and national culture into two cultures. As Lenin wrote in "Critical Remarks on the National Question", "There are two nations in every modern nation. . . There are two national cultures in every national culture. There is the Great-Russian culture of the Purishkeviches, Guchkovs and Struves—but there is also the Great-Russian culture typified in the names of Chernyshevsky and Plekhanov. There are *the same two* cultures in the Ukraine

as there are in Germany, in France, in England, among the Jews, and so forth."<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, persons sticking to nationalistic positions—representatives of oppressor nations—are, more than others, inclined to attribute to their nation special, unique, properties, which allegedly place it above other nations or peoples. "What every bourgeoisie is out for in the national question," wrote Lenin in the article "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", "is either privileges for its *own* nation, or exceptional advantages for it."<sup>2</sup>

An extreme manifestation of an oppressor nation's nationalism is Great-Power *chauvinism*—the preaching of national exclusiveness, superiority of some nations to others, national arrogance and egoism, and the fanning of national antagonisms and hatred.

Great-Power chauvinism was displayed in particularly vicious forms in the attitude of the capitalist West towards the colonial East. The economic system that had taken shape by the 20th century was the world capitalist economy since it embraced all world economies. It was not homogeneous, though: industrially developed Western capitalist countries had a higher status while pre-capitalist Eastern countries constituted the former's raw-material appendage; capitalist West was the coloniser, pre-capitalist East was the object of colonisation. History had it so that the colonisers were of the white race and the colonised—of the Black and Yellow races: racial oppression was, thus, added to national oppression.

What, then, are races and racism? This is the subject of the second topic.

(2) A race is made up of individuals with purely common external characteristics (colour of skin and hair, shape of skull,

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 32.

Purishkevich, Guchkov—major Russian capitalists; Struve—Russian bourgeois economist and philosopher; Chernyshevsky (1828-1889)—a great revolutionary democrat, author, and scholar, was imprisoned in the SS Peter and Paul Fortress and then sentenced to twenty years of forced labour and exile in Siberia; Plekhanov (1856-1918)—outstanding theoretician and propagandist of Marxism, was in forced emigration from 1880 to the February 1917 Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 409-410.

eyes and mouth, length of body, etc.). Racial distinctions are biologically inherited (not social); they develop as a result of several hundred generations' habitation in a common geographical environment (climate), and subsequent adjustment to the environment. According to scientific data, racial distinctions began to form in primitive community, when men had spread over the Earth and occupied definite natural habitats.

Three basic races are distinguished: the Caucasian (White), Mongoloid (Yellow), and Negroid (Black). The first live chiefly in Europe, Southwest Asia, North Africa, and North America; the second—in Central, North, East and Southeast Asia, Central America, and South America; the third—in Africa and Asia to the south of the Tropic of Cancer, and Australia.

A basic race is made up of several smaller ones. Thus, the main Mongoloid race includes the Asian, Arctic, Far Eastern, Southasian, and American races. The core Negroid race includes the Negro, Bushmen, Melanesian, Australian and other smaller races. Between two or more basic races, just as between two or more smaller races, there exist mixed or intermediate races with less distinct racial characteristics or combinations of two or more types of racial distinction. Notably, the East African (Ethiopian) race and the South Indian (Dravidian) race are of mixed—Caucasian and Negroid—origin. Altogether, there are some thirty human races.

Historical materialism is a theory consistently opposed to racism—the ideology and politics based wholly on unfounded and extremely reactionary ideas of the existence of “superior” and “inferior” human races. Although racism is rooted in the slave-owning society, one may justly assume that current racism is a product of capitalism.

Slaves (taken prisoner in foreign lands) were not treated as human beings in the slave-owning societies of Egypt, Greece and Rome; they were downtrodden, bought and sold, murdered at whim; nevertheless, nobody tried to justify this practice by the colour of skin. The great ancient philosopher *Aristotle* (384-322 B.C.), who saw slavery as a normal and necessary institution, criticised the idea of men's natural equality, claimed some people were slaves by nature, and considered slave-owners as men naturally superior to slaves, did not, however, allude to the differences in the colour of skin to substantiate these ideas. Aristot-

tle was the author of one of the first elite theories which claimed that some men were superior to others and hence were destined to rule others, but he did not propound any racist theories. The fact that Shakespeare's Othello was a Moor married to a white lady and that he commanded white officers and men did not bother anyone.

Capitalism not only led to Western colonisation of the East but also gave birth to racism—a theory which claims that the White race is superior to the Black and Yellow races. In his four-volume *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* (Essays on the Inequality of Human Races), the French author and philosopher Joseph Gobineau (1816-1882) explains the course of history and distinctions of national development by racial factors—"pure" or "mixed" development of races. In his opinion, racial purity is of cardinal significance for nations' physical and mental characteristics and stability of their way of life and state structure. On the contrary, racial "mixtures", "mixed blood", produce diversity of outlooks, disorders, painful stagnation, and, finally, lead to degeneration. According to Gobineau, the purest race is the White race; it is superior to other races in intellect, strength and beauty; it is the only race holding life and honour in high regard. He saw the increasing number of racial mixtures as leading mankind to ruin. With time, racism took root as one of the most reactionary trends of bourgeois sociology, serving fascism and other abominable theories.

Imperialism continuously reproduces racism in its various forms and puts racist theories into practice. Over 50 million Americans—Blacks, Indians, and other ethnic minorities—are subjected to racial discrimination in the United States. The great humanitarian, Dr. Martin Luther King, wrote in his last published article, "Showdown for Non-Violence": "America is reaping the harvest of hate and shame. . . Now, almost a century removed from slavery, we find the heritage of oppression and racism erupting in our cities, with volcanic lava of bitterness and frustration pouring down our avenues."<sup>1</sup> Slavery has indeed been abolished in the United States, but did not prevent the Philadelphia police authorities from sanctioning the air bombardment of a Black residential block and shooting down in cold blood peo-

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<sup>1</sup> *Look*, April 16, 1968, p. 25.

ple escaping from the burning buildings, among them women and children.

It must be borne in mind that racism, differentiating men according to the colour of skin, may itself assume any "colour". It may, likewise, be white, black or yellow. It is well known that at the time of the Second World War Japanese militarists were active circulating the myth of a "special mission" of the Yellow race, naturally headed by the Japanese. It is also well known that the Negritude, essentially a protest against Africa's colonial past, shows a pronounced slant towards Black racism. It is a variety of racism to declare the black skin colour man's best property.

African revolutionaries are firmly against the assertion that "White superiority" must be opposed with "Black superiority". The racist myth of White superiority cannot be disproved or killed by the myth of Black or Yellow superiority.

(3) It is pertinent to consider the fight against class oppression as the foundation of struggle against national and racial oppression, using the example of the Republic of South Africa.

*First*, the South African racism exists in the most bare-faced forms. It is legally instituted. Apartheid as the system of separate development of races is an official government policy and practice. Here, national and racial oppression are a single issue, so are national and racial problems. *Secondly*, there are actually two states on the territory of South Africa: the white South Africa, with all the characteristics of a highly industrialised capitalist state, and a non-white South Africa, with all the trappings of a colony. South African colonialism is distinct in that the ruling white colonialists do not live in a metropolis overseas but in the same territory with the Black, Coloured and Indian populations.<sup>1</sup> This is settler colonialism. *Thirdly*, the Republic of South Africa is at the threshold of a social revolution (actually in its first stage) led by the Black working class wishing to unite with its white class brothers in a common battle against capitalism and advancing a realistic programme of settling all racial and national problems on the basis of socialist organisation of society.

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<sup>1</sup> Coloureds are people of a mixed (Black and European) origin; Indians—descendants of emigrants from India—comprise over half a million population.

Describing the distinctions and current state of the national problem of South Africa, we must note that in this country the colonisers and the indigenous African populations have not merged (as in Latin American countries). Two nations—representing two races—exist under a capitalist system. The historical type of community—the nation—has in this case superimposed itself, so to speak, on the biological, racial community.

The internal structures of these two nations are also peculiar. The white nation, as any other capitalist nation, falls into the ruling exploiting class of monopoly bourgeoisie and the exploited class of white workers. The latter, however, find themselves in a relatively advantageous position compared with non-white workers: their wages and living standard are impressively higher due to the huge profits that the capitalists derive by exploiting non-white workers. The idea that white workers are superior to non-white workers, that they, too, are in a way representatives of the ruling class, is systematically inculcated in them. True, it has been more difficult of late to do this: since 1980, crises and unemployment have, for the first time, been hitting white workers as well, the highest paid section inclusive. Nevertheless, it requires considerable effort on the part of the fighters against apartheid to make white workers understand that they are subject to exploitation by the capitalists—owners of the means of production—in the same way as are non-white workers.

Among the African workers, stresses the Programme of the South African Communist Party, "there are no acute or antagonistic class divisions. . . Most of them are wage-workers in industry or agriculture. There are no large-scale African employers of labour. The professional groups (mainly teachers) do not, as a rule, earn salaries or live differently from their fellow-Africans."<sup>1</sup>

The situation has somewhat changed in recent years. There have emerged African employers but they do not so far constitute a fully-fledged exploiter class within the Black—exploited—nation. The ruling class of white capitalists, aiming to split the African population so as to retain its ruling position, has been

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to South African Freedom. Programme of the South African Communist Party*, Fraleigh Press Ltd., London, 1962, p. 33.

increasingly conscious of the need to develop a long-term policy meant to bring up a section of African bourgeoisie. This would guarantee an inflow of class allies and appeasers in the face of African political and trade-union leaders. However, the idea remains a long-term perspective. Presently, the chief exploiter of the Black nation and the Black working class is the white bourgeoisie.

South African progressives, headed by the African National Congress (ANC), have invariably stressed that Africa belongs equally to all who live on this continent. To put an end to the racial enmity and the political and socio-economic inequality of the white and non-white nations, it is necessary to start eliminating class antagonisms by transferring the bulk of the means of production from the hands of the capitalists into the hands of the working class and the all working people. This would create conditions for the settlement of South Africa's national and racial problem through integration of the two nations and other national groups into a single South African nation.

What is the class basis for a single South African nation? It can only be the unity of the Black and white working class in the struggle to eliminate capitalism and build a socialist society. "If the aim of our revolution is not only to end the inequality between the Black and white nations, between the African, Indian, and Coloured nationalities, and the racial hostility that goes with that national inequality, but also to bring these nations and nationalities together into a single South African nation without any racial privileges, then to achieve this aim, it is necessary to organise the only class that is capable of achieving this kind of revolution—the working class of both Black and White nations in a struggle to achieve socialist solutions."<sup>1</sup>

It must be stated unequivocally that unification of Black and white workers is not a utopia or wishful thinking, but a statement of objective requirements of the class struggle and the brewing social revolution in South Africa. This process has already begun, albeit at a slow pace, in the country's trade-union movement. Notably, a powerful (some half a million strong) national federation of Black and anti-racist trade unions—the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)—was founded

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<sup>1</sup> *The African Communist*, No 97, 1984, p. 51.



in November 1985. This year witnessed another remarkable event: a group of South African trade unions embracing Black and white workers put forward a concerted demand on higher wages, shorter working hours, improved social security, and some other demands.

It is noteworthy that in Namibia, too—a country illegally occupied by racist South Africa—the revolutionary forces are not waging war against the white population as such but against racist laws and practices and the system of exploitation and oppression. It is a struggle for total emancipation, for a state where all the people—black and white alike—will have equal rights.

Needless to say, in a society where racism used to predominate, peaceful coexistence of Black and White races, elimination of racial prejudice of the Whites towards the Blacks and of the Blacks' natural distrust of the Whites, the equality of civil rights and duties for the Whites and the Blacks are not at all easy to ensure. Still, the process of Zimbabwe's independent development proves that this can be done.

Fighters against racial and national inequality are encouraged by the appropriate solution of the nationalities question in the USSR, a country with over 100 nations and nationalities of various racial groups.

Article 36 of the USSR Constitution states: "Citizens of the USSR of different races and nationalities have equal rights. . . Any direct or indirect limitation of the rights of citizens or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on grounds of race or nationality, and any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness, hostility or contempt, are punishable by law."<sup>1</sup>

A new social and international community of people—the *Soviet people*—has formed in the USSR. This community is not a "supernation" through the Russian nation's absorption of non-Russian nations and nationalities—as some bourgeois scholars assert. It is a community which enables all nations and nationalities within it to develop in its own specific way and to pursue both national and international goals in a common advance towards a communist society.

National relations in the USSR are characterised by the for-

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<sup>1</sup> *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1984, p. 28.

ward advance of all socialist nations and nationalities and the strengthening of ties among them on the basis of voluntary, reciprocal, and fraternal cooperation. The two trends are interconnected and interrelated. Each nation's progress is brought about by its own as well as other nations' efforts. This, naturally, makes for stronger ties between all nations and ensures further progress for each of them. It is the first case known in history of the multinational composition of a country ceasing to be a brake on progress and becoming a source of strength and advancement. The bonds of friendship tying all Soviet nations are the great driving force of the Soviet society.

A staunch adherent to the Leninist foreign-policy course, the CPSU proceeds from the premise that the strengthening of ties among Soviet nations and nationalities is an objective process. There is no need to step it up by any artificial pressure, inasmuch as this process is predetermined by the general course of social development in the Soviet Union. At the same time, the CPSU is against any artificial containment of this process, any attempts to impede it by cementing national separation. The current strengthening of ties among nations promises a long-term historical perspective of total unity and integration of nations.

### Questions and Answers

*Question:* The above paragraphs contain just criticisms of reactionary nationalism, that is, nationalism of the oppressor nation kindred to chauvinism and racism. What is the communist attitude towards nationalism of an oppressed nation?

*Answer:* Lenin taught revolutionaries to distinguish between nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation. The former is undoubtedly reactionary ideology and politics, while the latter has also a general democratic aspect manifested in the struggle for national independence and statehood.

For a better understanding of this topic, we recommend studying Lenin's critical remarks addressed to *Rosa Luxemburg* (1871-1919), a prominent figure in the international working-class movement, contained in his work "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination". Special attention must be paid to paragraphs 4 and 5.<sup>1</sup> Rosa Luxemburg got carried away by the fight

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 409-425.

against bourgeois nationalism in Poland (then part of czarist Russia), brushing aside the Great Russian nationalism, the most dangerous to the cause of the revolution inasmuch as it was more feudal than bourgeois.

Lenin approached the question of nationalism of an oppressed nation from the angle of proletarian class struggle and an alliance of proletarians of all nations in this struggle. He wrote as follows: "The bourgeois nationalism of *any* oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we *unconditionally* support. At the same time we strictly distinguish it from the tendency towards national exclusiveness; we fight against the tendency of the Polish bourgeois to oppress the Jews, etc., etc."<sup>1</sup>

Communists cannot fail to see the class limitations of the oppressed nations' bourgeois nationalism (even when it advances the slogans of self-determination and national sovereignty). He wrote in this connection: "Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, *in favour*, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for *its own* bourgeois nationalism, we stand against. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation."<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of Communists of the East to bourgeois nationalism in their respective countries is described in Lenin's address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East convened on 22nd November 1919.<sup>3</sup>

*Question:* Can any contradictions arise between national interests (notably, the cause of national liberation) and the international proletarian interests?

*Answer:* Such contradictions can arise in some historical situations. Thus, a decade after the Franco-German war of 1870-1871, in which Germany defeated France and seized Alsace-Lorraine, as well as other French provinces, Engels wrote of the

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 411-412.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 151-162.

oppressed Alsatians (in a February 22, 1882 letter to Eduard Bernstein in Zürich) that if they want to provoke war between France and Germany on the eve of an impending revolution, set the two peoples against each other and thus delay the outbreak of the revolution, he would say: "Wait! You can endure as long as the European proletariat. When it is free, you, too, will be free as a matter of course; until then we shall not allow you to stand in the way of the fighting proletariat."<sup>1</sup>

This is not to say, in Engels' words, that "national independence is a secondary matter from the international angle . . . it is, on the contrary, the foundation for each and any international cooperation".<sup>2</sup>

Here is yet another example. In 1918, when Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were *compelled* to agree to the crushing and humiliating terms of the Brest Peace Treaty with German imperialists, the Russian bourgeoisie and its stooges—the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries—confronted Lenin and the Bolsheviks with what they considered to be an "internationalist" argument, namely, that the Brest Peace Treaty was a shameful betrayal and violation of Latvia's, Lithuania's, Poland's, and Kurland's right to self-determination.

Exposing their erroneous view, Lenin wrote: "Let us examine the argument from the standpoint of theory; which should be put first, the right of nations to self-determination, or socialism?"

"Socialism should.

"It is permissible, because of a contravention of the right of nations to self-determination, to allow the Soviet Socialist Republic to be devoured, to expose it to the blows of imperialism at a time when imperialism is obviously stronger and the Soviet Republic obviously weaker?

"No, it is not permissible—that is *bourgeois* and not socialist politics."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin also argued that "the interests of world socialism are

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Band 35, 1967, S. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 270.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Revolutionary Phrase", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1977, p. 28.

higher than national interests, higher than the interests of the state".<sup>1</sup>

To be an internationalist, as Lenin taught us, "one must *not* think only of one's own nation, but place *above it* the interests of all nations, their common liberty and equality".<sup>2</sup>

*Question:* The language problem (what language should be used in communication, instruction, state documents and procedures. etc.; should there be one generally used state language or not) constitutes an important aspect of the nationalities question in any multinational state which used to be or is now divided into oppressed and oppressor nations.

What does the experience accumulated in multinational Russia and the Soviet Union teach us?

*Answer:* The history of a language is bound with the history of the nation using it. When the colonial system of imperialism disintegrated, opinions were expressed in some newly independent multinational states that each of these countries should stop using English, French, and other West European languages—the languages of colonialists—and adopt some indigenous language as the compulsory state language.

Nothing came out of it due to two reasons. First, because at the time of decolonisation some West European languages had actually become nationally adopted and, hence, their renunciation or prohibition could have created additional difficulties for communication by various nations, nationalities, and other big and small ethnic groups. These difficulties would have made themselves felt in all spheres—from cultural to economic. Secondly, it was hardly possible to adopt some local language as the state language without causing displeasure and resistance on the part of the national groups not proficient in it.

There were various forces in pre-revolutionary Russia—from monarchists to bourgeois liberals—advocating the adoption of Russian as a compulsory state language. The monarchists put forward the following argument: with Russian as the state language it would be easier to rule non-Russians "with an iron

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Report on Foreign Policy Delivered at a Joint Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Moscow Soviet. May 14, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1974, p. 347.

rod". The liberal's argument was that the "great and mighty" Russian language would enrich the culture of non-Russians by giving them access to great cultural values, etc.

To the reader interested in this question we recommend Lenin's article "Is a Compulsory Official Language Needed?" Lenin and other Russian Marxists were firmly against imposing the language of Great Russians (constituting a *minority*, slightly over 40 per cent of the total population) on all non-Russian nations and nationalities as a compulsory official language. "Who wants that sort of thing?" asked Lenin, and answered: "Not the Russian people, not the Russian democrats. They do not recognise national oppression in *any form*, even in 'the interests of Russian culture and statehood'".<sup>1</sup> In the single quotes Lenin cited Russian liberals. Lenin answered them as follows: "We know better than you do that the language of Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky is a great and mighty one. We desire more than you do that the closest possible intercourse and fraternal unity should be established between the oppressed classes of all the nations that inhabit Russia, without any discrimination. And we, of course, are in favour of every inhabitant of Russia having the opportunity to learn the great Russian language.

"What we do not want is the element of *coercion*. We do not want to have people driven into paradise with a cudgel; for no matter how many fine phrases about 'culture' you may utter, a *compulsory* official language involves coercion, the use of the cudgel."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin's position on total equality of all languages was realised after the socialist revolution in Russia. All privileges on the basis of language were totally abolished, and practical measures were adopted to facilitate the development of all languages spoken by non-Russian ethnic groups. Suffice it to say that some 50 nationalities developed their written languages after the revolution. The Soviet citizens' right to use the national language and languages of other national groups is stipulated in the Constitution of the USSR (Article 36).

Once they had acquired equality in this area, non-Russian

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

nations and nationalities showed the desire to learn Russian, as Lenin had predicted. Most of the non-Russian inhabitants of the USSR are bilingual; some, as national censuses show, regard Russian as their native language. Thus, Russian has been assigned with a truly historic mission—to be the medium of communication of all national groups inhabiting the USSR.

As stated in the Programme of the CPSU, "The equal right of all citizens of the USSR to use their national languages and the free development of these languages will be ensured in the future as well. At the same time, learning the Russian language, which has been voluntarily accepted by the Soviet people as a medium of communication between different nationalities, besides the language of one's nationality, broadens one's access to the achievements of science and technology and of Soviet and world culture."<sup>1</sup>

Other foreign nations have been showing increasing interest in the Russian language. As the great Soviet poet Mayakovsky wrote:

*Why,  
were I a Black  
whom old age hoars,  
still,  
eager and uncomplaining,  
I'd sit  
and learn Russian  
if only because  
it was spoken  
by Lenin.*

### For Homework and Discussion

1. Make a synopsis of the sections of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* dealing with national relations and the correlation between class and national. Expostulate on the position: "In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the na-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 48.

tion vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end."<sup>1</sup>

2. Write out positions dealing with nations' right to self-determination from Lenin's work "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" and analyse them. What conditions are needed for the oppressed nations to attain freedom? What is the correlation between the goals pursued by the proletariat of the oppressed nation and those pursued by the proletariat of the oppressor nation?

3. Today, two German states exist—the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Can we speak of the existence of two German nations—the socialist German nation in East Germany and the capitalist German nation in West Germany?

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 503.

## Chapter 8

### HOW TO STUDY LENIN'S WORK "THE STATE AND REVOLUTION"

In a handbook of historical materialism, the contents are usually laid out in the following order: classes and class struggle; nations and national relations; the state as the major component of society's political organisation; social revolution. The same layout (which has a scientific explanation) is preserved in this book. We shall now proceed to analyse the state and social revolution in connection with Lenin's work *The State and Revolution*. It will aid us in our examination of these topics and help understand *how and why works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin should be studied*.

It should always be kept in mind that no handbook or manual can ever be an adequate substitute for an original work. The study of Marxism-Leninism presupposes knowledge of the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Needless to say, it is not an easy thing to study original works. It requires a certain level of knowledge, patience and perseverance.

It may happen that at first reading not everything will be clear and easy to assimilate. One should not be afraid of this. Lenin recommended reading difficult places several times; he believed that all difficulties can be overcome through a keen and purposeful effort.<sup>1</sup> The important thing is not to try and learn some positions "by heart" but to try and understand their essence, to see the historical correctness of the teaching developed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and become capable of orienting oneself in theoretical issues without the help of others.

It should be remembered that works by Marx, Engels and

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The State", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, pp. 470-474.



Lenin are not just textbooks or handbooks of the kind the reader is holding now. They are essentially acute discourses with ideological and political adversaries of the proletariat and its revolutionary cause (the same is true of Lenin's work *The State and Revolution*), and this makes the assimilation of original works even more difficult.

We must learn to single out the most important aspects, the statements and arguments with which Marx, Engels, and Lenin opposed their ideological and political adversaries and which can even now be used in the struggle against the opponents of Marxism-Leninism.

A student of Marxism-Leninism must bear in mind that the principal theoretical positions of the theory of communism were not discovered at once but took years and decades to develop. They were not obtained from abstract speculation at a writing desk but from the course of real life, from the proletariat's class struggle in the first place. Therefore, when we study a work by Marx, Engels, or Lenin we must remember that, while it continues the preceding works, it also contains some other aspects—new approaches to former problems and new conclusions corresponding to the new conditions of social life.

Thus, Lenin's work *The State and Revolution* is a continuation of the fundamental works by Marx and Engels dealing with the problems pertaining to the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Numerous extracts from these works are cited in the book and in Lenin's preparatory notes titled "Marxism on the State".<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that Lenin himself translated from German these necessarily long extracts because the translations into Russian available at the time were either incomplete or inadequate.

In the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, continuity is organically linked with *innovation and creative development* of the theory of revolution. Therefore, a student of historical materialism must strive to discover, understand and assimilate the new aspects of a given work.

Needless to say, there should be a *concrete historical approach* when studying any work by Marx, Engels or Lenin. In other words, we must learn when, why, and in what historical situa-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Marxism on the State*, 1984.

tion the work was written, and what practical and theoretical objectives it intended to pose or reach. For this, we must first of all understand the general historical situation. Otherwise we risk "not seeing the wood for the trees".

Another preliminary remark: the original works are studied not just to acquire or extend theoretical knowledge. The study of these works is needed primarily to facilitate practical revolutionary work. Therefore, works written in the 19th or early 20th century must be studied in an *inalienable connection with our time*, with contemporary objectives of revolutionary struggle. Using the Marxist methodology in his research on social life (which, as a truly scientific methodology, can not grow obsolete), our contemporary can understand and explain the developments taking place now, in the late 20th century, and to predict the major trends of social development for a definite historical term.

Last but not least, the study of original works develops the ability to distinguish genuine Marxism-Leninism from its falsifications which opportunists and reformists try to spread. The fact is, that, both in the capitalist West and developing countries, there exists a peculiar section of anti-Communists, which the *African Communist* calls "non-Marxist Marxologists". Meant here are those theoreticians and functionaries, acting within the framework of the Socialist International or under its influence, who pay lip service to Marxism-Leninism, and who need a superficial knowledge of it for the sole purpose of trying to discredit this teaching and waging a struggle against the socialist countries, as well as the communist and workers' parties.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now turn to Lenin's work *The State and Revolution*. The following will be examined:<sup>2</sup>

(1) The historical situation that necessitated the work. Lenin's theory of the socialist revolution.

(2) The book's structure.

(3) The basic issues raised in the work:

(3) 1. The Marxian outlook on the origin and essence of the exploiter state.

(3) 2. The proposition on the need to destroy the old bourgeois state structures.

<sup>1</sup> *The African Communist*, No. 100, 1985, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> This pattern may be employed in the examination of other works by Marx, Engels, or Lenin.

(3). 3. The Marxian view of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist state.

(4) The CPSU on the dialectics of the development of socialist statehood.

(5) Marx and Lenin on the two phases of communist society. Socialism and communism as defined in the Programme of the CPSU.

(1) Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution* in August-September 1917; actually he had begun to work on the book some time earlier, in the latter half of 1916 while still in emigration in Switzerland. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution (that had ended czarism), Lenin was able to return to Russia. Although he was wholly taken by practical work, the idea that a theoretical research on the problems of the state and revolution was needed did not leave Lenin. Notably, we know that in June 1917 Lenin made a list of works he needed to write the book. He continued his work on the book later, when, pursued by bourgeois-landlord Provisional Government, he was forced to go deep underground first in Razliv (off Petrograd—now Leningrad) and then in Helsingfors (Helsinki). The book was published after the socialist revolution in Russia, in 1918.

The book was necessitated by two important circumstances: the impending proletarian revolution in Russia and attempts to distort the teaching of Marx and Engels by opportunists and revisionists within the Second International and also by theoreticians of the official Socialist parties in Germany, France, Belgium, Britain, Russia and other countries. These theoreticians and parties held the view that a socialist revolution could be achieved only in the distant future—not earlier than capitalism would have created highly developed productive forces everywhere and the proletariat comprised the majority of population. Thus, the defence of socialism in word necessarily became the defence of capitalism in deed.

Considering that *The State and Revolution* deals mainly with the theoretical problems of the state while the revolution is investigated in this connection only, a few explanations concerning Lenin's theory of the socialist revolution—which continued and advanced the views of Marx and Engels on the

socialist revolution in new historical conditions—are relevant here.

Not long before he wrote *The State and Revolution*, Lenin discovered and formulated the law on the uneven, leaps-and-bounds character of capitalism's economic and political development in various countries. This enabled him to draw the conclusion that a simultaneous victory of the socialist revolution in all or major capitalist countries (what the founders of Marxism suggested) was impossible, and that the socialist revolution would first win in a small group of countries or even in one country. (For a better understanding of this issue we recommend Lenin's articles "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe"<sup>1</sup> and "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution"<sup>2</sup> written in 1915 and 1916 respectively.) It is noteworthy that Lenin did not name then the country where a socialist revolution was more probable than in others.

At the time he was working on *The State and Revolution*, Lenin was already confident that a socialist revolution would first triumph in Russia and not anywhere else. Outlining the development of the revolutionary process in Russia following the 1905 and February 1917 revolutions, Lenin chose the following words to end his foreword to the book: "The question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state, therefore, is acquiring not only practical political importance, but also the significance of a most urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do before long to free themselves from capitalist tyranny."<sup>3</sup>

A few weeks after that a socialist revolution in Russia became a fact. Later, after the civil war and imperialist intervention ended, and after the proletarian revolutions in Hungary, Bavaria (Germany) and some other countries had been defeated, it became obvious that the socialist revolution had won in one country.

There is no end of bourgeois and bourgeois-reformist assertions that the socialist revolution won in Russia "contrary" to Marxism, that its victory did not rest on a stable economic foundation or a high level of productive forces.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1980, pp. 339-343.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1977, pp. 77-87.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1977, p. 388.

What can one say about this?

The founders of Marxism had never asserted that the victory of socialist revolution would be confined to economically developed capitalist states. When in his "Principles of Communism" (1847) Engels outlined the prospect for the socialist revolution's simultaneous victory in major capitalist countries, he named America (the US) and Germany along with Britain and France,<sup>1</sup> yet in the late 1840s the US and Germany were far behind France and even farther behind Britain with regard to economic (capitalist) development.

It is a fact that the economic mainspring of any social revolution (socialist included) is the conflict between the advanced productive forces and outdated production relations. This has been explained in Section 5 of this book. But, as Marx and Engels believed, "historical collisions" might develop in some country, even if the contradiction between productive forces and production relations has not reached its most acute form. Some other economic and/or political reasons are "sufficient to produce a similar contradiction in countries with a less advanced industry".<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Marx was of the opinion that a revolution will occur "in the extremities of the bourgeois body" earlier than "in its heart", since the possibility of adjustment is greater there, i.e., in the countries where capitalism is not necessarily highly developed but is more vulnerable.

We have learnt from the past and modern history that a high economic level of development is not necessarily accompanied by a high level of revolutionary movement of the working class. Vice versa, a high level of revolutionary movement is not always brought about by a high level of development of the national economy and productive forces.

This is not to say that a low level of economic development is more conducive to a socialist revolution than a higher one. In his book *The Economy of the Transition Period*, Bukharin sought to prove that an economically backward country must be the first to tear the chain of imperialism. Lenin did not agree with him;

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, p. 75.

he stressed that "we would have achieved nothing without a certain level of capitalist development".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin pointed out on several occasions that, as a country of average level of capitalist development, pre-revolutionary Russia was a cross section of all fundamental contradictions inherent in capitalism: between labour and capital; budding capitalism on the one hand, and major survivals of feudalism and serfdom, on the other; highly developed industrial regions and non-industrialised outskirts, a ruling nation and the oppressed nations and ethnic groups.

In other words, *Russia effected the first victorious socialist revolution in mankind's history because since the early 20th century it had been the centre of world revolutionary movement*. It must be mentioned that in the notes made when working on the *State and Revolution*, Lenin alludes to Engels' words that "Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe"<sup>2</sup>, and writes on the margin: "Exactly!"<sup>3</sup>

(2) The *organisation of the book* reflects the logic of Lenin's research into the problems of the state and revolution. Since reformists and revisionists had made their best to distort and vulgarise the views of Marx and Engels on the state, the first objective posed and reached by Lenin was to re-establish and make accessible to the revolutionary movement the *true* outlook of the founders of scientific socialism. The first chapter tells the reader what the state is; when and why it emerged; what levers of power made it possible for the exploiting minority to rule over the exploited majority; what goals the exploiter (including bourgeois) state serves.

Having examined these questions, Lenin investigates, in the second chapter, the interrelationships of the state and social revolution. He shows that, having analysed the experience of the 1848-1851 revolutions in Europe, Marx and Engels drew an important conclusion on the *need to destroy* the exploiter bourgeois state in order to make the proletariat the ruling class, i.e., establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

<sup>1</sup> *Lenin Miscellany*, No. XI, p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, 1976, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Marxism on the State*, p. 7.

In the third chapter Lenin proves how Marx (1) concretised the issue of the elimination of the bourgeois state and (2) showed what must take its place on the basis of his analysis of the Paris Commune. In this connection Lenin makes an appraisal of the 1905-1907 bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia: a truly popular revolution in which the proletariat and the peasants put forward *their own* demands in an attempt to build a new society in place of the old one which was being destroyed.

Lenin also elaborates on the question of the interconnection of the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism, and, in particular, the use of elected bodies of power to win over the masses to the side of the proletariat.

The fourth chapter continues the topics taken up in the third chapter, and is devoted chiefly to the works of Engels, who (as Lenin points out) in his explanation of Marx' conclusions on the Paris Commune, was able to outline clearly and graphically the other practical problems of revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism and the building of a socialist society. Drawing on Engels' works, Lenin describes the historic mission of the new (proletarian and socialist) state.

The fifth chapter is titled "The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State". Here Lenin substantiates the historical necessity of proletarian dictatorship and investigates the major regularities of the transition from capitalism to socialism, the peculiarities of the first and second phases of communist society and the conditions of the socialist state's withering away.

The last (sixth) chapter deals with criticism of the opportunist distortions of the Marxist position on the state (such criticisms are also found in other chapters). In this connection, it is important to know *how* reformists, revisionists and anarchists distort the Marxist theory of the state, considering that each of these opponents of Marxism *went about in its own way*.

Lenin intended to finish the book with a chapter on the Russian revolutions of 1905-1907 and February 1917. His work was "interrupted" by a political crisis on the eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution. "Such an 'interruption' can only be welcomed," wrote Lenin. "It is more pleasant and useful to go through the 'experience of the revolution' than to write about it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 497.

In his later works Lenin made an analysis of the experience accumulated in the course of the three revolutions in Russia and the revolutionary struggle of the working people in other countries. Notably, he elaborated on the topic in the book *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*<sup>1</sup> speeches delivered at the First Congress of the Communist International,<sup>2</sup> in the lecture "The State,"<sup>3</sup> in the articles "'Democracy' and Dictatorship",<sup>4</sup> and "Our Revolution".<sup>5</sup> Hence we recommend these works to the student of *The State and Revolution*.

(3) We shall now proceed to direct analysis of the basic contents of the work *The State and Revolution*, beginning with the origin and essence of the exploiter state.

(3) 1. Why is it that in any exploiter society—slave-owning, feudal or capitalist—an insignificant minority comprising the ruling classes are capable of oppressing and exploiting the overwhelming majority, the working people? Why do the working people—comprising the majority of population let the minority oppress and exploit them? Can one really suppose that they "like" it being downtrodden and exploited? Why, then, has this unjust system—the system of exploitation—existed for thousands of years? Evidently because the exploiter minority had some power, an instrument with the help of which it has subjugated, suppressed and exploited the majority. Indeed, this power, this instrument has always been in the hands of the exploiters. Modern imperialist bourgeoisie has it, too. This power is called the state.

In conformity with historical experience, Marxism-Leninism asserts that the state has not always existed. When there were no classes (at the stage of the primitive community) the state did not exist. Students of historical materialism must clearly understand that *the state emerges where, when, and insofar as the pre-class tribal community is replaced by the class (class-antagonistic, to be more exact) society*. For a better understanding of this issue we recommend Chapter Nine of Engels' book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Summing up

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, pp. 227-325.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 453-477.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 470-488.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 368-372.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1973, pp. 476-481.



his analysis of the emergence of the state on the ruins of the gentile order in Athens, Rome, and German tribes, Engels says: "Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class."<sup>1</sup>

Further developing their basic idea with regard to the role and meaning of the exploiter state, Marx and Engels pointed to the three principal features distinguishing the state from the gentile order.

*First*, the establishment of a social order which no longer directly coincides with the population organising itself as an armed force. It consists of *special* bodies of armed men (army, police, etc.) and material adjuncts (prisons and other institutions of coercion).

The *second* distinguishing feature is the taxes and state loans needed to maintain the social order protecting the interests of the ruling minority, i.e., the state apparatus. A strange picture unfolds: the ruling class constituting a minority establishes the state to maintain its rule, and also to hold the oppressed classes in subjugation which, in fact, the oppressed classes themselves have to pay for.

The *third* distinguishing feature is the division of the state's subjects according to territories, that is, organisation of the citizens, of their execution of rights and duties irrespective of gens or tribes.

Ideologists of the exploiting classes have invariably sought to prove that the state is a supra-class organ reconciling class antagonisms. The state, stressed Lenin alluding to Engels, is the product of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state is an organ of *class rule*, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of an "order" suiting the ruling class.

In this connection, Lenin exposes the erroneous views of *Karl*

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, p. 328.

*Kautsky* (1854-1938), a leader and theoretician of German Social Democrats and the Second International, who in the 1880s adhered to Marxism but subsequently, on the eve of the First World War, broke with it and later adopted a hostile attitude towards the socialist revolution and socialist changes in Russia. Not denying "theoretically" that the state is an organ of class rule and that class antagonisms are irreconcilable, Kautsky denied the applicability of these positions to imperialist state at the stage of state-monopoly capitalism. His thesis on the supra-class character of the bourgeois imperialist state essentially coincides with the bourgeois-reformist view that the state is a public institution which, by exercising public control, regulates the interrelations of labour and capital and coordinates their "common" interests.

At the current stage of state-monopoly capitalism, the power of monopolies and the power of the state are integrated in anti-popular and exploiter power meant to oppress the workers' movement, national-liberation movements and democratic movements for the sake of preserving the exploiter capitalist system.

The mechanism of exploitation has become more complex and sophisticated. The capitalist state redistributes, partly through its budget, a major portion of the national income in such a way as to benefit big capital. In turn, monopolists exercising control over the functioning of the state apparatus, obtain lucrative orders from the state, and fairly often shift onto the latter's shoulders the financial burden of unprofitable undertakings and industries. The state and monopolies seek to place the latest scientific achievements at their own service. All this goes to say that the imperialist state is a veritable institution for running the affairs of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

(3) 2. A question arises: What steps must the working class—fighting to emancipate all the working people from oppression and exploitation—take as regards the bourgeois state?

The answer is: it must be broken, smashed. This is the answer given by Marx, Engels and Lenin (the question was raised and answered in Lenin's works written on the eve of the socialist revolution in Russia).

The reformists and revisionists gave a different answer. They believed that state-monopoly capitalism is no longer capitalism in the true sense but "state socialism" and hence there was no need

to destroy the bourgeois state machine: it must be made to facilitate a "peaceful transformation" of capitalism into socialism.

Since this essentially non-Marxian outlook was not infrequently "supported" by quotations from Marx and Engels, the first task Lenin set himself was to prove that reformists and opportunists either ignored or distorted the conclusions of Marx and Engels. Notably, Lenin shows that the experience of the 1848-1851 revolutions in France and some other European countries led Marx and Engels to the conclusion that the revolution is compelled to "concentrate all its forces of destruction" against the executive power with its "enormous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its extensive and artificial state machinery". Quotating from Marx's work "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", Lenin italicises the following words: "*All revolutions perfected this machine instead of breaking it.*"<sup>1</sup>

Later, in a letter to Kugelmann written on April 12, 1871, Marx formulated the task of the Paris Communards as follows: "no longer attempt to transfer the bureaucratic-military apparatus from one hand to another, but *to smash* it, and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution."<sup>2</sup>

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", Lenin points out, briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during revolution in relation to the state.<sup>3</sup> It is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the opportunist "interpreters" of Marxism—Kautsky and Bernstein—Lenin goes on.

How was it done? Here are two of the most typical examples of the distortion of Marxism to which Lenin referred in *The State and Revolution*.

Having analysed the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx drew the following lesson: *the working class cannot simply take possession of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes*. This position first appeared in Marx's work *The Civil War in France*.<sup>4</sup> It was repeated, as an important specifica-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, 1979, pp. 185, 186; V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 411.

<sup>2</sup> Marx, Engels *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 420.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1986, p. 328.

tion in the last preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*.<sup>1</sup> Marx's idea is that the working class must break up, smash the ready-made state machinery, and not confine itself to merely taking possession of it, stresses Lenin in *The State and Revolution*. How did the opponents of revolutionary Marxism interpret this idea?

Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), one of the first expounders of the theory of the class struggle in capitalist society, interpreted Marx's position on the state as follows: Marx advocated a slow—evolutionary—development, was against a violent revolution, and even warned the working class against excessive revolutionary activities in the effort to take over power and also against assumption of power in general.<sup>2</sup> Bernstein, it seems, sought to ascribe to Marx a view directly opposite to that which Marx actually held on this question.

Kautsky, although not exactly repeating Bernstein in the latter's interpretation of this issue, did not himself offer the best of interpretations. He (as quoted by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*) claimed that, "according to Marx the working class cannot *simply* take over the *ready-made* state machinery, but that, generally speaking, it *can* take it over—and that was all".<sup>3</sup> Kautsky actually tried to remove the principal distinction of Marxism from opportunism as regards this major issue.

Another distortion of Marxism relates to the idea of the withering away of the state. The state, in the view of Marx and Engels, arose with society's split into antagonistic classes and, hence, will wither away when the classes cease to exist. It is quite clear that in speaking of the state "withering away" Marx and Engels referred to the *socialist* state of the period of its transition to a communist society. Opportunists sought to apply this Marxist idea of the withering away of the state to the bourgeois state.

Exposing their erroneous views, Lenin quotes a number of passages from Marx and Engels, including a fairly long passage from Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, and draws the following conclusion: "According to Engels, the "bourgeois state does not 'wither away', but is 'abolished' by the proletariat in the course of the revolu-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 482, 483.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 483.

tion. What withers away after this revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state."<sup>1</sup>

Besides this general statement of fact, Lenin, drawing on Marx's analysis of the historical experience of the Paris Commune of 1871, shows what it means destroying the bourgeois state, and breaking the exploiter state machine. He suggests the following: to eliminate the special armed bodies of men (the army, police, etc.), law-enforcement organs (the courts, procurator's offices, etc.), bureaucratic official apparatus, organs of the working people's spiritual oppression (reducing the force of religion and clergy by separating the church from the state and the school from the church). The "destruction" of the bourgeois state, therefore, presupposes elimination of the links and institutions of the state machinery which directly uphold the system of exploitation of man by man and of class by class.

As for some government agencies, means of public communication (the postal service and telegraph), statistical and accounting apparatus and banks, there is no need to destroy these links and institutions of the old state machine. They must be relieved from service to the capitalists and placed at the service of the working class and all working people. The question was raised and settled in this way in Lenin's work *The State and Revolution*<sup>2</sup> and in his works written after the socialist revolution in Russia.<sup>3</sup>

*The need to destroy the state institutions upholding the interests of the exploiter classes has in the present epoch become a major regularity of all truly popular revolutions pursuing socialist goals or aiming at a socialist perspective.*

Take the experience of the 1970-1973 revolution in Chile. It was peaceful in form, while in content it was anti-imperialist (aimed against US imperialism's domination of the country), anti-oligarchic, and agrarian (directed against local monopoly capital fused with US capital and local latifundists), and was potentially capable of growing into a socialist revolution. Its driving forces were the working class, peasants, the radical section of the urban petty bourgeoisie, the progressive sections of the intelligen-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 431.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1977, p. 106.

tsia and students. It was also supported by a section of the average national bourgeoisie.

It must be stressed that the Popular Unity bloc, headed by the Socialist and Communist parties of Chile, assumed power *legally*, in conformity with the principles of *bourgeois* democracy—as a result of presidential elections. Likewise, the Popular Unity Government was elected in conformity with these principles. The very first day revealed the contradiction between the executive power (the government) on the one hand, and the reactionary parliamentary majority on the other, which grew more acute with the passing of the days. Through economic levers, the bourgeoisie got hold of the courts, the bureaucratic apparatus, local administration agencies, and most of the mass media; it was also able to retain the commanding heights in the army and police.

The internal counter-revolution was rendered a powerful support by US monopolies, primarily by the International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT), a firm maintaining close ties with the United State Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Their objective was to overthrow the Popular Unity Government.

When the reactionary forces failed to achieve it by constitutional methods (the Popular Unity won nearly 44 per cent of the votes in the 1973 elections, that is, significantly more than in the 1970 presidential elections), a counter-revolutionary military coup was staged. The lawfully elected president and commander-in-chief of the national armed forces Salvador Allende was killed, many thousands of patriotically and democratically minded people were shot down, and several dozens were thrown in prison and concentration camps. Parliament, political parties and municipal councils were dissolved. The Constitution, which the reactionary had used to confine the activities of the popular government to the utmost, was abolished. Democratic freedoms ceased to exist. The country which had long-standing democratic traditions came under an anti-national terroristic military-fascist junta expressing the interests of local and North American monopoly capital.

Chilean Communists made a critical assessment of the three-year rule of the Popular Unity bloc which, in all fairness, must be given credit for major socio-economic changes that began in the country: agrarian reform, nationalisation of the bulk of natural resources and of private banks, government control over the

biggest enterprises, establishment of the public sector in the national economy, higher wages, improvement of the working people's living standard, etc. Chilean Communists are also aware of the grave mistakes made by the Popular Unity Government. Notably, a reformist trend, which from time to time made itself felt in the government's work, caused serious political harm; so did slogans and actions of various leftist elements.

Chilean Communists know that the tragic situation in their country has reaffirmed the truth of Lenin's idea (advanced in *The State and Revolution*) that the people—a truly democratic force—must assume full control over the entire state machine.<sup>1</sup> In the October 11, 1973 Communist Party appeal to the Chilean people, it was stressed that when the people again take over power (as current developments promised), it would not feel obliged to reinstate all the former institutions. Who will want to support a legal system which allowed for subversive activities, economic sabotage and fascism? Who would like to maintain a parliament which signed its death sentence by participating in an anti-government conspiracy? After the events in the country the Chilean people can justifiably set itself the task of building a new type of armed forces and police, or, at least, of ridding them and the investigation agencies of fascist elements. Some institutions, in which many sincerely believed, turned out to be absolutely rotten.

The appeal unequivocally stated that, after the people regain state power, a new constitution would be adopted, new codes and laws would be promulgated, state agencies and institutes established, and a state of a new type built—in which freedom of worship and institutions would be respected and all humanitarian norms safeguarded.<sup>2</sup>

The Chilean events prove that Marx, Engels, and Lenin (in *The State and Revolution*) were right in saying that it is not enough to destroy the bourgeois state and deprive the bourgeoisie of the major levers of political power. The next, and perhaps even more important, task during the revolutionary trans-

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<sup>1</sup> Volodia Teitelboim, "For a Victorious Revolution, with Account of the Tragic Experience", *World Marxist Review*, No. 10, 1973, pp.1-4.

<sup>2</sup> *La voz de orden es la unidad (Declaración formulada en Santiago el 11 de Octubre de 1973)*, Desde Chile hablan los comunistas, Ediciones Colo-Colo, 1976, pp. 23-32.

formation of capitalism into socialism is the replacement of the smashed bourgeois state apparatus with a new proletarian state.

The anarchist view (which Lenin sharply criticised) was that since in every class society the state is an instrument of coercion, the proletarian revolution must abolish the state and any central power. Allusions to the experience of the Paris Commune did nothing to change the anarchists' view inasmuch as they believed that the Commune proved their point of view.

The student of the theory of revolution is advised to remember the following conclusion of Marx on the class character and historical significance of the Paris Commune: "The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour."<sup>1</sup>

In his commentary on this conclusion Lenin pointed out that, while the Utopian Socialists busied themselves with "discovering" political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place, the anarchists dismissed the question of political forms altogether, and the opportunists of Social Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of parliamentary democratic state as a limit which should not be overstepped and denounced as anarchism every desire to *break* these forms, Marx did not set out to invent or discover a new—socialist—society or forms of social statehood. Lenin stressed that, in spite of the Paris Commune's failure, in spite of its short life and weakness, Marx saw in it the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to *smash* the bourgeois state apparatus and the political form "at last discovered", by which the smashed machine can and must be replaced, and under which the economic emancipation of labour and the building of socialism and communism can take place.

Marx and Engels gave a clear and unequivocal answer to the question "What is to replace the smashed state machine?": it is

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 334.



to be replaced by a new state of the Paris Commune type, that is, by the socialist state of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

(3)3. Lenin begins the second section of Chapter Five with Marx's famous conclusion in the "Critique of the Gotha Programme": "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin points out that Marx based his conclusion on the analysis of the proletariat's role in modern capitalist society on data concerning the development of this society and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Previously the question was put as follows: to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power, and establish its revolutionary dictatorship. Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society to communist society is impossible without a "political transition period", and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin predicts that the period of transition must inevitably be a period of violent class struggles and, consequently, "during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie)".<sup>2</sup>

For centuries working men treated all things connected with the state as extremely alien, hostile and hateful. The assumption of political power by the working class brings about cardinal changes in the nature of the state and in the working people's attitude to it. It becomes an instrument for exercising the working people's interests. The main function of the socialist state is creative organisational and educational work.

Suppression of the overthrown exploiting minority's resistance is a secondary and temporary function imposed by the conditions of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, a period at the end of which the question "Who will win?" is finally resolved.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 417.

The experience accumulated by the USSR and other socialist countries proves that as the exploiting classes disappear, the function of suppression is abolished. Even at the stage of socialist construction when exploiting classes or elements still exist, that is, when the state is still compelled to exercise its suppression function, even then the state of proletarian dictatorship functions as a new type of state granting the working people unprecedented rights and freedoms. The state of proletarian dictatorship is not "the state as state" but a transitional state, or "semi-state".

Lenin approached socialist statehood from the dialectical position. He had no doubt that the transitional stages of the revolution will be followed by transitional stages of the withering away of the proletarian state.<sup>1</sup> Unlike all the previous ruling classes, the working class is not interested in immortalising its dictatorship which is the initial form of socialist democracy. All the activities of the working class are aimed at expanding and extending the genuine rule by the people, thus creating conditions for society's transition from proletarian dictatorship to higher and better forms of socialist statehood.

As pointed out in the Programme of the CPSU, the dictatorship of proletariat in the USSR has completed its historical mission of ensuring the victory of socialism and "has evolved into a political power of all working people, while the proletarian state has become a state of the whole people".<sup>2</sup>

The experience accumulated by other socialist states, including those currently building a developed socialist society, shows that the transition from proletarian dictatorship to a state of the whole people constitutes a vital link in the chain of sociopolitical transformations, and that a state of the whole people is a relevant stage in the process of the improvement of socialist statehood during the first phase of communism. Each country, needless to say, has its own peculiar form of the transition period shaped by the specific conditions of this particular country.

The Soviet state of the whole people is the principal instrument for improving and advancing socialism in the USSR; in

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 49.

the international arena it defends socialist gains, ensures world socialism a stable position, withstands the aggressive policies of imperialist states, works for peaceful cooperation of nations.

The CPSU is of the opinion that at the current stage the strategic goal of Soviet society's political development is to improve Soviet democracy and considerably enhance socialist self-government of the people on the basis of the working people's (their collectives' and organisations') real and vigorous participation in decision-making as regards state affairs and public life.

The core of Soviet society's political system, the Communist Party, coordinates the functioning of all other components of this system—the Soviet state of the people as well as trade union, Komsomol, cooperative and other public organisations representing the common and specific interests of all population strata, all nations and ethnic groups. The CPSU gives an example of service in the interests of the people and maintenance of the principles of socialist democracy. It facilitates the implementation of self-government principles in the running of society and the state; that is, it works to ensure that the running of the country meets the interests of the working people and increasingly becomes their own function. The working people, in Lenin's words, then will know no other power except the power of their own unity.

Communism implies the turning of the socialist self-government system and socialist democracy into a higher form of society—communist public self-government. As the relevant socio-economic and ideological conditions develop, as all citizens get involved in running the affairs of the state and favourable international conditions shape up, the state—as Lenin writes in *The State and Revolution*—will, to an ever greater extent, become the transitional form between the state and non-state; “at a certain stage of this process, the state which is withering away may be called a non-political state”.<sup>1</sup> Hence the functioning of state agencies will increasingly acquire a non-political character and, with time, the state as a special political institution will no longer be needed.

One may ask: “When will this happen?” Lenin's answer is: “There can be no question of specifying the moment of the fu-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 443.

ture 'withering away', the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process."<sup>1</sup>

(4) The Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the two phases of communist formation—socialist and communist proper—is an important asset of the dialectico-materialist conception of history.

Lenin quotes the most important arguments and conclusions of Marx and Engels relating to the two phases of communist formation in *The State and Revolution*, notably in Chapter Five. Lenin stresses again and again that Marx and Engels did not attempt to make up a new society, as many "Socialists"—from Utopian Socialists to anarchists—have done. "Instead of scholastically invented, 'concocted' definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism," writes Lenin.<sup>2</sup>

Basing his conclusions on the Marxist methodology, on Marx's and Engels' arguments, Lenin makes a great leap forward in the elaboration of the Marxist doctrine of the two phases of the communist formation. He writes: "Politically, the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous. . . But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the 'first', or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production become *common* property, the word 'communism' is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin draws attention to the fact that a socialist society cannot be economically, ideologically or politically free from the vestiges of the old bourgeois society. Under socialism, there are still considerable differences between urban and rural areas, and between intellectual and physical labour; the birthmarks of old society are still stamped in people's mentality and conduct. Socialism cannot yet provide total material equality for all and in all spheres of public and private life. That is why Lenin stresses the need to maintain strict accounting and control by society and the state over production and consumption of goods.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 476.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Needless to say, at the time *The State and Revolution* was written Lenin could not give an extensive definition of the first phase of communism—he had not enough material for that. Calling infinitely mendacious the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as “something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all”, Lenin argues that socialism will be the beginning of a forward movement characterised by quantitative and progressive qualitative changes.<sup>1</sup>

Now that socialism has triumphed in the USSR and many other countries, when the socialist world system can demonstrate its indisputable advantages over capitalism, the material needed for an extensive definition of socialism as a social system has been accumulated. The motto of socialism is “All for the sake of man, all for the benefit of man”.

Cited below is the definition of socialism given in the Programme of the CPSU.

Socialism is society in which:

“the means of production are in the hands of the people, an end has been put forever to exploitation of man by man, social oppression, the rule of a privileged minority, and the poverty and illiteracy of millions of people;

“the broadest vistas have been opened for the dynamic and planned development of productive forces, and scientific and technological progress brings not unemployment but a steady growth in the well-being of the entire people;

“the equal right to work and pay in conformity with the principle ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his work’ is ensured, and the population enjoys such social benefits as free medical service and education, and housing with a minimum rent;

“the inviolable alliance of the working class, the collective farmers and the intelligentsia has been affirmed, men and women have equal rights and guarantees for exercising them, the young generation is offered a reliable road into the future and social security for veterans of labour is guaranteed;

“national inequality is abolished, the juridical and factual equality, friendship and brotherhood of all peoples and nationalities are established;

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 477.

"genuine democracy—power exercised for the people and by the people—has been established and is developing, and broad and equal participation of citizens in the management of production, public and state affairs is ensured;

"the ideas of freedom, human rights and dignity of the individual are filled with real content, unity of rights and duties is ensured, uniform laws and norms of morality and a single discipline apply to each and all, and increasingly favourable conditions are taking shape for the all-round development of the individual;

"the truly humanistic, Marxist-Leninist, ideology is dominant, the popular masses have access to all sources of knowledge, and an advanced socialist culture has been created which absorbs all that is best in world culture;

"a socialist way of life which gives working people confidence in the future, spiritually and morally elevates them as creators of new social relations and of their own destiny has taken shape on the basis of social justice, collectivism and comradely mutual assistance.

"Socialism is a society whose deeds and intentions in the international arena are directed towards supporting the peoples' striving for independence and social progress, and are subordinated to the main task of preserving and consolidating peace."<sup>1</sup>

Today, the USSR strives to accomplish all-round improvement of socialism and to ensure Soviet society's advance towards communism through acceleration of the country's socio-economic development.

The CPSU proceeds from the premise that there is no clear-cut boundary between socialism and communism: socialism's development, the growing realisation of its inherent potential, the progress of general-communist assets of socialism is nothing else but society's advance towards communism.

While it does not define a full and detailed picture of communism proper, the CPSU suggests the following definition, worked out on the basis of the Party's Marxist-Leninist theory and the practice, aimed at transforming society: *Communism is a classless social system with one form of public ownership of the means of*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 11-12.

production and with full social equality of all members of society. Under communism, the all-round development of people will be accompanied by the growth of the productive forces on the basis of continuous progress in science and technology, all the springs of social wealth will flow abundantly, and the great principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" will be implemented. Communism is a highly organised society of free, socially conscious working people, a society in which public self-government will be established, a society in which labour for the good of society will become the prime vital requirement of everyone, a clearly recognised necessity, and the ability of each person will be employed to the greatest benefit of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, as society advances towards communism and new experience of communist construction is accumulated in the USSR and other countries, the scientific conception of the higher phase of communism—the one and only society worthy of intelligent and emancipated mankind—will be enriched and specified.

### Questions and Answers

*Question:* Marx wrote that only at the higher phase of communist society "can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety".<sup>2</sup> Lenin quotes this and similar arguments of Marx's in *The State and Revolution* and points out that under socialism "bourgeois law is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production."<sup>3</sup>

How are we to understand these arguments?

*Answer:* Law is the will of the ruling class elevated to the level of a legal statute, i.e., the totality of obligatory norms and rules of men's conduct established or sanctioned by the state. Inasmuch as class interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are opposite, bourgeois law and socialist law are opposite.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 472.

Of course, the arguments of Marx and Lenin cited above are not to be interpreted in the sense that bourgeois law as such is preserved under socialism. It is no accident that Lenin places "bourgeois law" in quotes. Born of the revolutionary struggle of the working class and all working people, socialism gives birth to new—socialist—law. Socialist law has nothing in common with bourgeois law and rejects it. Some legal *forms* found in both capitalist and socialist societies must not be confused with the *essence* of social relations represented by each of them. Social relations under socialism are qualitatively different from those under capitalism.

Saying that socialism retains a scrap of bourgeois law, Marx and Engels meant precisely the legal norms that regulate the forms of distribution of goods. Bourgeois law implies and ensures inequality. Socialist type of law applies in equal measure to *different* people. The socialist principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work", is undoubtedly a just principle, but its implementation cannot ensure complete equality. People performing equal labour are not equal to one another, not alike: some are married, others are not; some have more children, others have less. That is why, with equal performance of labour and hence an equal share of the social product, some people will, in fact, receive more than others.

Complete social equality will be possible under communism when the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" will be exercised.

*Question:* Marx, Engels, and Lenin wrote of the state "withering away" in the process of transition from socialism to communism. At the same time, official documents of the USSR and other socialist states stress the need to take every effort to *uphold* the socialist state. Are not the two positions contradictory?

*Answer:* No. The socialist state is the chief instrument for building a communist society; to be able to build communism and successfully complete this task, it is necessary to make every effort to uphold the socialist state. The conditions for the state's withering away are created through the strengthening of the socialist state. The weakening of the socialist state can only play into the hands of imperialists and all enemies of socialism and social progress.

To sum up, withering away of the state in the process of



transition from socialism to communism will be possible not by weakening it, but by expanding socialist democracy and socialist self-government.

### For Homework and Discussion

1. Write out Lenin's definition of the role of socialist revolution in society's development and the elimination of exploitation of man by man as given in his work *The State and Revolution*. Describe the socialist revolution as the highest type of social revolution.

2. Make a table reflecting the Marxists' answers on the one hand, and those of reformists, revisionists, and anarchists, on the other, to the following questions:

- (a) does the bourgeois state reconcile class antagonisms?
- (b) should the bourgeois state be destroyed or left intact?
- (c) should a new state—without exploitation—be set up in place of the old, exploiter state?

Write out the appropriate passage from *The State and Revolution*.

3. Lenin states: "The more complete the democracy the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary;<sup>1</sup> and "genuinely full democracy, becoming a habit and *therefore* withering away. . . Full democracy equals no democracy. This is not a paradox but a truth!"<sup>2</sup> How do you understand this statement?

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 479.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Marxism on the State*, p. 30.

## Chapter 9

### THE PRINCIPAL DRIVING FORCES OF CURRENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As the science of the more general laws and driving forces of mankind's evolution, historical materialism suggests theoretical and methodological points of departure for investigation of the current period, including its contradictions and the driving forces of social progress. The course of mankind's evolution proves the Marxist-Leninist concept of the character and content of the current historical epoch.

As stated in the Programme of the CPSU, our age is *an epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism and communism, and of historical competition between the two world socio-political systems, an epoch of socialist and national liberation revolutions and of the disintegration of colonialism, an epoch of struggle of the main motive forces of social development—world socialism, the working class and communist movement, the peoples of the newly free states, and the mass democratic movements—against imperialism and its policy of aggression and oppression, and for peace, democracy, and social progress.*<sup>1</sup>

We shall examine the principal driving forces of the current stage of social development.

- (1) The world socialist system—the major revolutionary force of the current age.
- (2) The international communist and working-class movement as the vanguard of the struggle for social progress.
- (3) The anti-imperialist struggle of newly independent nations—a component of the world revolutionary process.
- (4) The growth of the mass democratic movements in the non-socialist world—a typical feature of our age.

<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 23-24.

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6. V. I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, pp. 61-74.
7. V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, pp. 151-162.
8. V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, pp. 31-38, 66-90.
9. V. I. Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 184-201.
10. V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International, July 19-August 7, 1920. Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions, July 26, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 240-245.
11. *International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties. Documents and Materials. Moscow, 1969, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969.*

(1) Advancing and elaborating on the theory of the possibility and necessity of victory of socialist revolution first in a small group of countries or in one country, Lenin had a firm belief in the inevitability of socialist transformations in all countries. He foresaw that further development of revolutionary processes would inevitably lead to some countries tearing away from the world capitalist system and joining those building socialism and communism. It is noteworthy that the concept of *international (world) socialism* is found in Lenin's works written before the socialist revolution in Russia (1917), such as "Karl Marx",<sup>1</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 48-50.

in the works that appeared after the revolution: "Left-Wing" Childishness" and "Report on Foreign Policy"<sup>1</sup>.

After the Second World War, socialism spread beyond the boundaries of one country (the USSR). Many European and Asian nations embarked on the road of socialist transformation, which resulted in the formation of the world socialist system in the 1950s. The victory of the Cuban revolution brought socialism to Latin America. The world socialist system today embraces more than a third of mankind's population—several dozen nations following the path of social progress.

These countries have accumulated a rich experience in the process of transition to socialism either through armed struggle or otherwise. In some countries the process was *accompanied* by civil war and military intervention, and others did not have to fight such wars; in some countries the working people took over power relatively quickly, and in others the process was prolonged. In some cases (Germany and Korea, for instance) part of the nation adopted socialism. In Vietnam, the socialist transformation began first in the north of the country and only thirty years later, after the defeat of the US interventionists and local reactionaries, in the south. Some countries advanced to socialism from capitalism; others skipped the capitalist stage of development and started to build socialism while still being at the pre-capitalist stage of development. One may justly suppose that in each particular case the transition to socialism was marked by features peculiar to the given country, and that the advance of the revolutionary process will create more forms of transition.

At the same time, peculiarities do not revoke the operation of the principal regularities of society's revolutionary-socialist transformation. This must be specially pointed out in view of the continuous attempts by modern reformists, revisionists, and advocates of the so-called Eurocommunism to set territorial boundaries as regards the applicability of Lenin's theory of socialist revolution and socialist construction, to "tie" it to the past, and cast doubt on its feasibility today and in future.

What are the *general regularities of socialism*? They are:

(1) power to the working people with the working class in the vanguard role;

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1965, pp. 340-341, 378-379.

(2) leadership by a Communist Party armed with the ideology of scientific socialism for society's development;

(3) maintenance of social ownership of the basic means of production and, on this basis, balanced national economic growth in the interests of the people;

(4) implementation of the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work";

(5) advancement of socialist democracy;

(6) equality and friendship of all nations and nationalities;

(7) defence of the revolutionary achievements against encroachments by class enemies.<sup>1</sup>

It must be emphasised here that the utilisation of these general regularities in the specific conditions of each particular socialist country facilitates its advance, helps overcome difficulties of growth and find timely solutions to the contradictions involved in this process, and also ensures a tangible contribution by the ruling Communist parties to the overall process of socialist construction.

The socialist system is a powerful world formation resting on an advanced economic system, solid scientific base and reliable military and political potential. It is no secret that the majority of countries within the world socialist system used to lag far behind the developed capitalist countries prior to the establishment of people's power. Notably, Hungary was approximately a century behind their level. Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland were backward and predominantly agrarian countries. Even Czechoslovakia, then a fairly developed capitalist country, was lagging behind the advanced capitalist countries as regards technological development, production concentration, and some other industrial indices.

With the establishment of socialism, the rates of socio-economic development have significantly increased in these countries. Moreover, while the capitalist economy is governed by the law of uneven socio-political and cultural development, and the economically strong countries grow more rich at the expense of weak ones (this expanding the gap between them), socialism creates the appropriate conditions for weaker states to rise to the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 12-13.

level of advanced countries. *The gradual evening out of the socialist countries' development levels has been definitely manifesting itself as a law of world socialism.* The higher and closer the levels of socialist countries' social development grow, the closer and more extensive their cooperation.

The reader is advised to keep in mind the following statement of Lenin: "Already under capitalism, all economic, political and spiritual life is becoming more and more international. Socialism will make it completely international".<sup>1</sup> Lenin's historical forecast has come true in the *socialist community*—member-countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Treaty. History has not yet known another community of countries within which no country has any special rights or privileges, where fruitful international ties are developed and extended at all levels—from higher party and government bodies to work collectives—and where international and inter-governmental relations are shaped by the operation of the principle "One for all and all for one". This is a new way of life and its distinguishing features are collectivism and mutual assistance, freedom, human dignity, genuine humanism, and inalienable unity of the rights and duties of each person.

The socialist community is marked by two distinct trends in the development of national relations. These trends, which are a special property of socialism, are as follows: each socialist nation is flourishing and its sovereignty is strengthened; ties between socialist countries are daily growing stronger and more extensive; and the number of common elements in their policies, economies, public life and culture is increasingly growing, i.e., these countries are becoming ever more closer.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Theses on the National Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> Here a question may arise: How can integrational tendencies be combined with the effort to strengthen the sovereignty of each country? We shall allude to the Programme of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which states: "Organs of state power shall extend and exercise in all areas fraternal cooperation with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other states and peoples within the socialist community on the basis of bilateral and multilateral treaties, and strengthen the GDR as a constituent part of the socialist community; they uphold the GDR's sovereignty, and withstand all and any attempts by an imperialist state or states to encroach upon this sovereignty what-

Comprising sovereign, independent states, the socialist community nevertheless constitutes an integral international formation. We may justly claim that the socialist community, if prospects are also taken into account, is a qualitatively new type of community of states and nations. It is:

*an economic community* basing itself on the social ownership of the means of production and making it possible to channel all financial and labour resources into all-round advancement of social production in the interest of all socialist countries and each particular state within the socialist community, and also to even out economic development levels of all countries;

*a political community* characterised by the guiding role of the Marxist-Leninist parties and the leading role of the working class in the building of a new society;

*a community of socio-class structure* predetermined by the elimination of exploiting classes and the presence of only friendly classes and other social groups: the working class, cooperated peasants, and the working intelligentsia; by the moderation of differences between urban and rural areas and between intellectual and physical labour;

*an ideological and cultural community* having as its foundation the Marxist-Leninist outlook and class-based unity of the principles of internationalism and patriotism;

*a community of goals* arising from the objectives involved in the building of a communist society.

To these must be added the *community of foreign-policy objectives*—prevention of war, elimination of war from the life of society, and the attainment of stable world peace on the basis of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

There is no doubt that the processes of socialist integration and the shaping up of a new socialist interstate entity are currently at the initial stage. Moreover, they are developed to a different extent in various spheres of social life. To date, socialist integration has achieved an impressive success in the economic sphere.

The Comprehensive Programme of socialist economic integra-

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ever the form such attempts might have taken." In: *The Ninth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany*, Politizdat Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 245 (in Russian).

tion adopted in 1971, has been successfully implemented. Socialist countries have advanced from coordination of individual economic plans to coordination of economic policies. Economic structures are being brought closer and stronger direct ties are established between departments, associations and enterprises engaged in cooperation. Joint firms are also being set up.

In the late 1980s, the CMEA countries set themselves the common goal of accelerating their socio-economic development. They adopted and began implementing a comprehensive programme of scientific and technological advancement through the year 2000. The aim of this programme is to ensure that the socialist community countries attain the highest world standards in all major areas of science and technology.

The primary task at the current stage is *to combine the latest achievements of scientific and technological revolution with the advantages of the socialist system*. This task is facing each country within the socialist community and the community as a single body. The closer each country's ties with the others, the more intensive the process of internationalisation of the community's social life, and the greater each country's contribution to this effort.

The scientific and technological revolution, leading to internationalisation of productive forces, makes imperative internationalisation of the economic (social ownership of the means of production, planned national economy), political (rule of the working class, the entire people), social (all for the sake of man, all for the benefit of man), ideological (collectivist Marxist-Leninist outlook) and moral (personal and international relations marked by friendship and comradeship) advantages inherent in socialism as a system.

Just as any other young social organism, the world socialist system—the socialist community—has its share of problems, difficulties, and even contradictions. It had to overcome illusions and to pay for errors, nevertheless, assessment of the present and future of the socialist states leads one to the conclusion that the world socialist system is a powerful and healthy organism which, once its pains are over, will serve as an example of genuinely humane civilisation.

The formation of the world socialist system and the establishment and strengthening of a community of socialist countries



have cardinally changed the *correlation of forces on the international arena* in favour of the nations striving for social progress, democracy, national freedom and peace.

The world socialist system is the principal revolutionary force of the modern age. This is so because: (1) it constitutes the highest stage of social progress and the essence of contemporary epoch—the epoch of worldwide transition from capitalism to socialism and communism; (2) the socialist states bear the brunt of the struggle against modern imperialism; (3) the socialist world, as Lenin predicted, exerts its principal influence on international revolution by setting an example of economic policy centred on the interests of the working people;<sup>1</sup> the successes achieved by the socialist world demonstrate to the working people in capitalist countries that modern society can easily do without the capitalist class and without any form of exploitation, moreover, not only do without but attain a better quality of life; (4) the world socialist system is a strong and reliable ally of the national liberation movement and the anti-imperialist struggle waged by the peoples that have thrown off the yoke of colonialism and embarked upon the path of independent history-making (the socialist countries are on the side of the nations and peoples defending their freedom, independence, and the right to choose their own way of social development, from attacks by imperialism's aggressive forces); (5) as the economic and defence potential of the socialist community is growing continually, imperialism is impeded in its effort to export counter-revolution and is totally unable to take social revenge and regain its positions; (6) pursuing a peaceful foreign policy and invariably opposing militarism and the imperialist military-industrial complex pushing the world to self-annihilation, the socialist states facilitate invigoration and mobilisation of all anti-war, anti-imperialist, and progressive forces.

Faced with a possible catastrophe mankind has only one reasonable and feasible choice—peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems in the current age of historical competition of the two world socio-political systems.

The world socialist system is a creation and principal gain of the working class. Let us proceed to the following issue.

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting of Activists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 456-457; "Tenth All-Russia Conference of R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1977, p. 437.

(2) It is well known that the chief asset of the Marxian doctrine is the substantiation of the working class' historical mission in the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into socialism and the building of a communist society.<sup>1</sup>

The identification of the great emancipatory mission of the working class stems from the materialist conception of history and is its basic asset. The founders of scientific communism treated the development of the working-class movement, both on the national and international scale, as a logical development of the historical process unfolding in conformity with the regularities inherent to it.

To answer the question why the working class and not any other oppressed class remains the principal revolutionary class of modern age, it is essential to identify (1) the features distinguishing it from other classes and (2) the objective necessity for unification of the national working-class movements.

Lenin wrote that only that class may aspire to the role of leader in the great emancipatory struggle which has been schooled, united, trained and steeled by decades of the strike and political struggle against capital—that class alone which has assimilated all the urban, industrial, big-capitalist culture and has the determination and ability to protect it and to preserve and further develop all its achievements, and make them available to all the people, to all the working people—that class alone which will be able to bear all the hardships, trials, privations and great sacrifices which history inevitably imposes upon those who break with the past and boldly hew a road for themselves to a new future—that class alone whose finest members are full of hatred and contempt for everything petty-bourgeois and philistine, for the qualities that flourish so profusely among the petty bourgeoisie, the minor employees and the “intellectuals”—that class alone which “has been through the hardening school of labour” and is able to inspire respect for its efficiency in every working person and every honest man.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that this class is the proletariat.

In Lenin's opinion, “The unity of the workers of all countries

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, “The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, 1973, p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, “Greetings to the Hungarian Workers”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 390.

is a necessity arising out of the fact that the capitalist class, which rules over the workers, does not limit its rule to one country... Capitalist domination is international. That is why the workers' struggle in all countries for their emancipation is only successful if the workers fight jointly against international capital".<sup>1</sup>

This argument of Lenin, advanced at the very close of the 19th century, has today assumed special topicality and significance. In the current conditions of increasing internationalisation of production, exchange and other spheres of social life, and in view of the new phenomena of oppression of workers by transnational corporations, the international character of the opposition between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the working class, and the international nature of the latter, are revealed ever more strikingly.

From the point of view of historical materialism, it is easy to demonstrate the objective material foundation of the working class' transformation into the basic productive force (according to some estimates, today the working class produces some three-quarters of the total social product) and major component of modern society's social structure.

The table below shows the numerical growth of the working class in the 20th century (in millions of people).

	early 1920s	early 1980s
Total	117	660
Socialist countries	16	220
Developed capitalist countries	82	241
including:		
European	49	102
North American	23	95
Developing countries	19	217
to them:		
Latin American	5	63
Asian	11	130
African	3	24

Source: *Rabochi klass i sovremenny mir*, No. 2, 1986, p. 23.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, 1960, p. 109.

It can be seen from the above table that the working class embraces three basic contingents: (1) the working class of the socialist countries; (2) the working class of the capitalist countries; (3) the working class of the developing countries.

The working class of the socialist countries—comprising a third of the total army of workers—is the *leading* contingent of the international working class. This expresses its principal qualitative distinction from other working-class contingents.

The proletariat of the capitalist countries is the chief force fighting for the abolition of the exploiter system and establishment of a new society—built on the basis of justice. In 1980, working class constituted about 80 per cent of the economically active population in the US and Britain, 77 per cent in France, 66 per cent in Italy, and approximately 62 per cent in Japan.

The proletariat of the Asian, African and Latin American countries is relatively young but is growing fast. The percentage of the wage workers is growing twice or even more as fast as that of the economically active population. In some of these countries, the working class already constitutes a third of the population. The political awareness and organisation of this working-class contingent increase in the course of its struggle against foreign capitalists and local exploiters.

The working class has been playing an increasingly greater role due not only to its numerical growth but also to significant qualitative changes brought about by scientific and technological progress. With the advance of the scientific and technological revolution the workers have to cope with increasing number of production functions; their intellectual, cultural, and occupational level is on the rise. The time is long past when the working class consisted entirely of manual workers with little or no basic education. As industrial labour becomes increasingly intellectualised, the workers have to fulfil most of the skilled work involved in industrial production. The nucleus of the modern working class in the major capitalist countries is made up of workers whose numerical strength is constantly growing and who not simply do skilled work but—and this is quite important—fulfil technologically oriented functions which until recently were being carried out by engineering staff. A worker with a higher education, a worker engaged in scientific research—this is the model worker at the junction of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Structural changes in the working class are also to be kept in mind. In his time Marx identified three basic groups within the working class: industrial proletariat constituting the backbone of the working class, agrarian proletariat, and the proletariat engaged in the sphere of trade transactions—those working in trading firms and offices. The three basic groups are still present today, although the character of each and the correlation between them have changed and continue to change.

Notably, the industrial proletariat has a higher percentage of workers concentrated in new enterprises connected with the STR (chemical, electronic, biological, space, etc.). At the same time, the number of workers engaged in old traditional industries (coal, textile, steel, etc.) has substantially decreased.

With the absolute numerical growth of the industrial working class, the percentage of trade and office proletariat grows, too. There has been a substantial increase in the number of workers employed in transport, construction, communications, and the public services.

As the managerial type of work is becoming industrialised, the financial interest and social status of the mass categories of industrial and office workers are coming closer together. Currently, the bulk of engineering staff are more exposed than before to the difficulties and adversities involved in the capitalist mode of production and, therefore, their conditions are becoming similar to those of the working class.

Hence, the proletariat under capitalism is not "disappearing" or "fading away" as the bourgeois and bourgeois-reformist ideologists allege; on the contrary, it is growing. The current process of proletarianisation of wage labour extends the social boundaries of the working class, embracing ever new categories of workers.

The processes emanating from the growth of the working class and elevation of its educational level and training, as well as the growing similarity of working class' jobs to those fulfilled by other categories of workers, have an impact on the class struggle going on in capitalist countries today. This struggle is gaining ever more scope and is assuming diverse forms; its purport is also becoming more profound. The cardinal interests of the working class make united and consolidated action of all its contingents increasingly essential.

*The international communist movement is the vanguard of the working class and all forces of the world revolutionary process.* The argument of Marx and Engels that the proletariat can act as a class only if organised into a specific political party, realising itself as a class party,<sup>1</sup> is of special significance today. Lenin's idea of a new type of communist party as a major subjective force making it possible for the working class to accomplish its historical mission is relevant today as never before. It is pertinent in this connection to give a definition of the new type of communist party.

The party of a new type is primarily a party of *revolutionary action*. Its specific features and distinctions are as follows. The party of a new type

- is guided by the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, develops it and ensures organic unity of the revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice;

- is the working class' collective political leader and higher form of organisation, the vanguard of all working people; is the source of its inexhaustible strength; is its close ties with the masses;

- builds its activities on the principles of democratic centralism which ensures electivity of all organs of party administration from top to bottom, regular accountability of party organs to their party organisations and higher party bodies, strict party discipline and subordination of the minority to the majority, obligation of lower party bodies to abide by decisions taken by higher party bodies; constant strengthening of the ideological and organisational cohesion of its ranks; conscious maintenance of discipline, and encouragement of efforts on the part of party members;

- is irreconcilable to all and any factions or groupings and to manifestations of revisionism, opportunism or dogmatism;

- subjects to critical analysis the results of its revolutionary and reforming activities and policies, constantly studies, assesses, and utilises the experience accumulated by the international communist movement;

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<sup>1</sup> See "Resolutions of the General Congress Held at the Hague from the 2nd to the 7th September 1872, *The Hague Congress of the First International, September 2-7, 1872, Minutes and Documents*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 282; "Engels to Gerson Thier in Copenhagen, London, December 18, 1889", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, p. 386.

is consistent in implementing the principles of proletarian internationalism.

It must be emphasised that these features and distinctions of the party of a new type are of a general and comprehensive character and, hence, are common to all countries. They are found in every Marxist-Leninist party whatever the conditions of its operation (legal or illegal, parliamentary or extra-parliamentary) and are applicable in the period of preparations for a revolution—prior to the assumption of power by the working class and all working people, in the course of the revolution, and after the assumption of power by the working class and all the working people—in short, at every stage of the advance towards socialism and socialist construction.

At the same time, a party of revolutionary action based on Marxism is resolutely opposed to quests for some form of party organisation or methods of party work correct and applicable at all stages of the revolutionary process. On the contrary, the organisational forms and methods of work are shaped up by the specific features of any given historical situation and the tasks stemming directly from this particular situation.<sup>1</sup>

The communist movement has a long and glorious history—from the Communist League with several hundred members, organised by Marx and Engels in 1847, to the most influential ideological and political force it is today. The following figures illustrate the numerical growth of the 20th century communist movement. In 1917, there was only one communist party in the world (in Russia), which had a membership of 400,000. In 1935, communist parties existed in 61 countries, and their approximate membership was 3,100,000; in 1960, the figures rose to 87 and 40,000,000 respectively, and in 1986—100 countries and 80,000,000 Communists.<sup>2</sup>

Like the international working-class movement, the international communist movement has several contingents operating in different conditions and accomplishing different tasks. The biggest contingent of the international communist movement is

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<sup>1</sup> See *The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of the Congresses, Conferences, and Plenary Meetings of the Central Committee*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1978, p. 206 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 13, March 25, 1986, p. 4.

the *Communist and Workers' parties of the socialist countries*. These are ruling parties heading the construction of a new society. In the mid-1980s, these parties embraced some 74 million people. Another major contingent is the *Communist parties of the capitalist countries*. Their objective is revolutionary transformation of society, and their struggle is directed against state-monopoly capitalism. The total membership of Communist parties in 29 developed capitalist countries is 3.7 million. *The Communist parties of the Latin American and Caribbean countries* play an important role in the communist movement. They are opposed by consolidated forces of bourgeois-landlord oligarchy, and reactionary military circles relying on aid from US imperialism. 23 countries in this region have some 500,000 Communists. *The Communist parties in the developing countries of Asia and Africa* face difficult tasks. The communist movements on these continents are fairly young but they are fast growing strong, with 28 countries boasting of 570,000 Communists. Their struggle for socialist perspective is inalienably linked with efforts to overcome age-old backwardness and neocolonialism.

It must be specially stressed here that the communist movement is not a mere sum total of communist parties but an international movement. The parties that constitute it have grown each on its national soil but pursue the same goals: peace and socialism. It is integral in terms of its class nature and class solidarity; it is multifarious as regards the objectives it pursues in different countries. As was stressed at the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the diversity of the communist movement is not "a synonym for disunity, much as unity has nothing in common with uniformity, hierarchy, interference of some parties in the affairs of others, or the striving of any party to have a monopoly over what is right".<sup>1</sup>

The following principles guiding relations between communist parties have been formulated in international meetings of communist and workers' parties (1957, 1960, 1969):

adherence to Marxism-Leninism, its universal truth; ideological unity achieved on the basis of common ultimate goals of the struggle for communist ideals;

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<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, p. 91.



proletarian internationalism, which organically combines revolutionary solidarity and recognition of total independence and equal rights of each party; responsibility before the working class and working people of the home country and before the international working-class and communist movement;

steadfast observance of the Leninist standards of party-building and party life;

prevention of any actions which may undermine the solidarity of communist movement;

unrelenting struggle against Right and "Left-wing" opportunism, revisionism, dogmatism, and against nationalism and parochialism;

resolution of the differences arising on individual questions through consultations and friendly meetings.

One should not dramatise the fact that the communist parties are not always unanimous. Given the wide variety of objectives facing the national contingents of the communist movement, it is impossible to achieve unanimity on all questions.

Today, the international communist movement has entered a qualitatively new phase. Just as society as a whole, it encounters many new realities, objectives, and problems. The conditions in which Communists act at home are changing. As stated earlier, radical change of the social structure of bourgeois society, including the composition of the working class, is taking place. The scientific and technological progress has a contradictory impact upon the economic situation and consciousness of the working people in the non-socialist countries. The conditions in which the Communist parties' work in the international arena are changing accordingly.

Communists are not discouraged. Guided by the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, they can see deeper and farther than others as concerns the essence and prospects of the contradictory processes that are taking place, and draw correct conclusions promoting their struggle for the interests of the working class, working people in all countries, democracy, peace, and socialism.

(3) *The anti-imperialist struggle of the nations and countries newly freed from the colonial yoke for the consolidation of their independence and for social progress* is a component of the world revolutionary process. It is noteworthy that Communists

have assessed the collapse of the colonial system under the impact of the national liberation revolutions as an event second only to the formation of the socialist world system in its historical significance.<sup>1</sup>

A remarkable feature of our age is the emergence and growing importance of over 100 new independently developing countries in the East and the continuing anti-imperialist struggle waged by these nations. Contemporary anti-imperialist struggle of the newly independent nations is marked by the following distinctions.

*First*, it unfolds in the epoch of worldwide transition from capitalism to socialism. Therefore, any manifestation of the anti-imperialist struggle—even if confined by the boundaries of the bourgeois-democratic struggle on the national scale—assumes an anti-capitalist character on the international arena.

*Secondly*, once national independence was attained, the emancipatory struggle of these nations went on to reach further objectives. Its current economic goal is independence and a New International Economic Order. This requires an onslaught on the positions of international monopoly capital and a radical restructuring of these countries' backward socio-economic structure—resting on feudal and tribal-communal relations.

*Thirdly*, Lenin's remarkable prediction that the struggle of the peoples of the East, primarily aimed at attaining national liberation, would inevitably acquire an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist thrust, is coming true. Of great historical significance is the progressive development of the countries of socialist orientation—those that have rejected capitalism as fruitless for the countries wishing to economically transform their backward societies.

In the years of independence, many countries have scored tangible economic and cultural successes, and strengthened their statehood. The newly independent countries have developed some collective international forms of struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism that have proved feasible in a number of cases.

However, this irreversible process of socio-economic transformation is rather slow and difficult. The main impediment is im-

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<sup>1</sup> *Programme Documents in the Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Politizdat Publishers, Moscow, 1960, p. 64 (in Russian).

perialism and its neocolonialist policy. It must be admitted that using an assortment of methods—from bribery, graft, and payouts to direct interference in the internal affairs of the newly independent countries—capitalism has, to a considerable extent, managed to preserve many of the relationships of economic dependence and inequality that shaped up under colonialism. Through non-equivalent exchange, inequitable trade transactions, various manipulations with bank rates and transnational corporations that have got a grip on the economic life of many newly independent countries, imperialism has managed to set up and maintain an unprecedented system of neocolonialist exploitation.

Currently, some 28,000 branches of foreign firms (including 11,700 US, 6,000 British, 1,800 Japanese as well as several hundred French, West German, and Belgian) operate in the developing countries. The bulk of the natural wealth and even major territorial regions of developing countries are controlled by foreign monopolists. Thus, in 1967 the US billionaire Daniel Ludwig bought in Brazil a plot of land roughly equalling one-third of Switzerland for a relatively insignificant sum of three million dollars.

Branches of imperialist concerns and transnational corporations control the economic market in the majority of developing countries. They supervise the processing, storage, transportation, insurance and distribution of the goods produced in developing countries. Notably, the transnational corporations control some 70 per cent of the total world export of bananas, rice, natural rubber, and oil; over 80 per cent of the cacao, tea, coffee, grain, cotton, jute, copper and tin exports. They also control 90 per cent of iron ore, bauxites, and timber exports.

This, however, is not all. The developing countries cannot make a real headway because of the constantly growing prices of imported industrial goods and the falling prices of exported raw materials. This alone enables the transnational corporations to derive 250 billion dollars annually from the developing countries.

The problem of developing countries' foreign debt has assumed unprecedented urgency. In the 1960s, it did not cause any special concern either in the indebted or in the creditor countries. (Despite the fact that the debt quadrupled from 1960 to 1970 from 17.9 billion dollars to 74.1 billion dollars.) As of the 1970s, the foreign debt of developing countries has been rising at a soar-

ing rate. It reached 206.8 billion dollars in 1975, 610 billion in 1980, a trillion dollars towards the end of 1985—that is, a 54-fold increase compared with 1960.

In 1984, this crisis hit a new phase: 104 countries paid out 92 billion dollars, while they received investments and credits to the sum of 85 billion dollars. This means that the majority of developing countries are compelled to spend the new loans on servicing or payment of the debt, and not on their vital needs or implementation of national development projects. Thus, the economy of Asian, African and Latin American countries is veritably drained of blood, made inert and incapable of the growth needed to maintain independent existence.

Thus, it is not surprising that the developing countries, with a population of over 2 billion people, have become a region of want, misery and starvation. In the 1980s, the average per capita income of the newly independent countries was one-eleventh that of the developed capitalist countries. The gap, as data for the past three decades show, is expanding alongside the profits derived by imperialists from developing countries. "In just the past ten years, the profits squeezed out of the developing countries by US corporations exceeded their inputs four-fold. And in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the same period, the profits of US monopolies were over eight times greater than their inputs."<sup>1</sup>

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the imperialists thrive and maintain a relatively high living standard, and are capable of social manoeuvring and alleviating social tensions in their countries by bribing certain layers of the working people due, to a considerable extent, to the continuing plunder and exploitation of Asian, African and Latin American countries. It is a fact that a substantial portion of the national income of the United States—the bulwark of neocolonialism—comes from these sources.

It is also a fact that there is a connection between the trillion debt of the developing countries and the more than the trillion growth of US military expenditures in the past decade. The over two hundred billion dollars annually squeezed out of devel-

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<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, p. 20.

oping countries and the more or less equal US military budget in recent years is no accident. Therefore, it is in the vital interests of the US military-industrial complex to uphold and consolidate the system of neocolonialist overexploitation.

Obviously there has accumulated more than enough "incendiary material" in the formerly colonial zone. Undoubtedly, in the obtaining conditions the developing countries are not able to pay back the loan. The imperialist countries do not want to remit their debt and so lose billions of dollars; on the other hand, they cannot terminate the financial "aid" to developing countries. Unless a just solution is found, this knot of contradictions may result in serious international economic and political collisions. However much the ruling circles of imperialist powers would like to trace the "hand of Moscow" or the "hand of Havana" in the regions where the people rise to fight against imperialist domination, they cannot discover something that does not exist. If a real "hand" pointing to the road of anti-imperialist struggle is to be traced, it is the hand of want and starvation stifling the multimillion masses of the working people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The anti-imperialist struggle of newly independent nations is assuming new proportions.

(4) *Mass democratic movements in non-socialist countries* constitute one of the principal driving forces of modern social development. What are mass democratic movements?

It is clear that these movements involve masses of people: industrial workers, farmers, students, intellectuals, office workers, petty and average urban bourgeoisie—in fact, all the strata oppressed by the state-monopoly capitalism, all those opposed to its more reactionary manifestations. This movement encompasses the multifarious manifestations of social protest both within individual capitalist and developing countries and on the international arena.

The mass democratic movements today reflect the exacerbation of capitalism's contradictions, the intensified onslaught of the monopoly bourgeoisie on the rights and freedoms of the working people, curtailment or total abandonment of bourgeois democracy, full-scale militarisation, arms race and plunder of natural resources and also deeper moral degradation of society. In

short, these movements reflect the growing antagonism between monopolies on the one hand and the overwhelming majority of the population on the other.

Mass democratic movements grow at home, but inevitably assume a worldwide character under transnational capitalism; many have turned into organisations. Among them are: the World Peace Council—coordinating organ of the World Peace Movement—embracing peace advocates in 141 countries; Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries embracing 100 states with a population of over 1.5 billion; the World Federation of Democratic Youth which unites more than 200 youth organisations in over 120 countries; Women's International Democratic Federation which brings together 135 women's organisations in 117 countries, and a number of other organisations.

The more reactionary and anti-democratic capitalism becomes, the greater the social protest it procreates. New forms of mass democratic movements appear, such as the movement of the Greens which sprang up in Federal Germany and some other West European countries in the 1970s. This movement has a broad socio-class spectre. It embraces a motley assortment of people, including anarchists and those trying to impose a sectarian attitude on the Greens. Nevertheless, the movement is growing.

At first the Greens were mostly concerned with the pollution of the environment by capitalist monopolies, but, as of the mid-1970s, the movement extended the front of their anti-monopolist struggle to cover demands for democratisation of social life; they began to campaign for peace and against unemployment, arms race and nuclear war. In 1980, the Green movement of Federal Germany took shape as an independent political party. Documents adopted at an important congress convened by the party in 1986 stressed that the campaign against nuclear war, against the US Strategic Defense Initiative and Federal Germany's participation in their realisation was on top of the list of its foreign policy problems. The congress demanded that the deployment of US nuclear missiles in the FRG be terminated and the already deployed missiles dismantled.

The Greens' evolution—from a movement concerned with environmental protection to a party defending peace—is fairly logical: peace on Earth is the principal condition for preserving nature and man.

It is important to differentiate between the two types of democratic transformation.

The first type is manifested in reforms which, although they have an anti-imperialist thrust, do not touch upon the cardinal structure of capitalist society. Such reforms can be and are implemented today.

The second type is of a considerably higher order and is related to social development prospects. It involves radical changes calculated to undermine the foundation of the economic and political power of monopoly capital. One must keep in mind Engels' argument that "social reforms are never carried by the weakness of the strong, but always by the strength of the weak".<sup>1</sup>

There is no insurpassable boundary between the first and second types of democratic transformation. Their qualitative difference, however, leaps to the eye. The radical anti-monopoly changes are not a mere sum total of a number of ordinary reforms not touching upon the foundation of the capitalist system. The anti-monopoly changes of the second type imply that a significant shift in favour of the working class and its democratic allies occurs in the correlation of antagonistic class forces in capitalist society. The following words of Lenin's may justly refer to the second type of democratic transformation: "It will be a tremendous step *towards* socialism, a step from which, if complete democracy is preserved, there can no longer be any retreat back to capitalism, without unparalleled violence being committed against the masses."<sup>2</sup>

The anti-monopoly struggle of a general democratic character unfolding in developed capitalist countries under the leadership of the working class is in present conditions the most feasible way for the masses to approach the struggle for socialism.

Communists, unlike rightist and "left" opportunists, do not try to contrapose the efforts aimed at effecting deep-going economic and social changes and social transformations to the effort to achieve socialism; rather, they consider the former as part of the latter. As pointed out in the final document of the 1969 In-

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "The Free Trade Congress at Brussels", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1977, p. 360.

ternational Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, "In the course of the anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist united actions, favourable conditions are created for uniting all democratic trends into a political alliance capable of decisively limiting the role played by the monopolies in the economies of the countries concerned, of putting an end to the power of big capital and of bringing about such radical political and economic changes as would ensure the most favourable conditions for continuing the struggle for socialism. The main force in this democratic alliance is the working class."<sup>1</sup>

### Questions and Answers

*Question:* In this section world socialism has been defined as "the world socialist system" and "the socialist community". Are these concepts identical or do there exist some distinctions between them?

*Answer:* The concepts "world socialist system" and "socialist community" are of one order. The socialist community is an organic component of the world socialist system. Yet the two concepts are not identical.

The concept "world socialist system" is broader than the concept "socialist community". The former pertains to all states with a similar type of social system, the latter—to those which on the basis of this similarity make purposeful efforts to broaden internationalist ties and cooperation between them for the sake of a speedier attainment of the communist ideal and eternal peace on Earth. As pointed out earlier, the socialist community is made up of member-countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

*Question:* The group of newly independent African and Asian countries (often Latin American countries are added to this group) are termed differently: "economically weak countries", "developing countries", "Third World countries", or simply "the Third World". How can these concepts be described from the position of historical materialism?

*Answer:* First of all it must be borne in mind that any concept

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<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 27.



is a form of reflection of the world at the stage of cognition linked to the use of language, a form (method) of generalisation (abstraction) of objects and phenomena. Objects and phenomena are reflected in concepts in the most generalised form through fixation of general and specific properties. The more relevant the properties serving the basis for generalisation, the more scientifically relevant the concept.

To return to our specific question: the concept "economically weak countries" prevailed in economic and other writings, including Marxist, in the 1950s and 1960s. It reflected the basic state of the overwhelming majority of countries which freed themselves from colonial domination, that is, their low level of socio-economic and cultural development. Later, opinions were expressed to the effect that "weakly developed" is not a very apt term inasmuch as, to a certain extent, it hurts the dignity of newly independent countries, or at least might be interpreted as such. This concept was replaced by "developing countries", a term introduced in the 1970s and still used today.

The term "developing countries", no doubt, implies more dynamism and hope for a better future. However, this concept, too, is not immune to criticism. Strictly speaking, there have never been a "non-developing country". All states, all nations have always developed, some faster, others slower. All presently existing countries—capitalist, socialist, developing—continue to develop. In Lenin's words, "it is impossible to stand still in history".<sup>1</sup>

The concept "Third World" deserves a more extensive research. It has a wide currency in journalism and political studies. It must be pointed out that the more it is applied, the less definite becomes its meaning and the more disputes it arouses.

One can hardly agree with those Western researchers who believe that there is no such thing as the Third World, that it is a philosophical abstraction reflecting no real thing, at best a "territory" or a "geographical concept".

No, this concept reflects not so much the geography as the history and culture, the history and politics of Western colonialism in the East. It reflects the similarity of historical fates (in some regions—of cultural traditions and religions), and the fact

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 362.

that these nations belong to civilisations having common features as distinct from the Western civilisation. This concept reflects the reality of Asian, African, and Latin American nations' liberation from the colonial yoke, as well as the reality of their continuing anti-imperialist and anti-neocolonialist struggle.

The concept encompasses a specific type of economic development: the level and structure of productive forces; correlation of the socio-economic structures participating in the process of reproduction; the formations and transitional economic relations no longer existing in the West; the specific place occupied in the world capitalist economy, predetermined by the fact that the majority of the newly independent countries are still economically weak.

It must also be definitely stated that the term "Third World" is fairly conventional; it is more figurative than scientific. It raises objections inasmuch as it is used in relation to nearly all countries of Asia, Africa and even Latin America, in spite of the fact that they have different levels and rates of socio-economic development: averagely developed capitalist countries in Latin America and the Middle East; rich oil-exporting countries and territorially small countries with high per capita incomes (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates); countries poor and backward in all respects (mainly Central African) with an extremely low per capita income and archaic social order.

The principal objection pertains to the following. What is the Third World if the First and Second are to be understood as capitalism and socialism? Is the Third World isolated and independent from capitalism or socialism? It was stated earlier that there are two clearly defined groups of the newly independent countries: countries of capitalist orientation, capitalist mode of development (to date, the majority) and countries whose social development is oriented towards socialism (so far, the minority). The term "Third World" ignores this principal distinction.

Another objection is that, inasmuch as the Third World exists, there must exist the "third option" of social development—neither capitalist nor socialist (communist), a cross-section between capitalism and socialism. The advocates of socialism of a national type aspire to the discovery of precisely such way of development, just as do those who advocate other patterns of a bourgeois-na-

tionalistic and bourgeois-reformist character.

It must be pointed out here that many leaders and theoreticians of newly independent African and Asian countries are well aware of the inadequacy of the term "Third World". Notably, Kwame Nkrumah said that there are only two worlds: the revolutionary (socialist) and the reactionary (capitalist), and that the newly independent Asian and African countries do not exist independently of these two worlds as a Third World. When he employed this term himself, Nkrumah stressed that the Third World does not occupy an intermediary position between capitalism and socialism but is an inalienable part of the revolutionary world, the world fighting capitalism, imperialism and neocolonialism.<sup>1</sup>

Some Marxist publications use the term "Third World" but always in inverted commas because of its conditional and inadequate meaning. In many cases, Marxist authors precede it with "so-called".

This aidbook does not employ the term "Third World".

### **For Homework and Discussion**

1. What impact had the 1917 Socialist Revolution in Russia on your home country's development? Prepare a short paper on this question.

2. What is the difference between the assistance rendered developing countries by the USSR and other socialist countries, and the "aid" offered by the Western countries?

3. Write out from Engels' "Principles of Communism" and Marx' and Engels' *Manifesto of the Communist Party* all definitions pertaining to the proletariat: its class essence, origin, evolution, distinction from other oppressed classes and historical mission.

4. What democratic movements and organisations are there in your country and how do they participate in the work of world democratic movements and organisations?

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<sup>1</sup> *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah*, Thomas Nelson Ltd, London, 1967.

## *Chapter 10*

### **THE ROLE OF THE MASSES AND OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY**

This subject holds a special place in a course of historical materialism. Although it does not present any difficulty for the comprehension of basic theoretical principles, its political importance is tremendous.

If one looks at the history of philosophy and of social science as a whole from the standpoint of this subject, one thing becomes immediately apparent: all pre-Marxist philosophers and sociologists holding idealistic views (and at that time even materialist philosophers had an idealistic understanding of history) were unanimous in claiming that history was made by great individuals—kings, generals, outstanding statesmen and religious figures—while the populace played no part in history or, at best, its part was limited to being the object of manipulation by great individuals.

Historical materialism, which emerged, as we already mentioned, in the 1840s, stated unequivocally from the very outset that history was shaped not by great individuals but by the common people, the working masses, the toiling classes of society. The dispute between idealism and historical materialism concerning the role of the populace and of the individual in history continues to this day and, moreover, is more bitter than ever.

In this connection let us consider the following questions:

- (1) What is the populace and why does it play a decisive part in history?
- (2) What is the individual and what is his role in history?
- (3) The interaction between the individual and society constituting the process of historical development.

## Literature

1. "Marx to Wilhelm Bloß in Hamburg, London, November 10, 1877", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, p. 291.

2. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, pp. 19-539.

3. Frederick Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 162-63.

4. V. I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, 1960, pp. 15-28.

5. V. I. Lenin, "Speech in Memory of Y. M. Sverdlov at a Special Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, March 18, 1919", *Collected Works*, 1965, pp. 89-94.

6. V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, pp. 283-99.

(1) It might seem at first glance that there is nothing simpler than the question: "What is the populace?" Many believe that it is all the people, the entire population. However, this is not entirely so. The notions "the population" and "the populace" coincide only in a classless society or else in a society where there are no exploiter classes, that is, in a socialist society.

But in an antagonistic society—slave-owning, feudal, capitalist—"the populace" does not coincide with "the population". *The populace is above all the working people, the exploited classes.* In a slave-owning society, it is the slaves and freeborn plebeians; in feudal society, the peasants and artisans; in capitalist society, the proletariat, peasants, working intellectuals (the intelligentsia), white-collar workers, and the lower middle class.

The bourgeoisie should be mentioned separately. There was a time when it was also part of the populace. This was when the bourgeoisie fought against the feudal lords and was, therefore, a progressive, revolutionary class (as a rule, progressive up to a point and revolutionary up to a point). The ideologists of the emerging bourgeoisie were right in considering their class as part of the populace in contrast to the aristocracy, nobility and clergy as parasitic classes. Today, however, the revolutionary spirit of the bourgeoisie has vanished without a trace. The reactionary imperialist bourgeoisie is irreconcilably opposed to the common people, is in continual bitter conflict with the people and has, therefore, become an overtly *antipopular* force.

Although Karl Marx has always tried to expose the petty-

bourgeois illusions about the "unity of the people" in capitalist society, he made extensive use of the term "the people". In this connection, Lenin wrote: "In using the word 'people' Marx did not thereby gloss over class distinctions, but united definite elements capable of bringing the revolution to completion."<sup>1</sup> Lenin himself emphasized, when speaking of the Russian Revolution of 1905, that only the *people*, i.e., the proletariat and peasantry, could bring the revolution to completion.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, the notion "the common people" has a definite class character. In order to determine whether a certain class or social stratum constitutes part of "the common people", one should ascertain its economic status, interests and aspirations, its attitude to the national revolutionary objectives, and its capability of taking part in reaching these objectives.

Having arrived at a definition of "the common people", we must determine why the common people, the popular masses, and above all the toiling classes, have played and continue to play a decisive role in history. We suggest doing this along three basic lines:

First, one must proceed from the fundamental principle of historical materialism that the common people, the toiling classes are the main productive force of any society. It is they who feed and clothe the whole of society. Here we refer our readers to the chapter on material production.

Second, it should be borne in mind that the common people are the creators and bearers of social relations. The common people are the basic subjective force which materializes the objective law according to which production relations correspond to the character and level of development of productive forces. Consequently, the populace is the force which moves society from the old socio-economic formation to the new. Here we refer the reader to the chapter on socio-economic formations and social revolutions.

Third, one must substantiate the thesis that the common people create the nation's cultural wealth. This might present some difficulty, because for modern idealism culture is perhaps

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1965, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

the last refuge in its attempts to prove that everything depends on a creative individual.

True, there is no denying that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* would have been impossible without Homer, the *Divine Comedy* without Dante, and *Hamlet* without Shakespeare. Only Pushkin could have written *Eugene Onegin* and only Tchaikovsky could have composed the music to the opera of the same name. All that is true, but that is not all.

The common people have created language, which develops with the advance of civilisation through the ages. Being the basic means of communication between people, language is inalienable from their mental and physical activity. No one can say who taught people to produce and use fire, who was the first to craft the bow and arrow, the fishing net, the boat, the wheel, the cart, and lots of other inventions. All these objects were born of the effort of many generations. The spiritual culture of society does not grow of and by itself—it grows out of the soil of material culture and is advanced not so much by the intellect of the ruling exploiter classes as by the labour of the exploited masses. The great Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) wrote: "Throughout the ages, civilised communities have contained groups of nameless people. They are the majority—the beasts of burden. . . . They toil most yet theirs is the largest measure of indignity. . . . They are like a lampstand bearing the lamp of civilisation on their heads: people above receive light while they are smeared with the trickling oil."<sup>1</sup>

Historical materialism not only proves that the toiling masses play the decisive role in history, but also that this decisive role constantly grows. In *The Holy Family* Karl Marx wrote: "Together with the thoroughness of the historical action, the size of the mass whose action it is will therefore increase."<sup>2</sup> Lenin called this thesis one of the most profound philosophical principles of Marxism<sup>3</sup> and has explained the reverse side of this principle: "...the more profound the change we wish to bring about,

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore. *Letters from Russia*. Calcutta, Visva-Bharati, 1960, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Holy Family", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, "The Heritage We Renounce", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, 1960, p. 524.

the more must we rouse an interest and an intelligent attitude towards it, and convince more millions and tens of millions of people that it is necessary."<sup>1</sup>

This law of social development becomes especially apparent during the transition from capitalism to socialism, which puts an end to exploitation of man by man and of class by class. For the first time in history, the toiling masses headed by the proletariat take power into their own hands and make social production serve the interests of the working people. For the first time in history, the common people acquire real guarantees of their right to education and create a new culture. For the first time in history, the common people become the real masters of their own destiny, both in the sense of day-to-day life and in the sense of their historical future, which they themselves consciously shape in accordance with the objective laws of social development.

(2) In proceeding to the second question, first of all let us define what is the individual.

An individual is a human being. But, whereas one *is born* a human being, one *becomes* a personality. "Human being" is a generic notion which embraces the traits common to all people as contrasted to animals. An individual is each *concrete* person with his inimitable *personality*, that is his particular character, temperament, mentality, memory, perception of the world around him and attitude to it. We cannot help agreeing with the great German poet and philosopher Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) when he says that "every individual is a whole universe which is born and dies together with him."<sup>2</sup>

Certainly, a human being as a phenomenon has a biological aspect. Children, as a rule, resemble their parents in appearance and often even inherit voice timbre and certain traits of character. But the essence of man is social, not biological, because man lives in society and through society. A human being becomes an individual only by associating with others in a certain milieu, which is the total of social factors (both material and ideological)

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, p. 498.

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Heine, "Reisebilder", *Gesammelte Werke*, Dritter Band, Berlin, Aufbau-Verlag, 1954, S. 429.



which directly and indirectly influence man. In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx wrote that: "...the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."<sup>1</sup>

In examining the role of the individual in history, two things must be borne in mind. In the first place, historical materialism does not oppose the masses to the individual, it does not claim that the populace exists independently from the individuals constituting it. Lenin wrote in this connection: "...the idea of historical necessity does not in the least undermine the role of the individual in history: all history is made up of the actions of individuals, who are undoubtedly active figures."<sup>2</sup> Lenin flatly rejected the claims of opponents to the effect that historical materialism ostensibly nullifies the importance of the individual, subjecting him to some sort of "immanent laws of economics". Lenin wrote that such assertions were nothing but "idealist nonsense", because ignoring the role of the individual would have doomed Marxism "completely, from the very beginning, from its fundamental philosophical premises".<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, the masses and the individual are two dimensions of a single historical process. And if we accept the sociological law according to which the role of the masses in history constantly grows, we must also accept another sociological law—the growth of the role of the individual in history.

In the second place, the role of the individual in history should be defined from a materialistic standpoint. Lenin's firm belief that history was made by "live individuals with all their human thoughts and feelings" led him to a number of questions: "But what determines these 'thoughts and feelings'? Can one seriously support the view that they arise accidentally and do not follow necessarily from the given social environment, which serves as the material, the object of the individual's spiritual life, and is reflected in his 'thoughts and feelings' positively or negatively,

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Empirio-Criticism and Historical Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1977, p. 318.

in the representation of the interests of one social class or another?"<sup>1</sup>

The social environment and historical setting determine not only the individual's thoughts and feelings, but also its potentialities or limits of its activity. No individual, however great, can transgress the boundaries of objective historical conditions and bring about an event which has not yet matured in the course of objective social development.

Here we must clarify what is meant by "a great individual".

All pre-Marxist philosophers took it for granted that great individuals were those who ruled over nations, who led armies, who meted out justice and who laid down and abolished laws. But come to think of it, were all the kings and generals whose names came down to us in history truly great individuals? Certainly not. The *Révolutions de Paris* weekly, which came out during the French bourgeois-democratic revolution bore the following motto: "The great appear great in our eyes only because we are kneeling. Let us rise!"<sup>2</sup>

Those who share the materialistic view of history understand that a truly great individual is a person whose actions correspond to the objective course of social development and express the interests of the progressive, revolutionary classes. An individual heading a progressive social movement personifies this movement, as it were. His *personality*, of course, is also very important. He must be able to analyse the situation and work out a strategy, he must possess a strong will and fighting spirit.

The age of capitalism, the last exploiter system, and the transition to socialism gave us Marx, Engels and Lenin—men of colossal intellect who have had a tremendous impact on historical development. Although they were born into non-working-class families, they became the leaders of the proletariat and helped it to become aware of its revolutionary potential and historic mission. Greatful humankind will always remember them as men of genius and fearless revolutionaries who succeeded, after analysing

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> The weekly *Révolutions de Paris* came out in Paris from July 1789 to February 1794. Quoted in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Holy Family", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 82.

the historical material available to them, in predicting the basic trends of future development and perhaps in bringing the future a step closer.

(3) The problem of interaction between the individual and society is one of the most crucial and intricate problems of sociology. Historical materialism teaches that the individual and society are opposites in dialectical unity. There can be no individual without society just as there can be no society without the individual; likewise, society produces civilised human beings just as human beings produce society.

Pre-Marxist philosophers, who treated society and the individual idealistically, as abstract notions, were never able to resolve the problem of their relationship. Some of them identified the individual with society and claimed that the two existed in harmony, while others counterposed them to each other and insisted that the antagonism between the two can never be eliminated.

How then does historical materialism solve the riddle of the relationship between society and the individual? It proceeds from the idea that this relationship is based on the form of ownership of the means of production. Public ownership provides economic conditions for complete harmony between the interests of society and the individual, whereas private ownership gives rise to deep antagonisms between them. Marx wrote: "An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour. . . is the *estrangement of man from man*."<sup>1</sup>

Alienation means that the consequences of human activity turn into spontaneous social forces which dominate over people, that man is enslaved by spontaneously forming social relations. Estrangement, characteristic of the slave-owning, feudal and especially capitalist society, is a historical phenomenon and as such has a beginning and an end.

In this connection, let us analyse one of the basic schools in present-day bourgeois philosophy, *existentialism* (from the Latin *existentia*, existence). The most outstanding proponents of existentialism were Jaspers, Heidegger, Marcel, Sartre, and Camus. The drawback of existentialism is not that it places the individual at its centre, not that it concentrates all its attention on dis-

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 277.

covering the purpose of human existence, but that its point of departure is the very existence of the individual, his subjective world of thoughts, moods, and emotions. From this point of view, existentialism distinguishes between "real" existence of man—free being independent of existing social relations, being which is determined by the inner nature of the individual—and "unreal" existence—the individual's participation in the drab monotony of everyday life.

In condemning many of the features of capitalist society—depersonalisation of labour, stereotyping of the personality, conformism, etc.—existentialists believe alienation to be the essence of man as such, his immanent state of mind. The individual lives in an alien world among hostile people, objects and situations; everything in this world conspires against man; it is easier and more convenient for man to submit to established standards of behaviour than to fight for freedom—such is the leitmotif of existentialism. The conclusion existentialists come to is that no social change, no revolution can change the fact that man comes into this world a lonely alien and finally leaves it—again an alien and alone. Sartre saw existentialism not so much as humanism as despair and hopelessness.

In contrast to existentialism and other theories of eternal conflict between society and the individual, historical materialism teaches—and the practical experience of the socialist countries confirms this—that when private ownership and the exploiter classes are eliminated and production of material wealth is subordinated to the interests of the working people, the conflict between society and the individual disappears. Under socialism, man ceases to be the means of production and becomes its aim, receiving unlimited opportunities for developing his creative potential and talent, thus fully unfolding as a personality. This in turn makes society even more powerful and dynamic. "If man is social by nature," Marx pointed out, "he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the separate individual but by the power of society."<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean, of course, that under socialism the inter-

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Holy Family", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 131.

ests of society fully coincide with the interests of the individual. Most probably, such complete identity is impossible in principle. This is especially true in the first phase of communism, where the level of development of productive forces is not able to satisfy all the needs of every individual, where distribution is still done according to the amount of work done, and where the state must still supervise the measure of work and consumption. But the fundamental characteristic of the contradictions between social and individual interests under socialism (in contrast to capitalism) is that these contradictions are non-antagonistic and can be resolved in a peaceful manner with priority being given to the interests of society.

Life in the socialist countries confirms that the idea of communism as a society in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all"<sup>1</sup> (this phrase from the *Communist Manifesto* was included in the text of the USSR Constitution of 1977) is no Utopia—it is the expression of the objective processes of social development.

### Questions and Answers

*Question:* What classes and social groups constitute the populace in the developing countries? What can be said of the bourgeoisie in these countries?

*Answer:* It follows from what has been said in this chapter that the populace in the developing countries includes peasants, workers, all the exploited poor sections of the population, the lower middle class in town and country, and most of the intellectuals—in a word, all classes and social groups which hold anti-imperialist views and have a stake in their country's gaining not only national but also social independence.

As for the bourgeoisie in the developing countries, it is a very diverse class. The *comprador* bourgeoisie which has close ties with imperialism often acts against the national interests, and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, too, has betrayed and sold out the interests of its people—neither type can claim to be part of the people. As

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, 1976, p. 127.

regards the national bourgeoisie, the matter is not so simple. The national bourgeoisie is part of the people only insofar as it has retained its anti-imperialist orientation and, consequently, insofar as its class interests coincide with the interests of the toiling masses. At the same time, as an exploiter class in society, the national bourgeoisie gradually loses its revolutionary spirit, becomes increasingly conservative, and turns into a force hostile to its people.

*Question:* What can be said of the great leaders of the national liberation movement? How do they express their time and how does their time express them?

*Answer:* The national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America have produced many outstanding personalities—political and military leaders, theoreticians and philosophers.

The peoples of Latin America hold sacred the memory of *Simon Bolivar* (1783-1830), who led the struggle for independence of the Spanish colonies in South America. Proclaimed the Liberator by the National Congress of Venezuela in 1813 and holding the highest government posts, he was always close to the common people and did everything in his power to improve their lot—thereby incurring the hatred of the ruling exploiter classes.

In the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon and many other outstanding personalities have devoted their lives to the struggle against colonialism and imperialism, for the freedom and independence of their nations. History has immortalised their names. Yet it was not they who gave birth to the age of the collapse of colonialism. On the contrary, it is the age of the collapse of colonialism that gave birth to them. They became great personalities because they understood the needs of the common people, the needs of historical progress and expressed them in concentrated form, and because the common people believed in them and followed them. Nehru was right when he said: "The people were the principal actors, and behind them, pushing them on, were great historical urges. . . But for that historical setting and political and social urges, no leaders or agitators could have inspired them to action."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, London, the Bodley Head Ltd., 1953, p. 282.

## For Homework and Discussion

1. What is the methodological importance of the law of the decisive role of the mode of production in social development for proving that the popular masses play a key part in history?

2. In Lenin's work "*Left-wing*" *Communism—an Infantile Disorder* find and copy out the principal ideas on the correlation of the notions "the masses", "classes", "parties", and "leaders", and on the role of the Communist Party and its leader in guiding the class struggle of the proletariat.

3. Proceeding from the principles of historical materialism, use the facts of your country's history to show that a leader's success depends on how close his ties are with the people.

## Chapter 11

# SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE LAWS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

A materialistic solution of the fundamental question of philosophy in relation to social being enables us to consider from a truly scientific standpoint the area of social life which idealism sees as the basis and the source—the area of ideas, opinions, theories, and also emotions, habits and mores, which *in toto* constitute social consciousness.

Let us study this subject from three different angles:

- (1) The spiritual life of society and social consciousness as reflections of social being. The structure of social consciousness.
- (2) The laws governing the development of social consciousness. Its dependence on social being and relative autonomy.
- (3) The class character of ideology in a class society.

## Literature

1. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, pp. 36-37, 50-51, 55, 59-60, 328-331,, 418-420.
2. Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 337-341.
3. "Engels to J. Bloch in Königsberg. September 21 [22], 1890"; "Engels to C. Schmidt in Berlin. October 27, 1890", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 487-495.
4. "Engels to W. Borgius in Breslau. January 25, 1894", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 502-504.
5. V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1977, pp. 367-373.
6. V. I. Lenin, "Materialism and Empirio-criticism", Chap. VI, Sec. 2, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1977, pp. 322-327.
7. V. I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980.



8. V. I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", Sect. "Materialistic Understanding of History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1974.

(1) In considering the first question, one must recall what was said in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in connection with the materialistic solution of the fundamental question of philosophy in relation to the life of society—on the primacy of social being and the secondary nature of social consciousness. In short, people's social being, that is, their actual life associated with the production of material wealth, determines their consciousness and, in general, their spiritual life.

In this connection we should clarify what we mean by "the spiritual life of society" and "social consciousness". The concept of "the spiritual life of society" is broader than the concept of "social consciousness".

*Social consciousness* is a reflection of people's social being in their emotions, moods, opinions, views, and, finally, ideas and theories.

*The spiritual life of society* includes, apart from social consciousness as its basic component, also what is termed "spiritual production" and "spiritual communication".

Spiritual production is the activity of the human intellect in perceiving nature and society. A major role in this is played by ideologists, scientists, and artists, who create the nation's intellectual and cultural wealth—political and scientific theories, works of art, etc. Spiritual communication is people's activity in spreading this cultural and intellectual wealth through upbringing and education. The basic means of spiritual communication are speech, writing, and as an extension, the mass media (the press, radio, and television).

In examining the reflection of social being in social consciousness, one should remember once again the relevant principles laid down by Lenin in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. The most fundamental idea in this connection is: "Social consciousness reflects social being—that is Marx's teaching."<sup>1</sup>

It should be borne in mind that the reflection of social being in man's consciousness and in social consciousness is not a passive reflex, not mechanical mirror-like reflection, but a com-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1977, p. 323.

plex, contradictory process resulting from man's active attitude to life. For that reason, in defining social consciousness we must emphasize not only the aspect of reflection but also the aspect of man's active, purposeful attitude to the world around him. It is in this sense that Lenin wrote that "man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it".<sup>1</sup>

Consciousness was born together with society and develops with it. The bearer of consciousness is each individual or a certain social group (a class or society as a whole). The consciousness of a particular person is *individual* consciousness, while the consciousness of a group of people is *social* consciousness.

What is the relationship between individual and social consciousness and how is the consciousness of a large group of people formed? On the face of it, the answer may seem quite simple: the consciousness of a large group of people, that is, social consciousness, is the sum total of the individual consciousnesses of all the people in this group. Yet in actual fact that is not so.

Individual consciousness reflects social being through the prism of concrete life conditions of each particular person. Everything in the individual is inimitable—psychological makeup, character, temperament, abilities, talents, upbringing, family, social, and ethnic backgrounds, personal interests, etc. Just as there are no two absolutely identical people, so there are no two identical individual consciousnesses. Nevertheless, basically people are similar. Likewise, there are common features in the consciousness of different people.

In reflecting social being as a whole, social consciousness discards all the details that distinguish the consciousness of one person from that of another and leaves what is common to the consciousness of a large group of people or society as a whole.

Consequently, social consciousness is not a simple sum total of the consciousnesses of each member of that group and, conversely, individual consciousness is not simply a particle of social consciousness.

Social and individual consciousness are in dialectical unity. Social consciousness exists, of course, only in the minds of individual people and for this reason is expressed only through in-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's Book *The Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, 1980, p. 212.

dividual consciousness. But since each person lives in society and is connected with other people, individual consciousness exists only in connection with social consciousness.

Social consciousness has its own complex *structure*: within it we can distinguish a number of forms and levels which are interconnected and interpenetrating. The forms of social consciousness include political, legal, moral, aesthetic, religious, and philosophical consciousness.

Each form of social consciousness has its own object of reflection. Political consciousness reflects the political activity of people, relations between classes, nations, states, and political parties. Legal consciousness, which is closely connected with political consciousness, expresses the views of various classes on the nature and purpose of law and law enforcing agencies: the legal system, the courts, the procuratorship, etc. Moral consciousness serves as one of the means of regulating people's behaviour. Aesthetic consciousness reflects man's need for artistic perception of reality. Philosophical consciousness seeks to reflect the world as a whole. Finally, religious consciousness also claims to do this, proceeding, however, from the assumption of the existence of God.

The forms of social consciousness differ also in the ways they reflect reality. Whereas philosophy expresses its content in the most general concepts—categories, legal consciousness is expressed in rules and laws, art in artistic images, and religion in imaginary, illusory ideas of the existence of supernatural forces.

One should also bear in mind that as society develops the forms of social consciousness also develop. In primitive-communal society, there existed such forms as religion, morality, and art. Class society adds philosophy, art, political, and legal consciousness. In a classless communist society, political and legal consciousness will cease to exist, and ultimately, with the universal spread of scientific knowledge and a scientific world outlook, religion will also probably wither away. But philosophy will develop further, enriched by ever new scientific discoveries, although it will naturally lose its class character. The same may be said of art and morality.

So we see that each form of social consciousness performs a particular social function, all of them constituting the superstructure over the economic basis of society.

Now we must consider the two levels of social consciousness

—the everyday level and the theoretical (ideological) level—as pointed out by Frederick Engels.<sup>1</sup>

*Everyday consciousness* is shaped spontaneously, in the process of everyday life. It is also called empirical consciousness, because it is based on knowledge which people acquire empirically, through experience, in the process of many centuries of labour and is handed down from generation to generation.

Everyday consciousness also includes psychology as a total of people's opinions, habits, emotions, motives, and desires, which are formed in them under the direct influence of surrounding conditions. This is where different nations and ethnic groups acquire their characteristic psychological makeup. This lower level of social consciousness is often referred to in the relevant literature as the psychological level.

Everyday consciousness reflects life on the surface, as it were. It is unable to reflect the essence and inner processes of reality, it cannot rise to broad generalisations and conclusions. A characteristic feature of everyday consciousness, particularly of specific manifestations of people's psychology, is the interpenetration of consciousness and emotion.

*Theoretical consciousness* consists of ideology (philosophy, sociology, political economy, political trends, including the aims and immediate objectives of parties, ethics and aesthetics) and scientific knowledge acquired by all sciences—natural, technical and social. Obviously, theoretical consciousness is associated with the active process of thinking. Theoretical consciousness is not satisfied with a superficial reflection of life, and it strives to penetrate to its essence, to make certain generalisations, and to determine and formulate the laws of this development.

This does not mean, of course, that any theoretical consciousness faithfully reflects objective reality. Theoretical consciousness may be true, scientific (for instance, the dialectical-materialistic world outlook) or false, unscientific (for instance, the idealistic world outlook).

Everyday and theoretical consciousness, social psychology and ideology are interconnected and interacting. For example, the anti-capitalist social psychology of the working class and of all the toiling masses provides fertile soil for assimilating anti-capitalist,

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<sup>1</sup> See: Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, p. 19.

socialist ideology. In trying to spread socialist consciousness in the working-class movement, the communist and working-class parties in capitalist countries make use of its "active urge towards socialism".<sup>1</sup>

(2) It follows from the materialistic solution of the fundamental question of philosophy as applied to social life that *changes and development of people's consciousness, ideas, and theories are in the long run determined by the changes and development of material production and social being*. Therein lies the basic law governing the development of social consciousness.

It would be impossible to correctly understand or explain a single political doctrine, a single philosophical theory, whether in the past or present, a single legal or moral precept, without seeing the dependence of social consciousness on social being. People are used to explaining their actions as prompted by their thoughts and ideas (which fact is always used by idealism) and often forget that these actions are determined by their needs, which are realised<sup>2</sup> and expressed in these very thoughts and ideas.

In formulating the above-mentioned law governing the development of social consciousness, it is important to point out that *in the final analysis* it is determined by the changes and development of material production. Naturally, to deduce people's ideas and theories directly from the process of production would mean not just over-simplifying but grossly distorting the basic principle of historical materialism. Lenin condemned vulgar materialists who tried to prove that the ideological level is a direct result of the level of technology.<sup>3</sup>

The thesis of historical materialism on the *relative autonomy of social consciousness* is directed against such vulgar-materialistic views. In his letter to Bloch dated September 21-22, 1890, Engels explained this: "...According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining factor in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Struggle of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1965, p. 388.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, "Dialectics of Nature", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, "V. Shulyatkov. The Justification of Capitalism in West-European Philosophy (from Descartes to E. Mach)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 484-500.

have ever asserted more than this. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic factor is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase.”<sup>1</sup> Returning to this issue in his letter to Borgius dated January 25, 1894, Engels pointed out once again that it was erroneous to think that “the economic situation is *cause*, and *solely active*, whereas everything else is only passive effect”. He emphasised that “the economic situation therefore does not produce an automatic effect” on other areas of social life, especially on ideology, which is farthest removed from its economic basis.<sup>2</sup>

In this connection, anyone studying historical materialism must bear in mind the following: in the first place, social consciousness, just like all other areas of social life forming part of the superstructure, has its own laws of development and in the process of history even the ideas themselves interact with each other; in the second place, apart from the determining influence of social being, social consciousness is also greatly, sometimes decisively, influenced by other factors operating between social being and social consciousness, such as class struggle, the nature of political power, the state superstructure as a whole, and the local characteristic features of the socio-political development of a given country or nation.

How specifically is the relative autonomy of social consciousness manifested? There are several ways of proving this phenomenon.

*Proof No. 1* consists in the known facts of historical continuity in ideology, when the ideas of one historical period tangibly influence the ideas of another historical period. Take, for example, the appearance of Marxism. It was born in the mainstream of world civilisation. Lenin pointed out that the theoretical sources of Marxism were classical German philosophy (Hegel, Feuerbach), British political economy (Smith, Ricardo), and French utopian socialism (Fourier, Saint-Simon). In this connection we recommend rereading two of Lenin’s works on the subject, “The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism” and “Karl Marx”. It is important to understand that Marx did not merely compile and absorb all the most progressive ideas of his

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442.

predecessors, but reappraised them on the basis of combining materialism with dialectics, as a result creating a new, truly scientific teaching.

Continuity exists also between reactionary theories of different ages. For example, neo-Thomism, the official philosophical doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, is based on the teaching of *Thomas Aquinas*. According to neo-Thomism, the process of history depends upon supernatural forces, which predetermine the fate of entire nations and govern the behaviour of every individual.

*Proof No. 2.* All forms of social consciousness are not only interconnected but interpenetrating and overlapping. We distinguish each one of them separately only for the purpose of studying them. But in actual life, all these forms are intricately interwoven in social consciousness, forming in a number of cases an indivisible whole. For instance, political consciousness is expressed in law (indeed, in many textbooks on the subject, political consciousness and legal consciousness are treated as a single political-legal consciousness), and also in morality, art, philosophy, and religion.

The class character of ideology in a class society, which we shall consider further on, is actually the expression of political consciousness through other forms of social consciousness.

*Proof No. 3* consists in the fact that social consciousness (or, more precisely, a certain ideological trend, the consciousness of a certain group of people) may either be ahead of its social being or lag behind it. To illustrate the first alternative, let us again take the emergence of Marxism in the 1840s. At that time, the development of capitalism was still on the upgrade, and there could be no question of any form of socialism taking over. Nevertheless, after making a thorough study of capitalist relations and capitalist production as a whole and discovering its basic laws of development and antagonisms, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels came to the conclusion that in the long run capitalism would inevitably collapse, superseded just as inevitably by socialism and then communism. This fundamental conclusion, together with the entire theory of scientific socialism, was adopted by the working class and its party as a scientific guide into the future. Up until October 1917, the socialist ideology of the working class remained a scientific prophecy, going ahead of the development of everyday material existence, that is ahead of social being.

In most cases, however, social consciousness lags behind the development of social being because, as a rule, changes take place first in one's being and only later in one's consciousness. Speaking of the inertness of mass mentality, especially at the psychological level, shaped by many centuries of private ownership, Lenin pointed out: "The force of habit in millions and tens of millions is a most formidable force."<sup>1</sup> In this respect, it is easier to change the material existence of society, it is easier to overthrow the capitalists and landowners and nationalize their plants, factories, land, etc., than to change social consciousness, to change the established stereotypes of thinking, to change the psychology of the millions. Lenin wrote about this in his well-known article "A Great Beginning" devoted to the first communist *subbotniks*, in which volunteers came together to donate a Saturday's work to the nation.

*Proof No. 4.* In a number of countries of socialist orientation (Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, the Congo, Benin, and several more), the ruling parties have adopted, according to their programmatic documents, the ideology of the working class, Marxism-Leninism, and this is reflected in these countries' state laws.

For example, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Benin proclaims that the country has taken the road of socialism and that its philosophical foundation is Marxism-Leninism, which must be creatively applied to the country's local conditions.

The question may arise: doesn't this contradict the principle of the primacy of social being and the secondary nature of social consciousness? How can there be such an advanced ideology in a country with a backward economy and undeveloped social structure?

No doubt, a backward economy and an undeveloped social structure is by far not the best basis for a progressive ideology. Undeveloped socio-economic relations inevitably give rise to immature, scientifically unsound theories about socialism, which abound in the newly liberated countries of Asia and Africa. However, as is evident from the postulate on the relative autonomy of social consciousness, there is no direct dependence of the scientific level of socialist ideas and theories on the level of development of material production and maturity of class antagonisms.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, p. 44.



In tackling the basic political and ideological issues of a revolutionary transition to socialism, Lenin never exaggerated the factor of socio-economic backwardness of a particular country. He was convinced that even in economically backward countries where there is almost no proletariat, "...we are in a position to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action".<sup>1</sup> Speaking after the October Socialist Revolution of 1917 about the Soviet eastern republics, Lenin emphasized: "These republics are proof and corroboration of the fact that the ideas and principles of Soviet government are understood and immediately applicable, not only in the industrially developed countries, not only in those which have a social basis like the proletariat, but also in those which have the peasantry as their basis."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that a low level of economic development does not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for the spread of scientific socialist ideology is confirmed, for example, by the experience of the Mongolian People's Republic. In the early 1920s this country's economic level was as low as, if not lower than, the level of most of today's newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. Mongolia had neither industry nor proletariat. Yet this did not prevent the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, which at the initial stages of revolution was a peasant party, from adopting the scientific ideology of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism, and laying the foundations of socialism in Mongolia as early as the late 1950s.

There is yet another consideration in favour of the relatively autonomous (in relation to a country's inner socio-economic conditions) development of socialist ideas and theories in the newly independent countries.

The starting point of socio-economic development in such countries as, for example, the People's Republic of the Congo and Benin, on the one hand, and Zaire and Senegal, on the other, were approximately the same. How come then in the first two countries the officially proclaimed ideology is a socialist ideology

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 490.

of the working class, whereas in Senegal the dominant ideology is based on the principles of "African socialism" which are incompatible with scientific socialism, and Zaire is oriented towards capitalism in theory and in practice? It would be impossible to give a cogent answer without considering the nature of each particular country's state superstructure and the political creeds and personal qualities of those in power.

This does not mean, of course, that progressive ideas in economically backward countries come out of the blue and have no roots in real life. In considering the internal economic conditions of the developing countries and their influence on people's mentality and on ideological processes in general, one should bear in mind that even before capitalist relations mature and become dominant they already demonstrate their inability to solve the problems facing the newly independent countries.

Thus, progressive socialist ideology in economically backward countries reflects the processes taking place in the whole world as well as in those particular countries. The basic meaning of our age, which is the transition from capitalism to socialism with the international teaching of Marxism-Leninism as a beacon, in the specific historical setting of the newly liberated African and Asian countries engenders and sustains a non-capitalist trend of development in the social and economic areas, and is the prime factor of the spreading and consolidation of Marxism-Leninism in the sphere of ideology.

All this proves that the reflection of social being in the social consciousness of a particular nation is a complex multistage process influenced by a number of other factors, both national and international. In other words, social being, economics, determines social consciousness only in the long run, having passed through many intermediate stages, first of all through the sphere of social life. Thus social consciousness is relatively independent, in its development, of social being. It can be said that relative independence is "internal dependence and external independence."<sup>1</sup>

The relative independence of social consciousness constitutes another important law of its development.

(3) As regards the third question we shall limit ourselves to only a brief outline, since this question summarizes much of what

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, 1974, p. 304.

has been already said in the present chapter and in the chapter on social classes and class struggle.

We already know that ideas and theories do not appear of and by themselves but express people's needs, and their needs express their interests. In a class society, people's interests are above all class interests. Therefore in a class society, people's ideas, theories, opinions and psychology are necessarily of a class nature. Lenin warned that "people have always been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the *interests* of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises".<sup>1</sup>

Each class develops its own system of ideas, its own ideology. The role played by the ideology of a particular class in the life of society depends on the position of this class in the system of social production. Marx and Engels emphasized that "...the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force.... The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations...."<sup>2</sup> Obviously, apart from the dominant ideas of the ruling class in a class society, there are always the ideas of the exploited classes.

Take capitalist society, for example. The imperialist bourgeoisie owns the means of production and holds state power—therefore, it is the dominant intellectual force of society. It has set up a powerful, increasingly sophisticated ideological machine for brainwashing the masses. One is astounded not so much by the number of people in capitalist countries who are under the ideological influence of big business, as by the number of people who are freeing themselves from this influence. This applies not only to the working class but also to various middle-class strata, the professional classes, and the peasantry.

In socialist society, the dominant ideology is the ideology of the working class, Marxism-Leninism. With the elimination of exploiter classes and their ideological influence on the non-pro-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three-Component Parts of Marxism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 58-59.

letarian population, Marxism-Leninism, though remaining the ideology of the working class, becomes the ideology of the entire nation.

In the following concluding chapters dealing with the forms of social consciousness and modern bourgeois sociology we shall dwell in more detail into the class nature of ideology in a class society.

### Questions and Answers

*Question:* What is the role of social and cultural traditions in the social consciousness of newly liberated nations and in their struggle for national renaissance and social progress?

*Answer:* First of all let us clarify what we mean by tradition. In the materialistic understanding, traditions (from the Latin *traditio*, handing over, legend) are elements of a nation's social and cultural legacy handed down from generation to generation and preserved in certain societies, classes and social groups for a considerable period of time. These are usually definite social institutions, rules of conduct, values, ideas, customs, rites, etc. There are traditions in different areas of social life—in the economy, politics, social consciousness, and especially in law, art, and religion.

Traditions exist in all social systems and are to a certain extent a necessary condition of their development. They are most widespread and have the greatest importance in pre-capitalist societies. It is a known fact, for instance, that in the social and spiritual life of African and Asian peoples, tradition plays a more important role than in the Western countries in modern and recent history.

In a class society, traditions are necessarily of a class nature, and therefore a class approach is needed in studying them. Only a class approach can explain what role traditions play in the struggle of African and Asian nations for national renaissance and social advance.

Let us consider, for example, the commune and communal traditions. In Asian and African countries, there are many who advocate preserving the communes and communal relations. Some even say that the commune is "ready socialism" and therefore one must return to communal life.

In principle, the founders of Marxism-Leninism did not rule out the possibility of using peasant communes, with their collectivist principles and traditions, in the process of non-capitalist development of backward nations towards socialism—on condition that socialist revolutions will win in the industrialized countries.<sup>1</sup> But they ridiculed those theoreticians who identified communes with socialism and saw commune peasants as born socialists and communists.

The tribal commune by itself, with its primitive system of production and distribution and lack of incentive to increase labour productivity or to develop contacts with the outside world—this is, of course, no socialism and cannot grow into socialism. The communal tribesmen have a long path of development ahead of them if they are to come to socialism. The elimination of foreign oppression opened the way for revival and flourishing of the Oriental peoples' unique culture. However, this does not necessarily imply restoration and strengthening of antiquated social institutions and relations.

Two things are obvious: *on the one hand, if blindly followed, tradition leads to conservatism and stagnation in social life; on the other hand, if social and spiritual legacy is neglected, this might result in a break of continuity in the development of society and culture and in a loss of certain human values.* Therefore, the commune should be transformed into a productive entity suited for building a new society, with its democratic and collectivist traits left intact. An interesting example in this connection is the establishment of *udjamaa* villages (literally, "one big family") in Tanzania.

*Question:* It was said in this chapter that in a class society all opinions, ideas, and theories have a class character. Are there any exceptions to this rule?

*Answer:* There are exceptions, but they are few and far between. In certain limited cases, ideas and theories worked out for certain needs have no direct relation to the interests of a particular class: for example, the laws and principles of formal logic, or the laws of nature (the latter belong to such exceptions only when they do not conflict with religious dogmas). Lenin pointed

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<sup>1</sup> See: Frederick Engels, "On Social Relations in Russia", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, 1977, pp. 402-403.

out that "...if geometrical axioms affected human interests, attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of natural history which conflicted with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition."<sup>1</sup>

### For Homework and Discussion.

1. In his work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Lenin criticises the Russian philosopher Alexander Bogdanov, who tried to "correct" Marx, saying: "In their struggle for existence men can unite only with the help of *consciousness*: without consciousness there can be no intercourse. Hence *social life in all its manifestations is a consciously psychical life... Sociality is inseparable from consciousness. Social being and social consciousness are, in the exact meaning of these terms, identical.*"<sup>2</sup>

Try to determine Bogdanov's philosophical position and prove that his views are theoretically and logically unsound.

2. On the basis of the material in this chapter, especially the answer to the first question, try to determine which traditions in your country play or could play a progressive role and which of them are reactionary. You can write a paper on this subject.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 1977, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Empirio-Criticism and Historical Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 322.

## Chapter 12

### FORMS OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Before attempting to describe the basic ideological forms of social consciousness, let us work out a uniform procedure for their analysis.

(1) We must give a *definition* of the particular form of social consciousness under review, pinpointing the object of reflection and the social needs that generated this form.

(2) We must show its *specific features*, the ways in which social being is reflected, and how it differs from other forms of social consciousness.

(3) We must reveal its "function", that is, the *role* it plays in society.

According to this model, we shall consider the following concrete forms of social consciousness: (a) political, (b) legal, (c) moral, (d) aesthetic, and (e) religious. In the list of literature given below, the letters in brackets indicate which form of social consciousness is considered in each particular work.

#### Literature

1. "Marx to Ferdinand Lassalle in Berlin, April 19, 1859", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982 (d).

2. Karl Marx, "Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1975, pp. 276-277 (a, b).

3. Karl Marx, "Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1859", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1987, pp. 89-93 (a, b).

4. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, pp. 36-37, 50-51, 55, 59-60, 328-31, 418-20 (a, b).

5. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984 (a, b, c).

6. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1975, pp. 100-113 (c); pp. 359-364 (e).
7. Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 371-375 (e).
8. "Engels to Ferdinand Lassale in Berlin, May 18, 1859", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (d).
9. "Engels to Minna Kautsky in Vienna, November 26, 1885", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (d).
10. "Engels to Margaret Harkness in London, April 1888", in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (d).
11. V. I. Lenin, "Party Organisation and Party Literature", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 1978 (d).
12. V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and Religion", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, (e).
13. V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 1977 (e).
14. V. I. Lenin, "Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, (d).
15. V. I. Lenin, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977 (a).
16. V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977 (c).
17. V. I. Lenin, "On Proletarian Culture", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, (d).
18. V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1976 (e).
19. V. I. Lenin, "To Inessa Armand, January 24, 1915", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, 1980 (c).

### (a) Political Consciousness

The key to defining political consciousness is a Leninist understanding of politics as relations between classes and, as their derivative, relations between peoples and states. It is in political consciousness, especially in political ideology, that the basic interests of various classes are expressed in concentrated form.

Political consciousness includes the views of a certain class on class struggle and revolution, on social and state structure, on the relations between nations and states, on war and peace. These views are put into practice in the actual struggle between classes and in the activity of the state, parties and other political institutions and organisations.

Political ideology is expressed in state constitutions (what is



meant is, of course, the political ideology of the ruling class), in the programmes and documents of parties and other political organisations, in speeches by top party and state officials on key issues of domestic and foreign policy, in the documents of international conferences of states and political parties, and also in specialised theoretical treaties and research papers on various political issues.

In describing political consciousness, it should be pointed out that in comparison with other forms of social consciousness, it is closest to the economic basis of society and to the economic interests of various classes, but even here the causal connection of economics and political consciousness is not direct—it is modified by a number of intermediate social phenomena.

For the student of historical materialism it is obvious that political views appeared together with the appearance of classes as awareness of the fact that society is split into hostile, antagonistic classes, as awareness of the irreconcilability of class interests.

For example, in the ancient Egyptian papyrus "The Disenchanted Man Speaks to His Spirit", a commoner doubts the justice of the entire social system of his day, saying that "the wrongdoer is everywhere", "a man smites his brother, his mother's son", "the robber is a possessor of riches".<sup>1</sup>

The slave-owning aristocracy expressed their ideas on state government in various "political instructions". For example, one such instruction teaches: "Bend the multitude, suppress its ardour." The social and political system was declared to be the continuation of the order established by God in nature: God has created kings to rule the people just as He created the whole world, plants and animals, to feed man.<sup>2</sup>

Several millennia later, in mediaeval Europe the Church continued to preach to the oppressed peasants, expressing the interests of the ruling feudal class, that the social order was established by God himself, who created the earth, the animals, and the first people, Adam and Eve. To this the peasants answered quite logically: "When Adam ploughed and Eve spun, who was the nobleman?"

<sup>1</sup> Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> See: *The History of Philosophy*, in Five Volumes, Vol. 1, The USSR Academy of Sciences Press, Moscow, 1957, pp. 38-38 (in Russian).

Capitalist society, which gave birth to two basic antagonistic classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—also gave birth to two diametrically opposite political consciousnesses—bourgeois consciousness and proletarian, socialist consciousness. It was the first time in history that an exploited class developed its political consciousness, in the form of Marxism, to the level of a comprehensive, logically organised theoretical system. Neither the class of slaves nor the class of serfs had managed to do or had been capable of doing this.

Furthermore, Marxism was the first teaching in history to raise theory to the level of practical guidance of the liberation struggle of exploited classes. Lenin said that Marxism connected revolutionary theory with revolutionary policy and tied together the theory and practice of class struggle into one inseparable whole.<sup>1</sup>

Ever since socialism became a reality in many countries instead of only a science, the political consciousness of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat—the two antagonistic classes—have reflected in the most concentrated form the antagonisms between the two world systems, capitalism and socialism.

The tangled ideological situation in the world is key-noted by the struggle of the two basic political ideologies—the political ideology of the bourgeoisie and the political ideology of the proletariat. Bourgeois ideology supports capitalism, trying to hold back the objective course of history. On the other hand, working-class ideology, represented above all by Marxism-Leninism, serves the cause of social progress.

Today the political consciousness of all classes is dominated by the issues of war and peace. And this is hardly surprising.

Hamlet's crucial dilemma—to be or not to be—today faces all of mankind. Such is the grisly reality of the late 20th century. Moreover, the time left for deciding between war and peace is running out. As military technology today is rapidly becoming more and more sophisticated, the arms race—above all the nuclear arms race—may very possibly get out of hand. The nuclear competition between the two world systems is being escalated to

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<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of Karl Marx's Letters to Dr. Kugelmann", *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, 1977, p. 107-108.

fever pitch by the plans of the US and other NATO countries' military-industrial complex to carry the arms race into near-earth space and to fill it with thousands of levels of weapon systems, which would be controlled not so much by people as by computers. If these plans are carried out, civilisation will become the hostage of technology. Then no one could guarantee that a fateful decision, which would wipe out humanity and all life on earth, will not be made by a computer—instead of national leaders—as a result of even a minor technical fault. The colossal power of modern weapons leaves no hope for any country, including the United States and the Soviet Union, to successfully defend itself by purely military means, even by a superpowerful defence system in space. Therefore, ensuring security is increasingly becoming a *political* objective and can be reached only by *political* means.

But this requires a *new political thinking*, that is, a sober evaluation of the new situation in the world, and discarding the pre-nuclear mentality, which took armed conflicts and wars for granted as a legitimate means of settling disputes and satisfying imperial ambitions. The political mentality of the ruling class in capitalist society must get rid of its prejudices against socialism and recognize its historical right to exist.

As far as communists are concerned, they have already reappraised their system of priorities in foreign policy, understanding that preservation of life on earth is the prime condition of social progress. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said at the 27th CPSU Congress that in the present world situation the struggle between capitalism and socialism can continue "*only and exclusively in forms of peaceful competition and peaceful contest*".<sup>1</sup>

This new accent in foreign policy runs through all the documents of the 27th CPSU Congress and the recent congresses of the ruling parties in the other socialist countries, once again demonstrating the profound humanism of communist ideology. And this new accent is a creative development in today's context of Lenin's idea that "from the standpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism,

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<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, p. 82.

the interests of social development are higher than the interests of the proletariat".<sup>1</sup>

Here we should add that on the issue of peace the class interests of the proletariat coincide with the interests of social development. Moreover, it is the proletariat and its principal achievement—the world socialist system—which are today the leading force fighting for peace and social progress.

Despite the fundamental differences in the way capitalism and socialism view current events and the world's future—differences that are natural and inevitable, differences that existed, exist and will continue to exist—it should be obvious to both sides that ideas cannot be forced upon anyone with the help of weapons. The historical competition between the two world socio-political systems, a peaceful competition which Communists have always advocated, implies also the historical competition between the two political ideologies. It is up to the nations themselves to decide which system and which ideology is better.

#### (b) *Law and Legal Consciousness*

In the chapter on Lenin's work *The State and Revolution* we already defined law (in the answer to the first question) as a sum total of obligatory rules of conduct in society established or sanctioned by state authority and expressing the will of the ruling class. In other words, it is a system of legislation.

Law is closely associated with legal consciousness, that is, people's sense of justice. Law and legal consciousness are related but not identical concepts. They are relatively independent elements of society's legal superstructure. Legal consciousness is not law itself, not legislation but the emotions, opinions, ideas and theories—in a word, consciousness which expresses the attitude of individuals and whole classes to law, to juridical acts.

Obviously, different classes would not have identical attitudes to law and juridical acts, that is, an identical sense of justice. The legal consciousness of the ruling classes basically coincides with law, because it is *their* law. If, however, something in the legal system ceases to satisfy the ruling class, for economic or po-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1977, p. 236.

litical reason, it can abolish certain laws and proclaim others in line with *its* sense of justice. In order to be sanctioned in the form of a law, Engels said, "the economic facts" (and political ones, for that matter) "must assume the form of juristic motives".<sup>1</sup>

The legal consciousness of the exploited classes naturally does not correspond to law which expresses and protects the interests of the exploiter classes. This is because legal consciousness, unlike law, is not obligatory for all and is not enforced by the state. "One law for the rich and another for the poor"—this proverb expresses the essence of the exploited classes' legal consciousness and their attitude to law established by the ruling class.

Another characteristic feature of legal consciousness is that it reflects the life of society from the point of view of the rights and duties of citizens of a particular state. For the ruling exploiter class, law is above all its privileges and *rights* recorded in legislation, whereas for the exploited class, law is its *duties*, also recorded in legislation, to obey the authorities, to respect private ownership, to meekly work for their exploiters, and to give up their lives for the sake of their master.

It can be seen that law is the main instrument of the ruling class' policy. The ruling class uses the machinery of state and law to make other classes observe its interests and abide by their enactments.

Law and legal consciousness, just like politics and political consciousness, are characteristic of a class society. Before there existed any classes, that is, before the emergence of the state, there was neither law nor legal consciousness. Relations between people were regulated by customs which had evolved over the centuries. In his work "The Housing Question" Engels vividly demonstrates how customs gradually turn into laws.<sup>2</sup>

Law not only reflects the division of society into antagonistic classes, but gives it statutory force, often even the force of a divine commandment. In ancient India, for instance, according to the Laws of Manu, dating back to the 3rd century B.C., out of his lips God created the Brahman caste destined to rule, study

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1976, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 365.

the scriptures and preach; from his hands He created the Kshatriya caste destined to protect the people; from his hip He created the Vaysya caste destined to be merchants and usurers, and also to graze cattle and till the land; finally, from his feet He created the Sudra caste, and "one occupation only the Lord prescribed to the Sudra, to serve meekly even these other three castes".<sup>1</sup>

The Laws of Manu proclaimed that a Sudra cannot and must not take part in deciding the affairs of state: "The kingdom of that monarch, who looks on while a Sudra settles the law, will sink low, like a cow in a morass."<sup>2</sup> The code attempts to justify cruelty in enforcing the law since allegedly only punishment rules over all living creatures, only punishment keeps vigil over them when they are asleep, and the wise deem punishment to be like the law. And not only law and order in society, but the entire universe is founded on fear.<sup>3</sup>

That is how the Laws of Manu protected the caste system and, in effect, state terrorism against the toiling masses.

Unlike the slave-owning and feudal societies, where law overtly protected the rights and privileges of the ruling classes, in capitalist society the bourgeoisie prefers to disguise the true nature of legal relations. Bourgeois legislation proclaims "equality before the law". Although this fine-sounding phrase proudly figures in the constitutions of most capitalist countries, it is nothing but an empty phrase and is so obviously at odds with real life under capitalism. There can be no equality in relations between worker and capitalist—neither economically, politically, nor legally. The essence of bourgeois law and legal consciousness has been analysed in detail by the founders of Marxism.<sup>4</sup>

The hypocrisy of bourgeois law is most readily seen in the context of racism. In the United States, for instance, unemployment among the non-white population is much higher than among whites, although legally they enjoy equal rights to employment.

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<sup>1</sup> *Laws of Manu*, I, 91, Delhi, Motilal Bandarsidass, 1964, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, 21, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> See: *The History of Political Doctrines*, 2nd edition, Moscow, Gosyurizdat, 1960, pp. 37-40 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> See Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instructions", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1976, pp. 109-131.

In secondary schools and higher educational establishments the overwhelming majority of students are white, although all races have equal rights to education. At every step the courts acquit Ku Klux Klansmen and policemen murdering Blacks and sentence innocent people to death or lengthy prison terms only because the colour of their skin happens to be black, although under the Constitution all are equal before the law.

Even under so-called bourgeois democracy, there are numerous restrictions, qualifications and bans which substantially limit, if not cancel out, the rights and liberties proclaimed in the Constitution.

In socialist society, law expresses and protects the interests of the common people. It differs radically from bourgeois law and all other legal systems in that it guarantees employment, free from exploitation, to all citizens. Socialist law protects public ownership of the means of production and strengthens it by combatting unearned incomes of certain individuals (through bribes, embezzlement, profiteering, and other unlawful activity). In this way, socialist law as an element of the superstructure is a powerful factor in developing the socialist economy, socialist organisation of labour, and in the whole socialist way of life.

The USSR Constitution of 1977 was a milestone in the political and legal development of socialism. It gave statutory force to the principles of the economic, social and political system in the USSR, the country's structure as a multiethnic state, the procedure for the establishment and functioning of the bodies of state authority, and also proclaims the aims, principles and structure of the socialist people's state. The USSR Constitution contains articles on the right of a citizen to take part in the management and administration of state and public affairs, and on the basic rights, freedoms, and duties of Soviet citizens.

The Constitution of the USSR exemplifies the basic difference between a socialist and a bourgeois constitution: a socialist constitution records not only political, but also socio-economic rights, and all these rights are not just proclaimed but actually guaranteed.

In conclusion we must stress the importance of socialist law in helping citizens develop a conscious respect for society's laws, for socialist law and order, which under communism will grow into a habit of observing the standards of conduct in community

life. But then there will be no more need for law and legal consciousness—it will be superseded by communist moral awareness.

### (c) *Morality and Moral Consciousness*

Morality is an unwritten code of rules and standards of behaviour in society which express people's concepts of good and evil, justice and injustice, duty, conscience, honour, disgrace, etc. Like any other form of consciousness, moral consciousness has two levels—the psychological (emotional) and the ideological (theoretical). Moral consciousness is man's awareness of the nature and forms of his behaviour in society and his attitude to other people. The highest ideological level of moral consciousness is expressed in the concepts of *ethics*.

Like certain other forms of consciousness, moral standards regulate people's behaviour in society. What then makes moral consciousness different from other forms of consciousness?

Society has a number of various regulating mechanisms which coordinate people's communal life. These include, apart from moral standards of conduct, also legal enactments, government decrees, customs, traditions, industrial administrative regulations, organisational rules and instructions, etc. Unlike all these, moral standards and requirements of human conduct are not set by authorized persons or organisations and are not enforced by state power by means of stipulated sanctions, but rather appeal to man's reason and feelings, to his conscience, to his compassion, to his ability to absorb the collectively evolved moral experience of mankind.

Anyone can demand observance of moral standards from anyone else, but instead of appealing to a third party to arbitrate he will appeal to that person's conscience. Whereas the strength of legal norms lies in the power and authority of the state which establishes and enforces them, the virtue of moral standards is that, once they are understood by an individual, they become part of his code of conduct.

Marx wrote in this connection that morality is based on the autonomy of the human spirit. No matter what authority you appeal to, if a person is not convinced of the need to observe a certain requirement and if his sense of duty and will are not affected by it, it will remain for him nothing but fine-sounding



words which he can ignore perfectly well. Conversely, if a universal moral requirement, for example to take care of one's children and aged parents, has become one's inner need and awakens one's conscience, it will always guide him in the future.

This characteristic of moral requirements also enables us to distinguish them from spontaneously evolved forms of behaviour which have become a habit. In this latter case a person's individuality is effaced, as it were, and he acts in a certain way not because he consciously chooses to, but because everyone else does so, because it is customary and because one is supposed to. Such regulators of behaviour played an important part at the more primitive stages of society, because each individual was much more dependent on the whole tribe both in production and in the dominant collective forms of consciousness.

Thus, the moral standards and requirements evolved by society get ingrained in the very fiber of a person's being and shape his motives on the basis of personal conviction and urge to act in a certain way. For such a person, his sense of duty becomes law, which he cannot disobey. Such is the regulating function of moral standards in society.

However, can we conclude that moral norms and requirements which guide people's behaviour are intrinsically present in human consciousness, never change and do not depend on a person's status in the system of social production, his relation to the means of production, and his role in social organisation of labour? In other words, can moral standards and requirements be considered in isolation from development of society and people's class affiliation?

Marxism teaches that (1) moral standards and opinions reflect people's economic status, (2) these standards and opinions develop along with the development of society and (3) in a class society moral norms and opinions have inevitably a class nature.

We cannot consider good and evil, justice and injustice in isolation, outside a class and historical context. For example, people in civilized society cannot speak of cannibalism without a shudder, although the cavemen of the Stone Age saw nothing terrible or immoral about it.

Take any antagonistic class society, and it becomes obvious that what is just and moral from the point of view of the exploiters is unjust and immoral from the point of view of the exploit-

ed. It is hard to imagine a capitalist who would have a guilty conscience for exploiting his workers or who, if he did feel any remorse, would give up his profits and abandon his factory.

Bourgeois ethics often tries to present a distorted picture of the Marxist class approach to morality, arguing that Marxists ascribe only vices to the capitalists and only virtues to the workers. However, this is not so. The founders of Marxism-Leninism have never idealized the working class. They recognized that certain sections of the working class are infected with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois mentality. But the thing is that the working class carries with it a historically progressive morality not because in each individual case each worker is a paragon of virtue, but because the working class as a whole is destined to carry out a great historical, and hence moral, mission: to rid mankind of exploitation and gear the production of material wealth to the aim of shaping harmoniously developed individuals.

In recent years, Western ideologists have somewhat shifted their accents, claiming that revolutionary theory in general and the revolutionary movement of the working class in particular are devoid of any moral content or, in any case, indifferent to morals. This is not true either. Lenin wrote: "In that seething struggle that is revolution, at that special post which every revolutionary occupies . . . of enormous importance is high moral prestige won in the course of the struggle, unquestionable and unchallenged prestige, the roots of which lie, of course, not in abstract morals, but in the morals of the revolutionary fighter, the morals of the rank and file of the revolutionary masses."<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental Marxist principles of revolutionary and communist morality and its role in building a new society were set forth by Lenin at the All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League in 1920 in a speech entitled "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues".<sup>2</sup> Anyone interested in historical materialism would be advised to study this speech carefully and think of how its ideas apply in the local context of his particular country.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Speech in Memory of Y. M. Sverdlov at a Special Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. March 18, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, pp. 283-99.

In the struggle for a humane and just society in which the all-round development of each is the condition of the development of all, the people waging this struggle themselves become more humane and just. The morality which the communists seek to establish is:

“—*a collectivist morality*, the fundamental principle of which is “One for all and all for one”. This morality is incompatible with egoism and selfishness; it harmoniously blends the common, collective and personal interests of the people;

“—*a humanistic morality*, which ennobles the working man, is filled with a deep respect for him and is intolerant of infringements upon his dignity. It asserts truly humane relations between people—relations of comradely cooperation and mutual assistance, good will, honesty, simplicity and modesty in private and public life:

“—*an active, vigorous morality*, which stimulates one to ever new labour achievements and creative accomplishments, and encourages one to take a personal interest and be involved in the affairs of one’s work collective and of the entire country, to be implacable in rejecting everything that contradicts the socialist way of life and to be persistent in the struggle for the communist ideals.”<sup>1</sup>

#### (d) *Art and Aesthetic Consciousness*

Although everyone comes into contact with art in one way or another, by far not everyone can explain what art actually is. This is hardly surprising, because art can be considered from several different angles: as a form of social consciousness and an inherent part of man’s spiritual culture; as a special type of human activity, an artist’s self-expression, his artistic creation; as a special type of intellectual cognition of reality; and finally, as a means of education and also communication between people. All this is correct: these are the various aspects of art or, to be more precise, its various functions.

There are many art forms: literature, cinema, theatre, dance,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 57.

music, graphic art, sculpture, architecture, and decorative applied art.

Art reflects everything in man's life: work, social activity, everyday life, his thoughts and emotions, his attitude to other people, to nature, and to events around him. Even when a painting contains no people but shows, for example, the sea or the forest, this sea and this forest is not merely a depiction of some particular part of nature but rather *man's* attitude to it and in this sense a humanising of nature in the picture. The object of art is "everything that is interesting to man in life."<sup>1</sup>

What is special about art is that it reflects reality in *artistic images*. An artistic image—whether in literature, in poetry, in music, or in painting—is what distinguishes art from other forms of social consciousness. In reproducing life in artistic images, art has a tremendous impact not only on the mind but also on people's emotions. One cannot comprehend a work of art through abstract logic as one does, say, in science. Art presupposes sensory perception, and one can understand a work of art only through the senses. Many generations of art lovers have been moved by the enigmatic smile of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, and no one will probably be able to unravel the mystery of its emotional impact.

Art does not merely describe or reflect the world like a photograph, but seeks to get down to the *essence* of the object, reflecting in something concrete, which we perceive through our senses, something general, typical of a whole group of phenomena.

Art always contains an element of imagination, an element of the artist's personality, an element of his—and his alone—perception of the world. Obviously, a work of art need not always correspond to reality. It often happens that an artist deliberately deviates from certain details of reality, but this is done to achieve greater penetration into the essence of things.

Take, for example, the world-famous school of the *poto-poto* art in Brazzaville, the People's Republic of the Congo. The paintings of those artists (the most prominent are Zigoma, Iloki, Ondongo, Ombala, and Bandila) plunge us into the world of make-believe: bright blue knife-like birds soaring up towards the sun;

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<sup>1</sup> N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1949, p. 91 (in Russian).

scarlet palm trees with branches brandished in all directions clawing into the sky; a baby elephant who has just rushed out of the jungle and is gaping at us. His body is black, his trunk is beige, his outsize ears are bright yellow, and his eyes are two white specks. The literal-minded will, of course, say this is a misrepresentation of reality, in other words, a lie. Yet, despite all the imaginary elements, this is Africa, live tropical Africa. This is probably why the *poto-poto* paintings produce such an emotional impact.

In art, man displays his ability to perceive beauty, to enjoy it, and to alter life "in line with the laws of beauty", to use Marx's expression. This is closely associated with *aesthetic consciousness*, which is people's finer feelings (perception of the beauty of color, shape and movement, a feeling of the beautiful and the ugly, the tragic and the comic), their tastes (the ability to evaluate the degree of beauty or ugliness), their interests (an urge to create beautiful objects), their views, concepts and ideals (what an object should be like to be considered beautiful, and what qualities a person should possess to be considered fine) and, finally, aesthetic theories. Like all other forms of consciousness, aesthetic consciousness emerged and develops under the influence of people's practical activity.

In considering the relationship between art and aesthetic consciousness, one should devote special attention to their class character (in a class society). Special attention because, unlike politics and law, where the class nature of things is obvious, in art and aesthetic consciousness class nature is hidden beneath the surface and is manifested in much subtler forms.

A work of art has a class nature not only because it reflects and expresses something, but even more so because it is a medium through which people perceive the world, a medium which educates people and shapes their attitudes to life, and also because the artist himself is moulded by society and is dependent on it. Different social classes seek to use art in their own interests, and the ruling exploiter classes have the possibility to influence art, whether explicitly or implicitly, encouraging certain trends and hindering others.

Whereas in the 19th century Friedrich Nietzsche saw the ideal and aim of art in transcending "beyond good and evil", and José Ortega y Gasset tried to substantiate dehumanization of art, the bourgeois ideologists of today are out to destroy the

moral content of art as well as its aesthetics. They contrast "the art of the elite" to "the art of the masses", seeking on the one hand, to subordinate "mass art" to the values, standards and needs of capitalist society, thus making it into a bourgeois art, and on the other hand, to deny the working masses free access to knowledge and art and to self-expression in art. The so-called "mass culture" which the capitalist mass media and show business dish out to the public is only a cheap substitute of real art. Although bourgeois ideologists claim that "mass art" bridges the gap between classes, develops common cultural interests and tastes and ultimately a common mentality, what it really does is develop in the general public the kind of mentality that is advantageous to the capitalists.

Capitalism impoverishes the national culture, eroding the traditional cultural values which have evolved over the ages. The policy of modern capitalism in art is based on commercialisation and the worship of racism, base instincts, violence, and the mores of the underworld. Therefore, one of the problems facing humanity today is how to preserve its cultural heritage and protect it against bourgeois vandalism and decay.

It becomes obvious from the above that art cannot be isolated from life in general and from politics in particular. Despite the bourgeois apolitical theories of "pure art" and "art for art's sake", which treat art as man's urge to escape from humdrum reality, true art is actively involved in life itself and is a powerful weapon in the struggle for national liberation and prosperity.

In contrast to the bourgeoisie, which tries to conceal the class and partisan character of its art, the proletariat and its party openly declare that art should serve not the exploiters but the working people, should serve the proletarian cause of revolutionary change worldwide according to the principles of socialism. This idea is developed in Lenin's article, "Party Organisation and Party Literature", which we recommend to our readers.

#### (e) *Religion and Religious Consciousness*

The essence and characteristic features of religion as a form of social consciousness have been exhaustively formulated by Engels: "All religion . . . is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life,

a reflection on which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces."<sup>1</sup>

From this definition it follows that religion reflects (1) the domination of real natural and social forces over people, and (2) this reflection assumes the form of beliefs in supernatural beings (God and the Devil) and in another world (heaven and hell). Curiously, these supernatural beings and worlds are opposed not only to living people but to each other: the function of the Devil is to lead people astray from the righteous path drawn by God, and if it had not been for hell which awaits all sinners, the existence of heaven would have lost all meaning.

Religion is not only religious ideas and beliefs. It is also religious emotions (on the everyday, psychological level of consciousness), worship of deities, and performance of rites. Moreover, every developed religion is controlled by a ramified Church establishment. Religious consciousness reaches its highest, theoretical level in *theology*, a system of religious doctrines on the essence and action of God which are elaborated by professional clergymen but often ascribed to divine revelation.

It is important to understand when and why religion appeared, that is, when and why people began to believe in good and evil supernatural forces.

Religion teaches that not only was the whole world, including man, created by God, but that religious beliefs themselves were also introduced by God into man's heart, from the very beginning. Science, however, has proved beyond doubt that throughout the greater part of history human beings did not have any religious beliefs—simply because they had not yet achieved the necessary economic, social, or spiritual level.

The emergence of religion is a complex and often contradictory process. It should not be oversimplified as was done, for example, by Voltaire (1694-1778), who claimed that religion appeared after a fool met a swindler. There is no denying, of course, that the lies and hypocrisy of some and the ignorance of others do promote the spread of religion and account for its tenacity today. Yet the roots of religion are much deeper and much more intricate.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "*Anti-Dühring*", p. 361.

Historical materialism proceeds from its fundamental concept that social being is primary and consciousness is secondary, showing that religion has definite historical, economic and cognitive roots.

When Engels said that in primitive society erroneous ideas of nature, of man's essence, of spirits, of supernatural forces, etc., mostly had a "negatively economic basis", he meant the extremely low level of society's economic development, which, in turn, determined the low level of people's consciousness.

It took primitive man a long time to arrive at the idea of a supernatural being, God. Thousands of generations fled from thunder, lightning, earthquakes, floods and forest fires, thousands of generations watched sunrise and sunset, the stars and the moon, birth and death—before man finally asked himself the great epistemological question: *Why* does all this happen? *What* stands behind it? *Who* controls it? Many more primitive generations had to pass before people could answer these questions, but since at that stage of development they could not provide a scientific explanation, they inevitably came to the idea of supernatural forces, the idea of God. Lenin agreed with Feuerbach when the latter wrote that God was a composite of the most general qualities taken from nature and turned into an independent being.

As the primitive tribal system disintegrated and there emerged an antagonistic class society, people were even more confirmed in the belief that they were ruled by supernatural forces. In the words of Engels, "the fantastic figures, which at first only reflected the mysterious forces of nature, at this point acquire social attributes, become representatives of the forces of history."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that millions of people worldwide, especially the toiling masses in antagonistic class societies, have been oppressed for millennia and continue to be oppressed by hostile social forces makes it possible to understand why religion continues to this day to have such a grip on people. Lenin emphasized that in capitalist countries religion has primarily *social* roots: "The deepest root of religion today is the socially downtrodden condition of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in face of the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts upon ordinary working people the most horrible suf-

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "Anti-Dühring", p. 362.



fering and the most savage torment, a thousand times more severe than those inflicted by extraordinary events, such as wars, earthquakes, etc."<sup>1</sup>

There are three international religions, which are most widespread in the world today: *Christianity* (emerged in the 1st century A.D.), *Islam* (7th century A.D.), and *Buddhism* (6th-5th centuries B.C.). There are also national religions: *Hinduism* (in India), *Shintoism* (in Japan), *Judaism* (in Israel), and others. In many countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania, there still exist various tribal religions with all the accompanying primitive beliefs: animism (belief in the soul and in spirits), fetishism (worship of material objects), totemism (belief in supernatural kinship of a given clan or tribe with a certain animal, plant, object, or other phenomenon of nature), and magic (rituals of sorcery aimed at exerting a supernatural influence on people, animals, objects, natural phenomena, and imaginary spirits).

Religion rules the minds of believers, and thus performs special social functions. This is, above all, the *ideological* function of religion, which makes it similar to philosophy. However, whereas materialist philosophy gives one a picture of the world and man's part in the proceeding from scientific data and people's experience, religion is an unscientific, perverted view of the world which requires implicit faith in supernatural forces.

Religion also performs a *compensatory* function, soothing people's natural fear of impending death by providing hopes of continued life in another world. In so doing, religion seeks to reconcile people with the existing social order, preaching that the worse their life in this world, the better it will be in the other world.

In any antagonistic class society, religion and the Church are financed by the ruling classes and, therefore, sanctify private ownership and inequality between different people and classes. Therein lies the most important *social* function of religion.

The student of historical materialism must have a clear idea of the attitude of Marxists to religion, to the Church, and to believers. In this connection we advise our readers to make a thorough study of two articles written by Lenin, "Socialism and Re-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 405-406.

ligion" and "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", which were written in 1905 and 1909, respectively, but have to this day retained their importance for Communists, especially in the developing countries, where the vast majority of the population is religious.

Communists have never concealed the fact that in their practical activity aimed at bringing about revolutionary changes in the world along socialist lines, they are guided by the scientific, materialistic ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which is in essence an *atheistic* ideology. Communists are not seeking any "points of contact" between Marxism-Leninism and religion. They unequivocally define religion as "the opium of the people", as a type of spiritual slavery which is aimed at justifying physical slavery.

This does not mean, however, that Communists do not respect the religious feeling and convictions of believers. Marx considered the freedom of conscience and religious belief to be an inalienable human right.

"Incompatibility between religion and the rights of man is to such a degree absent from the concept of the rights of man that, on the contrary, a man's *right to be religious* in any way he chooses, to practise his own particular religion, is expressly included among the rights of man. The *privilege of faith* is a *universal right of man*."<sup>1</sup>

Both the theory of Marxism and the practice of building socialism in different countries confirm that everyone is entitled to believe or not to believe in God—it is his or her personal business and legal right. For example, Article 52 of the USSR Constitution states: "Citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess or not to profess any religion, and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda. Incitement of hostility or hatred on religious grounds is prohibited." In socialist society, the Church is separated from the state, and the school from the Church. The state does not interfere into citizens' attitudes to religion or to religious beliefs.

At the same time, since socialism eliminates exploitation as the main social root-cause of religion, carries out a cultural revolution, and propagates scientific and atheistic information, peo-

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 162.

ple living in a socialist society gradually get rid of religious beliefs and prejudices.

Special mention should be made of the attitude of Marxists to political movements acting under the guise of religion. This attitude is based on a principled class approach. It was pointed out in the Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 26th Party Congress: "Of late, Islamic slogans are being actively promoted in some countries of the East. We Communists have every respect for the religious convictions of people professing Islam or any other religion. The main thing is what aims are pursued by the forces proclaiming various slogans. The banner of Islam may lead into struggle for liberation. This is borne out by history, including very recent history. But it also shows that reaction, too, manipulates with Islamic slogans to incite counter-revolutionary mutinies. Consequently, the whole thing hinges on the actual content of any movement."<sup>1</sup>

In Latin America, a new movement which has been gaining momentum over the last 15-20 years is the so-called theology of liberation. Its ideologists (G. Gutierrez, L. Boff, G. Arroio, and others) represent a part of Latin American clergy which is now actively involved in the struggle against oppressive dictatorships and their imperialist patrons and considers that elimination of poverty and exploitation and establishment of a just society is "part of salvation". They have their own interpretation of the Catholic social doctrine, often drawing on Marxism, in particular, the Marxist theory of class struggle. Quite naturally, this incurs the wrath of the Vatican. Yet the ideas of these "theologians of liberation" meet an enthusiastic response and support from the general mass of working people in Latin America.

Marxists draw the main social divide line not between religious people and atheists but between the exploiters, and the exploited. Communists extend a friendly hand of cooperation to all those who champion the cause of the common people and fight against exploitation and all brands of exploiters, both domestic and foreign, and to all those who favour national revival and social progress. Yet Communists do not demand that religious

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.* Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1981, pp. 18-19.

people should abandon their beliefs as a condition of cooperation—just as the Communists themselves defend their own right to have communist views and beliefs.

All this goes to show that differing attitudes to religion cannot be the bone of contention between true revolutionaries. Although Marxists explain the roots of religion from materialistic positions, they have never given top priority to the issue of religion in the revolutionary liberation struggle. On the contrary, they consciously subordinate the struggle against religion to the struggle for socialism.

Religion will gradually wither away with the advance of education, science, and spiritual culture as a whole.

### Questions and Answers

*Question:* How do the various forms of social consciousness develop and how does this relate to historical development as a whole?

*Answer:* History does not develop along a straight line. For that reason, the various forms of social consciousness, too, develop unevenly. In various periods of history, different forms of consciousness come to the fore. It is not always easy to establish the relationship between the level of socio-economic development of society and the level of a certain form of social consciousness. Apropos of art, Marx pointed out that “some of its peaks by no means correspond to the general development of society; nor do they therefore to the material substructure, the skeleton as it were of its organisation. For example the Greeks compared with modern [nations], or else Shakespeare”.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, ancient Greece with its economically inefficient slave-owning system, gave the world an art and a philosophy—brilliant in form and profound in content—that contained the roots of almost all subsequent art trends and philosophical schools. Greek philosophers delved deep into the problems of politics, law, ethics, aesthetics, religion, and atheism.

In the Middle Ages, the scene was dominated by the Church, which suppressed all other forms of social consciousness: art had

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, “Introduction”, in: Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1977, p. 215.

a right to exist only on condition that it kept to Biblical subjects, morality assumed a religious quality, philosophy was turned into a handmaiden of theology, and men of science were simply locked up in dark dungeons or burnt at the stake by the Holy Inquisition.

The Renaissance of the 14th-16th centuries heralded the advent of capitalism and seemed to plant in people's hearts and minds for ages to come the ideals of humanism, which glorified man and life on this earth rather than in another world, vindicated sensuality, reawakened man's interest in nature, and reaffirmed his faith in the unlimited possibilities of the human individual.

However, after getting firmly established, capitalism, a force essentially hostile to its producer—the proletariat, began to be “hostile to certain branches of spiritual production, for example, art and poetry”.<sup>1</sup> And today, as already mentioned, the general crisis of capitalism is strikingly manifested in morality, art, and cultural life in general. At no other time in history did humanity live under such pressure of deception and hypocrisy from the exploiter classes as today.

*Question:* It was stated above that each form of social consciousness in a class society inevitably has a class character. But how do class interests relate to the general human aspect in morality, politics, art, etc.?

*Answer:* The class element is everything that expresses and defends the interests of a certain class. The general human element is everything which expresses and defends the interests of all classes, all people.

Historical experience shows that the general human interests coincide with the interests of the most progressive, revolutionary classes, whereas the interests of reactionary classes are, as a rule, antagonistic to the general interests of humanity. Therefore, in trying to establish the relationship between the class element and the general human element in any social field, one should see first which particular class is concerned and only then examine how its interests relate to those of humanity as a whole.

But we repeat that the notion of “general human values”, which is widely used in Marxist-Leninist philosophy, also has to

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, Part I, 1978, p. 285.

do with the interests of all people regardless of class affiliation and all states irrespective of socio-economic system.

Take morality, for example. Bourgeois ethics tries to deny the class character of morality in a class society on the grounds that morality expresses general human values, offering the following pseudo-dilemma: either class morality or human morality, *tertium non datur*.

According to the principles of Marxism, proletarian morality, far from opposing general human interests, expresses them most fully and scientifically. The general human element of morality is the standards, principles and values in human relations which express the essence of man as a *human being*. Proletarian morality is not at all opposed to such aims as equality, prosperity, and happiness of all people. It only rejects the unscientific definition of these goals and methods of achieving them.

Let us take, for example, such global problems of today affecting the very foundations of human life on earth as environmental pollution and depletion of natural resources. The more these problems are aggravated, the more acute is the need for effective international action aimed at organising rational use of our planet's resources as the common property of the entire human race.

It was stated in this connection in the Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress: "The global problems, affecting all humanity, cannot be resolved by one state or a group of states. This calls for cooperation on a worldwide scale, for close and constructive joint action by the majority of countries. This cooperation must be based on completely equal rights and a respect for the sovereignty of each state. It must be based on conscientious compliance with accepted commitments and with the standards on international law. Such is the main demand of the times in which we live."<sup>1</sup>

*Question:* Can religious people, particularly clergymen, join a Marxist party, which is guided by an atheistic ideology?

*Answer:* This question, which is just as important today as it was a century ago, was answered exhaustively by Lenin back in 1909. In his article "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion" he wrote: "It cannot be asserted once and for all that

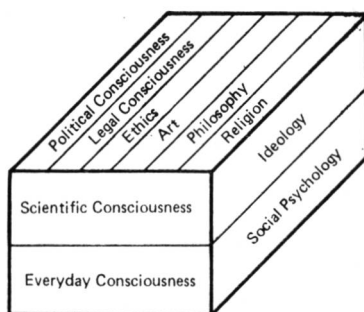
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<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, 1986, p. 24.

priests cannot be members of the Social-Democratic Party; but neither can the reverse rule be laid down. If a priest comes to us to take part in our common political work and conscientiously performs Party duties, without opposing the programme of the Party, he may be allowed to join the ranks of the Social-Democrats; for the contradiction between the spirit and principles of our programme and the religious convictions of the priest would in such circumstances be something that concerned him alone, his own private contradiction; and a political organisation cannot put its members through an examination to see if there is no contradiction between their views and the Party programme. . . And if, for example, a priest joined the Social-Democratic Party and made it his chief and almost sole work actively to propagate religious views in the Party, it would unquestionably have to expel him from its ranks. We must not only admit workers who preserve their belief in God into the Social-Democratic Party, but must deliberately set out to recruit them; we are absolutely opposed to giving the slightest offence to their religious convictions, but we recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our programme, and not in order to permit an active struggle against it.”<sup>1</sup>

### For Homework and Discussion

1. Which of these two diagrams of the structure of social consciousness is more precise and why?



<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 408-409.

2. Proceeding from the material of this chapter and drawing on previous chapters, try to analyse the nature of social consciousness in your country, its principal forms, their characteristic features and their role in the development of society.



### Chapter 13

## IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IN THE WORLD TODAY. CRITICISM OF BOURGEOIS SOCIOLOGY

Our world is at a turning-point today, witnessing a fierce ideological struggle, in which sociology is actively involved.

In this concluding chapter of our course of historical materialism we would like to concentrate on the following points:

(1) Escalation of ideological struggle at the present stage. Neoconservatism as an expression of the aggressiveness and crisis of bourgeois ideology.

(2) The basic traits of contemporary bourgeois sociology. Lenin's methodological principles of examining bourgeois sociology.

(3) The bourgeois philosophy of history.

(4) Bourgeois empirical sociology. The structural-functional school.

### Literature

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984, pp. 477-519.

2. V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 1977, pp. 29-39.

3. V. I. Lenin, "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", Chapter VI, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1977, pp. 314-56.

4. V. I. Lenin, "Socialism Demolished Again", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, 1964, pp. 187-208.

5. V. I. Lenin, "Statistics and Sociology", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1977, pp. 271-77.

6. V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1976, pp. 227-36.

(1) In getting down to the first question, we must first of

all emphasize the significance of ideology in the life and development of society. On the basis of historical experience, Marxism-Leninism concludes that a revolutionary change from the old society to a new one is impossible without an ideological preparation, without the struggle of ideas of different, above all antagonistic, classes. This also applies to our own age, the age of transition from capitalism to socialism and finally to communism. Obviously, it would be impossible to destroy the old social system with ideas alone. The material force of the old society may be toppled only by a new material force. But theory, too, becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses and guides them to practical action.

The struggle between communist and bourgeois ideology has been going on for nearly one and a half centuries. As soon as Marxism emerged in the 1840s, the struggle began between communist and bourgeois ideology, which express the interests of the two opposing classes of modern society, the workers and the capitalists.

This ideological struggle reached a new level after the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia in October 1917, later climbing yet to a higher pitch, after World War II, when socialism burst the confines of one single country and there appeared a community of socialist states. The scientific prophecy of communist ideology began to come true in many countries of the world.

Today, on the threshold of the 21st century, ideological struggle has become even more acute and its impact on the course of human history is even stronger. This can be attributed to two factors: first, an unprecedented development of the mass media, above all, television; and second, establishment of a military balance between capitalism and socialism.

Yet imperialist forces, chiefly in the United States, are still bent on taking social revenge, resorting to all methods and means available, including ideology. Bourgeois ideology is essentially meant to protect the interests of big business and is, therefore, hostile to socialism. Its aims are obvious: on the one hand, to present capitalism in a most favourable light, conceal its innate injustice and oppressiveness, and impose upon all other nations its way of life and cultural standards; on the other hand, to discredit socialism and to distort the meaning and significance of such values as democracy, freedom, equality, and social progress.

The ruling political force in the United States, the military-industrial complex, is out to turn ideological struggle into a psychological war, and then to gear the latter to preparing ground for a real war. The Pentagon, for instance, has direct control over 250 radio stations and dozens of television centres scattered all over the world; it also puts out over a thousand newspapers and some 400 magazines and bulletins with a total circulation of over twelve million. The Pentagon maintains close ties with the US mass media aimed at both the American and international public. For example, much of what is transmitted to more than a hundred countries by the CBS, one of the largest radio and TV networks in the United States, is sponsored or actually prepared by the Pentagon.<sup>1</sup>

The CIA is also actively involved in the mass media. Corey Ford, one of the Agency's founders, minced no words when he wrote: "...Foreign propaganda must be employed as an instrument of war—a judicious mixture of rumor and deception, with truth as a bait, to foster disunity and confusion. . . In point of fact, propaganda is the arrow of initial penetration in preparing the people of a territory where invasion may be contemplated. It is the first step; then fifth column work; then militarized raiders of 'commandos', then finally the invading divisions."<sup>2</sup>

The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had every reason to state that the psychological warfare unleashed by imperialism cannot be qualified otherwise than as a specific form of aggression, of information imperialism which infringes on the sovereignty, history, and culture of peoples.<sup>3</sup>

Another expression of the aggressiveness and decay of bourgeois ideology is the *neo-conservatism* of the ruling quarters in the United States, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany and other NATO countries. Neo-conservatism is today a fairly widespread ideological, philosophical, and political trend which rejects outright the materialistic view of history and condemns

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<sup>1</sup> See *World Marxist Review*, 1985, No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Corey Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1970, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, p. 108.

what it terms "atheistic materialism". It is an extreme brand of subjective idealism.

Neo-conservatism in politics is a rabid form of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. President Ronald Reagan, whose Administration even the people of the US associate with a rise in the right-wing, conservative movement in the United States, said quite simply that the West would outlive communism and leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history. He stated that communism would be written off as a sad and painful chapter in human history. The West was not on the defensive any more, and that is why he, the President, was calling on the whole world to begin a crusade for freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Bourgeois sociology, naturally, also sees things from the view point of a "crusade against Communism" and defends capitalism's freedom to oppress and exploit.

(2) Before attempting to describe the principal trends of modern bourgeois sociology, it is necessary to pinpoint its basic features. Then the student of historical materialism can, if need be, analyse them in more detail. The basic features of modern bourgeois sociology are:

1. *historical idealism*, which bases itself on the assumption that ideas and consciousness are primary, while material life of society is derivative;

2. *subjectivism*, which rejects the objective approach to reality and denies the existence of any objective laws of social development;

3. *indeterminism*, which denies the existence of objective relations of cause and effect and other objective laws of social development;

4. *agnosticism*, which denies the possibility of knowing social processes and phenomena;

5. *eclecticism*, which has no qualms about confusing different, very often diametrically opposed ideas and philosophical views—materialism and idealism, dialectics and metaphysics.

Now we will describe the basic methodological principles of scientific criticism of bourgeois sociology worked out by Lenin.

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<sup>1</sup> See "Address to Members of Parliament. June 8, 1982, London", in: *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*. Vol. XVIII, No. 23, June 14, 1982, pp. 769-770.

First of all, in examining bourgeois sociology as a whole or a certain trend, one should look into its material roots. Lenin pointed out that, in criticizing bourgeois theories, one should not limit oneself to comparing them with Marxist ideas. The materialistic method demands that the *material* foundation of any concept be analysed, whether it is scientifically sound or unsound.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin also reminds us that politics, above all class relations, is the most concentrated expression of economics. Lenin, therefore, rejected the abstract idealistic non-class approach to ideology. He wrote, for example, that Narodnik ideas were "the result of their reflecting the interests and the viewpoint of the small producer, and not at all the result of 'pure' thought".<sup>2</sup> Thus a *class*, and in this sense a *partisan* approach to bourgeois sociology is one of the most important principles of its scientific analysis.

Of great importance is Lenin's principle of the irreconcilability of socialist and bourgeois ideology. In his work "What Is to Be Done" he stressed: "...the *only* choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a 'third' ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way*, *to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology."<sup>3</sup>

A scientific analysis of bourgeois sociology is always set in a concrete historical context. Although Marxism always emphasizes the common foundation and essence of bourgeois sociology as a whole, it stipulates the importance of distinguishing the characteristics of different sociological schools and trends expressing the interests of different bourgeois strata. It also stresses the need to remember that these schools and trends keep changing and developing together with the classes they represent and with the whole of society.

Thus, one can only properly examine the major branches of

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<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1963, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1977, p. 384.

modern bourgeois sociology if one keeps in mind these fundamental principles.

(3) A fitting epigraph to the examination of the third question are Engels' words: "The bourgeoisie turns everything into a commodity, hence also the writing of history. It is in its nature, a condition of its existence, to falsify all commodities: it falsified history. And the version of history which is most highly paid is that which is best falsified for the purposes of the bourgeoisie."<sup>1</sup>

Falsification of history by Western bourgeois historians increased after the October 1917 socialist revolution in Russia and grew with the emergence of a world socialist community, and the collapse of the colonial system. Ever since, bourgeois sociology has been out to disprove the Marxist-Leninist concept of the objectivity of social progress and its basic conclusion that all countries will inevitably go through a revolutionary change from capitalism to socialism and on to communism.

One of the first Western bourgeois sociologists of the 20th century to question the very idea of historical progress was the German philosopher Oswald Spengler (1880-1936). Soon after World War I, he published his basic work, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (The Decline of Europe). Although the book contains a rather pessimistic view of European capitalism, as is obvious from its very title, still objectively speaking it served the interests of the capitalist class.

In analysing Spengler's interpretation of history, one should take into account two things: in the first place, Spengler postulated that society and nature were the product of human consciousness, thoughts and emotions, and that is the point of view of subjective idealism. In the second place, he did not believe it was possible to study history in any scientific way (which makes him a typical agnostic), because any historical event happens only once. A student of history, he said, should be guided exclusively by his intuition if he hopes to succeed.

It was probably Spengler's own intuition that told him that there was no such thing as a common human culture and that

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "Plan of Chapter Two and Fragments for *The History of Ireland*", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1985, p. 313.

instead there were actually eight distinctly original, inimitable, self-contained local cultures: Chinese, Babylonian, Egyptian, Graeco-Roman, Arab, West European, Mayan, and the budding Russian-Siberian. "Instead of the monotonous picture of a world history moving in a straight line," he wrote, "I see a multitude of powerful cultures . . . each with its own idea, its own passions, its own life, desires and feelings, and finally its own death."<sup>1</sup> Each local culture, whose motive force is the spirit, is born, develops through childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and finally dies. Such cycles, according to Spengler, are the basis of historical development.

Spengler's ideas were developed by the outstanding English historian and sociologist *Arnold J. Toynbee* (1889-1975) in his 12-volume *A Study of History*. According to Toynbee, history develops according to divine laws, with religion as the main driving force of each particular culture (civilisation). It is above all the different religions that distinguish one civilisation from another. Initially, Toynbee counted twenty-one such civilisations, later bringing down the number to thirteen.

Arbitrarily extending the lifespan of each "local culture" to 6,000 years (compared with Spengler's 1,000 years), Toynbee tried to prove that different human cultures develop parallel to each other, rather than succeeding each other. The empires of Alexander the Great, the USA and the USSR exist simultaneously, he wrote. However, if one is to accept this idea, there can be no question of any progressive social development, to say nothing of the basic conclusion of Marxism concerning mankind's inevitable transition from capitalism to socialism and to communism.

In the later years of his life, Toynbee was largely influenced by the Japanese scholar, Ikeda, and turned his attention to East Asia. He finally came to the conclusion that Japan, China, Vietnam and Korea (that is, both the capitalist and socialist countries occupying that region today) will form an axis around which the whole world will eventually unite.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1960s, another theory that gained wide currency was

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<sup>1</sup> Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, Becksche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München, 1920, Bd. 1, S. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Toynbee A. J., Ikeda D., *The Toynbee-Ikeda Dialogue. Man Himself Must Choose*, Tokyo, New York, San Francisco, Kodansha International Ltd., 1976.

the theory of the stages of economic growth advanced by the American sociologist W. W. Rostow. His book, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*,<sup>1</sup> was directed against the Marxist-Leninist teaching of socio-economic formations and against historical materialism as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

According to Rostow, all nations go through the following five stages-of-growth: (1) the traditional society (the entire pre-capitalist history of humankind), (2) the preconditions for take-off (societies in the process of transition, i.e. the advent of capitalism), (3) the take-off (the industrial revolution), (4) the drive for maturity (a high degree of technological development with the spread of new production techniques and science), and (5) the age of high mass-consumption.

It follows from the table given in Rostow's book that the eight most developed capitalist countries—Britain, France, the USA, Germany (here, the FRG—V.Z.), Sweden, Japan, Canada and Australia—have already entered “the age of high mass-consumption”.

The USSR, according to Rostow, is at the fourth stage, that is, it is “driving to maturity”, and from the technological point of view is ready to enter the fifth stage.

Another five countries—Turkey, Argentina, Mexico, China, and India—entered the third stage only in the 1940s and 1950s, while the rest of the world, that is, the vast majority of former colonies and semi-colonies of the imperialist West, are still at the first and second stages.

The criteria that Rostow used in determining the stages of economic growth are the level of development of science and technology, their practical application, and per capita produc-

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<sup>1</sup> Rostow W. W., *The Stages of Economic Growth. A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge, University Press, 1960.

<sup>2</sup> Despite the arrogant way he polemicalises with Marx, far from understanding the essence of dialectical materialism, Rostow displays a rather poor knowledge of even the basics of Marx's teaching of socio-economic formations. According to Rostow, Marx speaks of four successive formations: feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and communism. Well, we can make allowances for the fact that a bourgeois sociologist may not know that, according to Marx, socialism is not a formation but the lower stage of the communist formation. But to where have the primitive-communal and slave-owning formations disappeared? If Rostow believes that they never existed, why ascribe this to Marx?



tion. Rostow does not seem to realise that the level of technology, productive forces and science alone does not determine the socio-economic system of a given society. For example, the United States and the Soviet Union are both great industrial nations, yet they belong to very different socio-economic systems: capitalism and socialism.

The criteria used by Rostow in drawing up his construct of the five stages-of-growth of human society ignore the form of ownership of the means of production and the nature of production relations in each particular society and are, therefore, scientifically unsound.

It may seem on the surface that, by identifying countries with different socio-economic systems and recognising the ability of communism to ensure "high mass-consumption", Rostow is quite impartial. However, this is a false impression. He does not miss the opportunity to glorify Western capitalism, imperialism, above all in the United States, and to cast a slur on communism and the socialist countries. While holding the post of Chairman of the Political Planning Council of the US State Department in the 1960s, Rostow actively promoted the aggressive foreign policy of US imperialism. For example, he advocated settling "the problem of South Vietnam" by intense bombing of North Vietnam.

The theory of "the stages of economic growth" is close to the theory of "an integrated industrial society" and the theory of convergence, according to which in the course and on the basis of the high-technology revolution, all the developed countries—both capitalist and socialist—show a tendency to gradual convergence and ultimate merging. Here is what Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968),<sup>1</sup> a Russian-American sociologist prominent in the West, wrote to this effect: "The preceding brief analysis of the changes

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<sup>1</sup> Pitirim Sorokin headed the right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Russia in the early 20th century. After the February Bourgeois Revolution of 1917, he was Kerensky's personal secretary and editor of *The People's Will* newspaper. After the October Socialist Revolution of 1917, he left the right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in 1918 and stepped down as member of the Constituent Assembly. Lenin assessed this fact in his article, "The Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin", a symptom of a change of front, a split among the petty-bourgeois democrats (see: V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, p. 190). In 1920, Sorokin became lecturer at Petrograd University. In 1922 he emigrated and in 1923 settled in the United States.

and tendencies in the main compartments of culture, social institutions, systems of values, and the socio-cultural life of both nations demonstrates indeed that in all these basic fields both countries have been increasingly becoming similar to each other and converging mutually toward a mixed type, neither Communistic nor Capitalistic, neither Totalitarian nor Democratic, neither Materialistic nor Idealistic, neither totally Religious nor Atheistic-Agnostic, neither purely Individualistic nor Collectivistic, neither too criminal nor too saintly."<sup>1</sup>

What can one say about such theories? There is no denying, of course, that the scientific and technological revolution assumes similar forms in capitalist and socialist countries, with automation and computerisation of production, gigantic industrial combines, and fantastic achievements in science. It is hard to deny, too, that there is much in common between them in the look of modern cities with their glass-and-concrete high-rises and similar architectural designs. Yet all these similarities are only on the surface, and they cannot change the fundamental socio-economic differences between capitalism and socialism. It is not the plants, factories, railways and high-rises themselves that make capitalism different from socialism, but the form of ownership of all these assets—private under capitalism and public under socialism—and the aims of production—to increase the profits of the capitalists or to satisfy the needs of the working people. It is for this reason that automation of production, like scientific and technological progress as a whole, has different social consequences under capitalism (unemployment, the deepening gulf between intellectual and physical work, and degradation of the main productive force, the workers) and under socialism (higher labour productivity, which increases the working man's leisure time for developing as a well-rounded individual, and also bridges the gap between intellectual and physical work).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, when imperialism above all in the United States, did its utmost to transfer the rivalry between the two world systems into the sphere of military confrontation, the theories of convergence of capitalism and social-

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<sup>1</sup> Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Mutual Convergence of the United States and the USSR to the Mixed Sociocultural Type*, Mexico, 1961, pp. 45-46.

ism receded into the background or underwent substantial changes. Western bourgeois sociologists started emphasising "partial convergence", that is, merging of capitalism and socialism not at the level of socio-economic systems but rather at the level of individual areas of social life—through development of market mechanisms of economic regulation in the socialist countries, political pluralism, introduction of bourgeois law. In other words, the aim of "partial convergence" was to transform socialism into capitalism, or rather to dissolve socialism in capitalism.

The idea of an integrated industrial society has also undergone substantial changes. A number of Western bourgeois sociologists of diverse political affiliations, from liberal to reactionary (for example, Bell, Galbraith, Toffler, Kahn and Brzezinski in the United States; Fourastié and Touraine in France; and Dahrendorf in the FRG) advanced the theory of a "post-industrial society" which would succeed capitalist industrial society. Although each of these sociologists interprets the future post-industrial society in his own way, there is much in common in their premises and conclusions.

One feature characteristic of all the theoreticians of the "post-industrial society" is their technological determinism, which exaggerates the importance of society's technical development level and minimises or denies altogether the importance of ownership and class struggle. Depending on the level of technical development, they distinguish: (a) the pre-industrial (agrarian) society, (b) the industrial (capitalist and socialist) society, and (c) the post-industrial society (also called the technotronic or super-industrial society), in relation to which the concepts of "capitalism" and "socialism" become irrelevant.

These theoreticians have their own interpretation of economic, social and political development. In accordance with society's technological level, the economy is dominated by the "primary sphere" (agriculture), or the "secondary sphere" (industry), or the "tertiary sphere" (services), where science and education would play a leading role. In the period of "primary sphere" domination, social organisation is determined by the Church and army, and society is ruled by clergymen and feudal lords. Under the domination of the "secondary sphere", society is ruled by corporations and businessmen. Under the "tertiary sphere", the lead-

ing forces will be universities, scientists, and experts. It goes without saying that the high-technology revolution will make unnecessary a social revolution.

It can be seen that the theory of the "post-industrial society", which claims to play the role of a universal sociological theory, attempts to find an alternative to the Marxist teaching concerning the progress of mankind to socialism and communism—an attempt not just to modernise capitalism but to perpetuate it. But it is obviously a vain effort.

However, many bourgeois sociologists see the scientific unsoundness of the theoretical premises and logical constructs of the "post-industrial society" concept and have decided to give up theory altogether, going to the other extreme: empirical sociology. Let us now proceed to describe bourgeois empirical sociology and recommend a method for its examination.

(4) Bourgeois empirical sociology emerged in the 1920s in the USA. Its advent was heralded by two books: *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* by W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, and *An Introduction to the Science of Sociology* by R. Park and E. Burgess.

Having worked out a number of principles and methods of concrete sociological investigation (observation, polling, questionnaires, social experiment, modelling, mathematical data processing), empirical sociology enthusiastically got down to investigating concrete individual social processes and phenomena. Urban sociology began to study demographic, housing, transport and other problems of modern cities. Rural sociology concentrated on similar problems in the countryside. Industrial psychology studies organisation of labour and public relations at industrial enterprises. Cultural sociology examines cultural processes with the aid of ethnology. Another rapidly growing branch of this science is the sociology of the family, marriage and child upbringing. Other branches include sociologies of employment, sports, and the school. Some of the leading branches today are sociologies of public opinion, sex, and crime. In fact there is hardly a single aspect of society which would not be covered today by bourgeois empirical sociology.

Empirical sociology often adopts methods and techniques used by special sciences, as for example, social psychology. Another

branch of sociology that has recently gained currency in the West is sociometry, or microsociology (represented by Gurvitch in France and Moreno in the United States), which postulates that the macrostructure of society is determined by the microstructures of so-called small groups making up society, that is, personal relations, sympathies and antipathies. For instance, there are frequent quarrels between girls living at a female boarding school. To obviate conflict situations, microsociologists reshuffle the inhabitants and pick roommates in such a way as to make the members of each small group compatible. The conflicts disappear. As a result, the microsociologists come to the conclusion that what is possible at a boarding school is also possible in society as a whole: class struggle can be eliminated in the same way as quarrels at a boarding school.

The empirical research carried out by Western bourgeois sociologists often comes up with valuable statistical and factual data, which can be used by Marxist sociologists (naturally, after it has been carefully checked). However, when it comes to generalisations and conclusions (which is an indispensable element of any science), one must beware. Bourgeois empirical researchers claim that they are completely apolitical and not affiliated to any philosophy—yet such a statement is in itself already a definite class policy and philosophy.

In the view of Marxism-Leninism, serious concrete sociological investigation is absolutely essential for a scientific analysis of processes and phenomena taking place in any particular country, for assessing the development of a country as a whole and for drawing conclusions which may be vital to further policy-making. In an introduction to the second edition of "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", a brilliant model of concrete sociological investigation, Lenin wrote that the desire of the Mensheviks to seek answers "to concrete questions in the simple logical development of the general truth about the basic character of our revolution, is a vulgarisation of Marxism and downright mockery of dialectical materialism".<sup>1</sup>

A critical analysis of statistical data enabled Lenin to come to two important conclusions: the first, concerning Russia, about the

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1977, p. 32.

leading role of the proletariat in the approaching bourgeois-democratic revolution; the second, a much broader one, that the strength of the proletariat in the process of history is immeasurably greater than its share of the total population.<sup>1</sup>

In developing a certain attitude to concrete sociological investigation in general, and to bourgeois empirical sociology in particular, it is essential first to make a thorough study of Lenin's article "Statistics and Sociology". This work contains a number of theses of paramount methodological importance. Here is one of them: "The most widely used, and most fallacious, method in the realm of social phenomena is to tear out *individual* minor facts and juggle with examples. Selecting chance examples presents no difficulty at all, but is of no value, or of purely negative value, for in each individual case everything hinges on the historically concrete situation. Facts, if we take them in their *entirety*, in their *interconnection*, are not only stubborn things, but undoubtedly proof-bearing things. Minor facts, if taken out of their entirety, out of their interconnection, if they are arbitrarily selected and torn out of context, are merely things for juggling, or even worse."<sup>2</sup>

The natural limitations and superficiality of empiricism have prompted Western bourgeois sociologists to seek access to more general theory. Eventually there appeared *the school of structural-functional analysis*, represented by Parsons, Merton, Davis, Levy, and others.

It should be noted that historical materialism also uses structural-functional analysis as one of the principles of systems research into social processes and phenomena as entities, in which each structural element has a certain functional purpose. When we spoke in the first chapters about the structure of a socio-economic formation, about its major elements—basis and superstructure—and their interaction, and of the interconnection and interdependence of economic, social, and political relations and institutions, all this was done in line with the principle of structural-functional analysis (naturally, from a materialistic point of view). In Marxist sociology, structural-functional analysis is in-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Statistics and Sociology", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 272.

timately connected with the principles of socio-economic determinism, historicism, analysis of phenomena that are internally contradictory—all of which principles constitute the dialectical materialistic methodology of examining social phenomena.

In Western bourgeois sociology, the structural-functional analysis school holds idealistic views. For example, its founder, the US sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), imagined society as a complex functional system, the basic element of which was the social interaction of abstract individuals. But people's social actions, he said, were determined by the psychology of individuals and groups. Even the most complicated social actions involving millions of people originate in human psychology, he stated.

True, Parsons and other functionalists sometimes adopt the principles of the so-called multiple-factor theory, according to which everything is equally important for the development of society, everything equally affects historical advance—economics, politics, science, religion, culture and ideology. Bearing in mind what has been said in the previous chapters of this book, our reader can easily demonstrate the unsoundness of this approach.

Parsons' attempt to liken society to a biological organism, with the bourgeoisie playing the part of the brain and the working class performing the function of the muscles, also does not hold water. Obviously, this is a shameless advocacy of capitalism with its class exploitation. Parsons' followers also make no secret of their belief that capitalism is the best possible system, and one that requires no changes. They see the workers' class struggle as "deviant behaviour", which the state can and must curb. This coercive, punitive function of the capitalist state aimed at suppressing any protest of the working people is, therefore, portrayed as a natural reaction of a living organism to pathological deviations from the norm.

Thus, what seems at first sight to be an abstract theory serves the interests of the most reactionary bourgeoisie. Yet no sociological theory is capable of changing the verdict history has passed on capitalism.

### **Questions and Answers**

*Question:* What is the Marxist interpretation of ideological struggle and, specifically, the forms and methods of settling the ideological dispute between capitalism and socialism?

*Answer:* Marxists believe that ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism is a natural phenomenon. It will continue just as long as there exist capitalism and socialism, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the exploiters and the exploited. Calls for de-ideologisation of relations between antagonistic classes and different socio-economic systems, which are heard from time to time among bourgeois reformists, are not merely unrealistic but actually reactionary, since their aim is to ideologically disarm all opponents of capitalism and establish undivided rule of imperialist ideology.

*Marxists-Leninists declare that there can be no reconciliation of ideologies.* This is a position of principle, which is not negotiable.

But does this mean that Marxists-Leninists advocate settling the ideological dispute between capitalism and socialism by military means and propose converting all dissenters to their faith by force? Most emphatically not! Weapons can only destroy people's heads, not transplant ideas from one head to another.

Furthermore, Marxists-Leninists believe that ideological struggle must not turn into a psychological war. They are for a peaceful and honest competition between ideas and ways of life. Ideological struggle must not be used for interfering in other nations' internal affairs, must not lead to political and military confrontation. Otherwise an ideological dispute over whose system is better may result in the greatest disaster ever, a disaster that would put an end to both the quarrellers and what they were quarrelling about.

*Question:* What is "informational colonialism"?

*Answer:* Informational colonialism is ideological expansion of imperialism in the newly independent countries, whose own national mass media are weak. Here are just a few facts. The former colonies, which account for most of the world's population, are covered by only 7 per cent of the world's TV networks, 25 per cent of radio stations, and about 20 per cent of total newspaper circulation. But even these organs mostly spread information provided by the Western media about world developments, above all developments in the West—naturally, information doctored and biased in favour of capitalism. For example, a recent study conducted by *Afrique-Asie* magazine of information coming from the US-based Associated Press Agency shows that 47 per cent of the



news is about the United States, 16 per cent about Western Europe, 19 per cent about Asia, and a mere 4 per cent about Africa. The Worldnet satellite television system currently being installed by the United States will enable the United States to inundate the developing countries with a torrent of information favourable to Western imperialism, thus undermining the burgeoning national telecommunications systems and adversely affecting the development of national cultures.

The newly independent nations are demanding that Western ideological expansion be stopped and a new international information order be established.

*Question:* How does imperialism ideologically attack the theory and practice of socialist orientation pursued by a group of developing countries?

*Answer:* Western propaganda attacks socialist orientation along four basic lines:

(a) by alleging that a socialist orientation of newly-independent countries with a backward economy goes against the views of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and against the fundamentals of the materialistic interpretation of history, which gives priority to economic factors over socio-political factors;

(b) by alleging that Marxism is a Western theory which cannot be applied in Eastern conditions;

(c) by alleging that the idea of socialist orientation was born in Moscow and is being forcibly imposed on the developing countries;

(d) by alleging that in practice socialist orientation is accompanied by the same difficulties and contradictions as capitalist orientation.

### **For Homework and Discussion**

1. On the basis of knowledge acquired in the present handbook, give a critical analysis of the above-mentioned four arguments against socialist orientation in developing countries as advanced by Western bourgeois ideologists.

2. Proceeding from an analysis of local conditions, describe the ideological struggle in your country and region. What features distinguish it from the struggle in other countries?

## CONCLUSION

### *Why Is It Important to Study Historical Materialism?*

Let us sum up the results of this course of historical materialism. The question naturally arises: what use will it be to you?

We hope that the reader has gained a better understanding of society as a certain system of social relations and an understanding of history as the inevitable succession of socio-economic formations. This understanding is a source of social optimism for all revolutionaries.

Historical materialism is a theory—but a theory which is intimately connected with revolutionary practice. The mission of Marxism-Leninism, including historical materialism as one of its components, is to serve as a beacon for revolutionary practice.

As a science of human society as a whole and of the most general laws and motive forces of its development, historical materialism is an international teaching. There can be no historical materialism meant only for Europe, although Europe was its cradle. The basic principles of the materialistic interpretation of history cannot be applicable only to certain regions and not applicable to others. Just as there can be no “national models” of Marxism, there can be no “national models” of historical materialism. The main distinguishing feature of historical materialism is its significance for all mankind and its universal applicability.

But, of course, historical materialism does not claim to have discovered the ultimate truth. We can be sure that society will present us with many a riddle as it develops. But historical materialism will help to solve them.

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