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A. Pavlenko

The World Revolutionary Process

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Introduction

The world revolutionary process is a process of transition from one socio-economic formation to the other, from capitalism to socialism, a process covering a whole historical epoch. The main forces behind it are the countries of the socialist community, the international working class, and the national liberation movement.

The *countries of the socialist community* are engaged in building communism—a new and most progressive socio-economic formation. They have established as a reality its first phase, socialism, which has a great revolutionising impact on all other countries and nations.

The *international working class* is the vanguard of modern society, a vehicle of revolutionary ideas, abolishing capitalism, and waging an all-embracing struggle to transform capitalist society into socialist society.

The *national liberation movement* has developed far and wide. The colonial system of imperialism has collapsed as a result of victorious national liberation revolutions. In recent years such revolutions have triumphed in Angola, Mozambique,

Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Iran and a number of other countries. Many nations, after doing away with colonial oppression, decide to create the conditions necessary for socialist development.

The whole world is in turmoil. The ground is burning under the feet of colonialists in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the people of the Middle East are astir while violent class battles are taking place in the USA, Japan and the capitalist countries of Europe. The working class is taking a decisive stand against the system of wage slavery; millions upon millions of peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, students and believers are joining in the struggle. Class and revolutionary battles are taking place all over the world; every day brings news of broad anti-imperialist, anti-war and other progressive movements.

“Socialist revolutions, anti-imperialist national-liberation revolutions, people’s democratic revolutions, broad peasant movements, popular struggles to overthrow fascist and other despotic regimes, and general democratic movements against national oppression—all these merge in a single worldwide revolutionary process undermining and destroying capitalism.”*

The imperialist bourgeoisie makes every effort not only to obstruct the world revolutionary process, but also to discredit revolutionary movements and the very idea of revolution. The ideologists

* *The Road to Communism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962, p. 484.

and politicians of international imperialism tend to attribute current revolutions to the "subversive activity of international communism", to "international terrorism" or to explain them by some minor secondary reasons. The people of Iran have overthrown the bloody regime of the Shah, but bourgeois ideologists claim that this revolution is merely a result of the personal enmity of Ayatollah Khomeini to the Pahlavy dynasty and of the doings of extremists who instigated the people.

However, neither the world revolutionary process as a whole, nor any of its manifestations, can be explained by intriguing on the part of one person, the characters of individual personalities, the "export of revolution" or similar arguments. They are always caused by deep economic and political reasons. The moment for revolution comes when the existing state of affairs cannot hold on any longer, when a revolutionary situation is maturing and the majority of the people is joining in the struggle.

The author of this book, by analysing the present world revolutionary process, hopes to acquaint the reader with the laws of its development and the reasons for the inevitable replacement of the capitalist system by a new, communist, socio-economic formation.

Chapter One

THE MODERN EPOCH AND BASIC LAWS GOVERNING THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

It is extremely important that all revolutionary forces have a Marxist-Leninist definition of the character and essence of the modern epoch. A full and comprehensive analysis of the epoch provides a general picture of the development of the world, and makes it possible to understand the complicated and manifold phenomena of social life, correctly define the prospects of social progress and reveal the main trends in modern development and the balance of class forces throughout the world. This problem affects the future of mankind as a whole.

If the popular masses understand the essence of the present historical epoch it makes it all the easier to acquaint them with the laws governing the world's social development and draw them into the democratic and socialist remodelling of society. A scientific analysis of the epoch constitutes the theoretical basis for the strategy and tactics of the Communist and Workers' Parties, and of all contemporary revolutionary forces. Finally, the modern epoch must be scientifically defined since this question arouses ideological conflict.

1. The Character and Essence of the Modern Epoch

Socio-Economic Formation

The place which any given epoch occupies in history is determined on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which treats socio-economic formations as stages of historical development. The theoretical definition of the concept "socio-economic formation" was given by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, founders of scientific communism.

To understand this concept one must know the meaning of such terms as the "productive forces", the "relations of production", "basis" and "superstructure".

Material social production lies at the basis of all human life. In order to live people need food, clothing, dwelling and other material values, and in order to produce these things people must work. Material production is effected through the medium of the *productive forces* which embrace *means of production*, instruments of labour in the first place, and *people* who possess certain work skills and experience and who put these means of production into operation. The main productive force of human society at all stages of its development consists of the working people.

In the process of production and joint activity people not only act upon nature but also enter into definite relations with one another for the

purpose of mutually exchanging the products of their activity. Social relations in the process of production, exchange and distribution constitute *production economic relations*.

A decisive role in the system of relations of production is played by the existing *form of ownership*, that is the relation of people to the means of production. If the means of production are owned by individual people, social strata, groups or classes who use these for exploiting other groups, strata and classes it means that *private ownership* prevails within that society. In such a society the owners of the means of production and those who are deprived of them stand in the relative positions of domination and subjection, and the lion's share of the total product is appropriated by the owners of the means of production (slave-owning, feudal and capitalist systems). In this case the relations of production are manifestly antagonistic, society is rent by contradictions, and class battles become more and more violent.

On the other hand, if the means of production, objects and results of labour belong to society as a whole and are used to satisfy the material and cultural requirements of the popular masses, *public ownership* holds sway. In such a society there is no exploitation of man by man, the working people work for their own benefit, for the benefit of society; the relations of production are characterised by the comradely cooperation and mutual assistance of equal and free toilers (socialist system).

The totality, unity and interaction of the productive forces and the relations of production make up the *mode of production*. The *law of the correspondence of production relations to the character and level of development of the productive forces* is at work at every stage of the development of human society. The fact that the productive forces are a more mobile element of the mode of production often leads to a situation when, at a certain stage, the relations of production begin to lag behind and retard the development of the productive forces. In the case of antagonistic formations, in which there exist classes defending the old relations of production, the latter become fetters on the productive forces. This conflict brings about the sharpening of all, especially class, contradictions in society. At this point begins the epoch of social revolution.

The relations of production, that is the relations of ownership, exchange and distribution in their totality form the *basis* or the *economic system* of the given society. Every basis has its own *superstructure*, which embraces political, ideological, legal, moral and religious relations with the corresponding institutions (the state, parties, public organisations, the church, etc.) and forms of social consciousness (ideas, theories, views). Superstructure is a class category; it serves and safeguards the basis, and expresses the interests of the ruling class. In the epoch of social revolution the old basis is abolished; the immense superstructure towering above it undergoes more or less rapid change.

To sum up, a *socio-economic formation* is a society at a specific stage of historical development taken in the unity of all its aspects: its mode of production, its economic system (basis) and the superstructure corresponding to it.

The progress of history is a succession of socio-economic formations which forms an ascending line of world social development. Human society has passed through four formations (primitive-communal, slave-owning, feudal and capitalist) and is now in the epoch of transition to the communist formation.

After the decay of the primitive-communal system and up to the advent of capitalism, social progress proceeds extremely unevenly and abounds in contradictions. In a class antagonistic society a small minority thrives at the expense of a huge majority which is exploited and oppressed. The irreconcilability of their basic interests engenders struggle between the propertied and non-propertied classes. One formation is succeeded by another not spontaneously, but as a result of *class struggle*. It is precisely class struggle that stimulates the development of antagonistic formations while social revolution, as its highest manifestation, is a natural transition from a lower formation to a higher one.

The Inevitable Collapse of Capitalism

Capitalism is the last antagonistic formation based on the exploitation of man by man. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were the first to scientifi-

cally prove the historical inevitability of its collapse and the transition of mankind to the communist formation.

The capitalist economy, based on private ownership of the instruments and means of production, is regulated by spontaneous economic laws through the medium of competitive struggle sweeping the market. Under capitalism the process of labour acquires an increasingly social character, which is manifested in the concentration and centralisation of the means of production and manpower at big enterprises, in the intensification of the social division of labour. The results of this social labour process, however, are appropriated by individual capitalists owning the means of production. *The contradiction between the social character of production and the private capitalist form of the appropriation of its results is the basic economic contradiction of capitalism.* It is expressed in the incongruity between the organisation of production at individual enterprises and the anarchy of production reigning in society at large, in the antagonism *between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie*, which is the *main class contradiction of capitalism*. This shows that the development of capitalism itself engenders and aggravates its inherent antagonistic contradictions which inevitably lead to the collapse of capitalism. The numerical strength, organisation, solidarity and class-consciousness of the proletariat grow together with the development of capitalism. Class struggles harden the proletariat, it accomplishes a socialist revolution, overthrows

the dominant bourgeoisie and builds a new, communist (socialist) society. This is the *historical mission of the proletariat*.

Imperialism as the Last Stage of Capitalism

In its development capitalism passes through two stages: its lower stage is characterised by free competition and its higher stage, imperialism, by the reign of monopolies. The first theoretical exposition of imperialism was given by V. I. Lenin, the founder of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet state.

Under imperialism the contradictions of capitalism reach their culminating point. The main contradiction between the social character of production and the private capitalist form of appropriation is intensified; antagonism between labour and capital, between the peoples of colonial, dependent and newly-independent countries, on the one hand, and a handful of imperialist powers, on the other, as well as contradictions between imperialist powers themselves, grow ever more acute. At this stage the world capitalist system as a whole is ripe for socialist revolution.

In the spring of 1917 Lenin wrote: "*The extremely high level of development which world capitalism in general has attained, the replacement of free competition by monopoly capitalism, the fact that the banks and the capitalist associations have prepared the machinery for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and*

increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the tremendous obstacles standing in the way of the proletariat's economic and political struggle, the horrors, misery, ruin, and brutalisation caused by the imperialist war—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

*“That era has dawned.”**

Lenin's forecast proved prophetic. In October 1917 Russia's proletariat accomplished the Great October Socialist Revolution, overthrew the power of the bourgeoisie and embarked on building a socialist society.

The Communist Formation

The communist socio-economic formation is the highest stage in the development of human society. Its two phases are socialism and communism proper.

The building of socialism is a long historical process. The experience of the Soviet Union shows that this process embraces a period of transition from capitalism to socialism, a stage of building developed, or mature, socialism and a stage of the gradual overgrowing of developed socialism into communism.

* V. I. Lenin, “Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 469.