Karl Marx and Our Time

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КАРЛ МАРКС И СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ

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KARL MARX'S TEACHING AND SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM IN THE USSR

One hundred years have passed since the death of Karl Marx. A whole century. A century of dramatic upheavals, revolutionary storms and fundamental changes in mankind's destiny; a century which has refuted and swept away a multitude of philosophical concepts, social theories and political doctrines. It has been a century of successive victories by Marxism, of its growing impact on social development.

With the march of time, the meaning and scale of Karl Marx's lifelong feat become increasingly clear.

For millennia people have been looking for a way to restructure society on a just basis, to rid themselves of exploitation, coercion, and material and intellectual poverty. Great minds have devoted themselves to that quest. Generation after generation, fighters for the people's happiness sacrificed their lives for that goal. But it was in Marx's titanic activities that the investigations of a great scholar merged for the first time with the dedicated practical work of a leader and organiser of the revolutionary movement of the masses.

Marx is rightly considered the successor to all the best that was created by classical German philosophy, English political economy and French utopian socialism. But, after critically reassessing their achievements, he went much further. First and foremost, because he undertook a task which he formulated with depth and simplicity, as befits a genius: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."[1] Marx devoted all the power of his remarkable mind and his entire life to the cause of the revolutionary transformation of the world.

A distinctive feature of Marxism is the unity of consistently scientific theory and revolutionary practice. Marx's scientific work could only have unfolded in inseparable connection with the independent entry into the political arena of the pro-

[1] K. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 8.

Here and further on, the quotations of Marx and Engels are taken from K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow (English-language edition), unless otherwise indicated.

letariat, then a very young class historically. Marx had the good fortune to see how the prophetic words he had pronounced in his youth were translated into reality: "As philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *spiritual* weapons in philosophy."[1]

The philosophy which Marx gave the working class was a revolution in the history of social thought. Humanity did not even know a fraction as much about itself as it has learnt thanks to Marxism. Marx's teaching, presented in the organic integrity of dialectical and historical materialism, political economy and the theory of scientific communism, was a real revolution in world outlook and simultaneously illuminated the road to the most profound social revolutions.

Marx revealed the objective, basically material, laws of the march of history. He discovered them where previously everything had seemed to be either a trick of chance, the despotism of individuals, or had been presented as the self-expression of a mythical world spirit. He perceived the essence behind the visible, the apparent, behind the phenomenon. He ripped the shroud of secrecy from capitalist production, from the exploitation of labour by capital; he showed how surplus value is created and by whom it is appropriated.

Frederick Engels, Marx's great friend and companion-in-arms, attached special importance to Marx's two major discoveries—the materialist interpretation of history and the theory of surplus value. And it is easy to see why. These discoveries made it possible to turn socialism from a utopia into a science, to provide a scientific interpretation of the class struggle. They made possible what Lenin described as the chief component of Marx's doctrine: the elucidation of "the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society".[2]

[1] K. Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1975, p. 187.

[2] V. I. Lenin, "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 582.

Here and further on, the quotations of Lenin are taken from V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow (English-language edition), unless otherwise indicated.

Yes, Karl Marx was a great scholar. But he was also a great practical revolutionary. It is astonishing how much he was able to do for the attainment of the goals that he had indicated.

Marx, together with Engels, founded the Communist League—the first political organisation of the class-conscious, revolutionary proletariat. He was thus the first Communist in the most contemporary meaning of the word, the pioneer of today's world-wide movement.

"Nothing but an international bond of the working classes can ever ensure their definitive triumph,"[1] wrote Marx. And he himself, the founder of the First International, worked tirelessly to forge international workers' unity. The political behests of Marx and Engels to the Communists of the world are inconceivable without the fiery call, "Workers of All Countries, Unite!"

Marx, convinced internationalist that he was, was unsurpassed at grasping the specifics of the situation in the most varied countries—from England to India, from France to China, and from the USA to Ireland. At the same time, when closely examining the life of a people, he constantly sought its interconnection with the life of the whole world. And here he always posed the fundamental question: who will begin the revolutionary destruction of the capitalist order and who will be the first to set out on the road to humanity's communist future?

History provided the answer to this question. It fell to the lot of the proletariat of Russia to be the revolutionary trailblazers. Even today there are "critics" of the October Revolution who assert that it took place contrary to all of Marx's expectations. They pretend that Marx did not take Russia into account at all in his revolutionary forecasts. But in actual fact he showed a great interest in Russian affairs and learned Russian in order to understand them better. An irreconcilable opponent of tsarism, he prophetically assessed the prospects of the mounting social movement in Russia, and saw that in it was ripening a "most grandiose social revolution"[2], which would be of world-

[1] *The General Council of the First International, 1866-1868,* Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 329.

[2] See Marx/Engels, *Werke,* Bd. 32, Berlin, 1965, S. 659.

wide significance. Indeed, Marx was even a better judge of future events than some present-day "critics" are of events of the past.

Engels said that Marx's death left a yawning gap in the ranks of the embattled proletariat. It was indeed an immense loss. But Marx's banner remained in reliable hands. It was carried aloft by Engels himself, who stood at the head of the rising revolutionary working-class movement. It was in Engels's lifetime that Vladimir Ilyich Lenin entered the arena of the proletarian class struggle.

Lenin was a loyal follower of Marx and Engels. As he himself said, he could not tolerate even the slightest aspersion cast on his great teachers. That was only to be expected of the man who did more than anyone else not only for the defence of Marxism, but also, under new historical conditions, for the creative development of all its component parts and for its practical implementation. He elevated Marxism to a new and higher stage. Lenin's name is inseparable from the name of Marx. Leninism is Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, of the collapse of the colonial system, the epoch of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism. In our time Marxism is simply impossible outside of and without Leninism.

Lenin and the Bolshevik Party he founded led the first victorious socialist revolution, which has radically changed the sociopolitical make-up of the world. Thus a new era was ushered in—the era of the grand accomplishments and historic gains of the working class and the mass of the people. Thus scientific socialism, created by Marx, has merged with the actual practice of the millions of working people building a new society.

Today the rich content of Marx's teaching is being revealed to us much more widely and deeply than to his contemporaries, for it is one thing to perceive the idea of the historical need for socialism in its theoretical form and quite another to be both a participant in and witness of that idea's implementation.

The rise of socialism did not take place, in all respects, in the concrete historical ways which the founders of our revolutionary

theory had expected. First socialism triumphed in a single country which, moreover, was not the most developed one economically. The crux of the matter lies in that the October Revolution took place in the epoch of imperialism, under new historical conditions which had not existed in Marx's lifetime. This was mirrored in Lenin's theory of socialist revolution, which has been fully corroborated by life.

Bourgeois and reformist ideologists are to this day building whole systems of arguments in an attempt to prove that the new society built in the USSR and the other fraternal countries differs from the image of socialism which Marx visualised. They say that the reality and the ideal are at variance. But, wittingly or through ignorance, they overlook the fact that, in elaborating his teaching, Marx himself was guided least of all by the requirements of some abstract ideal of a neat, sleek "socialism". He deduced his ideas of the future system from an analysis of the objective contradictions of large-scale capitalist production. It is this science-based approach which enabled him to determine correctly the main features of the society which was yet to be born in the purifying thunderstorms of the social revolutions in the 20th century.

According to Marx, social property in the means of production is the cornerstone of the socio-economic system that replaces capitalism. The clear-cut words of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* emphasised the significance which Marxism attaches to this necessary revolution in production relations: "...the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property."[1]

The historical experience of real, existing socialism shows that it is no simple matter to turn "mine"—privately-owned—into "ours"—collectively-owned. The revolution in property relations can by no means be reduced to a single act, as a result of which the basic means of production become the property of the whole people. Acquiring ownership rights and becoming a real, wise and efficient owner-manager are not at all the same thing. Hav-

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1976, p. 498.

ing accomplished a socialist revolution, the people have a long way to go before they learn their new position as the supreme and undivided owners of the entire public wealth—preparing themselves for it economically, politically and, if you like, psychologically, developing a collectivist mentality and behaviour. For a person of socialist upbringing is only someone who is concerned not just with working well himself, with his own well-being and prestige, but also with the performance of his work-mates and the work collective, and with the interests of the whole country and the working people throughout the world.

The turning of "mine" into "ours", it should be remembered, is a long and multifaceted process which should not be oversimplified. Even when socialist production relations have been established once and for all, some people still preserve, and even reproduce, individualistic habits, a striving to enrich themselves at the expense of others, at the expense of society. In Marx's terminology, all this is a consequence of the alienation of labour, and does not automatically and suddenly evaporate from people's minds, although the alienation itself has already been eliminated.

We are now well aware of all this from the practice of building socialism and communism. But there is something else we know as well: in full conformity with what Marx foresaw, wherever proletarian revolutions have been victorious, social property in the means of production has been firmly established in one form or another and has also become the main factor of the existence of socialism, its foundation and the main source of its progress.

A powerful economy developing according to a plan has been created in our country on the basis of socialist property. This economy makes it possible to set and fulfil national economic and social tasks that are large in scale and complex in content. It goes without saying that the realisation of these potentialities of ours does not take place by itself. Problems and serious difficulties arise. They may have different origins, but these origins are never connected with the essence of the social, collective property, which has been established and has proved its advantages.

On the contrary, many of the shortcomings which sometimes upset normal work in this or that area of our national economy are caused by deviations from the norms and requirements of economic life, whose keystone is socialist property in the means of production.

Take, for example, the question of economical and rational use of material, financial and labour resources. The fulfilment of the current five-year plan and the future development of our economy largely depend on the resolution of this question. When you get down to it, this is a matter of observing the necessary norm of economic management prescribed by socialist property. Its essence lies in a thrifty attitude to the property of the whole people, and in showing initiative and vigour in multiplying it. All of society has to pay for a violation of that norm, and it has the right strictly to call to account those who squander its wealth through negligence, incompetence or selfishness.

Our concerns now centre on increasing the efficiency of production and of the economy as a whole. The Party and Soviet people are deeply aware of the importance of that problem. But its practical solution is not going ahead as successfully as necessary. What is the hitch? Why are we not getting the returns we should from the huge capital investments? Why are the achievements of science and technology not being introduced into production at satisfactory rates?

Many reasons can be mentioned, of course. In the first place, we cannot fail to see that our work to improve and reorganise the economic mechanism and the forms and methods of management falls short of the requirements at the present level of the material, technical, social and spiritual development of Soviet society. That is the main thing. At the same time there are, of course, the effects of such factors as the considerable shortfall in agricultural production in the last four years, and the need to channel more and more funds and material resources to tap the fuel, energy and raw material resources in our country's northern and eastern regions.

One can repeat over and over again Marx's basic idea that appropriate forms of organisation of economic life are needed to

speed up progress of the productive forces, but things will not be set in motion until this theoretical truth is translated into the concrete language of practice. It is of paramount importance today to consider and consistently implement measures capable of giving full scope to the operation of the enormous creative forces inherent in our economy. These measures should be carefully prepared and realistic, and this means that in planning them it is necessary always to proceed from the laws governing the development of the economic system of socialism. The objective character of these laws makes it necessary to avoid any attempts to run the economy by methods alien to its nature. It is useful to recall here Lenin's warning about the danger of the naive belief of some officials that they can solve all problems "by issuing communist decrees".[1]

On the other hand, it is impermissible to leave a project unfinished once we have agreed on the necessary measures and taken decisions. Everything that is decided should be carried out. This is the Leninist tradition of our Party and it is not fitting for us to depart from it.

The interests of society as a whole are the most important guide for the development of an economy based on socialist property. But it certainly does not follow from this that socialism suppresses or ignores personal or local interests, or the specific requirements of different social groups for the general weal. Not at all. As Marx and Engels stressed, "The '*idea*' always disgraced itself insofar as it differed from the '*interest*' ".[2] One of the most important tasks in improving our national economic mechanism is to ensure that these interests are duly taken into account and are combined in the best possible way with the interests of the entire people and thus used as a motive force for the growth of the Soviet economy, for improving its efficiency, for raising labour productivity, and for all-round strengthening of the economic and defence might of the Soviet state.

[1] See V. I. Lenin, "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1977, p. 77.

[2] K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Holy Family", in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 81.

The efficiency of a socialist national economy should, of course, be judged not only by purely economic criteria but also by social ones, bearing in mind the ultimate goal of social production. Under capitalism that goal is profit on capital; under socialism—as Marx proved theoretically—it is the welfare of the working people and creation of the conditions for all-round development of the individual. Existing socialism gives this proposition of Marx flesh and blood.

Indeed, however multifaceted the tasks confronting the Soviet economy, in the final analysis they all merge into one: to ensure the growth of the working people's well-being and create the material conditions for further flowering of their intellectual, cultural life and their active participation in the affairs of society. That is what determines the general direction of the CPSU's economic policy and it is reflected in the documents of the Party's 26th Congress, in the Food Programme now being carried out, and in the Party decisions on concrete economic matters. It is clear that this also determines many, very many, things in our approach to the rationalisation of production, to its intensification. In other words, in our country the problems of raising economic efficiency are decided in the interests of the working people, and not at their expense. This does not make our work any simpler but it allows us to conduct it relying on the inexhaustible strength, knowledge and creative energies of the entire Soviet people.

Marx saw the historical mission of the system that replaces capitalism to lie in turning work from an unpleasant and compulsory duty into the primary vital need of the individual. We now know from experience how much needs to be done on the long road to complete realisation of this idea. But we have already completed the decisive stage. An end has been put to the situation, inherent in capitalism, where the product of labour is opposed to the worker as an alien and even inimical object and where the greater the physical and mental efforts he exerts, the more powerful his oppressors become. The most significant and indisputable gain of socialism is that it has created the conditions that ensure everyone the right to work. It is work, conscious and

conscientious work, work done with initiative, work for the benefit of society, that is recognised in our society as the highest gauge of a person's merit and public prestige.

Practice has also demonstrated that socialisation of the means and objects of production is a necessary and effective factor for the formation of the social climate inherent in socialism, a climate in which man does not have an oppressive feeling of uncertainty about the morrow, a climate in which the collectivist spirit and comradely mutual assistance, moral health and social optimism are prevalent. All this taken together means a fundamentally new quality of life for the working masses, a quality which is not by any means reducible to material comfort but encompasses the entire spectrum of a flourishing life.

Naturally, all this cannot be achieved overnight, the very next day after social property has been established. It therefore cannot be assessed immediately as a "completed", accomplished socialism. A change in property relations does not by itself remove all the negative features of human relationships that have accumulated over the centuries. The fact is that without such a change any "model" of socialism, however attractively clothed, will prove unviable and will exist only in the imagination of its architects. This is axiom of Marxism, and it holds true today as it did a hundred years ago.

The so-called axioms of Marxism should be approached with care since life itself inflicts severe punishment if they are misunderstood or ignored. For example, it was at the cost of great efforts, and even mistakes, that the full significance of Marx's views concerning distribution came to be appreciated. He persistently pointed out that in the first phase of communism every working man "receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it", in short, strictly according to the amount and quality of his work,[1] that is, in keep-

[1] See K. Marx, F. Engels, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 17.

ing with the basic principle of socialism: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." An irreproachable democrat and humanist, Marx was a strong opponent of levelling and categorically rejected the demagogic or naive talk, not infrequent in his time, too, about socialism as "universal equality" in distribution and consumption.

Today not only the social and economic significance but also the tremendous political weight of these views of the founder of scientific communism have become clear from practice, from the experience of many socialist countries. Indeed, relations of distribution directly and immediately affect the interests of everyone without exception. The nature of distribution is essentially one of the major indicators of the degree of social equality possible under socialism. Any attempts to exceed this possible degree at will, to lunge ahead—to communist forms of distribution—without accurately assessing the labour contribution made by each person to the creation of the material and spiritual wealth can, and do, give rise to undesirable phenomena.

Thus, it became quite clear that any violation of the objective economic requirement for a priority growth of labour productivity is inadmissible. While producing a favourable impression at first, a wage increase if it is not inseparably linked up with this decisive factor eventually has a negative effect on the whole of economic life. Specifically, it stimulates demands which cannot be fully satisfied at the given level of production and hampers steps to eliminate shortages with all their ugly consequences, justly resented by the working people.

Certainly, correct solution of the problems of distribution under socialism presupposes that the money the population has should be matched by adequate amounts of varied consumer goods and services, the determining factor being the level of development of the productive forces. It is, of course, impossible to satisfy requirements that exceed our possibilities. At the same time it has been and will continue to be our duty to work in two directions: first, to ensure the steady growth of social production and, on this basis, a rise in the Soviet people's living standards and

cultural level; and second, to promote in every way a rise in the level of their material and cultural requirements.

Full social equality does not come overnight and in a finished form. It takes society quite a long time, and requires great efforts, to reach that stage of maturity, to work up to it. Society must develop its productive forces to the level of the material and technical basis of communism. It must cultivate in every working man high consciousness and culture, professionalism and the ability to make rational use of the benefits of socialism.

As long as such conditions are absent, the Party guiding the socialist society has to focus attention on the distribution relations, on strict control over the measure of work and the measure of consumption. The CPSU constantly sees to it that the principle of socialist distribution revealed by Marx is implemented everywhere and without fail, and that it is better and more fully applied. If this principle is violated we have to face unearned incomes, so-called rolling stones, shirkers, slackers, and bad workmen who in effect sponge on society and live off the mass of conscientious workers. This is something which must not be tolerated; it is like living parasitically on the humanism of our system.

It is work and work alone, its actual results and not somebody's subjective desire or goodwill, which should determine the level of material well-being of every citizen. This approach is fully in keeping with the spirit and letter of Marx's views concerning distribution under socialism.

We have a long-established system of material and moral work incentives. It has been serving us quite well in the building of socialism and communism. But today, both this system itself and its forms and practical application evidently need to be further improved. It is not only important to reward good work and give it the public recognition it deserves. It is also necessary that the practice of material and moral incentives, combined with an efficient organisation of labour, should maintain and develop in people's minds an awareness that their efforts and the goods they produce are useful and necessary. It is necessary that this practice should eventually instil in the workers a feeling of involvement in the activities and plans of their collective, and of the entire

people. And this feeling mobilises and disciplines better than any persuasion and exhortation.

In improving the distribution relations it is necessary to take into account the whole set of relationships involved in the work process. What is meant here is, first of all, the consistent consolidation in all spheres of the national economy of what Marx described as "regulation and order", which he considered to be forms of "social stability" of "a corresponding mode of production".[1] Administration by mere injunction and fuss and talk instead of action are especially harmful for work in this direction. A manager will not achieve much if he fails to realise this and if he tries to replace systematic and persistent organisational efforts by showy but ineffective campaigns. The purpose of the Party's efforts to improve management and raise the level of organisation, efficiency, and discipline in matters of planning, and state and labour discipline, is not only to get rid of certain shortcomings and difficulties—which by itself is extremely important—but, in the long run, to strengthen still further the foundations of the socialist way of life.

It goes without saying that in these matters the Party proceeds from the real conditions of labour management existing at the present stage of development of Soviet society. So far these conditions are such that the economic law which Marx considered the first law of communal production—the law of economy of labour time—is not yet operating here to the full. This is largely due to the great number of physically taxing, unattractive and monotonous jobs, and the slow rate at which they are being mechanised, let alone automated.

Meanwhile, it is enough to see how stretched the labour resources are and to see the demographic situation in the country for it to become clear that it is impermissible from an economic point of view to maintain the considerable share of manual, non-mechanised labour, which stands at 40 per cent in industry alone. This is why it is so meaningful today to accelerate scientific and

[1] See K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 793.

technological progress to the utmost, more actively to use its achievements, first of all in those sections where labour expenditure is particularly high. And we do have the foundation for this. In the high level of the development of the socialist national economy. In the professional experience and skill of the Soviet working class. In the competent economic specialists and managers, a great scientific and intellectual potential whose productive force is becoming more and more significant in today's conditions. What is necessary now is to use all our potentialities better and faster, and to improve work efficiency and production organisation.

We must persistently tackle the tasks of mechanisation and automation of production because of their social and political significance as well. As a rule, people freed from strenuous, arduous manual labour show greater initiative and a more responsible attitude to their work. They get additional possibilities for study and recreation and participation in social activity and production management. They can thus also more fully exercise the political and democratic rights granted to the working people by the socialist revolution—the rights of full masters of their society and their state.

Long before the society replacing capitalism began to emerge, Marx revealed the essence of the political forms of its life. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* noted that "the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy".[1] The establishment of socialism is inconceivable without a firm political power, whose class content Marx summed up with the notion of "the dictatorship of the proletariat". According to Marx's teaching, it is this dictatorship which opens the road of political development ultimately leading to communist social self-government.

[1] K. Marx and F. Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 6, p. 504.

How does socialism's living history compare with these predictions by Marx?

In our country, just as in all the others where the working class and working people wield power, this has meant the triumph of democracy in the most precise and literal sense of the word—the genuine victory of people's power. The working people at last have the rights and freedoms which capitalism has always denied them, in essence, if not always formally.

Soviet democracy, which came up against particularly fierce resistance from counter-revolutionary forces, both internal and external, came into being honestly, without concealing its class character, not stopping short at legalising the privileges of the working people in relation to the members of the exploiter classes, who were fighting against the new power. Soviet democracy is and will always be in essence a democracy guaranteeing the broadest rights and protecting the working people's interest, a democracy prepared to discipline those who threaten the socialist gains of the people.

In the process of building the new society, the content of socialist democracy is enriched, the restrictions formed historically wither away, and the forms of exercising the people's power become more varied. This process goes on in inseparable connection with the development of the socialist statehood, which itself undergoes qualitative changes, the most important of which is that the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes a state of the whole people. This is a change of immense significance for the political system of socialism. It is reflected in the USSR Constitution adopted by the whole people in 1977, a constitution which lays the legislative basis for the further deepening of socialist democracy.

We do not idealise what has been and is being done in our country in this area. Soviet democracy has been experiencing and, it is to be supposed, is still going to experience, growing pains caused by society's material possibilities, the level of consciousness and political maturity of the masses, and also by the fact that our society is not developing in a hothouse, in isolation from the world hostile to us, but in the cold winds of the "psychological war" unlea-

shed by imperialism. Improvement of our democracy requires the elimination of bureaucratic "overorganisation" and formalism, of everything which dampens and undermines the initiative of the masses, shackles creative thinking and the activity of the working people. We have been fighting against these phenomena and will continue to do so with still greater energy and persistence.

It is sometimes claimed that the present character of socialist statehood and democracy is not in keeping with the perspective of communist self-government indicated by Marx. However, the road we have covered and the experience we have gained prove otherwise.

Take, for instance, Marx's ideas that it is the task of "the people, constituted in Communes" to govern the new society, that the essence of the new power is "a government of the people by the people".[1] It is well known that these ideas were suggested by life, by the heroic feat of the Paris Communards. Nevertheless, they contained only a very general indication of a remote goal. It is only the revolutionary creativity of the masses that could concretise the means of nearing this goal. And on the eve of the October Revolution, the creativity of the masses provided the material which enabled Lenin to outline the practical step towards realisation of Marx's formulas in the conditions of our country: "*The people themselves,* . . . united in the Soviets, must run the state."[2]

People who know no other power over them but the power of their own unity—this idea of Marx, Engels and Lenin is embodied in the activity of the Soviets, combining legislation, administration and control. It is manifested in the work of the trade unions and other public organisations, in the life of the work collectives and in the development of the entire political system of our society. And the point is not at all to seek distinctions be-

[1] See K. Marx, "The Civil War in France", in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. 2, 1977, pp. 221, 227.

[2] V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Soldiers of Izmailovsky Regiment, April 10 (23), 1917", *Collected Works,* Vol. 24, 1977, pp. 107-08.

tween this system and the ideal of communist self-government (many such distinctions can be pointed out because of the historical distance separating us from the second phase of communism). What is much more important is that this system is functioning and is perfecting itself, finding ever new forms and methods to develop democracy, to widen the working man's economic rights and potentialities in production and in the entire socio-political practice—from the deputies' commissions and people's control to the standing production meetings. This is real socialist self-government of the people which is developing in the course of communist construction.

The experience of democratic development in accordance with the USSR's new Constitution needs to be given special attention and generalised. This applies first of all to the invigoration and ever wider encouragement of local initiative, and to the deeper involvement of all work collectives in our national affairs. The powers of the local Soviets with regard to the enterprises, institutions and organisations situated in the areas under their jurisdiction have widened substantially in recent years. The potentialities of the district, regional, territorial and republican (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics) Soviets will also increase with the implementation of the decisions of the May (1982) Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee on the setting up of agroindustrial amalgamations under their authority. In this way the role of the representative organs in the exercise of the principal, managerial and organising, function of the socialist state is growing. One cannot but note the cost-accounting team, a primary form of production management evolved by the masses.

It goes without saying that an interpretation of self-government which leans towards anarcho-syndicalism, the splitting of society into rival corporations independent of each other, democracy without discipline, and the notion of rights without duties is deeply alien to us. The proven organisational principle of the entire life of socialist society is democratic centralism, which makes it possible successfully to combine the free creativity of the masses with the advantages of an integrated system of scientific guidance, planning and management.

The socialist system makes the exercise of the working people's collective rights and duties the mainspring of social progress, while by no means disregarding the interests of the individual. Our Constitution grants Soviet citizens broad rights and freedoms and at the same time underscores the priority of public interests, which it is the supreme manifestation of civic duty to serve.

The gap existing under capitalism between the interests of the state and of the citizen has been eliminated in our society. But, unfortunately, there are still people who try to oppose their selfish interests to the interests of society, of its other members. It is becoming clear that it is necessary to educate, sometimes to re-educate, some persons, and to combat encroachments on socialist law and order and on norms of our collectivist life. And this is not "flouting of human rights", on which bourgeois propaganda hypocritically harps, but real humanism and democracy, which mean government by the will of the majority and in the interests of all the working people.

The CPSU places the interests of the people, the interests of society as a whole, above everything else. It devotes day-to-day attention to providing conditions that stimulate the creative activities and social activeness of the working people, and give the industrial enterprises and the state farms and collective farms more independence. This activeness, this initiative, is a matter of the feasibility of the Party's plans, the growth of its strength and, in the final analysis, a guarantee that the programme of communist construction will be implemented.

As the nucleus of Soviet society's political system, the Party sets an example of democratic organisation of all its activities: it elaborates and develops democratic principles, which enter all the spheres of our socialist life. This is one of the most important manifestations of the Party's guiding role in the life of society, its inspiring influence on the masses.

In his time, while analysing the Marxian methodological approach to defining the main features of the new society, Lenin

wrote: "There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in the idle guess-work about what cannot be known. . . .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."[1] It is on the basis of such an analysis that Marx, as is well known, created his teaching of the two stages in the development of the single communist formation, a teaching which the CPSU and other fraternal parties use. It is on this basis that Lenin generalised the new historical experience and comprehensively developed the theory of the construction of socialism and communism. Today, too, we use these propositions as our point of departure in resolving one of the questions which Marx, Engels and Lenin considered the most difficult—that of the concrete forms of transition to communism.

The most important features of present-day Soviet society are reflected in the concept of developed socialism. This concept convincingly shows the dialectical unity of real successes in socialist construction, in the carrying out of the many economic, social and cultural tasks of the first phase of communism, the growing sprouts of a communist future, and the problems outstanding from yesterday. This means that it will take some time to make up the lag and move ahead. We must have a sober idea of where we are. To run ahead means to put forward unfeasible tasks; to be content with what has been achieved means to fail to use everything at our disposal. What is now required is to see the real pattern of our society's growth, with all its potentialities and needs.

In reviewing what had been done in the field of Marxist-Leninist theory in recent years, the 26th Congress of the CPSU gave prominence to the elaboration of the concept of developed socialism. Relying on this concept, the Party determined its strategy and tactics for the coming years and for the more distant future,

[1] V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1977, pp. 463, 476.

and warned against possible exaggerations of the extent to which our country has neared the highest phase of communism. All this enabled us to clarify and concretise how and when we can attain our programmatic aims.

Tasks of great magnitude are arising before the Party and the people in the closing decades of the 20th century. Taken together, these tasks are reducible to what could be described as the perfecting of developed socialism, in the course of which the gradual transition to communism will take place. Our country is at the beginning of this long historical stage, which, in turn, will naturally have its own periods and its stages of growth. Only experience and practice will show how long they will last and what concrete forms they will take. But one of the major, one could say, qualitative reference points on this road was clearly indicated by the Party's 26th Congress, which put forward a proposition on the formation of a basically classless structure of society within the historical framework of developed socialism.

It is characteristic that this conclusion, made on the basis of practice, echoes Marx's understanding of socialism as a society which knows no class differences.[1] This, by the way, is fresh confirmation of the fact that the validity of Marx's views should be judged not on the basis of the experience of the last few decades but should also be assessed from the positions of a longer perspective.

The person who asks himself, "What is socialism?" and turns for the answer first of all to the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, is doing the right thing. But he should not stop there. Today the concept "socialism" cannot be fully understood without taking into account the very rich practical experience of the peoples of the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries. This experience shows that many of the problems arising on the road of socialist construction are complicated. But it also testifies to the fact that only socialism is able to solve the most difficult questions of social reality.

[1] See K. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 18.

It is socialism that removes the age-old barriers separating labour and culture and creates a very firm alliance of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia, of all manual and mental workers, with the working class playing the leading role. It brings the achievements of science, technology, literature and art within the reach of the working masses and ensures unprecedented public recognition of the creative activities of the intelligentsia. It is socialism that rallies into a close-knit family the peoples that were formerly divided by national strife and provides a just solution to the nationalities question, which is engendered by the exploiter system. It is socialism that, while facilitating the flourishing of the national forms of life, also creates a new type of international, interstate relations, which exclude inequality and are based on fraternal cooperation and mutual assistance.

With the completion of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism and with the consolidation of the new, socialist way of life, the sharpest social confrontations in society are overcome, confrontations which are based, in the final analysis, on society's division into hostile classes. However, this conclusion has nothing in common with the simplistic and politically naive idea that socialism gets rid of every single contradiction and difference and of all trouble in everyday life. Incidentally, our ideological opponents also exploit this idea in their own way when they cast aspersions on the new system, pointing out that here, too, there are both difficulties and disappointments in people's lives and sometimes a very difficult struggle between the new and the old.

Yes, we have both contradictions and difficulties. To think there can be some other course of development would mean turning aside from the reliable, though sometimes rough, ground of reality, would mean departing from the ABC of Marxist dialectics. Lenin elucidated this question theoretically on the basis of the Marxist teaching. "Antagonism and contradiction," he wrote, "are not at all one and the same thing. The former will disappear, the latter will remain under socialism."[1] Now this tenet has been confirmed by practice. It does not follow from this, however,

[1] *Lenin Miscellany XI,* p. 357 (Russ. ed.).

that one can disregard or ignore non-antagonistic contradictions in politics. Life teaches us that even those contradictions which are not by their nature antagonistic can cause serious collisions if disregarded. Another—and the most important—aspect of the matter is correct use of socialism's contradictions as a source and stimulus of its onward development.

Our experience shows that successes in socialist construction come when the policy of the ruling Communist Party rests on a sound scientific foundation. Any underestimation of the role of Marxist-Leninist science and its creative development, any narrow pragmatic interpretation of its aims or disregard of the fundamental problems of theory, any imposition of opportunistic demands or scholastic theoretising can have serious political and ideological consequences. Experience and practice have repeatedly confirmed that Lenin was right in saying that "anybody who tackles partial problems without having previously settled general problems, will inevitably and at every step 'come up against' those general problems without himself realising it. To come up against them blindly in every individual case means to doom one's politics to the worst vacillation and lack of principle".[1]

The CPSU attaches great significance to development of the theory of Marxism-Leninism, as its very creative essence demands. This is vitally important in solving our practical tasks. For example, we increasingly feel the need for serious research into the political economy of socialism. And here Marx's *Capital* has always set our science a shining example of deep insight into the essence of the phenomena of economic life.

The multifaceted and not always identical experience of the fraternal socialist countries provides vast material for theoretical interpretation. In this connection one cannot but recall Lenin's words to the effect that "only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will complete socialism be created by the

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[1] V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude Towards Bourgeois Parties", *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, 1977, p. 489.

revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of *all* countries".[1] Nowadays the task is being tackled in practice over vast areas of the globe, in the framework of the world system of socialism, which has become the decisive factor of mankind's social progress. And it is being tackled in the basic direction foreseen by Marx.

Lenin often said that he constantly collated all his activities with Marx. It is with Marx, Engels and Lenin that the CPSU collates its every step.

To collate current activities with Marx, with Marxism-Leninism, does not at all mean mechanically to "compare" life in progress with this or that formula. We would be worthless followers of our teachers if we were content simply to repeat the truths they discovered and rely on the magic power of quotations once learnt by heart.

Marxism is not a dogma but an effective guide to action, to independent work on the complex tasks which every new turn in history sets before us. And to be able to keep pace with life, the Communists should carry forward and enrich the teaching of Marx in all directions, and creatively apply in practice his method of materialist dialectics, which is justifiably described as the living soul of Marxism. It is this attitude to our invaluable ideological heritage, an example of which Lenin set, and this continuous self-renewal of revolutionary theory under the impact of revolutionary practice that make Marxism the real science and art of revolutionary creativity. In this lies the secret of the force of Marxism-Leninism, its unfading freshness.

It is sometimes said that the new phenomena in social life "do not fit in" with the concept of Marxism-Leninism, that it is in "crisis" and should be "revived" with ideas drawn from Western sociology, philosophy or political science. The problem, however, is not at all an alleged "crisis" of Marxism; it is something else—the inability of some self-styled Marxist theorists to appre-

[1] V. I. Lenin, " 'Left-wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1977, p. 346.

ciate the true scope of the theoretical thinking of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and to use the tremendous intellectual power of their teaching when making a concrete study of concrete questions. It would not be superfluous to add that many bourgeois philosophers, sociologists and political economists have earned a name for themselves largely by twisting Marxist ideas to suit themselves.

It is unworthy of Communists to be attracted by the trenchant phrases of all sorts of "perfectors" of Marxism and to clutch at the fabrications of bourgeois science. Not the erosion of the Marxist-Leninist teaching but, on the contrary, a struggle for its purity and creative development—such is the path to the cognition and solution of new problems. Only this approach is in keeping with the traditions and spirit of our teaching and the requirements of the communist movement.

We, the Soviet Communists, are proud of belonging to Marxism-Leninism, the most influential ideological current in the entire history of world civilisation. Open to all the best and most advanced in modern science and culture, today it is in the centre of the world's intellectual life, it has won the minds of millions upon millions of people. It is the ideological credo of the rising class, which is liberating all of mankind. It is the philosophy of social optimism, the philosophy of the present and the future.

The world has now travelled a long distance along the road of its social renewal, along the road of realisation of the revolutionary goals and ideals of the working class. The political map of the world has taken on a new appearance. Science has made momentous discoveries; the technological advances are astounding. At the same time, mankind has many new problems, including some very complicated ones. Its concern about the worsening raw materials, energy, food, ecological and other global problems is valid. And the main thing of concern to the peoples today is the need to preserve peace, to avert a thermonuclear catastrophe. There is nothing more important than this on the international plane for our Party, the Soviet Government and all the nations of the world.

To gain an understanding of all the complexities of the modern world and organise and direct the revolutionary socio-histor-

ical creativity of the working class and all the working people—such is the great task which the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the struggle for mankind's progress are tackling today, the task which Karl Marx set himself and his ideological and political associates and followers: to interpret and change the world.

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