

### PART III

#### WHAT IS A COMPLETED DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND MUST SUCH A REVOLUTION PRECEDE SOCIALISM?

In 1847, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote:

"...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/

Written several months prior to an expected bourgeois revolution in Germany, the above words took the success of the pending German bourgeois revolution for granted, with that revolution being "...but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." 2/ However, after experiencing brief success, the 1848 bourgeois revolution in Germany succumbed to feudal counterrevolution. According to Marx, an important reason for the above revolution's failure was that the German liberal bourgeoisie deserted the ranks of the people and sided with the feudal absolutist party. Marx prophesied that in an impending revolution Germany's petty bourgeoisie would play a similar role. Nevertheless, stressed Marx,

"The relation of the revolutionary workers' party to the petty-bourgeois democrats is this: it marches with them against the faction which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes them in everything whereby they seek to consolidate their position in their own interests." 3/

Marx continues:

"While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible...it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power....(However) That during the revolution the petty-bourgeois democracy will for a moment obtain predominating influence in Germany is not open to doubt." 4/

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1/ See P.62

To be sure, the two-stage revolution envisioned by Marx and Engels has yet to occur in Germany, or any other European capitalist country, or the United States. Throughout their respective lifetimes, however, Marx and Engels both adhered to the belief that the proletarian revolution in the above countries would be preceded by a broader-based people's revolution.

In summing up the lessons of the defeated 1848 bourgeois revolution in Germany, Marx also wrote:

"Every provisional organization of the state after a revolution requires a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that." 5/

According to V. I. Lenin, what Marx was referring to in the above statement was a democratic revolution and a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship:

"...The tasks which Marx set before a revolutionary government in 1848 amounted in substance primarily to a democratic revolution: defence against counterrevolution and the actual elimination of everything that contradicted the sovereignty of the people. This is nothing else than a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship." 6/

It was Marx's opinion, continues Lenin, that such a dictatorship should be exercised by the people.

"But we know that he (Marx) always ruthlessly combatted the petty-bourgeois illusion about the unity of the 'people' and about the absence of class struggle within the people. In using the word 'people', Marx did not thereby gloss over class distinctions, but combined definite elements that were capable of carry the revolution to completion." 7/

On what does the democratic revolution's completion depend, and what "definite elements" are capable of carrying that revolution to completion?

"It depends on whose hands the immediate rule passes into, whether into the hands of the (big bourgeoisie), or into the hands of the people, i.e., the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie. In the first case the bourgeoisie will possess power, and the proletariat 'freedom of criticism', freedom to 'remain the party of

extreme·revolutionary opposition'....In the second case, a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, i.e., the complete victory of the revolution, would be possible." 8/

As we shall demonstrate in Part IV of this work, the first case ("the bourgeoisie will possess power and the proletariat 'freedom of criticism', freedom to 'remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition'") has been the existing condition in the U.S. from the time of the U.S. Constitution's ratification in 1788 to the present, while the second case ("a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship") has never been the existing condition in the U.S. and is thus still on the order of the day.

The by-product of the democratic revolution--i.e., the form in which the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship exists --is the democratic republic. In his 1891 criticism of the Draft of the German Social-Democratic Party's Erfurt Program, Engels spoke of the democratic republic's relationship to socialism.

"If one thing is certain", stated Engels, "it is that our Party and the working class can only come to power under the form of the democratic republic." 9/

Lenin subsequently referred to the above statement as a "particularly striking" presentation of "...the fundamental idea which runs like a red thread through all of Marx's works, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat." 10/

In anticipation of the confident claims of some of our readers that a democratic republic already exists in the U.S., that the political requirement for proceeding directly to the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S. has thus been fulfilled, etc., we here point out that Engels was not referring to a democratic republic in general, but to a particular form of democratic republic. What form of democratic republic was Engels referring to?

"In my view", asserted Engels, "the proletariat can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic." 11/

Of course, the U.S. is not a "one and indivisible" republic (i.e., a completely unified state), but instead is a federal republic (i.e., a union state). Engels describes the essential differences between the two forms of republics.

"Two points distinguish a union state from a completely unified state: First, that each separate state forming part of the union, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside of a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton large and small, votes as such." 12/

Clearly, then, in the U.S., two points distinguishing a union state from a completely unified state exist in the form of the civil, criminal, legislative and judicial systems in each of the fifty states on the one hand and on the other a federal chamber (the U.S. Senate) in which each state, large and small, votes as such. Therefore, it cannot be said that the form of democratic republic Engels had in mind presently exists in the U.S. and that the political requirement for proceeding directly to the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S. has thus been fulfilled. On the contrary, the form of democratic republic Engels had in mind (and in which People's Democracy manifests itself) is none other than the democratic-centralist republic, the completely unified state. That form of democratic republic--and none other--is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Why is the democratic-centralist republic the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat?

"(Because) such a republic", continues Lenin, "--without in the least abolishing the rule of capital, and therefore, the oppression of the masses and the class struggle--inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding and intensification of this struggle that, as soon as there arises the possibility of satisfying the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is realized inevitably and solely through the dictatorship of the proletariat, through the leadership of those masses by the proletariat." 13/

(Thus) "Marxism teaches the proletarian not to keep aloof from the bourgeois revolution, not to be indifferent to it, not to allow leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie but, on the contrary, to take a most energetic part in it, to fight

most resolutely for consistent proletarian democracy, for carrying the revolution to its conclusion." 14/

Like Marx, Lenin also insisted that the only force capable of carrying the democratic revolution to conclusion is "...the people, i.e., the proletariat and the peasantry, if we take the main, big forces and distribute the rural and urban petty-bourgeoisie (also part of 'the people') between the two." 15/ Of particular interest in this regard is the Paris Commune, which ruled that city from mid-April to late May 1871. The historical significance of the Paris Commune lay in the fact that "it was essentially a working-class government... the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour." 16/ However, that discovery does not negate the fact that, along with failing to take over the Bank of France and to march on Versailles (political and military errors, respectively), the Communards committed the grave strategical error of failing to unite the proletariat and the peasantry--i.e., of failing to unite the people. And as Lenin insisted, this unity could only have been consummated in the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people.

"In Europe, in 1871, there was not a single country on the Continent in which the proletariat constituted the majority of the people. A 'people's' revolution, one that actually swept the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasantry. These two classes then constituted the 'people.' These two classes are united by the fact that the 'bureaucratic-military state machine' oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To smash this machine, to break it up--this is truly in the interest of the 'people,' of the majority, of the workers and most of the peasants, this is 'the preliminary coalition' for a free alliance between the poorest peasants and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible.

As is well-known, the Paris Commune

was indeed working its way toward such an alliance although it did not reach its goal owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external." 17

In applying the "red thread" of Marxism and the lessons of the Paris Commune to the concrete practice of the Russian Revolution, Lenin resolutely fought for the recognition of complete democracy, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, as the only possible path to socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Moreover, Lenin recognized the need for the same type of two stage revolution--i.e., the democratic revolution followed by the socialist revolution--in the world's colonies and semi-colonies. However, unlike Marx and Engels, Lenin did not extend the red thread of Marxism to advanced capitalist countries --an omission we shall return to further on in this part.

Though eventually confirmed to be correct by the concrete practice of the Russian Revolution, Lenin's advocacy of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry was at first widely opposed. Why?

"One of the objections raised to the slogan of 'the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' is that dictatorship presupposes a 'single will'..., and that there can be no single will of the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie." 18

Let us say in passing that if such an objection has a familiar ring to it, it's simply because a number of present-day Anti-Revisionist groups in the U.S. hold strikingly similar positions--in other words, that the petty-bourgeoisie is a thoroughly reactionary class and that the proletariat has no allies whatsoever and is the only revolutionary class in American society. That aside, Lenin's refutation of the above objection is most instructive:

"This objection is unsound, for it is based on an abstract, 'metaphysical' interpretation of the term 'single will.' There can be a single will in one respect and not a single will in another. The absence of unity on questions of Socialism and in the struggle for Socialism does not preclude singleness of will on questions of democracy and in the struggle for a republic.

To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the logical and historical difference between a democratic and a socialist revolution. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the character of the democratic revolution as a revolution of the whole people; if it is 'of the whole people' it means that there is 'singleness of will' precisely in so far as this revolution satisfies the common needs and requirements of the whole people. Beyond the bounds of democracy there can be no question of the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie having a single will. Class struggle between them is inevitable; but it is in a democratic republic that this struggle will be the most thoroughgoing and widespread struggle of the people for Socialism." 19/

Thus, like Engels, Lenin also stressed the relationship between the democratic republic and Socialism.

"We must not forget that there is not, nor can there be, at the present time, any other means of bringing Socialism nearer, than complete political liberty, than a democratic republic, than the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." 20/

"The complete victory of the (democratic) revolution", continues Lenin, "will mark the end of the democratic revolution and the beginning of a determined struggle for a socialist revolution....The more complete the democratic revolution, the sooner, the more widespread, the purer and more determined will be the development of this new struggle." 21/

Clearly, as is the case with the form of democratic republic Engels had in mind (the democratic-centralist republic, the completely unified state), the democratic republic in Lenin's sense of the term ("the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry") has never existed, and does not now presently exist, in the U.S. And yet, "...there is not, nor can there be, at the present time, any other means of bringing Socialism nearer..." than just such a democratic

republic.

Much like the present-day advocates of two-stage revolution in the U.S., Lenin too was confronted with "...absurd, semianarchist ideas about putting the maximum program into effect immediately, about the conquest of power for a socialist revolution." <sup>22/</sup> (The principal slogan of contemporary American semianarchists is: "Immediate and universal preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat!") As always, Lenin combatted the absurd ideas with facts derived from a concrete analysis of the concrete conditions.

"The degree of economic development of Russia (an objective condition) and the degree of class consciousness and organization of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably connected with the objective condition) make the immediate complete emancipation of the working class impossible. ...Only the most naive optimists can forget how little as yet the masses of workers are informed about the aims of Socialism and about the methods of achieving it. And we are all convinced that the emancipation of the workers can be effected only by the workers themselves; a socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class conscious and organized, trained and educated in open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie." <sup>23/</sup>

Though a description of the concrete conditions in Russia in the early 1900s, the above also aptly describes the present-day situation in the U.S. As was stated in Part I of this work,

"Though there exists a revolutionary situation in the U.S.'s economic base (the private appropriation of the profits of socialized labor), and U.S. imperialism is in a state of decline, the subjective view of reality of all classes and strata comprising the American people does not yet correspond to those objective conditions. ...Most importantly, the level of class consciousness of the American proletariat is not yet such that it can distinguish itself as a class from the rest of the people--meaning that the American proletariat does not yet see the need for its own political party and is not yet calling for socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat." <sup>24/</sup>

According to Lenin, however, "a socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class-conscious and organized, trained and educated in open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie." Thus, in the U.S., since capitalism has reached the highest stage of its development and is in need of no further development, the primary purpose of carrying the democratic revolution to completion is to develop the consciousness of the working class and train, educate and organize that class "in open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie."

In summary, then, Marx, Engels and Lenin all acknowledged the existence of the following general principle: Carrying the democratic revolution to completion--i.e., establishing a democratic-centralist republic under the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of all classes and strata comprising the people--is a necessary prerequisite to socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Stalin, too, acknowledged that principle, though his writings don't further develop the concept to any significant degree. However, contrary to Marx and Engels, neither Lenin nor Stalin ever applied the above principle to advanced capitalist countries.

What we are here dealing with, in other words, is a unique, unprecedented situation, in which a previously-held theoretical proposition of Marxism--namely, the principle of carrying the democratic revolution to completion in Europe's industrially advanced countries and the United States--on the one hand being buried in an avalanche of opportunist vulgarizations of Marxism (by Bernstein and other advocates of "evolutionary" socialism), and on the other failing to be completely unearthed by Marxism's subsequent defenders and developers. More specifically, Marx and Engels both believed that the democratic republic 1) takes the form of a completely unified state, 2) is ruled by a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people, and 3) is both a necessary prerequisite for and the nearest approach to socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Moreover, since their writings dealt primarily with capitalist Europe and America, and repeatedly pointed out that, with the exception of the First French Republic, the democratic republic in their sense of the term had yet to exist in any of Europe's capitalist countries or the United States, Marx and Engels were both clearly stating that the democratic-centralist republic and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people must precede socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat in advanced capitalist countries. But in combatting the numerous opportunist distortions of Marxism, Lenin and Stalin both failed to unearth the fact that the principle of carrying the democratic

revolution to completion does indeed apply to the world's advanced capitalist countries--though Lenin applied the principle of completed democratic revolution with splendid success in Russia and subsequently stated that the principle also applied in the independence and liberation struggles of the world's colonial and semi-colonial countries. Accordingly, advanced capitalist countries existing under bourgeois democracy were thought to be the only countries of the world inappropriate for two-stage revolutions at the time of Mao Tsetung's emergence in China.

In applying the principle of completed democratic revolution to the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, Mao Tsetung reached new heights of clarity and conciseness in describing the social character and class content of the democratic revolution, as well as that revolution's relationship to the development of socialism.

"In its social character, this revolution is a bourgeois-democratic and not a proletarian-socialist revolution." 25/

(However) "...it is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and a state under bourgeois dictatorship. It belongs to the new type of revolution led by the proletariat with the aim, in the first stage, of establishing a new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all revolutionary classes. Thus this revolution actually serves the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism." 26/

Mao continues:

"The new-democratic revolution is vastly different from the democratic revolutions of Europe and America in that it results not in a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie but in a dictatorship of the united front of all the revolutionary classes under the leadership of the proletariat....

The new-democratic revolution also differs from a socialist revolution in that it overthrows the rule of the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries...but does not destroy any section of capitalism which is capable of

contributing to the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle." 27/

Not surprisingly, Mao too was opposed by elements similar to the semianarchists who confronted Lenin in Russia and the advocates of one-stage revolution who temporarily dominate the contemporary revolutionary movement in the U.S. With characteristic precision and clarity, Mao completely routed such elements.

"But there are other people, apparently with no evil intentions, who are misled by the 'theory of a single revolution' and the fanciful notion of 'accomplishing both the political revolution and the social revolution at one stroke'; they do not understand that our revolution is divided into stages, that we can only proceed to the next stage of revolution after accomplishing the first, and that there is no such thing as 'accomplishing both at one stroke'....It is a utopian view rejected by true revolutionaries to say that the democratic revolution does not have a specific task and period of its own but can be merged and accomplished simultaneously with another task, i.e., the socialist task...." 28/

Though his writings strongly imply that the new-democratic republic serves as a bridge between the bourgeois dictatorship and the dictatorship of the proletariat, Mao too dismissed the possibility of new-democratic republics ever arising in advanced capitalist countries. The reason, of course, is that Mao's principal area of study was the Chinese revolution and the revolutions in the world's other semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries. Hence, Mao was never able to study the concrete practice of the American revolution and the revolutions in the world's other advanced capitalist countries to the point of being able to recognize the incorrectness of the one-stage revolution thesis. On the other hand, though everything Mao wrote concerning New Democracy was admittedly written with colonial and semi-colonial countries in mind, much of what he wrote clearly applies to the United States and the other advanced capitalist countries as well.

"For a certain historical period, this form (the dictatorship of the proletariat--Ed.) is not suitable for the revolutions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. During

this period, therefore, a third form of state must be adopted in the revolutions of all colonial and semi-colonial countries, namely, the new-democratic republic. This form suits a certain historical period and is therefore transitional; nevertheless, it is a form which is necessary and cannot be dispensed with.

Thus the numerous types of state system in the world can be reduced to three basic kinds according to the class character of their political power: 1) republics under bourgeois dictatorship; 2) republics under the dictatorship of the proletariat; and 3) republics under the joint dictatorship of several revolutionary classes." 29/

The bourgeois dictatorship is the kind of state system currently existing in the U.S. and the world's other advanced capitalist countries. While the objective conditions in the advanced capitalist countries are rotten ripe for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the subjective conditions in those countries have not sufficiently ripened. Hence, proletarian dictatorships are not immediate possibilities in advanced capitalist countries. In those countries, the necessary transition between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat is the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people.

The question making up the title of this Part can now be answered.

A completed democratic revolution is a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of all classes and strata comprising the people and, without question, such a revolution must precede socialism. At the present time, however, for reasons described above, a large majority of the world's Marxist-Leninists incorrectly believe that the socialist revolutions in advanced capitalist countries automatically consist of one stage, regardless of whether the democratic revolutions in those countries have been carried to completion. And yet, in summing up world history since the emergence of the Marxist Movement, we come face-to-face with the following objective facts: Socialist revolutions have only occurred in feudal, semi-feudal or developing capitalist countries and, without exception, have always involved two stages (i.e., the democratic and socialist stages). In advanced capitalist countries, meanwhile, socialist revolutions of any kind, and, in particular, one-stage socialist revolutions, have

yet to occur. Thus, the only conclusion one can draw is this: The proposition of one-stage revolution doesn't apply in advanced capitalist countries any more than it applies in feudal, semi-feudal or developing capitalist countries. In other words, the principle of carrying the democratic revolution to completion must be reapplied to advanced capitalist countries.