

## *Marxist Education Series—V :*

# Communism

*Communism is a classless social system with one form of public ownership of the means of production and full social equality of all members of society; under it the all-round development of people will be accompanied by the growth of the productive forces through continuous progress in science and technology; all the springs of co-operative wealth will flow more abundantly, and the great principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", will be implemented.*

*Communism is a highly organised society of free, conscious working people in which public self-government will be established, a society in which labour for the good of society will become the vital requirement of everyone, a necessity recognised by one and all, and the ability of each person will be employed to the greatest benefit of the people.*

*—Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.*

The supreme goal of every Marxist-Leninist Party in the world is to achieve the highest form of human society—communism.

There is no country in which this aim has yet been achieved. In October 1961, the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the most advanced socialist country, adopted a new programme: a programme for the building of communism. It envisages that in the current decade—that is, by 1970—the material and technical basis of communism will have advanced to such an extent that the Soviet production per head of population will surpass that of the strongest and richest capitalist country, the United States, with a high standard of living for all, good housing for all, the abolition of hard physical work and the shortest working day in the world.

In the second decade—that is, by 1980—production will have developed to an extent which will ensure an abundance of material and cultural values to the whole population. Soviet society will be approaching the stage where distribution according to needs will

be instituted and instead of two forms of social ownership, as at present, where industry is state owned but most farms collectively owned by the farmers, there will be a gradual transition to a single form—public ownership. *A communist society will, in the main, be built in the U.S.S.R.*

That is the meaning of the inspiring new programme.

Why, it may be asked, could the Soviet Union not, either in the past, or now, proceed directly to the building of communist society without the intervening stage of socialism?

In the previous article we noted that the level of production under socialism will for some time be insufficient to give every person what he needs. Hence the principle which guides socialist society is "From everyone according to his ability to each according to the work done". The Socialist form of society, although the most advanced which mankind has yet lived under, is therefore limited by historical reality.

The fundamental difference between utopian dreamers and scientific thinkers is well demonstrated by the different approach to the problem of achieving an ideal society in which there is equality in every sphere.

The utopian dreamers, motivated by the noblest of ideas, thought that if only men were made to realise the irrational basis of class society they would overnight advance to a completely communistic system in which there are no classes and in which there is complete equality. However sincere these thinkers were they lacked the scientific, historical understanding of the laws of social change which were so brilliantly elucidated by Marx and Engels.

Without a material basis, without taking into account historical reality, communism can never be built. Just as the system of Feudalism or Capitalism or Socialism arose in situations where the material basis for the existence had developed, so it is with Communism. Communism is not an exception to the objective laws of social change.

At one stage—the very first stage—of mankind's existence, people throughout the world lived under a system known as primitive communism. The character and level of productive forces were such that in order to survive men had to work together on the basis of equality. There was no class of exploiters and the social product was shared between all members of the community. Does this mean that primitive man was more advanced and more civilised than we are? We know that this is not so. What then is the explanation for the existence of co-operation and equality in the early stages of

history? It is that the level of technique was so low and the productive forces so underdeveloped that if there was no co-operation on the basis of equality the forces of nature would have conquered man. It was an equality arising out of necessity.

This historical fact demonstrates the truth of Marxism that at all stages the social system arises out of the objective material situation. The growth of classes and privileged groups could only come about when the level of production had reached the stage when a surplus could be produced. The development of class society reflected the changes which had come about in the system of production.

Now that the productive machine—especially under socialism—has reached such a tremendously high level and the state is directed by the organised working class led by the Communist Parties, why is it not possible for communism just to be proclaimed? Of course it can be proclaimed. But the proclamation would not be worth the paper it is written on. Social systems are not proclaimed and those who think that this can be done would be disillusioned very quickly. Before communism can be “proclaimed” certain material historical conditions must be brought about.

The creation of the socialist state is the first stage—a transition stage—in the advance towards communism. As soon as the working class gains power the conscious advance to communism can be planned and increasingly steps can be taken to bring into existence features of communist society in various spheres.

As was stated by N. S. Khrushchov in his report to the Twenty-First Congress of the C.P.S.U.:

“Notwithstanding all the difference between the communist and socialist phases there is no wall separating these two stages of social development. Communism stems from socialism, as its direct continuation . . . the transition from socialism to communism is a continuous process. . . .

“Communist forms of labour and industrial organisation and also such forms of satisfying the requirements of our people as public catering, boarding schools, kindergartens and day nurseries, are already developing on an increasing scale. There are many features of communism in our society and they will continue to develop.”

The fundamental feature of communist society is that everyone will make a maximum contribution to society and that he will in turn receive what he needs. This is illustrated by the well-known principle which characterises communist society: “From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs.”

Before this can be achieved a number of economic, social and political changes have to be brought about.

## **THE LEVEL OF PRODUCTION**

One of the tasks confronting a socialist state is to advance production to such a level that enough can be produced to satisfy the needs of all the people. A society of abundance must be created. The productive machine inherited by the socialist state from the capitalist past is not capable of catering for this sort of society. Socialism abolishes class and national inequalities but it cannot provide complete social equality in every sphere. The social product is shared out on the basis of the work done. Although far in advance of any previous social system, and although exploitation of man by man has been finally abolished, socialism is not yet in a position to distribute according to the needs of each person. When the economic machine reaches the level where it is capable of producing enough to satisfy everyone's needs, economic inequality (even in the limited sense in which it is forced upon the socialist state) gradually disappears.

These people who may be living in a society in which the sole incentive for contributing towards its welfare is economic gain, may find it difficult to understand how human beings will accept a form of society in which the less able live as comfortably as the more able. This brings us to the next important prerequisite for a communist society.

## **THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW COMMUNIST MAN AND WOMAN**

The cultural and ideological heritage of thousands of years of class society based on individual gain is an obstacle to the establishment of communism. The socialist revolution does not of itself bring into being the ideal communist man. In every sphere of life ignorance, backwardness and prejudices which have been inculcated by the previous system shows itself. In preparing for the communist stage it is therefore the duty of the socialist state not only to create an economic machine capable of providing the people with their needs but also to create a new communist man and woman whose mental outlook is completely divorced from the ideas of class society.

Of course the very abolition of the old relations of production and the creation of new socialist relations assists in changing the outlook of people in the socialist state. In the long run ideas tend to reflect the basic economic set-up in society. But ideas do not automatically die out with a change in economic relations. They tend to linger on and act as a brake on the new society. Hence

a mere change in economic relations—although it lays the basis for the flowering of new ideas—is not enough.

The socialist state therefore embarks upon a deliberate policy of eradicating the old ideologies, through mass education and propaganda, for a higher, socialist morality.

## **MENTAL AND MANUAL LABOUR**

The harnessing of science to create a society which can produce in abundance all human needs requires mass education on an unprecedented scale. The application of the most advanced techniques to production such as automation, nuclear power, electronics etc., makes possible the reduction of the working day and enables the masses for the first time to have enough leisure for the acquisition of knowledge, for cultural development, for sport and recreation. This lays the basis for the gradual breaking down of the differences between mental and manual labour. Thus the gulf which separates the “intellectual” from the mass of the people is gradually narrowed and equality has more than just a theoretical meaning.

The type of man which socialism endeavours to create and who will become the new communist man is well described by Emile Burns in his *Introduction to Marxism*:

“. . . on the basis of changes in material conditions which socialism brings, vast changes also take place in the development and outlook of men and women. They will be people with an all-round development, an all-round training, people who will be able to do everything!

“. . . the self-seeking individualist outlook, brought by capitalism, will have been gradually replaced by a really social outlook, a sense of responsibility to society. As Marx puts it ‘Labour has become not only a means of a living but is the first necessity of life. . . .’ In communist society there will no longer be any need for incentives or inducements to work, because the men and women will have no other outlook than playing their part in the further development of society.”

## **A SOCIETY WITHOUT CLASSES**

In communist society there will be no classes. The introduction of socialism does not of itself do away with economic classes. Apart from hostile remnants of the capitalist class, two great allied classes, the workers and the peasants, or collective farmers, form the mass of the population. The essential difference between town and country and between industry and agriculture persists for some time after the workers take power. The gradual elimination of these

differences and the full integration of agriculture into a planned socialist economy lays the material basis for the complete disappearance of economic classes. The traditional backwardness of the countryside will then disappear and the amenities for education, leisure and all-round development of man will be no less in the countryside than in the town.

## THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE

We have seen in a previous article that the state emerges at a period in history when society becomes divided into economic classes who stand in different relations to one another as regards the means of production. The dominant class controls the state and exercises a dictatorship which enables it to continue to rule. We have also seen that under socialism the state continues to exist in order to ensure the dominance of the working class in alliance with the peasant masses. Once the stage has been reached when classes no longer exist there is no longer any basis for the existence of the state. Thus under communism the state will "wither away" and to quote Engels' famous phrase:

"The government of people will be replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production" (*Anti-Dühring*).

Already, in the Soviet Union, many functions of the State are tending to disappear. Serious crime is rare, and petty offences are dealt with less and less by the Courts and more and more, in a neighbourly way, by fellow-workers or collective farms organised in factory or residential committees or on the farms. There is not much work for lawyers and Courts! Public, as opposed to State, administration is becoming more and more a feature of Soviet life.

Does this mean that communist society will be a sort of formless, anarchic, undisciplined community? On the contrary: modern productive techniques, the very backbone of the communist society, require a very highly-organised and disciplined community. But the discipline will rest not on State coercion but voluntary and conscious action of every member; public self-government will replace the element of dictatorship which is the essence of every state, even the most democratic.

Of course, there are some functions of the Socialist State which cannot be expected to "wither away" so long as aggressive and predatory imperialism exists in the world. The armed forces and the security services are essential to defend not only the people of the

countries of socialism and their achievements, but also the great cause of world peace and national liberation.

However, we live in a period of transition, on a world scale, from capitalism to socialism and communism. With every year that passes, the forces of socialism and national liberation are growing stronger, and those of capitalist imperialism weaker. Already one-third of mankind, under the leading banners of the Marxist-Leninist Parties, has chosen the road to socialism and communism. Already most of the peoples in the vast continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America are breaking away from the chains of imperialism, and are advancing to fortify political independence with economic independence and social progress.

There may be stern battles ahead; but the decisive victories have already been won. The future belongs to the working people of town and country; to socialism and communism.

Communism is the bright future of all mankind.

*(Concluded)*

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