

SOCIAL CHANGE

The difference between the process of analysis and understanding and the method of exposition: the questions, the doubts, the setting up and testing of various hypotheses, the agony and the joy which are the ingredients of analysis are left behind in the synthesis and exposition which takes the form of a systematic and orderly flow of thought. One could even make the point that the former is a dialectical process, while the latter is a formal logical process. The introduction of dialectics into the exposition still does not compensate for the lack of the richness of dialectical thinking which characterises the earlier phase of analysis and understanding. Uncomfortable questions used to be swept under the carpet. But as time went on the questions multiplied and were becoming increasingly bothersome. When others too admitted to being bothered by similar questions, what were subjective became a part of the objective reality which could no longer be dismissed as before. Then began a period of critical analysis, at first totally destructive and personally agonising - the negation, and then the gradual attempt of a new synthesis; personally joyful - the negation of the negation, the initial attempt to recreate this process of thought.

Marx talks of two phases of communism - a higher and a lower phase. The latter is a transitional stage from capitalism to communism. Lenin gave a name to this transitional stage and called it Socialism. The contrast between the theory

of socialism as a transitional stage to communism, and the practice of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries was a bothersome one. Solutions that present themselves are :

- a) The aberration theory; The Soviet Union is an aberration (largely due to Stalin). It is by no means a model of a true Socialist society. This view was largely reinforced by the Chinese experience. Here at last was a true Socialist model. But now there are doubts about China too. Is China also becoming an aberration (due to Deng Xiao Ping)? And what of the countries of Eastern Europe, N. Korea, Indo-China, Cuba, not to mention Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, South Yemen, Afghanistan, Guinea Bissau etc.? Are they all aberrations? This is a very idealist position to take: reality is an aberration and only the idea of Socialism is real.
- b) The distortion theory; The current practice of socialism is distorted because of the need to defend itself against counter-revolution at home and imperialism abroad. But the contemporaneity, the co-existence of Socialist and Capitalist Societies and their mutual inter-relationship, contradiction and inter-penetration is the reality and will continue to be so for a long time more. Then why call it a distortion? One may equally well say that capitalist societies are similarly distorted by the presence of the socialist societies. The whole world is then one big distortion. This is also an idealist position, since the idea only is real, while reality is a distortion of the idea.

c) A third way out is to question the basic premise which is at the root of the problem, namely Socialism - first stage of communism. to posit that Socialism is not a transitional stage from capitalism to communism. What is Socialism? Let us look at real experience again and what do we see :

- i) No advanced capitalist country has become socialist (with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia, which is a very special case).
- ii) On the contrary a number of pre-capitalist societies have become or are in the process of becoming socialist.
- iii) Socialist societies differ from capitalist societies in property relationships, class relationships and in the nature of State power and countervailing power. However, commodity production and the driving power of accumulation are common to both forms of societies. In the case of societies at comparable stages of economic growth, there is virtually no difference between their levels of science and technology, labour skills and productivity or production process, - in short between their levels of development and the productive forces.
- iv) Interpenetration, in terms of the flow of commodities, capital, technology, knowledge, ideas, institutional forms, and life style is increasingly

taking place between the two social systems.

v) In both types of society the nation state exercises hegemony over an integrated territory and domestic market. Consequently nationalism and the drive towards expansionism, characteristic of the nation state, exist in both types of society.

vi) Sometimes contradictions within a system are more acute than contradictions between the systems; diplomatic initiatives and international alignments are increasingly cutting across the system boundaries.

This is the reality of socialism, and its place in a model of social change has to be determined in relation to this reality and not in relation to an 'idea' of Socialism, of which the reality is an aberration or a distortion. In a schematic presentation, its place would be one leading out of pre-capitalism and parallel to (and not above) capitalism. It is an alternative to capitalism as a route out of pre-capitalism, and not a transitional stage between capitalism and communism. Pre-capitalist societies in transition throw up two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, either of which is capable of effecting and completing the transition out of pre-capitalism. The emerging bourgeoisie was economically more powerful than the emerging proletariat, and this was reflected in the fact that bourgeois ideology which played a significant role in instilling a class consciousness into the bourgeoisie emerged before the proletarian world view of Marxism.

Hence the bourgeoisie had an edge over the proletariat and the transformation of pre-capitalism through bourgeois revolution preceded the transformation through proletarian revolution. However, Marxism provided the proletariat with the weapon that they lacked and in the 20th century many more societies effected the transition from pre-capitalism through a proletarian revolution than through a bourgeois revolution. However, where a country had got out of pre-capitalism through a bourgeois revolution under the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and consolidated the process of self sustaining accumulation and expanded reproduction, a subsequent proletarian socialist revolution has not only never taken place, but even the possibility of it has receded more and more into the background, other than in exceptional cases by external intervention, as in Czechoslovakia. This is the reality of our present historical experience and it points quite definitely in the direction that the socialist revolution takes a country out of pre-capitalism and not out of capitalism. The issue before the countries of the third world is whether they get out of the pre-capitalist trap through the bourgeois or socialist revolution. The choice however, is not entirely an internal one. It is also largely governed by external forces, particularly if the country happens to be placed in a strategic position vis-a-vis the current conflicts in the international arena.

This view of socialism was gradually confirmed in so far as it afforded a solution to some other bothersome problems, such as :

- (i) Marx's proposition that the 'relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of the material forces of production'. In considering this,

the question arises: if there is no qualitative differences between stage of development of the internal forces of production in socialism and capitalism, how can socialist relations of production be at a 'higher' historical stage than the capitalist relations of production, particularly in view of the fact that, in spite of the difference in property relationships, accumulation and commodity production are common to both types of production relations? This again tends to reinforce the view that socialism and capitalism are historically parallel social formations, at virtually the same level of development of the production forces and providing alternative routes for pre-capitalist social formations to get into the stage of self sustained accumulation and expanded reproduction.

ii) The second problem relates to the rationale for interposing a transitional stage between capitalism and communism. In the 19th century it was thought that the revolutionary transformation of capitalism was imminent, but at the same time there was a consciousness of the fact that the forces of production had not developed sufficiently for the material abundance which characterised the communist mode of production... Hence the need for a transitional stage between capitalism and communism. Whatever other reasons there may be for a transitional stage, the above reason no longer holds in view of the tremendous development of productive forces under late capitalism which has brought mankind to the threshold of a post-scarcity era. On

the other hand, the rationale for socialism as a system which will lift a society out of pre-capitalism by a sustained development of the productive forces through a process of self expanding accumulation has been proved over and over again in practice. Marx's hope of a proletarian revolution in 19th century Europe is quite understandable in the sense that European capitalism had still not taken firm roots and the European bourgeoisie had not yet consolidated its hegemonistic class rule. Had the proletarian revolution succeeded in some country at that time, the ensuing socialist societies would have been transitional not from capitalism to communism, but from pre-capitalism.

Having 'removed' Socialism from the path way that a capitalist society passes on its way to communism, the question of the nature of the transformation of capitalist society had to be looked at afresh. Some of the bothersome issues are :-

i) The role of the proletariat in the revolutionary transformation of capitalism. There is no historical example of a class which constituted one element of the principal class contradiction, characteristic of a given mode of production, having played the leading role in overthrowing that mode of production. Slavery was not overthrown by the slaves, nor was feudalism by the serfs. Then why should it be the proletariat that overthrows capitalism? The slaves and serfs were so much an integral part of their respective modes

of production, that though they rebelled, fought against it and won concessions, they were incapable of transcending it. Then why should it be any different with the proletariat?.

ii) A second question is: What is the proletariat in advanced capitalist countries? Is it a cohesive and growing class with a definite class consciousness? Or is it a class which is losing its identity as the material conditions of its life improve, as the degree and extent of automation increase, and as the gap between mental and manual labour, town and country, decreases?

iii) The third question relates to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The questions raised earlier about the proletariat and its role are of relevance in this connection too. Moreover it is difficult to conceive of the possibility of this form of state replacing the bourgeois democratic state structure in the advanced capitalist countries. The transition from the bourgeois democratic state to 'statelessness' has to be through some other form of state structure which contains within itself the seeds of its 'withering'. (On the other hand the dictatorship of the proletariat is the necessary form of state structure for the socialist transformation of pre-capitalist societies. This is demonstrated by the success of the socialist transformation in countries with this form of state structure as compared to the ineffectual attempts of the petty bourgeoisie, in some third world countries,

to effect a socialist transformation without first smashing the pre-capitalist state structure, but merely grafting on to it elements of capitalist and socialist state structures).

iv) A fourth problem relates to the dialectical unity of ends and means. All these issues have a bearing on the tendency in Marxist thinking which goes by the name of 'Euro-Communism'. Having rejected the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat as being irrelevant to advanced capitalist countries, it still talks of a transition from capitalism to socialism. Probably some of the confusion in both the theory and practice of the Marxist parties in advanced capitalist countries may be resolved if they were to liberate themselves from socialism and set their sights on a transition to communism, and work out the implication of this both for theory and strategy. Euro-Communists and other radicals in the advanced capitalist countries are the best equipped to give body and form to the concept of the transitional stage to Communism (i.e. Marx's lower stage of communism as distinct from Lenin's transitional stage of socialism). In particular, they need to find answers to the following questions, among many others :

i) Are there significant differences at the superstructural level in relation to a transition to Communism between the Scandinavian Countries, Southern Europe, North-

ern Europe, Britain, U.S.A., and Japan? If so what is the material basis (forces and relations of production) for these differences?

ii) What is the character of the transitional state, if it is not a dictatorship of the proletariat? In terms of the unity of ends and means, what should be the nature of its power, if this transitional state is eventually to wither away? What is the specific form that the dialectical unity of centralism and decentralism takes in relation to State power and countervailing power in the transitional state? What forms of social organisations would correspond to such an interrelationship between centralism and decentralism, state power and countervailing power?

iii) If it is not through proletarian revolution, what is the method/methods for achieving this transitional state?

iv) What is the character of the production forces in the transitional stage to Communism? Is it merely a quantitative increase over the capitalist productive forces, or is there a qualitative change as well? If so, does the qualitative change lie in the transformation of a predatory man-nature relationship to a non-predatory one? Can such a qualitative change

be effected through an adaptation of existing technology, or has a new technology to be created? Does the scientific knowledge for the creation of such a new technology exist?

v) Is the specific role of the transitional stage to Communism the development of the productive forces to such a qualitatively higher level as to bring about a harmonious relationship between man and nature? If so what are the relations of production that would be most conducive to the development of productive forces in this manner? What would be the requirements of such a technology in terms of the spatial distribution of society? What would be the forms of social organisation, life styles and production activities of organisations in keeping with such a spatial distribution? Would such a society continue to be a commodity producing, accumulating one? Or would it be in transition to the production of use values? If so what are the specific relations of production of such a social formation?

vi) What is the path of transition from capitalist relations of production to these new relations of production?

vii) Do the radicals in the advanced capitalist countries have to wait for D'day when they capture state power, or do they have sufficient countervailing power to bring about the development of qualitative higher productive forces under new relations of production? In other words are such changes possible or could they be made possible in some of the advanced capitalist countries, or at least in some regions in them? If so, does this not become an important component of the strategy of the radical parties in those countries in developing a communist consciousness among the people and bringing about a social transformation in their countries?

viii) What effect would the development of such a qualitatively different advanced technology have on the third world countries which borrow it? Would not the role of the 'transfer of technology' be changed from an instrument of domination to an instrument of liberation? Would this not be the process by which the Imperialist centre is transformed into a revolutionary centre vis-a-vis the periphery?

This leads us to the main part of the paper; the process of Social Change. Here there were two principal questions that were troublesome;

i) In Marxist literature, the produc-

tive forces begin to develop under new and higher relations of production even before the bourgeois revolution through which the bourgeoisie captures state power. However, in the case of the proletarian revolution, it is only after the capture of state power by the proletariat that the productive forces begin to develop under new and higher relations of production. In this sense, the proletarian revolution is a big bang which inaugurates the change in the mode of production. This has influenced the strategies and tactics of proletarian parties; no attempts have been made to change the mode of production before D-day. In fact, any prior attempt to develop the productive forces is regarded as reformist, and as a palliative rather than as a revolutionary measure. This post ante division is to me a somewhat arbitrary one. In the case of the Chinese revolution, there was a change in the mode of production in the liberated areas before the final capture of state power. Of course one could argue that this was possible because the Chinese Communist party had effective power in the liberated areas. But what is effective power and what is a liberated area? The bourgeoisie of feudal Europe also had effective power in the towns, which

was their liberated area. Effective power is ultimately a certain critical measure of countervailing power and a liberated area is not necessarily a mountainous and relatively inaccessible area, but one in which such countervailing power prevails. The same thinking applies to the transformation of advanced capitalist societies. Is there sufficient countervailing power in their societies for the setting up of 'liberated areas where a change in the mode of production need not await the ultimate capture of state power, but in fact could be an important element of the strategy and action of the revolutionary movement in those societies?

- ii) A second problem relates to the nexus between the two levels of contradiction in Marxist theory: one at the level of the base (the contradiction between productive forces and productive relations), the other at the superstructural level (the class contradictions and the class conflict). The contradiction between productive forces and relation works itself out through class actors. What is the actual process by which this happens? To me this was a somewhat hazy area in Marxist theory.

The essay that follows is an attempt to clarify my own understanding of the detailed process by which the contradictions at these two levels interact with each other to produce social change through a long revolution.

A spectre is haunting humanity - the spectre of Barbarism.

In the century since Marx's death the continuing class struggle has produced a rich variety of advanced post-industrial, post-revolutionary and still stagnant pre-capitalist societies. The movement or non-movement of these societies, their specific transitional paths and their present characteristics are the raw materials for an analysis of the process of Social Change. With the dissolution of the monolithicity in Marxist theoretical thinking in the last two decades, there has been a flowering of debate within Marxism aimed at a fresh synthesis. Marxist trends that have remained submerged from the early part of the century are becoming a source of inspiration.

This paper is meant to be a contribution to this dialogue. In particular, it is addressed to those to whom both the spectre of Barbarism and the vision of Communism are real - the latter being more than a Utopia, irrelevant for current revolutionary practice. It is the theme of this paper that in the struggle against barbarism the reality of a communist society is of operational significance in charting a promising transitional path in a world becoming increasingly complex.¹

1. The use of the term Barbarism to characterize the antithesis of Communism has been inspired by

the writings of Rosa Luxemburg. However, it is used here in a somewhat different sense, both in terms of the end and the pathway to such a society. To Rosa Luxemburg Barbarism was the alternative to Socialism of the collapse of Capitalism. While we do not rule out the emergence of a barbarism through such an "implosion", our concern here is primarily with the arrival of Barbarism through "explosion" (transcending) of certain forms of Capitalism and Socialism.

The term Communism is used in the original Marxist sense, though we are not unaware that the pre-emption of this category by societies which are not even remotely approaching the original vision has endowed the term with many negative connotations among those who are otherwise in full sympathy with the essence of the concept.

The term Socialism has been even more abused. However, it is better to adhere to the generally accepted Marxist terminology - though giving it a somewhat modified content and position in the stages of societal change - than to coin a new label and add to the semantic confusion.

Pathways of Social Change: questioning of Unilinearity

1. The Marxist model of social change (in the modern area), as generally understood, envisages it as a staged process consisting of a succession of the following modes of production:

Pre-Capitalist → Capitalist → Communist

2. There was, however, a problem. In the 19th Century it was thought that the revolutionary transformation of capitalism was imminent, but at the same time there was a consciousness of the fact that the forces of production had not developed sufficiently for the material abundance which characterised the Communist mode of production. This problem was solved by interposing a transitional Socialist stage between the Capitalist and the Communist.

Pre-Capitalist > Capitalist > Socialist > Communist

3. The main historical role of the Socialist stage was to develop the productive forces to a level sufficient for the transition to Communism to take place. Its characteristic features were:
 - a. Social ownership of the means of production.
 - b. Planning as opposed to Capitalist anarchy in production, circulation and distribution.
 - c. Retention of differential rewards as material incentives for production ("to each according to his work" as distinct from the Communist distribution principle of "to each according to his needs").
 - d. Smashing of the Capitalist State apparatus and its replacement by the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would eventually wither away with the approach of the Communist stage.
4. The quarrel of the early anarchists with

the Marxists can be traced to this interposition of a Socialist stage with its repressive state apparatus. In common with the Utopians, they did not place much emphasis on the role of the development of productive forces in social changes, and felt that the time was ripe to usher in the stateless Communist Society, which would be non-hierarchical and self-managed.

5. In a way, the quarrel of the Social Democrats with the Marxists may also be traced to this interloping Socialist stage, which they felt was an unnatural and unnecessary intervention in the historical process. The evolution of capitalism itself would lead to the millennium, and any extraneous and forcible imposition of a proletarian revolution followed by the dictatorship of the proletariat was an historical aberration.
6. The Russian revolution presented a major theoretical challenge to the Marxists of that time. Some of the issues that it raised were :
- a) Why did it happen in Russia and not in one of the more capitalistically developed countries, particularly Germany where the proletariat was, relatively speaking, the most organised?
 - b) How could one talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat being the highest form of democracy when the proletariat was still numerically insignificant in a predominantly agrarian Russia?
 - c) Was it a bourgeois-democratic or a Socialist revolution?

d) If it was the former, why was the bourgeoisie not leading it?

e) If it was the latter: how could the stage of Socialist revolution have arrived on the historical scene, when there were so many unfinished bourgeois-democratic tasks in Tsarist Russia?

7. The first question was answered with the statement that "a chain snaps at its weakest link", and this "explanation" was readily accepted by Marxists. The second question was answered by changing the formula from the dictatorship of the proletariat to the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" and, except for a slight variation about the hegemony of the proletariat, everyone agreed.

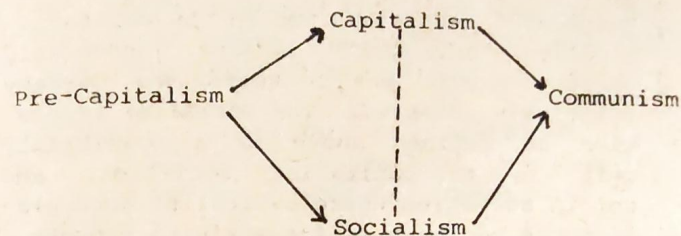
8. The last three questions, however, proved to be more intractable, and there was no uniformity in the answers given. Some of the answers were :

a) Pre-revolutionary Russia was in the throes of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but of a new type. The bourgeoisie had ceased to be a revolutionary class. Hence the new type of bourgeois-democratic revolution had to be led by the proletariat, and in actual opposition to the bourgeoisie. But this did not make it a Socialist revolution because the tasks to be performed after victory were specifically bourgeois-democratic and not Socialist ones. Moreover, the revolution would lead to

the consolidation, not of proletarian but of bourgeois power; because in a democratically elected Constituent Assembly, the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie would dominate over the proletariat which constituted only a tiny fraction of the population. "Thus by its actions the proletariat brings the course of revolutionary events to the extreme limit which is allowed by the objective development of social relationships, then almost inevitably at this boundary a big temporary defeat awaits it". (Rosa Luxemburg).

- b) The bourgeois-democratic tasks would merge with the Socialist tasks, and therefore the bourgeois-democratic revolution would flow uninterruptedly and without discontinuity into the Socialist revolution.
- c) The February revolution was a bourgeois-democratic one, while the October revolution was a Socialist one; thereby compressing the so-called entire historical era between Capitalism and Socialism into the space of 8 months.

9. The laboured and tortuous character of the above explanations is evident. Similar issues and similar explanations arose with regard to the nature of the social transformations in Eastern Europe and Asia. The source of the confusion seems to be the unilinear character of the historical staging described earlier. A different ordering of the stages on a non-unilinear basis may help to resolve some, if not all, of these problems. Such an ordering may be the following:



-----=interpenetration, not transformation

10. Some of the implications of the above model are :
- a) Capitalism and Socialism are historically alternative stages of development for pre-capitalist societies. The main historical role of both stages is the development of the productive forces of society, through accumulation, as a prelude to the Communist mode of production.
 - b) The Russian, Eastern European, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, etc., were Socialist revolutions. But the term "Socialism" needs to be drained of its ideal content and regarded as a historical stage parallel to Capitalism, and co-existing and interpenetrating with it. The inequality, the bureaucracy, the limitation of democracy apparent in varying degrees in existing Socialist societies are not aberrations, but inevitable consequences of a centrally directed thrust at lifting up pre-capitalist societies from a semi-medieval to the modern era.
 - c) The Socialist revolution took place in

"backward" Russia and not in the capitalistically "advanced" Germany, precisely because Russia was backward and Germany relatively advanced. The Socialist revolution as defined above is a possibility only in pre-capitalist societies, and not in societies where capitalist accumulation has become a self-sustaining process.

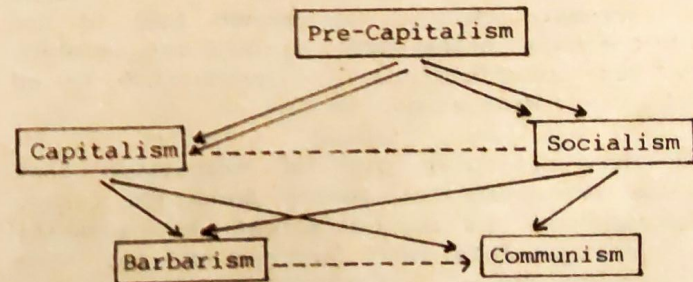
d) The term pre-capitalist must be regarded as including all socio-economic formation where accumulation has not become a self-reproducing and self-expanding process. It thus includes even those societies which through their contact with imperialism have become a part of the world Capitalist system, have even developed the wage labour form of exploitation in some areas of the economy, and whose superstructure contains typically capitalist features, but which nevertheless, partly because of their dependency relationships, have not reached the stage of self-producing and self-expanding accumulation. "State Capitalist" socio-economic formations would also, for the same reason, be included in the pre-capitalist stage.

e) Socialism is not a necessary historical stage for capitalist countries to go through in their transition to Communism and in relation to their proximity to this transition, some capitalist countries may be more advanced than some socialist countries.

11. But, even this model is bi-linear and too deterministic:

- a) It ignores the rich variety of social processes and forms that time has thrown up during this century.
- b) It depicts Pre-Capitalism, Capitalism and Socialism as each being undifferentiated socio-economic formations.
- c) It implies a necessary transformation of all Pre-Capitalist Societies into Capitalist or Socialist Societies, and or both these, in turn, into Communist Societies.
- d) It envisages a unique path of transition from Pre-Capitalism to Capitalism, from Pre-capitalism to Socialism, from Capitalism to Communism, and from Socialism to Communism.

12. A more realistic model could be the following one:



-----interpenetration not transformation
 ----->interpenetration, possibly transformation

13. The implications of this model are as follows:

- a) Pre-Capitalist societies have existed and exist in a variety of forms. Some of these societies have made the transition either to Capitalism or to Socialism, others will do so, but some appear to be far from this transition in their present state.
- b) There is no unique path of transition either from Pre-Capitalism to Capitalism or from Pre-capitalism to Socialism. Neither is there any determinism about whether a Pre-capitalist society would move to Capitalism or to Socialism, or whether it would move at all.
- c) The "determinism" exists, if at all, in the objective necessity, that if a pre-capitalist society does move to a higher stage of social development, it can only move to a stage which will develop the forces of production through a process of self-reproducing and self-expanding accumulation, and it cannot leap to the Communist stage merely through the development of the forces of production in an intervening stage.
- d) The particular path of transition that a Pre-capitalist Social formation takes, however, is not a matter of necessity or certainty, but of probability. The chance for a particular path depends not only on the internal class relationships and the configuration of the external environment, but also on non-predictable occurrences such as a fortuitous conjunction of the internal and external situations, the quality of leadership, and

- often on the presence of a charismatic leader. Moreover, the probability of a particular path is not a constant, but will vary with the occurrence of every new event. In such a context, prediction of the transitional path is a hazardous venture. As Jacques Monod says: "No one will blame a universal theory for not affirming and foreseeing the existence of this particular configuration of atoms: it is enough for us that this actual object, unique and real, be compatible with the theory. This object, according to the theory, is under no obligation to exist; but it has the right to".
- e) Both the Capitalist and the Socialist revolution must smash the pre-capitalist state apparatus, and erect in its place either a bourgeois or a proletarian state apparatus. Since in pre-capitalist social formations, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are numerically small, the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie play a vital role in the revolutionary transformation of pre-capitalist societies, whether through the bourgeois or the proletarian revolutions. However, where the petty-bourgeoisie attempts the transformation on its own, independent of and in opposition to both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, no real transformation takes place, and pre-capitalism continues to exist either in the form of simple commodity production or some form of "State Capitalism", (e.g. Burma, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Tanzania).
- f) Capitalist and Socialist societies also

exist in a variety of forms. The particular transitional path from Pre-capitalism will largely condition the form of the resulting Capitalist or Socialist society (unity of ends and means). Within the Capitalist and Socialist groupings the variety of forms will depend partly on differences at the level of the base (forces and relations of production) and partly on superstructural variations, particularly in the character of the state, the extent and nature of countervailing power, the level of social consciousness, and the vitality of community organisation.

- g) If the Socialist transformation of pre-capitalist societies could take place along a variety of paths, and if these paths in turn largely condition the character of the resulting society, and if this, in turn, largely conditions the possibility and the facility of the future transition to Communism, the process is not deterministic and scope for voluntary action will exist. The task of revolutionary forces in such societies is one of charting a course which could ultimately result in the surest transition to Communism-which is not necessarily the same as the one which will result in the quickest transition to Socialism. This does not mean, however, that they should stand aloof from a different type of transitional path which the conjuncture of circum-

stances has made inevitable. A qualitative change in pre-capitalist continuity is welcome as it breaks the stagnation - even if it were to lead to a capitalist path of development. It only means that they should look for and create space in the new situation for the achievement of their objective.

- h) The historical contemporaneity and interpenetration of Capitalism and Socialism implies that imperialism is not only a phase specific to capitalism but also to some types of Socialist societies. It further follows that the "positive" aspect of imperialism in lifting up certain societies from the Pre-capitalist into the Capitalist state (e.g., South Korea and Taiwan), has its analogue in that Social imperialism has performed a similar positive role in releasing certain societies from the Pre-capitalist trap and transforming them into Socialist societies (e.g., Eastern Europe).
- i) The variety of forms in which capitalist and Socialist societies exist could result in a variety of transitional paths to Communism, and an equal variety of forms of Communist society. However, the development of the productive forces alone does not ensure the transition to Communism; it is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Equally important are the specific relations of production, the quality of the man--nature inter-action which is develop-

ing the productive forces, and at the level of superstructure, the extent of social consciousness, community organisation and countervailing power. The mere development of the productive forces alone may not lead to Communism, but to its negation, Barbarism.

- j) As more and more societies escape from pre-capitalist stagnation into a socialist or capitalist path of expanded reproduction and accumulation, the space available for the dominance of the imperialist relationship between centre and periphery becomes increasingly constricted. As a result, Capitalism enters a period of internal crisis, a manifestation of which is the stagflation that is now afflicting all the capitalist countries in varying degrees of intensity. This however, need not presage the "collapse" of capitalist countries into a state of endemic chaos. On the contrary, the deepening crisis may provide the objective conditions for a historic change: the transcending of the Capitalist mode of production itself. The Capitalist mode of production may turn into a fetter inhibiting further development of the productive forces. The way out of the impasse could lie in a transformation of private ownership of the means of production into one form or other of social ownership, and of commodity production into the production of use-values. This could open up two possible paths of transition; one to barbarism and the other to Communism. Social ownership of the means of production and the production of use-values could take a centralised form within which a predatory man-nature relationship develops the productive forces, thereby providing the material base for a satiated, manipulated,

hierarchically managed and unconscious barbaric society. On the other hand, social ownership and the production of use-values could take a decentralised form which may eventually transcend "ownership" itself and become "non-ownership". Such relations of production will provide a framework within which a new technology based on a harmonious man-nature relationship could develop the productive forces, thereby providing the material base for a want-free, liberated, self-managed and fully conscious communist society.

14. A preliminary characterisation of Barbarism may be attempted:
- a) A very high degree of development of the productive forces coupled with a history of (a) exploitation and/or (b) concentration of means of production and centralisation of decision-making gives unparalleled power to a few over many, exercised not through deprivation but through directed satiating: induced consumption of useless products and usurpation of increased leisure time. The economic machine is kept going and even expanding by these created wants way beyond any meaningful level of human needs.
 - b) The driving force at this stage is neither coercion (political) nor remuneration (economic) but ideology - a powerful diffusion of perverse consumerism through the use of mass media, creating a mindless, sub-human, robot-like mass, completely at the mercy of the manipulators, i.e. the scenario of "1984".

c) While the essence of Barbarism is power, it operates not necessarily through the erection of awesome state power but by destroying all possibility of countervailing power. Thus neither Communism nor Barbarism require a state-the former because of a highly conscious people and the latter because of a completely unconscious mass.

d) The root of the unconsciousness lies in the social being: the ultimate development of technology, predatory on nature and based on extreme division of labour. Dialectically, the efficiency of this technology makes consumerism possible and in turn the ideology supports the existing man-nature relationship. While aggressively and wastefully transforming nature, man transforms himself into a Barbarian

15. A summary comparison of Barbarism and Communism may be as follows :

<u>Barbarism</u>	<u>Communism</u>
- extreme division of labour, low skill, low consciousness, "efficient" but wasteful technology, geared to individual consumption	- low division of labour, varied tasks, high skill, high consciousness, less "efficient", geared to maximum collective consumption.
- predatory on nature	- symbiotic with nature

- formally social ownership	- beyond ownership
- centralised	- decentralised
- little or no extraction of surplus value	- no exploitation
- abundant, over-consumptive	- sufficient, balanced life style
- stateless	- stateless
- unconscious, mindless robot-like man	- conscious, purposeful human man
- manipulated, tranquilized passive society	- emancipated, mobilized, active society
- control through ideology with false choice	- consensus through ideology with real choice, variety and freedom
- relationship as commodity, lonely atomistic amorphous	- relationships as meaning of existence, secure, collective, cohesive

Barbarism and Communism have apparently similar material conditions. The difference lies in the nature of the articulation of the productive forces, and subtle differences in the relations of production creating and being re-inforced by entirely dissimilar superstructures, mainly ideological. For a long historical epoch they may co-exist in an unstable state.

Process of Social Change: The Long Revolution

1. Perhaps the most succinct statement of Marx's conceptualisation of the process of social change is to be found in his Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy". The main propositions enunciated there are as follows

- i) "In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will".
- ii) "These relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production".
- iii) "The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life".
- iv) "At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production".
- v) "From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into fetters. Then occurs a period of social revolution".
- vi) "In considering such transformation the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic - in short, ideological-forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out".
- vii) "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed".
- viii) "New, higher relations of production never

appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society".

2. In theory, Marxists have generally agreed that the process of social change consists of a dialectical interaction between the objective and the subjective, base and superstructure, chance and necessity. In practice, however, many have tended to lean towards one or the other of these dialectical opposites by placing special emphasis on some of the propositions of Marx to the neglect of the others. For example:
 - a) Propositions (iv) and (v) have been specially emphasised by some, and this has led to deterministic and teleological overtones. Historical "progress" tends to be conceived as an "objectively necessary" process propelled by the "unfolding" of the "inherent" contradiction between forces and relations of production at each stage of their development, and its "inevitable" resolution "inexorably" leading humanity on to higher and higher stages of social progress.
 - b) On the other hand, particular stress laid on proposition (vi), particularly the latter half of it, has resulted in a subjectivist tilt which assigns, to the development of consciousness, the major role in bringing about social change.
 - c) Propositions (ii) and (vii) have often been ignored with the result that "Marxist" fancy, set free from its earthly moorings, has roamed freely in Utopian realms.

d) Proposition (viii) has been almost forgotten with the result that not only the understanding of the revolutionary process, but also the grasp of revolutionary strategy has suffered considerably.

3. The substance of all the above propositions of Marx, could be synthesised and concisely formulated as follows :

As a result of the development of the productive forces, and corresponding to a definite stage of that development, new and higher relations of production gradually begin to appear in the womb of the old society. These new relations of production, in turn, generate new social, political and ideological processes and a new consciousness corresponding to them. The interaction between the productive forces and consciousness results not only in the further development of the productive forces and consciousness and the deepening of the new relations of production, but also in an increasing awareness that the existing relations of production have become fetters hindering that development. The growing conflict between the new and the old is then fought out by men, and thus ensues a period of social revolution. However, the old social order never disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed.

4. In order to comprehend this process better, it is necessary to probe deeply into its detailed operation, both in historical as well as contemporary societies. Such a probe will not only increase the understand-

ing of the process, but will also thereby enable conscious intervention in it. For such intervention to be fruitful, however, it is necessary to analyse the process from the point of view of distilling from it useful operational concepts which could guide revolutionary strategy.

5. Such an analysis of the process of social change, which also, incidentally, brings out the element of probability inherent in it, could be as follows :

a) The development of the productive forces increases the social surplus.

b) While the distribution of the social surplus is being continuously reproduced by the production process which is taking place within the existing relations of production, there is a probability that as the surplus increase, some leakages and modifications may gradually arise in the existing distributive system.

c) The surplus accruing to independent direct producers may increase. Even some of the dependent direct producers may well be able to retain a part of the increased surplus and not surrender the entirety of it to the exploiting class (or classes). Also, within the exploiting class itself, more of the surplus may accrue to some individuals and sub-groups than to others. Thus begins a process of differentiation within the ranks of the independent direct producers,

dependent direct producers and the exploiters.

- d) The new beneficiaries of the increased social surplus may well utilise it in the same manner as the existing exploiting class. In the event they will gradually get absorbed into and strengthen this class, and the reproduction of the existing mode of production will continue unchanged.
- e) However, it is also possible that at some stage, some of them, at least, will use their share of the increased surplus in a manner different to that of the traditional recipients. In particular, they may utilise it to further develop the productive forces and could thereby come up against the need for new relations of production, because of the inadequate opportunities available for the development of the productive forces within the existing relations of production.
- f) To the extent that these new beneficiaries of the increased social surplus carry on production within the framework of new relations of production, they constitute the beginnings of a new social class which is emerging from within the "womb of the old society", and which is becoming so to say, the standard bearer of the further development of the productive forces. Their activity of developing the productive forces under new and higher relations of production constitutes the seeds of change within the existing

social order.

- g) Whether these seeds will germinate, take root, grow, flower and multiply will depend on the suitability of the environment, which in this case consists of the space available to them under the existing relations of production (i.e., economic space), and within the existing superstructure, particularly the dominant power relationship (i.e., political space).
- h) Wherever adequate space is available, the process of social production may now reproduce not only the existing relations of production, but along with them the new relations of production together with a new class which becomes increasingly conscious of itself as a class, and whose "objective historical role" is the further development of the productive forces.
- i) The continuous reproduction of the new relations of production will generate, reproduce, and in turn be strengthened by its own social, political and ideological superstructure, which reinforces and is reinforced by a growing class consciousness. A countervailing power in opposition to the dominant power will begin to emerge and gradually get organised and institutionalised. Countervailing power is of two types, non-antagonistic and antagonistic, depending on the nature of its relationship to the dominant power. In the case of the former, this relationship is a contradic-

tory but not an antagonistic one. Such countervailing power grows together with the dominant power. It may seek to reduce exploitation, but within the existing production relations, to check and control the abuse of power, and at most, to take over and manage more efficiently, and perhaps even more equitably, some of the institutions of the dominant power. The other type of countervailing power has an antagonistic relationship to, and its growth necessarily implies a decline of, the dominant power.

j) As the available space gets used up and constricted, the new relations of production come into conflict with the old, which now is becoming a fetter on the further development of the productive forces, and the new class whose consciousness has been growing becomes acutely aware of the need to create more space. The conflict between the new and the old is then fought out by men who are conscious of themselves as being representatives of two contradictory and antagonistic forces. Thus ensues a period of social revolution.

k) The social revolution is not a once and for all big bang. It is a process taking place over a period of time; a long and protracted revolution. It does not end with the "capture" of political power. It encompasses an entire period of development of the productive forces under new relations of production,

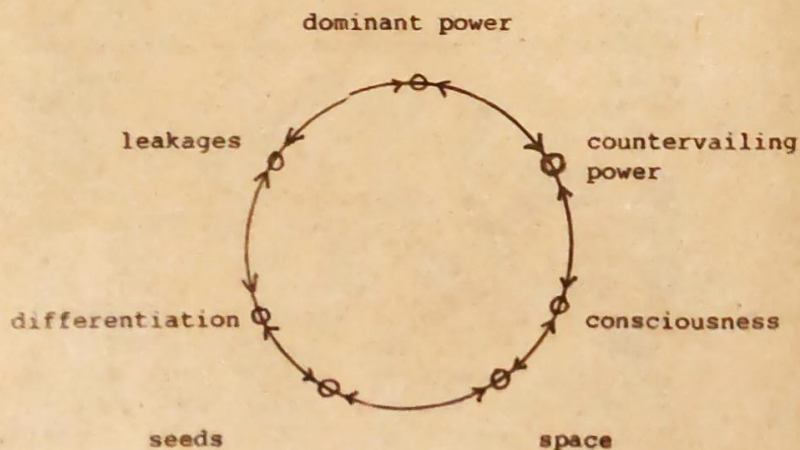
and in conflict with the old. In the course of the revolutionary conflict to create space, non-antagonistic countervailing power is transformed into an antagonistic one, and then into the dominant power. This is, however, only a stage in the process, though an important one. It could infuse a greater consciousness and direction to the process and speed it up. Leakages may be transformed from dribbles into a flood. The new relations of production may be further expanded and reproduced by a widespread sowing of seeds. The class struggle to create more space could now be waged under more favourable conditions. With the heightening of consciousness, there may emerge a non-antagonistic countervailing power, not only to check and control the abuse of power, but also to oppose any tendency of the dominant power to compromise with the old social order. Thus, the social revolution proceeds; sometimes slowly and taking a zig-zag course, sometimes leaping forward, until the old social order disappears when there is no room for the further development of the productive forces under the old relations of production.

6. The operational concepts that emerge from the above analysis of the process of social change are :

leakages ↔ differentiation ↔ seeds ↔ space
consciousness ↔ countervailing power ↔ dominant power.

The two-way arrows indicates that the causal relationship is not a uni-directional one, but a dialectical relationship flowing both ways, in which cause and effect continuously interchange their respective positions.

A circular representation may better focus on this inter-relationship :



Such a representation also more clearly signifies that there is no singular starting point for the process. Under certain historical conditions, the dearth of space may be the binding constraint for the process to move decisively. In such situations, the creation of space through revolutionary conflict, even going all the way to becoming the dominant power, may be a first priority before any seeds could be sown. However,

if this is a protracted struggle, some seeds of the new relations of production can be sown in that very process. Yet, the task of completing the social revolution still requires going through the different sequences of the process, beginning now from a position of dominant power.

In other historical conditions, the space needed for sowing the seeds, either exists or can be created through limited struggles which do not go all the way to becoming the dominant power. Such situations, in which many contemporary societies find themselves, require the conscious sowing of seeds (i.e., the development of the productive forces under new and higher relations of production) in the available space. This will not only increase the momentum of the social revolution and hasten the disappearance of the existing social order, by constricting the space available for it to grow, but may also be the surest method by which people become mobilised, conscientised and organised to become the dominant power, and to consciously continue the struggle until the old social order disappears.

7. Some of the implications for revolutionary strategy, of the above analysis and the operational concepts it has yielded, are as follows :

a) Seeds and space constitute a dialectical unity of opposites whose movement and interaction generate social change. Seeds without space are, to change the metaphor, mere bubbles, and space without seeds is only a vacuum. Seeds in search

of space and space looking for seeds provide the terrain for revolutionary action. Consciously looking for and creating space for the seeds to thrive and the sowing of seeds in the available space with the consciousness of becoming the dominant power is the very essence of revolutionary strategy.

- b) There is often a misconception among Marxists that any action by them to develop the productive forces of society is "economist" or "reformist", while only that action is revolutionary which leads, through theoretical education and mass struggles, to the raising of mass consciousness for the capture of political power. This is a one-sided conception of the process of social change, which in reality is brought about not only through the development of the productive forces and their mutual interaction.
- c) The dividing line between reformist and revolutionary action is not whether revolutionaries should actively participate or not in the development of the productive forces, but under what relations of production and with what consciousness they do it. To do so under new and higher relations of production and to struggle to create the necessary space for it, is to embark on a course of revolutionary action designed to sow the seeds of social change and multiply them continuously, with the ultimate objective of becoming the dominant power, and thereafter completing the social

revolution.

- d) For instance, there exists considerable economic space provided by certain forms of state capitalism in some of the Third World countries. This space is largely an unutilised vacuum.

Rather than merely condemn State Capitalism, revolutionary action consists in "transcending" it by fully utilising the space it provides to sow the seeds of change; i.e., to develop the productive forces under new collectivist relations of production, and to create more and more space, by political and economic struggles, for the seeds to grow and multiply. The raising of mass consciousness is an integral and inseparable part of mass creativity through mass action to develop the productive forces and to create economic and political space for it.

- e) The development of the productive forces within the relations of production and the growth of consciousness could lead, whenever the existing political space permits it or more political space can be created, to the establishment of strong and antagonistic countervailing power. This "Yenan" need not necessarily be in the mountains or the forests. It could be located anywhere. In the case of the bourgeoisie of feudal Europe, it was located in the towns.
- f) On the other hand, in many capitalist countries there exists a substantial

political space provided by bourgeois democracy and the growth of countervailing power both in a diffused and institutionalised form. This space too is largely an unutilised vacuum in search of seeds. The utilisation of the political space of bourgeois democracy for purely trade union struggles limited in scope to snatching a bigger share of the social surplus is, however, "economism" and not revolutionary action. It merely increases the "leakages" in the system of distribution of the social surplus. But unless this leakage is utilised to sow the seeds of change, it will not lead to social differentiation but to an identification with the capitalist class. It will not lead to the raising of social consciousness, but only to a reinforcement of the capitalist mode of production, by gaining for it a wider ideological acceptance from the new beneficiaries of the social surplus it creates.

- g) The task of revolutionaries in capitalist countries in Europe and elsewhere is not merely to condemn the obvious limitations of bourgeois democracy, but to fully utilise the political space it provides and develop the forces of production under new and higher communist relations of production, thereby sowing the seeds of change which will lead through the struggle for the creation of more and more space and the consequent development of social consciousness to an eventual transcending of both

bourgeois democracy and the capitalist mode of production. Many of these societies possess economic space, and often also political space for the seeds to grow. What they seem to lack are viable seeds capable of withstanding the ideological "lethal radiation" pervading the whole atmosphere. One effective shield is a coherent socially oriented (as opposed to individual drop out) counter culture created by those whom the system is throwing up in significant numbers as a reaction/revulsion to the dominant culture. Movements at the superstructural level concerned with eco-development, new life styles and democracy at the work place have the potential for generating seeds under these conditions.

- h) Likewise, the struggle in the socialist societies is between tendencies towards Barbarism and the striving for Communism. This struggle lies both in the superstructure and the base. The political and economic space to sow and develop the seeds of Communism varies in the different socialist countries. The task in the continuing revolution in these societies also, is to sow seeds and create more space in which to do so.
- i) The basis of internationalism is an identity of interest and mutual reinforcement arising, not out of being a part of the world Socialist movement in a common struggle against Capitalism, but from being a part of the world Communist movement in the common struggle

against Barbarism.

While Communism in one country may or may not be a viable proposition, Barbarism in one or two powerful countries will overwhelm the rest of humanity.
