

In Refutation of Instant Socialist Revolution in India

Moni Guha

Some political parties—who claim themselves as Marxist- Leninists—are advocating instant Socialist Revolution in India refuting the programme of Peoples’ Democratic Revolution as according to them—India is not only a capitalist country, but also an imperialist one. They have produced mass of statistics and data in support of their stand.

While highly appreciating the imperative need of using the statistics and data, we, at the same time, are quite aware of the fact that statistics and data have | got powerful propensities of betraying the users and these may play a tremendously treacherous role, if not handled with required consideration and care. About statistics and data, Lenin said, “In order to depict this objective position, one must not take examples or isolated data (in view of the extreme complexity of the phenomena of social life, it is always possible to select any number of examples, or separate data to prove any proposition) but the *whole* of the data concerning the *basis* of economic life in all the belligerent countries, and the *whole* world.” (Preface to his *Imperialism the highest stage of capitalism*, Emphasis by Lenin).

Accepting the conclusion of the advocates of instant socialist revolution in India, that India is a capitalist and imperialist country we will show how and why they have lost their way in the dense forest of statistics and data.

The celebrated and voluminous book of Lenin, *Development of capitalism in Russia* was published in 1898. In this book Lenin, with the help of mass of statistics and data established that capitalism in Russian agriculture and Russian national economy was developing at a rapid stride.

Seven years after the publication of this book, Lenin published another book viz. *Two tactics of Social Democracy in Bourgeois Democratic Revolution*, in June, 1905. In this book also he said that ‘Marxism teaches that a society which is based on commodity production and which has commercial intercourse with civilized capitalist nations, at a certain stage of development, itself, inevitably takes the road of capitalism.

How can we, the communist revolutionaries deny this unmistakable truth? We also agree with Lenin, as well as with the advocates of the instant socialist revolution in India that India also inevitably took the road of capitalism at a certain stage of her development, especially, after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1858, and with the introduction of commercial crops in agriculture. But, unfortunately, we cannot agree with the advocates of instant socialist revolution regarding the stages of revolution. Rather, as Leninists, we agree with Lenin, that in spite of the development of capitalism in India—like that of Russia—we need a democratic revolution.

Lenin said in his *Two tactics* that, ‘In countries like Russia, the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of capitalism. The working class is *decidedly interested* in the broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism. The removal of the remnants of the old order which are hampering the broad, free and rapid development of capitalism is of *decided advantage* to the working class’ (Emphasis by Lenin). Lenin showed in this book, why the Russian bourgeoisie were not interested in thoroughly and consistently developing capitalism and the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution and why the working class should and must take the leadership of the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution. In this context, Lenin propounded the theory of the revolutionary, democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

It was Lenin who with the help of mass of statistics and data firmly established that, in spite of the existence of strong pre-capitalist remnants Russia became a capitalist country, Again, it was the same Lenin, who formulated a programme of Bourgeois Democratic Revolution in Russia, and not only in Russia but also ‘in countries like Russia’ and advocated revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry instead of a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Why? On which grounds? Did Lenin deviate from Leninism and have the advocates of instant socialist revolution in India become more Leninists than Lenin himself?

Let us go deeper into the matter.

Marx, in his third volume of *Capital* said that, ‘The transition from the feudal mode of production takes place in two fold manner. The producer becomes a trader and capitalist ...

This is the really revolutionary way. Alternatively, the produce passes directly to the possession of the trader. Although, historically, the latter also is the process of transition... by itself it *does not bring about the subversion of the old mode of production, which it rather conserves and retains as its own pre-condition.*” (Emphasis ours).

What does the above quotation of Marx mean? It means the transition from feudal to capitalist mode of production did not take place everywhere in the form of the process of the producer becoming a trader—a capitalist. In countries like Russia, Eastern Europe and also in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where foreign intervention *reinforced* the position of the pre-capitalist traders, who were already operating on the basis of feudal production relation. The product of the labour of the peasants came to the world market and established “commercial intercourse with civilized capitalist nations” *only through the intermediaries of the colonialists via the native traders who became the compradors.* Due to non-revolutionary ‘alternative’ historical process of capitalist development agriculture became subjected to double yoke of exploitation, the capitalist mode of production became deprived of the possibility of “broadest, freest and most rapid development”, and it remained within the limits of semi-feudal and semi-capitalist relations. The sufferings of the working class and the people was not due to capitalism but due to the “insufficient development of

capitalism”. It became the task of the working class first to remove the obstacles “of the remnants of the old order which are hampering the broad, free and rapid development of capitalism”.

The process through which the society became transformed from feudal to capitalist in Western Europe and North America was “really revolutionary”. The Industrial Revolution in Western Europe and North America which gave birth to political democracy, was planned by no one. It was a social process arose out of the profit-seeking motive of the commodity society, of the then individual capitalists. The free competition of the private capitalists gave rise to political liberty and representative institutions which enabled the regimes of early capitalism of these countries to evolve a type of political democracy which is known as Western Democracy. The *idea* —not the political democracy itself came to us—including Russia, Eastern Europe and the colonial and semi-colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America—readymade before the economic, social and political conditions, to which it was related, had really arisen. The faltered and fettered development of capitalism, the abject compromise with the old order instead of subverting it, the double yoke of exploitation of the peasantry, the absence of political liberty and representative institutions in spite of capitalist development, were the socio-economic peculiarities of the social formations of the ‘backward’ countries, which still exist. Not only that. Take India as an instance. The ‘Industrial Revolution’ and the ‘capitalist development’ which we are witnessing in India since the introduction of Five Year Plans, is not the outcome of free competition of individual capitalists in the free national market born on the ashes of feudalism, but the work of a regime born out of the illicit connection and alliance with imperialism and feudalism. Naturally, the ‘industrialisation’ resulting from this state- initiative is not the industrialisation to the needs of independent national market, but in answer to the needs of foreign imperialisms, export-oriented ‘industrialisation’. Secondly, the finance of the industrialisation comes from the peoples’ revenue and from ‘loan capital’ of the foreign imperialists and thereby a new form of capital, out of the state-budget is accumulated which is known as bureaucratic capital. The chief instrument of planning industrialisation and creating infra structure is bureaucracy. Hence no political liberty, no representative institutions, no economic democracy, no major or fundamental change in feudal and semi-feudal relations were needed in India like those of Western Europe and North America. As such, the social and political regime of India have remained entirely different from the social and political regimes of those of Western Europe and North America. Political liberty and political democracy together with representatives institutions did not evolve here through the logical social process of the normal capitalist development of commodity market and free competition, A *form* of political democracy was foisted from the above, like, all other ‘radical’ reforms viz banning of untouchability and ‘equal rights’ etc. Social relations cannot be changed over-night through passing of resolutions in legislatures so long the economic foundations of those relations are not subverted. It is the absence of political liberty, representative institutions, economic democracy on the one hand and dependence on imperialisms and feudalism together with the rule by a standing bureaucracy—who are being daily strengthened by bureaucratic capital on the other, have logically made our regime politically and economically despotic. If there is any trace of democracy of the Western type

here, it is only in form without any substance. We are living in a socio-political structure of half-capitalism and half-feudalism, which we call semi-feudal, semi-capitalist. Unlike Russia, to a great extent, we are also living in a country which is half-independent and half-colony which we call semi-colonial and semi-independent. As such, our revolution, unlike Russia, has got a national liberation feature, which we will not discuss in this article. Taking all these into consideration, one cannot possibly build up a superstructure of political democracy even of the bourgeois type, without abolishing the semi-feudal and semi-colonial structure of Indian society. That would be putting the cart before the horses.

That was why “in countries like Russia” Lenin advocated the programme of a Bourgeois Democratic Revolution and the revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry under the hegemony of the working class.

Of course, the advocates of the instant socialist revolution may argue that Lenin’s Programme of B D R “in countries like Russia” was valid only in the period of ascending capitalism and Lenin was not possibly aware of imperialism and its decay in 1905 and around those years. Although Lenin was quite aware of imperialism long before the publication of his book *Imperialism—the highest stage of Capitalism*, we will not go into that controversy. Lenin published this book in the spring of 1916, In this book he showed that Russia was a big imperialist country. Of course, Lenin also showed that though Russia was a big imperialist country, she was dependent on Anglo-French imperialisms, as India today is a sub-super power but dependent on two super powers. Lenin, in this book, characterised imperialism as decaying, parasitic and moribund. He also said that though here and there capitalism might thrive, it was *as a whole* a decaying force. In spite of all these awareness, Lenin did not change the programme of BDR in Russia before April 1917, two months after the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution. As such, the assumed argument falls flat.

According to the advocates of instant socialist revolution in India, India is not only a capitalist country but also an imperialist one as Russia was. Lenin also said the same thing about Russia, still he advocated and practised the programme of BDR there.

As it stands now, can statistics and data on the capitalist development in agriculture and national economy, be the criteria to arrive at the conclusion that since India is a capitalist and imperialist country, a programme of socialist revolution should be put on the immediate agenda according to Leninism? Would that not be over-simplification?

Yet one more example, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party who advocated a BDR in Russia upto April 1917, that same Lenin and the Bolshevik Party went against the Provisional Government of the bourgeoisie and accomplished a socialist revolution and established the Dictatorship of the proletariat, in October, 1917.

Should we, then, conclude that within these seven months the development of capitalism went to such an extent, when it became a full-fledged one and a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat became an imperative one? In fact, no such thing happened

there. On the contrary, production and marketing were greatly hampered and shrunked, a considerable portion of capital went out of the country and no new investments were made during this period.

Then, on what ground Lenin made the socialist revolution there?

We will not go into that chapter as to what conditions necessitated the socialist revolution in Russia then. But from this it is proved that development or under-development of capitalism is not the only criteria to conclude in favour or against a socialist or bourgeois democratic revolution. The maturity of economic condition does not necessarily conform with the maturity of political condition; it has never conformed, nor will there ever be conformity. As such, those who seek conformity between the economic and political condition are not dialectical materialists but mechanical materialists.

In fact, the advocates of the instant socialist revolution in India cite only the example of October revolution most skilfully avoiding the historic event of February revolution, and say: Russia was a capitalist country, Lenin made socialist revolution there. India is a capitalist country, so following Lenin and Leninism we must make socialist revolution here.

This is sheer hypocrisy (sic).

It is an undeniable fact that the working class fights for socialism, for the abolition of capitalism and the private property relations and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As such, the programme of the Party of the working class is the programme for the socialist revolution and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is one aspect of the programme. The other aspect is : the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are not the *only two classes* in the society, nor the working class, though vital due to the concentration and centralisation of capital and industry constitutes overwhelming majority like those of Britain, Germany or America. And capitalism is not the only social relations nor in predominant position in rural areas though vital and controlling factors. Together with, the *over-all* impact of capitalist market economy, there are various types of economies and social relations and in some places the people under these economy and social relation constitutes an overwhelming majority and these economy and social relation play no insignificant part in their reflection, and consciousness as the mode of existence determines the mode of consciousness. The working class faces a duty to emancipate these sections and realises that only through emancipating these overwhelming majority, can the working class emancipate itself and so long the revolutionary potentiality of these exploited section against the pre-capitalist order is not exhausted, this must be utilised in the interests of the revolution. From this consideration, the Party of the working class adopts an immediate programme and divides the stages of revolution into two but remain conscious at the same time that the two stages are a *single chain* of one revolution. That is why Lenin wrote in 1905 in an article entitled “Social Democracy’s Attitude. Towards The Peasant Movement” that after “the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the

socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way.” From this it is clear that the lower stage is nothing but the usher of the higher stage, continuation and development of the higher stage. It is the two stages of a single programme of socialist revolution.

Those who do not recognise this two stages in countries like India, are not Marxist-Leninists.

Source: *Proletariat Path*, Vol. II, No. 2, Calcutta, January 1974, pages 38-46.