

VIII. PEACEFUL TRANSITION AS A FORM OF REVOLUTION

Having outlined the strategy and tactics of the national-democratic stage of the revolution, the CPI Programme takes up for discussion the problem of the possible form of the revolution i.e., the concrete new opportunities that have opened up

for the national-democratic forces in their bid for revolutionary seizure of power. This is the problem of peaceful transition.

The working class and its allies have always favoured the possibility of peaceful transition. Contrary to the slanders of the enemy, the revolutionary class is always the most humane class, the standard bearer of humanism and the rightful inheritor of all that humanity has created in its millennia of endeavour. Marx, Engels and Lenin always insisted that peaceful transition best suited the interests of the working class, entailing the least possible sacrifice and loss of life of the revolutionaries.

Marxists-Leninists have never made a cult of violence, unlike some anarchists and terrorists. The classical teachings of scientific socialism never contain a hidebound formula that violence and bloodshed alone are the hallmarks of 'true' revolution. History does not provide just one single and simple lesson, i.e., that 'political power always comes from the barrel of a gun'.

At the same time Marxism-Leninism has always insisted that the reactionary ruling class would never 'surrender' its power, that it would not shrink from the most vile of stratagems to attempt to remain the masters of social wealth. Hitherto, the reactionary ruling class has been able to frustrate the desire of the working class and its allies to make the peaceful transition to socialism. The best examples of this are the October 1917 Revolution and the Chinese Revolution. If the Bolsheviki and the Chinese Communists had been able to effect a peaceful transition, they would have done so gladly.

We know how Lenin envisaged the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism after the February 1917 Revolution and till about July when it was counter-revolution that put the bayonet on the agenda. Mao Tse-tung also in his report on coalition government to the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1945 stressed the need to strive to the utmost for negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang in order to effect a peaceful transition to people's democracy.

Thus, contrary to the prejudiced view of some inveterate slanderers of the CPI, peaceful transition is as revolutionary a path as armed struggle. To strive for peaceful transition is as revolutionary as to take up arms when counter-revolution forces

civil war on the people. At the same time it has to be underlined that in the new epoch new opportunities have opened up for peaceful transition. Hence, the CPI has given a central place in its Programme to the task of creating conditions for peaceful transition.

The change in the world balance of forces in favour of socialism and anti-imperialism makes the export of counter-revolution increasingly difficult. This was not the case previously. Civil war in Russia and in China could be forced on the people because the internal reactionaries were able to secure the intervention of foreign imperialism on their side.

The ensuring of peaceful coexistence entails non-intervention in the internal affairs of any state by any other state. It is now becoming increasingly possible to enforce such non-intervention thanks to the might of the socialist camp and other anti-imperialist forces. Hence, one big factor making for the inevitability of civil war is increasingly losing its force.

Another new factor is the broadening of the social base of the revolutionary forces. Lenin had stated that the socialist revolution would be effected by the working class and the poorest peasantry. The middle strata in the town and countryside would vacillate till after revolution had triumphed. Socialism was an unknown phenomenon and the middle strata would be extremely nervous as to how they would fare in a socialist system.

Today, the middle strata can be won as allies for the socialist revolution and can constitute one of its main driving forces. Even more so is it the case with regard to the national-democratic revolution. Simultaneously, the differentiation in the bourgeoisie itself, the increasing antagonism between the monopoly and non-monopoly strata, enables the extreme isolation of its most reactionary sections. This means that the attractive force of socialism spreads to more diverse social strata today and naturally exerts an important influence on different echelons in the coercive apparatus of the state power.

Finally, the new possibilities for peaceful transition are strengthened in many countries by the existence of civil liber-

ties and democratic institutions which neither Russia nor China possessed.

It is as a result of a composite analysis of all these factors that the CPI came to the conclusion that it will strive to ensure that the national-democratic revolution is won by way of peaceful transition. This way is not to be equated with the reformist path of exclusive reliance on elections and visualising a gradual coming to power without the sharpest class struggle, widest mass movements and political crisis. The advocacy of the path of peaceful transition precisely enables the CPI to organise better the mass revolutionary movement, combine it with parliamentary work, more effectively intervene when political crises erupt and win more allies for the revolution.

At the same time, without class struggle, mass movements, the building of powerful mass organisations and the use of parliament and elections to bring about a crisis of national bourgeois political power, peaceful transition is not possible. Peaceful transition, it cannot be repeated enough, is a form of revolution. These may be called permanently operating revolutionary factors without which no revolution can hope to succeed, whether peaceful or armed. Peaceful transition cannot be effected by people with reformist illusions. But, it is not enough merely to talk about the desirability of peaceful transition. It has to be fought for concretely and ceaselessly.

Apart from the permanently operating revolutionary factors mentioned above, an important place is assigned to the defence and extension of democracy, to the vigorous rebuffing of all authoritarian trends and forces. Without a vigorous and sustained struggle for democracy, no peaceful transition is possible. Such a struggle can be conducted effectively only if the working class and its allies have the confidence that democracy can be defended and extended. A cynical attitude to democratic rights and institutions, a belief that fascism is inevitable and even better since it will destroy the 'illusions' of the masses, is incompatible with genuine striving for peaceful transition.

Such revolutionary struggle and mass movement, so essential for peaceful transition, are the best guarantee that the working class and its allies will be ready for all contingencies, for

the non-peaceful way, should right reaction impose civil war at a critical juncture. It is sometimes asked if there has been any example of a peaceful transition. One can remind the questioners that before 1917 similar questions used to be put about the possibility of socialism itself. One could also remind them of Lenin's appreciation of the Hungarian revolution of 1919.

The question itself, however, is unscientific. One should rather ask whether or not the conditions that made civil war inevitable have basically changed, i.e., whether we live in a new epoch or not. Previously, it used to be said that no colony can become free without armed struggle. This turned out to be a dogma. Both armed and non-armed struggles won freedom for different peoples. There is no reason to doubt that a similar fate awaits the dogma of the inevitability of the armed struggle to effect the national-democratic or socialist revolution.