

The relationship between semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism

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1. Bureaucratic capitalism, oppressed countries and imperialism

According to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the countries of the world are divided in two types, characterizing a contradiction.

On one side, there are the imperialist countries, i.e. capitalist countries where the financial capital conquers or has conquered the hegemony in the economy and gains or has gained control over the bourgeois state.

On the other side, the oppressed countries, which have endured a process of semi-colonization by the imperialist countries, which keep control through a kaleidoscope of indirect and direct means (military intervention, corruption, ideological influence, etc.).

The oppressed countries don't know capitalism going to imperialism, but a particular form of capitalism: bureaucratic capitalism, i.e. "capitalism which is being developed in the oppressed nations by imperialism along with different degrees of underlying feudalism, or even pre-feudal stages." (Declaration and Program of the CPMLM of Bangladesh).

Countries characterized by bureaucratic capitalism are dependent of imperialist forces; because of the imperialist competition, there are often military coups and the formation of a new bureaucratic class, submitted to another imperialism than before.

Here, there are no national states. National states can not exist unless there are capitalism with a strong bourgeoisie. The thesis that a country would be a national state is revisionism and a masked support to a fraction of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie against another.

In some cases, the ruling class of a semi-colonial semi-feudal country tries to be expansionist, like for example India, Turkey or in the past (West) Pakistan with Bangladesh. Sometimes, it comes in contradiction with imperialist forces, that make military intervention, like against the Iraq of Saddam Hussein. It still does not make those countries "independent" or "national".

For this reason, today's fundamental contradictions are :

"1. The contradiction of the oppressed nations, on one side, against the superpower (now only US) and imperialist powers, on the other.

The kernel of the contradiction lies in contradiction against superpower. The solution of the contradiction is new democratic revolution.

2.The inter-imperialist contradiction

- a) Imperialist superpower US versus imperialist power like Russia, France, Britain and Japan etc.
- b) Contradiction among smaller imperialist powers

This contradiction leads towards imperialist world war of plunder for hegemony what the proletariat must oppose with people's war and finally world people's war.

3.Bourgeoisie versus proletariat contradiction

Solution of this contradiction is socialist revolution and then cultural revolutions.”

(Declaration and Program of the CPMLM of Bangladesh).

2.Genesis of bureaucratic capitalism: feudalism

When imperialism came into the process of colonizing the countries of Africa, Asia and America, it supported feudalism.

This feudalism was the basis permitting to weaken the national bourgeoisie and to maintain domination. There can be no national liberation without the resolution of the feudal question.

This is a key for understanding correctly the principles of New Democratic Revolution and not believing in the possibilities of success of “national liberation movement” that will necessarily collapse without this understanding.

Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, founder of the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist, explains the following:

“What is the main contradiction? In any process, where numerous contradictions exist, the main contradiction is the contradiction “playing the leading and decisive role” [Mao Zedong, On contradiction].

Comrade Mao Zedong says in his book “On New Democracy” in the same way the following: the main contradiction is the “contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions”.

The contradiction between feudalism and the popular masses today in our country is the main contradiction, because it “determines or influences the development of the other contradictions” and because it is “playing the leading and decisive role”.

The development of the contradiction between Labor and Capital, or in other words between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, depends on the development and resolution of the “contradiction between feudalism and the popular masses”; in so far as this contradiction develops itself and is unbound, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie emerge and develop themselves.

For a situation where the contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie clearly emerges, get worsened and ripe, feudalism has to be swept away with all its roots.

This is the basis of the reason why the proletariat is the most determined against feudalism and struggles on the front line. Because, the more feudalism is swept away by a determined and final peasant struggle, the bourgeoisie - proletariat contradiction emerges and the favorable conditions arise for the class struggle of the proletariat, for socialism.

These are the ideas forming the basis for the Marxist-Leninist theory of the uninterrupted revolution, that goes through stages.

“The contradiction” playing in semi-colonial semi-feudal countries the leading and decisive role on the contradiction between imperialism and the country in question is the contradiction between feudalism and the popular masses.

Imperialism resumes its existence and domination in these countries by sustaining feudalism in the political and ideological fields, by strengthening it and retarding the winding up of feudal ownership and feudal relations.” (Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, General criticism of Safak’s revisionism, 1972)

As expressed by Comrade Kaypakkaya, feudalism maintained by imperialism permits to keep weak the national bourgeoisie; it maintains the ideological domination of feudalism, even if the reactionary state pretends to be “democratic”.

3. Feudalism, basis for the domination of bureaucratic capitalism

The main obstacle to development in a country marked by semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism is the feudal aspect. Nevertheless, it does not mean that bureaucratic capitalism is weak and unable to develop itself.

On the contrary, bureaucratic capitalism tries to re-impulse itself through a process where society is divided in corporations and the masses mobilized in a reactionary sense.

This brings also contradictions with feudalism, like for example in Iran between the Shah, representative of the modernist bureaucratic capitalist class, and Khomeini, representative of the feudal class.

With the process also where imperialism uses more and more the natural resources of the oppressed countries, a modern imperialist agriculture is developed through a process where

feudalism itself dissolves itself in bureaucratic capitalism.

This is the process that gives birth to the huge modern plantations and the huge farms producing merchandises mainly for the imperialist markets.

This process is capitalist, but capitalist from the top; it is bureaucratic capitalist, it is an important pillar of fascism.

Comrade Kaypakkaya noted that:

“Even if the ownerships relations, primarily large land ownerships, are dissolved at a very slow tempo, these ownerships relations keeps their feudal forms of exploitation.

The semi feudal forms of exploitation continue, like the duty of half a crop to the landlord, lease, usury, interest-hire. Usurious interest and lease are pumped through imperialist banks.

The feudal relations continue with all theirs acuity in particular in the superstructure. Bourgeois democracy goes always hand in hand with the lash of feudalism.

Democracy always carries a feudal character. An important part of the bourgeoisie shows semi-bourgeois, semi-feudal features.

All this, namely, any feudal relationships, facilitates the indirect domination of imperialism, they are its pillars.” (Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, General criticism of Safak’s revisionism, 1972)

That is why, even if feudalism is swept away, it continues in the form of the dictatorship of bureaucratic capitalism, in fascism. Feudalism dissolves itself in bureaucratic capitalism.

The CPMLM of Bangladesh notes in its Declaration & Program:

“Among national and democratic aspects of that, today domestic aspect is principal. That is, semi feudal system is main problem.

But as class, this system is sustained by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the class that is representative of imperialism, expansionism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism, which have central state, parliament, banks, industries, political parties and armies. That means, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie is in political power. But as class, it is not independent but imperialist lackey.

So, we have to make revolution by overthrowing this class because the central question of revolution is to seize political power. But overthrow of this class is related with the overthrow of imperialism, expansionism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism. But according to law of historical materialism, it is not possible to go to overthrow capitalism and imperialism without overthrowing feudalism before.

This is why at the present phase of revolution this is mainly agrarian revolution. The present main task is to overthrow feudal system. But we should keep in mind that as a class, here

feudalists are under the central structure of bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and they have been thrown down to the lower level of big bourgeoisie in the course of formation of bureaucratic capitalism. “

4. Invasion and colonialism: a specific situation

Even if imperialism has been in the situation to abandon open colonialism for semi-colonialism, situations where colonialism prevails as the main aspect still exists or can exist, as a specific situation that needs a specific answer.

In a semi-colonial country, the national bourgeoisie is weak, oppressed both by imperialism and feudalism. It contains a progressive aspect; it *may* be an ally of the democratic revolution lead by the working class in alliance with peasantry.

Nevertheless, in such a situation, the democratic aspect is the main aspect, whereas if a situation of open national oppression exists as such, the national aspect becomes predominant.

The national aspect becomes predominant in two clear situations:

- a) In a country where the people's war is able to dismantle the old state, there will be inevitably an open foreign intervention, because the others imperialist countries will try to extinguish the revolutionary fire that spreads.
- b) In a country where the national development was particularly weak because of a weak bourgeoisie, there always was a process of submission made by another stronger country, i.e. by an capitalist-imperialist country (like New Caledonia with France) or by a semi-colonial expansionist country (like North Kurdistan with Turkey).

In both situations, the revolution - either democratic or socialist - must carry the flag of national liberation as the main aspect.

Like Stalin explained it, “a nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.” (Marxism and the National Question)

A foreign intervention wants to negate the nation as an historical phenomenon, to profit from it through oppression and exploitation. Therefore the communists must rally the masses in a broader way, because it is possible: it is the existence of the people as such that the foreign intervention wants to negate, with the revolutionary possibilities that goes with it.

The communists, without any chauvinist approach, put forward the nation as the main aspect, because it carries the course of the revolution, an universal aspect : the qualitative leap that exists in each process and which makes that each nation wants equality and freedom as universal demand.

This is a necessary stage in the process of human unification on Earth, of a world communist

society on all the planet, living in harmony with nature and spreading life in the universe.

Nevertheless, in a democratic revolution, the national liberation from semi-colonialism exists too, but as a secondary aspect.

In semi-colonial countries, it is a characteristic of revisionism and hoxhaism to support this national aspect as the main aspect, to support in an indirect manner the “national bourgeoisie”, which hides in fact a particular faction of the bureaucratic capitalist class.

During the 1960's-1980's, social-imperialist USSR promoted “national revolutions”, only to make triumph not the “national bourgeoisie” and “independence”, but a bureaucratic bourgeois fraction that should manage the country as a vassal of the USSR.

This is not what marxism-leninism-maoism teaches: a national war of liberation exists as such only in a situation of open colonialism and invasion.

5. Political guidelines

As the main root is the democratic aspect, it is wrong to consider as enough the anti-imperialist aspect. Doing this would come to the revisionist conception that a “national state” can exist.

At our epoch, there can not be a “national resistance” strong enough to break the imperialist domination, unless it is led by a genuine Communist Party, under the red flag.

No national flags can have a sense, as the only protagonist of our era is the working class, backed by all the oppressed classes.

It is an ideological, military, cultural and political error to stress in a unilateral way on a national resistance, however progressive this resistance may be. Even if it weakens imperialism, there is no possibility for this resistance to go beyond and to make a true new democratic revolution.

Without a particular care on this question, there is the risk to fall in the trap of an imperialism: concurrency and competition between imperialisms make them all support a “democratic” movement to mask their military coups.

Because of this, in any situation, revolutionaries living in an imperialist country must stress that the enemy is their own imperialism; there must be no hesitation on this question, even if imperialism tries to justify its intervention (in the name of democracy, right to interfere to prevent a “new Hitler”, etc.).

Any imperialist interventions will inevitably destroy any democratic element in the oppressed country victim of the intervention; it would only change the personal of the bureaucratic class, without changing anything in the nature of the country; it only fools the masses that hope for a “change”.

But the only change for the masses in an oppressed country comes through the People's War; only the People's War carries the real process of destroying feudalism and colonialism, liquidating the old state and producing a new democratic state, transforming itself in an uninterrupted process in a socialist state.

Annex: Lenin on the Prussian the American paths

"The pivot of the struggle is the feudal latifundia which are the most conspicuous embodiment and the strongest mainstay of the survivals of serfdom in Russia. The development of commodity production and capitalism will certainly and inevitably put an end to those survivals.

In that respect Russia has only one path before her, that of bourgeois development. But there may be two forms of that development.

The survivals of serfdom may fall away either as a result of the transformation of landlord economy or as a result of the abolition of the landlord latifundia, i.e., either by re-form or by revolution. Bourgeois development may proceed by having big landlord economies at the head, which will gradually become more and more bourgeois and gradually substitute bourgeois for feudal methods of exploitation.

It may also proceed by having small peasant economies at the head, which in a revolutionary way, will remove the "excrescence" of the feudal latifundia from the social organism and then freely develop without them along the path of capitalist economy.

Those two paths of objectively possible bourgeois development we would call the Prussian path and the American path, respectively.

In the first case feudal landlord economy slowly evolves into bourgeois, Junker landlord economy, which condemns the peasants to decades of most harrowing expropriation and bondage, while at the same time a small minority of *Grossbauern* ("big peasants") arises.

In the second case there is no landlord economy, or else it is broken up by revolution, which confiscates and splits up the feudal estates. In that case the peasant predominates, becomes the sole agent of agriculture, and evolves into a capitalist farmer.

In the first case the main content of the evolution is transformation of feudal bondage into servitude and capitalist exploitation on the land of the feudal landlords—Junkers.

In the second case the main background is transformation of the patriarchal peasant into a bourgeois farmer." (Lenin, The agrarian program of social-democracy in the first Russian revolution, 1905–1907, 1907)

"The two ways I have indicated of "solving" the agrarian question in developing bourgeois Russia correspond to the two paths of development of capitalism in agriculture.

I call these two paths the Prussian and the American paths.

The characteristic feature of the first is that medieval relations in landowning are not liquidated at one stroke, but are gradually adapted to capitalism, which because of this for a long time retains semi-feudal features.

Prussian landlordism was not crushed by the bourgeois revolution; it survived and became the basis of “Junker” economy, which is essentially capitalistic, but involves a certain degree of dependence of the rural population, such as the Gesindeordnung [“Regulation for Servants”, 1854. One of numerous laws in Prussia depriving farm labourers of all civil rights. Under this law the mere attempt of labourers to organise a strike was punishable with imprisonment.], etc.

As a consequence, the social and political domination of the Junkers was consolidated for many decades after 1848, and the productive forces of German agriculture developed far more slowly than in America.

There, on the contrary, it was not the old slave-holding economy of the big landowners that became the basis of capitalist agriculture (the Civil War smashed the slave-owners’ estates), but the free economy of the free farmer working on free land—free from all medieval fetters, from serfdom and feudalism on the one hand, and from the fetters of private property in land, on the other.

Land was given away in America, out of its vast resources, at a nominal price; and it is only on a new, fully capitalist basis that private property in land has now developed there.

Both these paths of capitalist development quite clearly emerged in Russia after 1861. The progress of landlord farming is undoubted, and the slowness of this progress is not accidental, but inevitable so long as the survivals of serfdom remain.

It is also beyond doubt that the freer the peasants are, the less they are weighed down by the remnants of serfdom (in the south, for example, all these favourable conditions exist), and finally, the better, all in all, the peasants are provided with land, the greater is the differentiation among the peasantry and the more rapid is the process of forming a class of rural capitalist farmers.

The whole question of the further development of the country boils down to this: which of the two paths of development will ultimately prevail, and, correspondingly, which class will carry through the necessary and inevitable change—the old land-owning gentry or the free peasant farmer?”

(Lenin, The agrarian question in Russia towards the close of the nineteenth century, 1908)

[Received by BannedThought.net on Aug 8, 2012.]