SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN THE SERVICE OF THE BOURGEOISIE AND REACTION

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THE RECENT COURSE OF EVENTS SHOWS THAT THE GENERAL CRISIS OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS DEEPENING AND BEING MANIFESTED IN ALL FIELDS: ECONOMIC-FINANCIAL, SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL-IDEOLOGICAL, as was also pointed out at the 6th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania. In these conditions the monopoly bourgeoisie is striving in every way to preserve and consolidate the capitalist order, to suppress the revolutionary movement of the masses of the people and to intensify their exploitation.

Great assistance has been and is being given to it by the modern revisionists, who, by their anti-Marxist and counter-revolutionary course, wherever they operate, have become extinguishers of the revolution and of the national liberation struggle. But parallel with them, in conformity with the circumstances which have arisen, monopoly capital also continues to use its old and specialized agent – social democracy, in struggle against the working class. In these recent years particularly the activity of the socialist and social democrat parties has been intensified so much that their ideologists in the present period speak of their “flourishing” and “renovation”, of the unprecedented force of “European democratic socialism”. In their opinion the advent of some social democrat parties to the head of the state machinery testifies to the “beginning of the epoch of democratic socialism”. In nine states of Western Europe the social democrats lead the government or participate in government coalitions in the capacity of “minor partners”.

The Congress of the Socialist International which was held in Vienna in June last year can rightfully be described as a convention of leading political figures of the capitalist states. Taking part in it were 2 Chancellors, 5 Prime Ministers and about 20 Ministers from various countries. In some states the socialist or social democrat parties play the role of opposition parties and come to the head of the state machinery when the leading bourgeois parties are discredited before the masses of the people by their policy. Such is the case with the British Labour Party which for nearly three years has played the role of an opposition party. Stalin, characterizing the ideological and political mission of social democracy, in his article entitled “International character of the October Revolution”, wrote: “Present-day social democracy is an ideological support of capitalism”. Lenin was
one hundred percent correct when he said that the present day social democrat politicians are «real agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement, overseers of the capitalist class from the ranks of the workers». Although almost half a century has elapsed, these definitions from the classics of Marxism do not lose their present relevance. The bourgeois features and the regressive role of social democracy are seen today in all the fields, but they are particularly evident in its stands towards the proletarian revolution and socialism and towards the national liberation struggles, in its solidarity with the aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism and in its collaboration with Soviet social-imperialism and with the other revisionists.

«Democratic socialism»
Creed of European social democracy

Bourgeois reformism, as a method of struggle of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, continues to be used on a wide scale at the present time as well. A more complete expression of it is the theory of «democratic socialism», official theory of the Socialist International, in which one clearly sees the stand of social democracy towards the vital interests of the proletariat.

The foundations of this theory were laid at the beginning of the 20th century by the principal ideologists of opportunism of that time, Bernstein and Kautsky. But this theory assumed full shape after the second world war, in the fifties, during the theoretical discussions that were held in the fold of the socialist and social democrat parties. It was counterposed to the Marxist-Leninist theory for the building of socialism, the accuracy of which has already been proved by practice. Present-day social democracy has rejected even that camouflage used by its predecessors at the beginning of the 20th century, and considers Marxism as entirely outdated and unacceptable in our day.

«Marxism as a theory... does not help us to take a further step, either in England or in France, or in partitioned Germany», the German social democrat R. Harder says, while the leader of the German social democrat party Willi Brandt, in a speech delivered before German businessmen in 1971, stated: «Social democracy and communism are incompatible» and «he who does not understand this and does not act in conformity with this should be told that there is no place for him in my party».

But how do the leaders of social democracy understand «democratic socialism»? For them the problem of the transformation of society is, in essence, an ethical problem which has to do with the education and re-education of men and women in the spirit of socialism. In their opinion, socialism is attained only through «democratic channels», i.e. by means of the social and cultural-educative transformations of the bourgeois state and by the bourgeois governments. The leaders of social democracy also say that socialism can exist only «democratically» i.e. as an «harmonic unity» of all the social strata and groups, the capitalists included. It is not difficult to conclude from these ideas that social reformism, the attempt to replace the class struggle (particularly the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat) with minor reforms, has been and remains a fundamental feature of social democracy. The western socialists make a fetish of the bourgeois state (the reactionary character of which they hide), of bourgeois democracy which, despite its falsity, is proclaimed as pure and above classes and see in them everything necessary for the building of socialism. The proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat have been and remain unacceptable to them. Thus Brandt, speaking at the 1970 congress of his party, said that they should follow the policy of «practical reason and not revolutionary acrobatics». The meaning of this «practical reason» becomes still clearer if we bear in mind the ideas of another rightist socialist, G. Ort lieb, according to whom there was a proletarian situation (the existence of the proletariat as an exploited class) in Europe only at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time it gave birth to the class struggle, but these times are gone and now, according to him, we can no longer speak of either exploiting and exploited classes or of the class struggle. In the western societies, according to Ort lieb, the class struggle has been replaced with social partnership. But the very course of events proves the falsity of these ideas. The powerful strike movement conducted by the working class in the capitalist countries is the fullest expression of the class contradictions and of the fierce class struggle occurring
in the world of capital. Its proportions have shocked not only the monopoly circles, but also their agent - social democracy, since the strike movement is developing increasingly more frequently beyond its control and will. While negating the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat as the decisive factors to build socialism the leaders of social democracy consider the reforms and rights the working class can secure within the capitalist order as the magic wand which will lead to the transformation of society.

The idealization of reforms by the leaders of social democracy calls to mind one of Lenin's important teachings: "Reformism is the bourgeois deception of the workers who always remain wage slaves, despite partial improvements, as long as capitalist domination exists".

The socialist and social democrat parties have frequently come to power in the world of capital, but they have always shown themselves to be faithful administrators of monopoly capital. Their "socialism" has been and remains a myth of the opportunist propaganda with which they ideologically poison the masses of the people and divert them from the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist order.

Enemies of the peoples that fight for freedom and independence

The national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America is one of the most important revolutionary forces of our times. It is a component part of the world proletarian revolution as long as it attacks and weakens imperialism and creates favourable premises for the victory of the proletariat in the developed capitalist countries as well. Therefore, the struggle for national liberation against colonialism and neocolonialism and the events occurring in new states cannot but draw the attention and interest of western social democracy. And life has confirmed that many of the social democrat parties have shown themselves to be determined partisans of colonialism and neocolonialism. It was precisely the French Government headed by socialist Guy Mollet that suppressed the just national liberation struggle of the Algerian people. It was also one of the organizers of the 1956 Anglo-Franco-Israeli aggression against the Arab countries. Whether the Belgian socialists or the British labourites, the French socialists or the German social democrats, in their stand towards the backward countries they have always defended the interests of the monopoly circles of their own countries. It is precisely such a stand towards the national liberation movements and the oppressed peoples that has discredited the social democrats: therefore, at the present time, they are seeking to use new disguises and to find new ways to penetrate into the new states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. For purposes of deception the congress of the Socialist International, which was held in Vienna in 1972, condemned the neocolonialist policy of the developed capitalist states with regard to the backward countries. But resolutions are resolutions. Thus, for example, with regard to the course of events in Indochina they have acted like bourgeois pacifists, making no distinction whatever between the U.S. aggressors and the victims.

Another typical example is the stand of social democracy towards the Near East problem. It always avoids an official evaluation of the situation in this region because the zionist circles take an active part in the Socialist International. Indeed the leader of zionism, Golda Meir, has taken active part in all the conferences and congresses of the socialist international in recent years and, from their rostrum, she has argued for Israel's aggressive policy towards the Arab countries. Her speeches have met the complete approval of the European socialists.

The leaders of social democracy, with a view to increasing their authority, are striving to extend their activity in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Quite significant in this direction is the hypocrisy of the British labourites who, at the annual convention of their party which was held last Autumn, approved resolutions condemning the racist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia and demanding the suspension of arm supplies to Portugal, allegedly as a token of solidarity with the African people's struggle against the Portuguese colonialists. The labourites promised that if they came to power they would send observers to the national liberation movements in Africa. But rightfully the question arises: why didn't Harold Wilson's party adopt such a stand when it headed the government in the years 1964-1970? The African peoples do not trust either the British labourites or the other social democrats. They clearly realize now that behind the "social democratic philanthropy" or the "socialist missionaries" stand the monopolies and banks of the big imperialist powers. Also, many of the chieftains of social democracy are compelled to recognize this truth when they admit that «with social democratic ideas we are not in position to solve the political problems of the third world».

The course of events and the lessons of history have strengthened the conviction of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America that only through a determined struggle against colonialism and neocolonialism (in whatever form they may appear) can genuine freedom and national independence be secured.

Alliance of renegades

Both modern revisionism and social reformism at the present time represent two regressive forces endangering the interests of the working class, of the revolution and socialism. Although they are separate organisations, it is not difficult to see that the ties and collaboration between them are strengthening and extending in the international arena as well. These ties are not accidental. The two forces are linked by their common ideological basis, since both revisionism and social reformism are manifestations of bourgeois ideology in the labour movement. Their tactical stands may differ on certain problems, but the strategy of the two sides has always had a counterrevolutionary character. The modern revisionists as well as the social reformists are supporters of the capitalist order, they counterpose themselves to and sabotage the struggle of the proletariat against the yoke of capital, and the struggle of the oppressed peoples for freedom and national independence.

Stressing the development of this process, comrade Enver Hoxha, in his report delivered to the 6th Congress of the PLA, said among other things: «With its theses of the dying out of the class struggle and of class collaboration under the mask of peaceful coexistence, with the illusions about the change of the nature of imperialism and about a world without weapons and without arms, with the fear of atomic weapons and thermonuclear war, with the preachings about the transition to socialism in a peaceful way, etc., etc.,
Khrushchevite revisionism has joined social democracy and transformed itself into a single counterrevolutionary current in the service of the bourgeoisie. Since modern revisionism appeared on the stage, and in particular after the usurpation of the leadership of the CPSU and of the Soviet State by the Khrushchevite revisionists, the social reformist chieftains of the Socialist International supported and put themselves in solidarity with the revisionists' course for the bourgeois degeneration and restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and in the other countries of Eastern Europe. They encouraged the attacks of the Khrushchevite revisionists and of the other revisionists against Marxism-Leninism and they applauded the process of the restoration of capitalism in the countries where the revisionists are in power. Close contacts were established between the revisionist parties and the social democrat parties. The revisionist theoreticians have sought to justify this collaboration of the renegades to Marxism-Leninism with the argument of the alleged «changes towards the left» that have occurred in western social democracy. In their opinion, and in particular according to the Soviet revisionists, social democracy has «corrected» its previous position and in many directions it is adopting a «realistic and constructive stand» giving up its old positions. They take the foreign policy of the German social democrat chancellor Willi Brandt as a typical example in this direction. For the sociologists and the revisionist politicians the conclusion of the Bonn-Moscow and Bonn-Warsaw treaties and of the agreement on West Berlin was an important step towards detente, peace and European security. But reality clearly shows that the social democrats have not changed «towards the left» and have not «corrected» their previous positions, but that the anti-Marxist line of the Soviet social imperialists has allowed the rapprochement and collaboration of the revisionist Soviet Union with the imperialist powers and, in this case, with west German revanchism, represented by Brandt. The Bonn-Moscow and Bonn-Warsaw treaties, the agreement on West Berlin and Brandt's «Ostpolitik» in general were made possible only thanks to the bargains of the Soviet social imperialists with the Brandt Government, to the detriment of the vital interests of the German people themselves and of the other European peoples. Following the example of and incited by the Soviet revisionists, the other revisionist parties, too, established close contacts with social democracy. In the world of capital these contacts are justified by the «need for unity of the proletarian forces in the struggle against the domination of the monopolies». Thus, in Italy the revisionists have made considerable efforts to link themselves and merge with the socialists. In France, in June 1972 the revisionist party concluded a joint government programme with the socialist party of Mitterand for the latest parliamentary elections. But, as appraised by the French Marxist-Leninists, «the Leftist Union» is nothing but a mouthpiece for the interests of the monopolies, irrespective of the fact that it includes people who call themselves communists or socialists. In our day too the revisionist parties as well the social democrat parties have integrated themselves into the capitalist order.

The principal social basis of social democracy is the old bureaucracy, while the principal social basis of the revisionist parties is the new bureaucracy which includes the functionaries of the apparatuses of the revisionist parties, the leaders of the trade unions and the mass organisations, the members of the parliamentary factions of the revisionist parties and others. However, with their slogans and their demagogical stands, they continue to deceive some detachments of the working class. For this reason the struggle against opportunism, in whatever form it may appear, whether as revisionism or as social democracy, has been and remains a fundamental task of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists.

Valid today even more than ever is Lenin's teaching: «One of the indispensable conditions for the preparation of the proletariat for its victory is the protracted, determined and merciless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism and the influences of the bourgeois currents of this kind, which are inevitable, as long as the proletariat acts in conditions of capitalism». Without this struggle, without the complete preliminary victory over opportunism in the labour movement there can be no question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only by unifying under the revolutionary banner of the Marxist-Leninist parties can the working class realize its historic world mission, the revolutionary destruction of the capitalist order and the construction of the new socialist society.