

PART V

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION'S PRESENT STAGE SUMMED UP

Having established the theoretical and practical bases for a new line on the nature and character of the American Revolution's present stage, it now becomes our task to elaborate this new line. In doing so, let us first of all sum up the essence of what has been stated above.

The contemporary revolutionary movement in the U.S. arose out of the spontaneous mass movements of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. During the past two decades, the advanced elements from those movements adopted Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as their theoretical guide to action and came to comprise the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement. Dating from the CPUSA's degeneration in 1957, the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement has passed through three periods: 1) The Spontaneous Period, 1957-1965, characterized by the failure to utilize theory as a guide to practice; 2) The Eclectic Period, 1965-1969, characterized by the utilization of vulgarizations of MLMTT as theoretical guides to practice; and 3) The Period of Theory and Line, 1969 to the present, during which the establishment of MLMTT as the only correct revolutionary theory has taken place, but the assimilation of MLMTT's basic laws and principles, the application of those laws and principles to the concrete practice of the American revolution, and the elaboration of the Programme and the development of the strategy for the given stages of the American revolution, have yet to occur. The practical result of the above failures is an extremely isolated, scattered, disunited movement.

As stated in Part II of this work, "To identify the root cause of the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement's isolated, scattered, disunited state, one must look for the basic unity shared by the various groups comprising the movement....What we are here concerned with is the underlying unity shared by all the movement's groups (with the exception of a small number of forces in the emerging Anti-Left tendency). And the underlying unity to which we refer is the belief that the socialist revolution in the U.S. consists of one stage." 1

To determine whether the widespread belief in a one stage revolution in the U.S. corresponds with the basic principles of MLMTT, it is first of all necessary to determine what a completed democratic revolution is and whether such a revolution must precede socialism.

According to the founders and principal defenders and

developers of Scientific Socialism, the democratic revolution is a revolution of all classes and strata comprising the people. Clearly, then, the democratic revolution is considered to have been carried to completion only when political power has been consolidated in the hands of the people--i.e., in the hands of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of all classes and strata comprising the people.

What is the form in which this revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people exists? As Engels makes clear, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people exists in the form of the one and indivisible democratic republic--i.e., a democratic-centralist republic, a completely unified state. Engels further stresses that the working class can only come to power under the form of just such a democratic republic. Of course, the U.S. is not the "one and indivisible" democratic republic Engels refers to (i.e., is not a completely unified state), but instead is a federal republic (i.e., a union state).

Lenin refers to Engels' pronouncement regarding the one and indivisible democratic republic being the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat as "the fundamental idea which runs like a red thread through all of Marx's works...." In explaining why such is the case, Lenin consciously equates a democratic republic with "the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"--the proletariat and the peasantry being the main components of the classes and strata Lenin identifies as the people. Lenin then succinctly sums up the relationship of the democratic and socialist revolutions:

"The complete victory of the (democratic) revolution will mark the end of the democratic revolution and the beginning of a determined struggle for a socialist revolution....The more complete the democratic revolution, the sooner, the more widespread, the purer and more determined will be the development of this new struggle." 2/

Thirty-five years later, in applying the principle of completed democratic revolution to the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, Mao Tsetung said essentially the same thing:

"(The New Democratic Revolution) is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and a state under bourgeois dictatorship. It belongs to the new type of revolu-

tion led by the proletariat with the aim, in the first stage, of establishing a new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all revolutionary classes. Thus this revolution actually serves the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism." 3/

Thus, a completed democratic revolution is a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of all classes and strata comprising the people and, without question, such a revolution must precede socialism. This principle was first put forward by Marx and Engels and, in their opinion, it applied to Europe's advanced capitalist countries and the United States. However, opportunist distortions--and the failure to completely root out all such distortions--resulted in the above principle no longer being applied to advanced capitalist countries. In other words, the overwhelming majority of contemporary Marxist-Leninists incorrectly cling to the belief that socialist revolutions in advanced capitalist countries consist of one stage. But the fact of the matter is that socialist revolutions have only occurred in either developing capitalist or feudal or semi-feudal countries and, without exception, have always involved two stages (i.e., the democratic and socialist stages). Conversely, a socialist revolution--one stage or otherwise--has yet to occur in any advanced capitalist country. Therefore, the proposition that the transformation to socialism in advanced capitalist countries is a one-stage revolution has no material basis. In other words, socialist revolutions in advanced capitalist countries are two-stage revolutions.

Along with failing to grasp the principle of carrying the democratic revolution to completion, our American advocates of one-stage revolution know nothing of Marxism's living soul (the concrete analysis of concrete conditions) and thus fail to conduct a thoroughgoing analysis of the concrete conditions in the U.S. Such an analysis reveals that from the end of the U.S. War of Independence onward, a struggle has been unfolding between the owners of this country's sources of wealth on the one hand and the masses of the people on the other to determine the type of democratic state the U.S. would be.

On two separate occasions, this struggle has assumed revolutionary dimensions.

Between 1783 and 1788, there was a struggle over whether the U.S. would be a government of the arising Northern capitalists and the Southern planters, with certain strata of the people given certain limited rights, or a government of the people. This was the First Democratic Revolution. The Federal

Convention of 1787 and the subsequent ratification of the U.S. Constitution resolved that struggle in favor of the capitalists and the planters.

Though the rights of some of the people were later gradually extended, essentially the same situation remained in effect until the Civil War gave hegemony in the U.S. to capitalism and the Northern capitalist class. Between 1865 and 1877, however, there was a struggle between the newly dominant Northern capitalists on the one hand and the Northern Radical Republican petty-bourgeoisie and the Freedmen, the independent farmers and the urban middle and working classes in the South on the other to determine, essentially, if the Congressionally reconstructed state governments would be the shared organs of the latter five groups or solely the organs of the Northern capitalists. This was the Second Democratic Revolution. The Compromise of 1877, resulting in the withdrawal of the remaining Union Army troops from the South and the alliance between the Northern capitalists and the former slave-owners in the South, who in the main were allowed to retain possession of their land and were given license to deal with the "Negro problem" in their own "peculiar" manner, resolved the struggle in favor of the Northern capitalists and their newly-acquired junior partners in the South--i.e., resulted in a dictatorship of the entire capitalist class. Thus, upon the close of the Reconstruction era, that is, upon the conclusion of America's Second Democratic Revolution, completion of the Democratic Revolution in the U.S. was still on the order of the day.

Notwithstanding the development of monopoly capitalism in the U.S. and numerous surface changes in the country's social and political spheres (many of which were the result of heroic mass struggles), the second hundred years of America's existence likewise has not resulted in the democratic revolution in the U.S. being carried to completion. Therefore, since the democratic revolution in the U.S. has yet to be carried to completion--and removing all barriers to the path of socialism demands the democratic revolution's completion--a necessary preliminary task to establishing socialism in the U.S. is the completion of the U.S.'s democratic revolution--i.e., the establishment of a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of all classes and strata comprising the people. Such is our new line on the nature and character of the American revolution's present stage.