

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

(First of Two Installments)

INTRODUCTION

With the publication of Volume 1, Number 1 of People's Democracy, a bi-monthly journal, Revolutionary Review Press (RRP) resumes open work following more than a year of internal development. The first two issues of People's Democracy (Jan.-Feb. 1978 and March-April 1978) together comprise a five-part work and introduce a new line on the nature and character of the American revolution's present stage--in the process, criticizing and exposing the presently prevailing (though incorrect) line on that question. Of course, a new line concerning the future direction of the revolution in a particular country must grow out of an analysis of the concrete conditions both internationally and in the particular country. Such an analysis must be accompanied by a summary of the history and present state of the revolutionary movement in the particular country, as well as by an elaboration of the new line's theoretical and practical bases. Thus, the first issue of People's Democracy (which comprises the Introduction and Parts I & II of the above-mentioned five-part work) summarizes both the concrete conditions internationally and in the U.S. and the history and present state of the contemporary revolutionary movement in the U.S., while the second issue (Parts III, IV, V and an Appendix) deals with the new line's theoretical and practical bases, respectively.

In summarizing the concrete conditions internationally and in the U.S., Part I explains why the capitalist economy of a particular country--be it in its competitive or monopoly stage--repeatedly passes through a series of processes known as a cycle. This cycle includes an often extended period of

crisis, the cause of which is acute overproduction and underconsumption. During such crises, the exploitation of the working masses in capitalist countries becomes most extreme, as does the possibility of a war to redivide the world between two or more imperialist powers. The U.S. has passed through eight such crises since the Civil War, three of which have led to imperialist wars (the Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II). The most recent such crisis occurred in the early 1970s. However, since the U.S. economy has recovered from the worst effects of that crisis, the crisis of the early 1970s has not led to imperialist war.

And yet, the possibility of imperialist war remains great. This is so because the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the transformation of that country into a social-imperialist power (socialist in words, imperialist in deeds) contending with U.S. imperialism for world domination means that the internal contradictions of the Soviet economy could also give rise to imperialist war, the state of the U.S. economy notwithstanding. In addition, armed struggles for independence on the part of various Third and/or Second World countries could likewise force either or both of the two superpowers into local and/or regional military conflicts.

Further on in Part I, the Soviet Union is identified as the principal source of a new World War. However, rather than supporting U.S. imperialism against Soviet social-imperialism, continues Part I, "the American people can best prevent the U.S. from either initiating or being drawn into imperialist war by overthrowing monopoly capitalism in the U.S., thereby eliminating the material (economic) basis of both U.S. imperialism and U.S. involvement in imperialist war (not to mention the source of the American people's own oppression)."

Part I goes on to make clear that the American people neither understand the prevailing concrete conditions in America and the world nor grasp the need to overthrow monopoly capitalism in the U.S. Two factors are primarily responsible for this state of affairs: 1) the ideological war being waged by the U.S. monopoly capitalist class against the American people in order to maintain the status quo; and 2) the absence of a genuine leading group (i.e., a vanguard party) to first impart revolutionary consciousness to the American people and then lead their assault against U.S. monopoly capitalism.

Of the two factors, the latter is of principal importance at this time, since the neutralization of bourgeois ideology presupposes the existence of a political party disseminating mass revolutionary ideology. Thus, Part II of this work describes and analyzes the contemporary American movement attempt-

ing to bring such a party into being.

Part II is divided into two chapters. Chapter 1 summarizes certain key spontaneous mass movements of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. While People's Democracy recognizes the need to sum up the spontaneous mass activity occurring in the U.S. prior to the early 1950s, and will do so in future issues, Part II's first chapter confines itself to an examination of the 1954-1974 period, since many of the spontaneous mass movements of that period combined to give rise to the contemporary American movement attempting to found the above-mentioned vanguard party (the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement). In other words, along with describing the degree to which the masses were in motion during the twenty year period in question, the purpose of Part II's first chapter is to demonstrate that the majority of the 1954-1974 mass movements divided into reformist, radical and revolutionary sectors. Eventually, advanced elements from the various revolutionary sectors (and, to a much lesser extent, from the radical sectors of the few movements lacking revolutionary sectors) embraced Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought (MLMTT) as their theoretical guide to action and came to comprise the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement. Chapter 2 describes and analyzes the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement, with particular emphasis given to such matters as the origins of the movement's principal groups, and the scattered, disunited, isolated state in which the movement currently finds itself. Chapter 2's final section identifies the one point of unity shared by the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement's principal groups: the establishment of socialism in the U.S. will be the product of a one-stage revolution. That line's incorrect and destructive nature is documented in Parts III, IV and V of this work, as well as in an Appendix, which together comprise the final installment of this series.

Part III deals with the question, What is a completed democratic revolution and must such a revolution precede socialism? Drawing heavily on the Marxist classics, Part III demonstrates that 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. Heretofore, however, though a recognized feature of Marxist theory, the principle of carrying the democratic revolution to completion has not been applied to advanced capitalist countries such as the U.S., resulting in there having been no socialist revolutions in such countries. Part III thus concludes that the time to so apply the above principles is now at hand.

Part IV applies the principles elaborated in Part III to an historical materialist analysis of American history. In addressing the question, Was the democratic revolution in the U.S. completed?, Part IV goes to great lengths to demonstrate that neither the War of Independence and the First Democratic Revolution, nor the Civil War and the Second Democratic revolution, nor the second hundred years of America's existence, resulted in a completed democratic revolution--meaning that the completion of the U.S.'s democratic revolution is still on the order of the day. Therefore, rather than involving one stage, the establishment of socialism in the U.S. involves a two-stage revolution. This conclusion is repeated in Part V, which summarizes the entire work.

In an Appendix, the one-stage revolution line is thus identified as the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement's "most grievous political error". The theoretical root of that error is the failure to grasp what Lenin referred to as "the fundamental idea which runs like a red thread through all of Marx's works, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat." ^{1/} And by a democratic republic, Lenin (as did Engels before and Mao after him) clearly meant a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of all classes and strata comprising the people. The above error's philosophical root is subjectivism, manifesting itself in the form of dogmatism. Thus, contrary to popular opinion, which holds that Right Opportunism is the main danger confronting the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement, the main reason for the U.S. Anti-Revisionist Movement's scattered, disunited, isolated state is Left Opportunism, manifesting itself philosophically in the form of dogmatism, organizationally in the form of sectarianism and politically in the form of the line of one-stage revolution.