

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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ON THE QUESTIONS OF THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO SOCIALISM AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Speech Delivered to Party Ideological
Workers

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Recently, while studying documents of the Party Conference some scholars and others responsible for ideological work have put forward diverse opinions on the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In particular, following the publication of an essay on these questions, opinion was all the more divided. So, I studied the data on the subject, exchanged views with scholars, and gave a short summary. But those who heard my views interpreted and conveyed them to others in their own way, with the result that they were distorted in many respects. Since the subject under discussion relates to the documents of the Party Conference, it is a very important matter and can in no way be neglected. I will therefore deal with it in some detail.

Like all other scientific and theoretical prob-

lems, the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat must also be solved from our Party's Juche viewpoint. You should neither cling to propositions of the classics and try to settle the questions dogmatically nor be enthralled by the ideas of flunkeyism and try to interpret the issues as others do. Judging from the written opinions of several scholars and from other essays, almost all comrades either interpret the propositions dogmatically or tend to flunkeyism and attempt to follow the thinking of other countries. Consequently, they advance these subjects in a direction which is entirely different from that of our Party. You cannot study problems and solve them correctly in such a way. You can only arrive at a correct conclusion if you use your own faculties to do so, free from flunkeyism and dogmatism.

Let us deal first with the problem of the transition period.

To explain the issue correctly, it is necessary first of all to consider in what historical circumstances and on what premises the classics, particularly Marx, advanced this question.

Firstly, as we see it, Marx obviously had in mind the developed capitalist countries when he

laid down his definition of socialism and formulated the question of the period of transition from capitalism to communism or to socialism. I think we must be fully aware of this fact at the outset if we want to find a correct solution to this question.

What, then, are the developed capitalist countries we have referred to? They consist of those countries where both rural and urban areas have become completely capitalistic and capitalist relations predominate throughout society, with the result that peasants no longer exist but there are agricultural labourers, side by side with the industrial labourers. Marx had this kind of developed capitalist country in mind when he put forward his theory, and England, which he had visited and where he had lived and worked, was precisely such a country. In formulating the question of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, therefore, Marx assumed first of all a condition in which no class distinction existed between the working class and the peasantry, and he proceeded from that.

Now, to cite the instance of the most developed capitalist countries of modern times, their productive forces have become so highly devel-

oped as to make even the countryside fully capitalistic and, as a result, the working class is the only labouring class both in town and country. In a certain capitalist country there are tens of thousands of farms, all of which are very highly mechanized. Not only is this so, but the electrification, irrigation and extensive use of chemicals in the countryside are also on a very high level. Thus, it is said, one agricultural labourer can look after 30 hectares of land in that country. What does this mean? It means not only that no class distinction actually exists between the working class and the peasantry but also that the agricultural and industrial productive forces are almost on the same level. The only difference, if any, lies in the working conditions of the industrial labourer in the factory and the agricultural labourer on the farm.

That is why Marx thought that the stage of transition to socialism following the seizure of power by the proletariat in those developed capitalist countries would cover a comparatively short period. In other words, he believed that because there were only two classes in society, the capitalists and the workers, the tasks of the transition period could be carried out in a relatively short period of time and that it would be possible to

pass quickly to the higher phase of communism, once the capitalist class was crushed and dispossessed and its property turned over to the ownership of all the people in the course of the socialist revolution. Yet Marx did not say that it would be possible to progress to communism directly from capitalism, without going through the stage of socialism. No matter how highly the productive forces may have developed and how completely the class distinction between the working class and the peasantry may have disappeared, it is essential to solve the tasks of the transition period before advancing further. These tasks include liquidating the remaining forces of the exploiter classes and eliminating the survivals of the old ideologies in the minds of people. We must first of all take account of this point.

The second point is the Marxist view of the uninterrupted revolution, which we must take into consideration in studying Marx's theory on the transition period and in expounding this question correctly.

As you all know, Marx lived in the era of pre-monopoly capitalism, so that he could not clearly see the imbalance in the political and economic development of capitalism. Therefore, he be-

lieved that the proletarian revolution would break out almost simultaneously in the major capitalist countries of Europe and that the world revolution would triumph relatively soon. Proceeding from such premises, Marx assumed that the period of transition from capitalism to socialism would be a comparatively short historical epoch, and he stated that the dictatorship of the proletariat would exist only during the time of the transition period, that is, these two could never be divorced. We must also take account of this point.

We can say that Lenin also followed the Marxist standpoint in the main, when he raised the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Unlike England or Germany where Marx had lived and worked, Lenin's Russia was of course not at all advanced, but was a backward though nevertheless capitalist country. Consequently, Lenin considered that the stage of socialism, the transitional stage, would be relatively long and not short as Marx had theorized.

But Lenin, too, following the Marxist view, said that a society where the working class had overthrown the capitalist system and seized power but where class distinction still remained between

the workers and the peasants, was a transitional society being not yet communist nor fully socialist. He further said that in order to implement total socialism, it would not be enough to merely smash the capitalists as a class; the distinction between the workers and the peasants would also have to be eliminated. Thus it was that Lenin finally considered the period up to the establishment of a classless society — where there would be no distinction between the working class and the peasantry following the overthrow of the capitalist class by the working class — to be the period of transition from capitalism to socialism or the period of transition to communism. I think that such a definition of the transition period is fundamentally correct.

But the problem is that our comrades interpret the propositions of Marx and Lenin dogmatically, without taking into consideration the times and historical circumstances in which they were formulated and, above all, they think the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat coincide with and are inseparable from each other.

It is true that the period of transition from capitalism to socialism or communism will only

end when a classless society with no distinction between the working class and the peasantry emerges following the overthrow of the capitalist class. It can also be taken for granted that should the socialist revolution take place consecutively in all countries and the revolution emerge victorious on a worldwide scale, the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat would coincide with each other, and with the termination of the transition period, the dictatorship of the proletariat would also cease to exist and the disappearance of the state would follow.

And yet, if socialism has been founded and a classless society has been established in one country or in certain areas, the transition period should be regarded as terminated there even though the revolution has not brought victory on a worldwide scale. As long as capitalism remains in the world, however, the dictatorship of the proletariat will not vanish, and we cannot even talk about the disappearance of the state. Therefore, in order to find a correct solution to the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat, we ought not to cling dogmatically to the propositions of Marx or Lenin, but proceed from the practical experiences

in socialist construction in our country to consider the questions.

At present, certain people accept the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, but do not appreciate, in any sense, the concept of the period of transition from capitalism to communism, that is to say, the period of transition to the higher phase of communism. However, they use the expression: gradual transition from socialism to communism.

It is the deviation of the Right opportunists to regard the transition period as the period from the seizure of power by the working class to the victory of the socialist system, and to suppose that the historical mission of the proletarian dictatorship will end with the termination of the transition period, equating the transition period and the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat to each other. Therefore, people with such a viewpoint say that following the attainment of the complete and final victory of socialism, which is the first phase of communism, and with the transition to the all-out construction of communism, the dictatorship of the proletariat has fulfilled its historical mission and is thus no longer necessary. This is a Right opportunist view, which is entirely

contradictory to Marxism-Leninism.

What, then, is the “Left” opportunist view? Those who have the “Left” view used to regard the question of the transition period exactly in the same light as those who have the Right opportunist view, but, proceeding from their standpoint that communism can be realized some generations later, they contend that the transition period should be regarded as the period of transition from capitalism to the higher phase of communism. By doing this they apparently mean to criticize Right opportunism. It is all very well to criticize the Right deviations; but we cannot consider such views on the question of the transition period to be correct.

As mentioned above, it is clear that all these people alike have fallen into deviations in viewing the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We think the transition period can either be called the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, or the period of transition from capitalism to communism, because socialism is the first phase of communism. But the trouble is that some of our comrades, bewitched by flunkeyism, either regard the transition period as the period

from capitalism to the higher phase of communism following the “Left” opportunist view or regard it as the period up to the victory of socialism following the Right opportunist view.

Therefore, the point at issue concerning the transition period is not a terminological matter of whether it is the transition to socialism or to communism, but rather the question of where to draw the dividing line of the transition period. Many people, having made a muddle of determining this line, are now confused and have created various problems. Both of the dividing lines, drawn by those with either the Right or the “Left” view, are incorrect.

By the higher phase of communism is meant not only a classless society where there is no distinction between the workers and the peasants, but also a highly advanced society where there is no distinction between mental and physical labour and each member of society works according to his ability and receives according to his needs. So, it is, in fact, tantamount to drawing no dividing line at all to regard the transition period as the period extending up to such a higher phase of communism. Some people not only regard the transition period as a period right up to the higher

phase of communism, but also say that it is impossible to bring about communism in one country only. They say that we will enter communism only when the world revolution is consummated. According to this view, the transition period cannot end before the world revolution is completed. These people interpret the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat as corresponding to each other, regarding the former as the period up to the higher phase of communism, while people with the Rightist standpoint consider the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat as coinciding with each other, regarding the former as the period up to the point of victory of socialism. In our opinion, this is an extreme opinion.

It is also questionable that people holding Rightist views regard the transition period as the period up to the victory of the socialist revolution. This viewpoint stems from the ideological view of abandoning the class struggle against survivors of the overthrown exploiter classes internally, and internationally refraining from the world revolution, by choosing to live at peace with imperialism. Moreover, they claim that the dictatorship of the proletariat will disappear when the transition

period comes to an end. But how can this be? They are fundamentally wrong.

It will not do, therefore, to follow mechanically what is set by those who hold the Rightist views, or to take as a model what is set by those holding the “Leftist” views.

We must firmly establish Juche and settle problems from the practical experience which we have gained in the revolution and construction of our country.

As already mentioned, the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat as defined by the classics were perfectly correct under the historical circumstances of their times and the premises they had developed from.

However, our present situation demands that we develop them creatively and not simply apply them without full consideration. We carried out the socialist revolution under conditions where we had taken over the very backward productive forces of a colonial agrarian country, and are building socialism under circumstances where capitalism still exists as a considerable force in the world.

We must take these specific realities into account in order to give correct solutions to the

questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bearing this point in mind, I consider it to be incorrect to regard the transition period in our country as the period up to the higher phase of communism, and deem it right to regard it rather as the period up to socialism. But it is wrong to believe that the transition period will come to an end as soon as the socialist revolution has triumphed and the socialist system is established. Considering the issue either on the basis of what the founders of Marxism-Leninism said or in the light of the experiences we have gained in our actual struggles, we cannot say that a complete socialist society has already been built just because the capitalist class has been overthrown and the socialist revolution carried through after the working class seized power. Therefore, we have never said that the establishment of the socialist system means the complete victory of socialism.

When will the complete socialist society ever come into being? Complete victory of socialism will come only when the class distinction between the working class and the peasantry has disappeared and the middle class, particularly the peasant masses, actively support us. As long as the

peasants are not working-classized, the support they may give us cannot be firm and is bound to be rather unstable.

The seizure of power by the working class is only the beginning of socialist revolution. To build a complete socialist society the revolution must be steadily advanced and a firm material basis of socialism laid. I have already stressed this time and again in my reports and speeches. Nevertheless, some of our comrades, because of their flunkeyist mentality, have not studied the documents of our Party properly but have shown a great deal of interest in what others have said. They are very wrong.

We must base ourselves on the situation as it is today and take a correct view of all questions from there. Because our country did not go through a capitalist revolution, its productive forces are very backward, and the division between the working class and the peasantry will have to remain for a very long time, even after the socialist revolution. In fact, there are only a few highly developed capitalist countries in the world today. Most countries are backward, and were formerly colonies or semi-colonies like our country, or are still dependent on others. In such coun-

tries the construction of a classless society and the consolidation of socialism are possible only by developing the productive forces for a comparatively longer period even after the socialist revolution.

As we did not go through the normal course of capitalist development, we have the task of developing the productive forces in our socialist era — a task which we should have tackled under capitalism. There is no need to make society capitalistic and go to the trouble of fostering the capitalists just to smash them and then build socialism, on the basis that we could not discharge the task which we should have completed in the capitalist stage. The working class in power should not revive capitalist society, but should carry out this task under the socialist system which it could not tackle in the stage of capitalist revolution, in order to build a classless society.

We must continue to consolidate the material basis of socialism and boost the productive forces at least to the level of developed capitalist countries, and completely eliminate the distinction between the working class and the peasantry. To this end, the technical revolution must be carried out to the extent that the developed capitalist

countries have turned their countryside capitalistic, so that farming can be mechanized, irrigation and the greater use of chemicals can be introduced, and the eight-hour day adopted.

It was precisely for this purpose that we published the theses on the socialist rural question. But our comrades do not even study the theses properly. We must always solve problems through our own knowledge, drawing on our Party documents. What is the central idea of the *Theses on the Socialist Rural Question in Our Country*? The basic idea is to carry out the technical revolution in the rural areas and develop the agricultural productive forces to a high level. At the same time, it seeks to promote the ideological and the cultural revolution and gradually abolish the differences between the working class and the peasantry in the spheres of technology, ideology and culture, and bring cooperative property up to the level of property of all the people.

And these tasks cannot be realized unless the working class gives guidance and assistance to the peasantry. It is our Party's line to give material and technical assistance to the peasants and carry out the technical revolution in the rural areas by relying on the solid basis of industry. To this end,

large numbers of tractors have to be provided for the countryside, fertilizer and agricultural chemicals should be supplied in quantity to increase their use, and irrigation should also be carried out. At the same time, the working class must help the peasantry in their ideological remoulding and also exert a cultural influence on them. Only in this way can the peasantry be completely working-classized.

To turn the peasantry into the working class is, in fact, one of the most important questions in building socialism and communism. In this way we will working-classize the peasants and abolish the distinction between them and the working class.

We should not adopt flunkeyism, but ought to hold fast to our Party's stand of Juche in solving the question of working-classizing the peasantry. We must develop the productive forces to a higher level, get rid of the disparity between town and country and raise the people's living standards by putting into effect the spirit of the theses and laying the firm material basis of socialism.

Only by doing this can we win over the former middle class completely. We cannot say so-

cialism has been consolidated or consider it has won a complete victory until the middle class stops hesitating and supports us fully. Only when they actively support us can we say that socialism has been completely accomplished. When we advance socialist construction and thoroughly win over the middle class to our side, when we eliminate the distinction between the working class and the peasantry and build a classless society, we shall be able to say that the tasks of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism have been accomplished.

I consider it right to draw the dividing line for the transition period at the border of the classless society, unlike those who are biased to the Right or to the "Left".

What, then, shall we say is the society which will exist, after the triumph of the socialist revolution and the accomplishment of socialist transformation, until the disappearance of class distinction between the working class and the peasantry? It can only be called a socialist society, since it is a society free from exploitation even though it undoubtedly belongs to the transition period.

Needless to say, the end of the transition pe-

riod will not immediately be followed by the higher phase of communism. Even after the close of the transition period, the revolution and construction must be continued and the productive forces developed to such a level that every individual works according to his ability and each receives according to his needs, in order to enter the higher phase of communism.

In my opinion, this approach to the question of transition period accords with the definitions laid down by Marx and Lenin, and it proceeds from the new historical conditions as well as the practical experience of the revolution and construction in our country. This is a preliminary and not a final conclusion reached by us. It is desirable that you make further studies in this direction.

Having given such a definition of the period of transition, how should we view the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat? The classics, as already mentioned, understood that the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat would coincide. Then, if a classless society materializes and the complete victory of socialism is achieved in our country, i.e., if the tasks of the transition period are accomplished, will the dic-

tatorship of the proletariat become no longer necessary? The answer to this is no. Even when the transition period is over, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be continued up to the higher phase of communism, to say nothing of its necessity during the entire period of transition.

Even after we have carried out the technical revolution in the rural areas, raised cooperative property to the level of property of all the people, working-classed the peasantry and done away with the distinction between the working class and the peasantry by solidifying the material and technical basis of socialism and carrying into effect the theses on the socialist rural question, the level of our productive forces will not yet be high enough to apply the principle of communism that each works according to his ability and receives according to his needs. Therefore, it will be necessary to continue to build socialism and strive to realize communism. It is quite clear that these tasks cannot be fulfilled without the dictatorship of the proletariat. In other words, even when the transition period is over, the dictatorship of the proletariat will have to continue to exist until the higher phase of communism is attained.

But here is another question. What will be-

come of the proletarian dictatorship once communism is realized in one country or certain areas while capitalism still exists in parts of the world? Even if communism was attained in one country or certain areas, that society would not be free from the menace of imperialism and the resistance of internal enemies who conspire with external enemies, because the world revolution has not yet been accomplished and capitalism and imperialism continue to exist. Under such circumstances, the state cannot disappear and the dictatorship of the proletariat must therefore remain in existence in the higher phase of communism. Inasmuch as we accept the theory that it is possible to build communism in a particular country or certain areas, it is entirely correct to view the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat separately in this way.

It is no revision of Marxism-Leninism on our part to consider the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat in this manner. It is our standpoint to apply the propositions of Marx and Lenin creatively to the new historical circumstances and the specific practices of our country. I think that this is the way to safeguard the purity of Marxism-Leninism against

dogmatism and flunkeyism.

I am now going to say a few words about the question of the class struggle in connection with the dictatorship of the proletariat. As long as the class struggle exists, the dictatorship of the proletariat will exist, and this dictatorship is essential to the class struggle. The class struggle, however, takes various forms. At the stage of overthrowing capitalism this struggle differs in form from that after its overthrow. This has already been expressly set out in the documents of our Party. Many people, however, commit Right or “Left” errors, simply because they have no clear idea of this.

The class struggle at the stage of the socialist revolution is a struggle to liquidate the capitalists as a class, and the class struggle in socialist society is a struggle aimed at achieving unity and solidarity, and is by no means a class struggle waged between the members of that society at war with each other. In a socialist society the class struggle certainly exists, but it is carried on by means of cooperation for the purpose of achieving unity and solidarity. It goes without saying that our present ideological revolution is a class struggle; and it is also a form of class struggle to render assis-

tance to the rural areas to working-classize the peasantry. Because the state of the working class aims, after all, at eliminating the peasants as a class and completing their working-classization through the supply of machines and chemical fertilizers and through providing them with irrigation works. Our class struggle is designed not only to working-classize the peasantry and terminate its existence as a class, but also to revolutionize the previous middle class including the intelligentsia and urban petty bourgeoisie and remould them on the pattern of the working class. This is the principal form of the class struggle we are now waging.

Also, within our social system subversive counter-revolutionary influences infiltrate from without and the survivors of the overthrown exploiter classes agitate within; so, the class struggle is necessary to suppress these counter-revolutionary activities.

In this way, there is, in a socialist society, a form of class struggle exercising dictatorship over both external and internal enemies, along with the basic form of class struggle which aims to revolutionize and remould the workers, peasants and working intellectuals through cooperation so as

to achieve unity and solidarity.

In a socialist society, therefore, the class struggle does not disappear but continues in different forms. It is perfectly correct to consider the question of the class struggle in socialist society in this way.

In connection with this question, I should like to direct a few more words to the issue of revolutionizing the intellectuals. We cannot yet say that we have fully worked out the correct approach to this question. We once sent our intellectuals into factories to labour among the workers with a view to revolutionizing them. But it is doubtful if that is really a good system. We have cultivated the intellectuals because we want them to write, study science and technology or serve as teachers. If they were intended to work in factories, we should obviously have made them workers from the outset, instead of providing them with expensive training. So, this way, too, is not quite appropriate.

Of course, it is a good thing to bring the intellectuals close to the workers to learn from them their organization and fortitude as well as their devotion to the people they serve by their physical labour. But this is still far from being an adequate

answer to the question of revolutionizing the intellectuals. Many of our writers have been to factories, and yet some of them made little progress in spite of all their work there. So, we cannot revolutionize the intellectuals merely by sending them to work in factories.

The important thing here is to make them strengthen their organizational life, including their participation in Party activities. At present, some of our intellectuals do not like the strengthening of Party and other organizational activities, and do not conscientiously take part in organizational life. They think that by strengthening their Party life and by taking part in organizational life they are losing their freedom.

Those cadres who neglect both their Party activities and Party study, also go against the Party's policies. Even the Central Party School does not strengthen the Party life of its students, so that, after graduation, they cannot make the most of what they have learned and fail to work and live in a revolutionary way.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance in revolutionizing the intellectuals to make them take an active part in revolutionary organizational life. Above all, it is essential for them to

strengthen Party-cell life, refrain from displaying their knowledge and conduct Party study well to arm themselves with revolutionary ideas. Further, they should neither be afraid of being criticized nor be unwilling to criticize others; they should intensify criticism and self-criticism and strictly observe organizational discipline. This alone will help them revolutionize themselves. People should cultivate collectivist ideas in the course of their organizational life in the Party or any social organizations, and acquire the revolutionary spirit of receiving definite revolutionary assignments from their organizations and carrying them out without fail. The members of the Party and social organizations must clearly equip themselves with the Party's policies and propagate them, and should become the kind of revolutionaries who carry out their revolutionary tasks to the letter and in accordance with the Party's policies. A revolutionary is a genuine communist. The communist has nothing to do with selfishness, which means serving one's own interests alone. Revolutionaries must have the communist traits of working and living under the motto: "One for all and all for one". They must temper themselves with the Party, class and popular spirit of serving the

working class and all the people.

The intellectuals will become spoiled in the end if they do not take an active part in all organizational life including that of the Party. There are many such instances. I should like to stress once again that both the old and new intellectuals should strengthen their activities in the Party and other institutions, in order to do away with their self-indulgent and petty-bourgeois mentalities and train themselves to become revolutionaries.

Today I have dwelt on the questions of the transition period and the dictatorship of the proletariat in considerable detail. I think this should be enough to give you a general idea of the questions raised in the course of studying the documents of the Party Conference.