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## POLITICAL ECONOMY - A Beginner's Course

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### Chapter 1 – What Is Political Economy And What Does It Teach?

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In its struggle the proletariat is guided by the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. These great teachers and leaders of the proletariat have forged a powerful weapon. They have created and developed revolutionary theory of the proletariat. The Marxist-Leninist teaching is a guide for the working class in its struggle under capitalism. Marxism-Leninism is a powerful weapon in the hands of the class conscious workers of all countries who enter the struggle against capital, and after the triumph of the proletarian revolution it shows the working class the way to conduct successfully the further struggle against all enemies of socialism, it enables them to carry out a correct policy ensuring the building of a complete socialist society.

In his explanation of the first draft program of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin wrote more than thirty years ago that Marxian theory

"... for the first time transformed socialism from a Utopia into a science, established a firm basis for this science and indicated the road along which to proceed in developing and elaborating this science further in all its details. It uncovered the essence of modern capitalist economy, explaining how the hiring of labour, the purchase of labour power, masks the enslavement of millions of propertyless people by a small group of capitalists, the owners of the land, factories, mines, etc. It showed how the entire development of modern capitalism tends towards the crushing of small enterprises by large ones, creating conditions which make possible and necessary the establishment of a socialist order of society. It taught one to distinguish - under the veil of established customs, political intrigue, tricky laws and tangled teachings - the *class struggle*, the struggle of propertied classes of all sorts with the propertyless masses, with the *proletariat*, which leads all the propertyless masses.

It made the real task of the revolutionary, socialist party clear: not the concoction of plans for the reorganization of society, not sermons to the capitalists and their henchmen about improving the conditions of the

workers, not the organisation of conspiracies, but the *organisation of the class struggle of the proletariat and the leadership of this struggle, the final aim of which is - the capture of political power by the proletariat and ' the organisation of socialist society.'*" (Lenin. *Collected Works*, Vol. II, "Our Program," p. 491, Russian ed.)

Marxism was the first to give a scientific approach to the study of the history of mankind. Bourgeois scientists are powerless to explain the laws of development of society. They represent the history of society as a continuous chain of pure accidents in which it is impossible to find any definite law connecting them. Marx was the first to show that social development like natural development follows definite internal laws. However, unlike the laws of nature, the laws of development of human society are realised, not independently of the will and acts of man, but, on the contrary, through the action of the broad human masses. Marxism discovered that the capitalist system, by virtue of the contradictions inherent in it, is unswervingly advancing towards its own destruction. Marxism teaches, however, that the destruction of capitalism will not come of itself, but only as the result of a bitter class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The social-democratic theory that, since society presumably develops according to definite laws, the working class can sit down with folded hands and wait for these laws to bring about socialism in place of capitalism is a crass distortion of Marxism. The laws of social development do not realise themselves automatically. They forge their way through the class struggle taking place in society.

The proletariat, armed with the Marxist-Leninist teaching, carries on the struggle for socialism with certainty. It knows the laws of social development; with its struggle, its work, its activity, it follows these laws, which lead to the inevitable destruction of capitalism and the victory of socialism.

Marxism-Leninism teaches one to lay bare the class struggle of the disinherited against their oppressors.

Marxism-Leninism teaches that the only road to socialism leads through the determined class struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of its own dictatorship.

Let us take any capitalist country. Whether it is an advanced or a backward country, the first thing that strikes one is class differences. In splendid mansions on streets lined with lawns and trees - a few rich people live. In dirty, smoky houses, squalid tenements or rickety shacks on joyless streets - live the workers, the creators of the tremendous incomes of the rich.

Under capitalism society is divided into two great enemy camps, into two opposed classes - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie has all the wealth and all the power in its hands; it has all the plants, factories, mines, the land, the banks, the railroads; the bourgeoisie is the *ruling class*. The proletariat has all the oppression and poverty. *The contrast between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat* - that is the most important, distinction in any capitalist country. The *struggle* between the working class and the bourgeoisie - that is what takes precedence over everything else. The *gulf* between these two classes grows ever deeper, ever wider. With the growth of class contradictions the indignation of the masses of the working class grows, their will to struggle grows, as do their revolutionary consciousness, their faith in their own strength and in their final victory over capitalism.

The crisis brought untold suffering to the proletariat. Mass unemployment, lower wages, thousands of suicides of people brought to desperation, death from starvation, increased mortality of children - these are the joys of capitalism for the workers. At the same time the bourgeoisie gets its tremendous incomes as usual.

Thus, for instance, according to German newspapers, 43 directors of the dye trust get 145,000 marks a year each; 4 directors of the Schubert and Saltzer Firm - 145,000 each; 2 directors of the Use Corporation - 130,000 each; 7 directors of the Mannesman Corporation - 135,000 each; 22 directors of the Alliance Insurance Co. - 80,000 each.

Millions of people go hungry so that a handful of parasites may live in luxury and idleness. This is the picture which capitalism presents, this is the picture of the class contradictions, sharpened to the extreme by the unprecedented crisis.

The interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are opposed to each other. The bourgeoisie tries to hold on to its rule by all the devices of violence and deceit. The proletariat tries, in proportion to the growth of its class consciousness, to do away with capitalist slavery and to substitute the socialist order for it.

The bourgeoisie and the proletariat are the *basic classes* in capitalist countries. Their interrelations, their struggle - these are what determine the fate of capitalist society. However, in capitalist countries, together with the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, there are other, intermediate, strata. In many countries these intermediate strata are fairly numerous.

The intermediate strata consist of the small and middle peasants (farmers), artisans, and handicraftsmen. These strata we call the petty bourgeoisie. What makes them kin to the bourgeoisie is that they own land, instruments and tools. But at the same time they are toilers, and this makes them kin to the proletariat. Capitalism inevitably leads to the impoverishment of the intermediate strata. They are being squeezed out under capitalism. Insignificant numbers break through into the ranks of the exploiters, great masses are impoverished and sink into the ranks of the proletariat. Hence, in its struggle against capitalism, the proletariat finds allies in the broad masses of the toiling peasants.

The bourgeoisie and the proletariat - these are the two main classes in every capitalist country. The bourgeoisie rules. But the bourgeoisie cannot exist without the working class.

The capitalist cannot prosper if hundreds and thousands of workers will not bend their backs and be drenched in sweat at his plants and factories. The blood and sweat of the workers are converted into jingling coin to fill the pockets of the rich. The growth and strengthening of bourgeois rule inevitably call forth the growth of the working class, an increase in its numbers and in its solidarity. Thus the bourgeoisie prepares its own gravedigger. As the capitalist system develops, the forces of the new, socialist society ripen at its core. Classes, their struggle, the contradictions of class interests - this is what constitutes the life of capitalist society.

But what are classes? Lenin answered this question as follows:

*"What is meant by classes in general? It is what permits one part of society to appropriate the labour of another. If one part of society appropriates all the land,*

*we have the classes of landlords and peasants. If one part of society owns the plants and factories, shares and capital, while the other part works in these factories, we have the classes of capitalists and proletarians." (Ibid., Vol. XXV, "Speech at the Third Congress of the Russian Young Communist League," p. 391, Russian ed.)*

What is the secret, however, which renders it possible for one part of society to appropriate the labour of another part of that society? And what are the reasons for the appearance of whole groups of people who "sow not, but reap"?

In order to understand this it is necessary to examine *how production is organised* in society. Every worker, every toiling fanner knows very well what production means. People must have food, clothing and shelter in order to exist. Every toiler knows very well the labour it requires to build houses, cultivate land, produce bread, perform the necessary work in plants and factories to produce the things man needs - because every worker, every toiling farmer, himself takes part in this work.

By means of labour, people change objects found in nature, adapt them for their use and for the satisfaction of their wants. In the bowels of the earth people find coal, iron ore, oil. By their labour they extract these useful objects and bring them to the surface of the earth. Here the iron ore is smelted and made into iron. The iron is in turn converted into the most diverse things - from a locomotive to a pocket knife or needle.

Everyone knows that people do not work singly but *together*. What could one man, by himself, do with a coal mine, an iron mine, a plant or a factory? And first of all, could there be such undertakings altogether without the united effort of thousands and tens of thousands of people? However, it is not only on large undertakings that individual effort is unthinkable. Even the individual peasant working a small plot of land with the help of his old mare could not do so if other people would not furnish him with a whole number of necessary things. The handicraftsman and artisan who works by himself could not get very far either without the instruments and materials which are the product of the labour of others.

We thus see that production proceeds in society. Production is *social*, but it is organised *in various ways*.

In order to produce, land, factory buildings, machinery and raw material are needed. All these are called *the means of production*. But the means of production are dead without *human labour*, without live *labour power*. Only when labour power is applied to the means of production does the process of production begin. *The place and significance in human society of different classes are determined by the relation of each of these classes to the means of production*. For instance, under the feudal system the principal means of production - the land - is owned by the landlord. By means of his ownership of the land, the landlord exploits the peasants. Under the capitalist system all enterprises, all the means of production, are in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The working class has no means of production. This is the basis for the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie.

Capitalism was not the creator of classes and class differences. Classes existed before capitalism, under the feudal system, and even earlier. But capitalism substituted new classes for the old. Capitalism created new methods of class oppression and class struggle. *"Classes are large groups of persons, differing according to their places in the historically established system of social production, according to their relations (mostly fixed and formulated in laws) to the means of production, according to their roles in the social organization of labour and consequently according to their methods of obtaining and the size of the share of social wealth over which they dispose. Classes are groups of persons, of which one group is able to appropriate the labour of another, owing to a difference in their respective positions in a definite order of social economy." (Ibid., Vol. XXIV, "The Great Initiative," p. 337, Russian ed.)*

Marxism was the first to disclose the laws of development of human society. Marx showed that economics lies at the basis of social development and that the mainspring of social development is the class struggle. The millions struggle of the oppressed classes against their oppressors - this is the fundamental motive force of history.

We have already seen that classes differ according to the places they occupy in a given system of social production. We have also seen that the place occupied by any class is determined by the relation of this class to the means of production. In the process of production definite relations are established between people.

We already know that social production is variously organized. In capitalist countries there is one social system, in the *Soviet Union* there is a totally different one. In capitalist countries the proletariat is compelled to work for the capitalist, is subjected to submission and arbitrary rule. There the plants, the factories, the railroads, the land, the banks - all belong to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie has all the means of production in its hands. This makes it possible for the bourgeoisie to drain the life sap out of the workers, to oppress and enslave the working class. The relations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the capitalist oppressors and the exploited workers, put a decisive stamp on the entire order of any capitalist country. In the Soviet Union, on the contrary, the proletariat occupies the ruling position in the plants, the factories and in the entire state.

In the course of production, definite relations are established between people, between entire classes. These relations we call *production relations*. The relations between workers and capitalists can serve as an example of production relations. Every social system, every system of social production, is characterised by the production relations dominant in it. In the Soviet Union production relations are entirely different from those in capitalist countries. What determines production relations in society, on what do they depend? Marx showed that production relations depend upon the stage of development of the *material productive forces of society*. At different stages of its development a society commands different levels of productive forces. At present, production takes place principally in large plants and factories, by means of complex machinery. Even in agriculture, where for ages the ancient wooden plough held sway, complex machinery is being used to an ever greater extent. In the past, however, human labour was totally different. Modern complex machinery was not even dreamt of then. In very ancient times a stone and a stick were the only instruments known to man. Many thousands of years have elapsed since then. Gradually man discovered newer and newer methods of work, learned to make new instruments. Instruments and machinery are the servants and helpers of man. With their aid human labour power produces enormous quantities of things which were undreamt of before. Of course, with the change of the means of production, with the introduction of new machinery, the very labour of man changes. During the last century to century and a half, technical progress has been particularly rapid.

About a hundred and fifty years ago people did not yet know anything about the steam engine; electricity came into use only about fifty years ago. Railroads have been developed only during the last hundred years. Automobiles became common only during the last few decades, tractors - even more recently. People still remember very well the first appearance of aeroplanes - it was only a short time before the war. The radio was developed only since the war.

However, it is not only man's tools - his inanimate assistants - that grow and develop. At the same time the living productive forces of society develop. *The greatest productive force* consists of the toiling classes themselves, man himself. The ability, the skill and the knowledge of man increase with the development of machines and the advances in technique. There could be no aviators while there were no aeroplanes, there could be no chauffeurs before the appearance of automobiles. Man learns not only to work with the assistance of complicated machines, first of all he also learns to create them, to construct them.

Together with the development of the productive forces, production relations change. Marx says that social production relations change simultaneously with the change and development of the material means of production, with the change in productive forces.

Further, the transition from one form of class dominance to another is inseparably linked up with the development of the productive forces of society. Thus, for example, the development of capitalism is linked up with the spread of large-scale production and with the appearance of machines.

We have already seen, for instance, that in primitive times the state of development of productive forces was very low. The instruments of labour were not yet developed. Man could only inadequately struggle with nature. Primitive tribes could only just manage to feed themselves on the products of the hunt. There were no reserves whatever. Therefore there could not be a system of classes wherein one lives at the expense of the other. The division of society into classes appears at a higher stage of development of the productive forces.

Up to a certain point production relations stimulate the development of the material productive forces. Thus, for instance, capitalism radically changed the old methods of labour, evoked and developed large-scale machine production. But at a certain point in their development,

the productive forces begin to clash with the production relations within which they developed.

"From forms of development of productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution." (Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*, Preface, p. 12, Charles H. Kerr & Co., Chicago, 1908.)

At the present time we are living in such a *period of social revolution*. The production relations of capitalist society have turned into chains hampering the further development of the productive forces. Overthrowing the power of capital, the proletariat breaks these chains. The proletarian revolution frees the productive forces from the chains of capitalism and opens up an unlimited scope for their development.

The capitalist system, resting as it does on the brutal exploitation of the toiling masses, will not get off the stage of its own accord. Only the heroic *revolutionary struggle* of the working class relying upon its alliance with the basic mass of peasants and toilers in the colonies, will bring about *the overthrow of capitalism and victory of socialism* the world over.

How is capitalism organised, how is the apparatus organized by means of which a handful of capitalists enslave the working masses? It is important to know this in order to take a conscious and active part in the great struggle which is now going on all over the world between capitalism and socialism.

The development of capitalism leads to the victory of the proletarian revolution, the triumph of the new, socialist system. This was established by Marx many years ago. Marx came to this conclusion through a thorough study of the capitalist system of production, through discovering the laws of its development and decline.

From this it is clear what *tremendous significance* there is in political economy, which, in the words of Lenin, is "*the science dealing with the developing historical systems of social production*." This science occupies a very important place in all the teachings of Marx and Lenin.

In his introduction to *Capital*, Marx says:

"... it is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society," i.e., capitalist society.

Marx set himself the task of discovering the law of development of capitalist society in order to guide the proletariat in its struggle for freedom.

"The study of the production relationships in a given, historically determined society, in their genesis, their development, and their decay - such is the content of Marx's economic teaching," says Lenin. (See Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, p. 15).

The servants of the bourgeoisie try to "prove" that the capitalist system, capitalist relations, are eternal and immutable. Their purpose is perfectly evident. They would like to convince the workers that there can be no question of the overthrow of capitalism. The fall of capitalism, they say, is the fall of humanity. Humanity, according to them, can exist only on the basis of the capitalist system. Hence they try to represent all the basic laws of capitalism, all the most important social relations of the capitalist system, as eternal laws, as immutable relations. Thus it has been - thus it will be, say the hirelings of the bourgeoisie.

The political economy of Marx and Lenin does not leave a single stone of this dream edifice of the reactionaries standing. The Marxist-Leninist theory shows how capitalist relations arise from the ruins of the previous system, how they develop, and how the development of the ever sharpening internal contradictions of capitalism inevitably leads to its destruction, leads to the victory of the socialist revolution of the proletariat - the gravedigger of the bourgeoisie.

The history of mankind tells us that man lived on this earth for thousands of years knowing nothing of capitalism. This means that the laws which political economy discloses in capitalist production are neither eternal nor immutable. On the contrary, these laws appear only together with capitalism and disappear with the destruction of the capitalist system which gave rise to them"

It means, in addition, that political economy cannot confine itself to the study of only the capitalist order of society, but must also study the *previous epochs* in the development of society.

Marxist-Leninist political economy penetrates deeply into all the innermost recesses of the capitalist system of coercion and exploitation. It uncovers the true nature of class relations which the learned hirelings of the bourgeoisie try to befog.

Marxism-Leninism studies the production relations of people in capitalist society in their development, in motion. The productive forces of human society develop, as we have already shown, within the framework of definite production relations. The development of capitalist society, however, reaches the point where the productive forces outgrow the limits imposed upon them by the production relations within the framework of which they grew and developed for a time. The contradictions between the productive forces of capitalist society and its production relations then grow sharper. These contradictions find their expression in the class struggle between the bourgeoisie, which defends the system of exploitation, and the proletariat, which fights for the abolition of all exploitation of man by man.

Marxist-Leninist political economy centres its attention on the developing contradictions of capitalism, which lead to its destruction and to the victory of the socialist revolution of the proletariat.

The social revolution is conditioned by the contradictions between the productive forces and the production relations under capitalism, which find their expression in the class struggle. These contradictions inevitably grow keener as capitalist society develops.

Socialism comes to replace capitalism. Under socialism, production relations in society are entirely different in structure from those under capitalism. Must political economy study these new relations? of course it must.

Lenin has shown that political economy is "the science dealing with the developing historical systems of social production."

Engels - who was Marx's closest companion-in-arms - has pointed out that:

*"Political economy, in the widest sense, is the science of the laws governing the production and exchange of the material means of subsistence in human society"* (Engels. *Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science* [Anti-Duhring], p. 105).

Consequently, political economy must study not only capitalism, but also the epochs which preceded it and the order of society which is coming to *replace it*.

Does this mean that for all systems of social production the same laws prevail? Not at all. On the contrary, every system of social production has its own peculiar laws.

The laws which prevail in the capitalist order lose their force and their significance under socialism.

At present, when socialism is being victoriously built on a sixth of the globe, the great practical importance of also studying the economic structure of socialism and the transition period from capitalism to socialism is clear.

To us theory is not a dogma (*i.e.*, a dead, religious doctrine), but a *guide to action*. Theory is of great significance to the revolutionary struggle. The greatest liberation movement in the world of an oppressed class, the most revolutionary class in history, is impossible without revolutionary theory, Lenin has stressed numerous times.

*"You know that a theory, when it is a genuine theory, gives practical workers the power of orientation, clarity of perspective, faith in their work, confidence in the victory of our cause. All this is, and must be, of enormous importance for the cause of our socialist construction,"* says Comrade Stalin. See , *Leninism*, "Problems of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R.," p. 306.

Political economy must give a clear and precise understanding not only of the laws governing the development and decline of capitalism, but also of the laws governing the new socialist order that arises from the ruins of capitalism. Marxist-Leninist political economy throws a bright light on the picture of the decaying capitalist world and also on the picture of the socialist world under construction in the U.S.S.R.

It is clear that attempts artificially to confine political economy within the narrow walls of studying only the capitalist system play into the hands of the enemies of socialist construction. Such attempts prevent the theoretical comprehension of the vast experience of the Soviet Union in economic construction, experience of the utmost importance for the working class of the entire world. Such attempts lead to theory lagging behind practice, to the separation of theory from practice, which plays into the hands of our enemies. Such a conception of political economy, as a science dealing exclusively with the capitalist system, is held by many economists, on the initiative of one of the theoreticians of social democracy, Hilferding, who attempts an idealist revision of Marxism. Lenin came out sharply against such a conception.

Two worlds - the world of capitalism and the world of socialism - this is what at present constitutes the centre of attention in political economy.

Unprecedented destruction and disintegration are taking place in capitalist countries. Beginning with the autumn of 1929 a crisis of unwonted depth and power has been devastating these countries. This crisis has exceeded any crisis previously experienced by the capitalist world in its severity, in its protracted nature and in the distress it has caused to the toiling masses.

The crisis brought tremendous ruin both to industry and to agriculture. Because of the lack of markets, production has been curtailed to an ever increasing extent, shutting down plants and factories and throwing millions of workers out of employment. In the countryside the areas under cultivation were reduced, and millions of farmers ruined. Great quantities of goods were simply destroyed: in Brazil coffee was dumped into the ocean, in the United States wheat was used to fire locomotives, milk was spilled into rivers, fish thrown back into the sea, cattle destroyed, harvests ruined - all in order thus to reduce the quantity of foodstuffs thrown on the market. At the present time when the lowest depths of the crisis have already been passed, capitalism has succeeded in somewhat easing the position of industry by means of the utmost intensification of the exploitation of the workers, by increased robbery of the farmers, by still further pillaging the colonies. Nevertheless, there can be no talk of any serious economic recovery in capitalist countries, since capitalism is living through the period of its decline, its disintegration. The bourgeoisie seeks a way out of the crisis by increasing the exploitation of the masses of workers, by paving the way for a new imperialist war and intervention against the U.S.S.R. The bourgeoisie is passing to fascist methods of rule to an ever greater extent, in an attempt to keep the workers in subjection by means of bloody terror.

During the years of this profound crisis in the capitalist world, the U.S.S.R. has successfully fulfilled its First Five-Year Plan of socialist construction in four years. At the present time, the U.S.S.R. is victoriously carrying out the even greater task of the Second Five-Year Plan - the building of classless, socialist society.

The U.S.S.R. has laid the foundation of socialist economy during the years of the First Five-Year Plan period. Socialist large-scale industry - the fundamental base of socialism - has grown enormously. Dozens of new industries have been created that had never before existed in Russia. In particular, heavy industry, which is the backbone of

the entire national economy, has made great strides forward.

During the period of the First Five-Year Plan, the U.S.S.R. has also accomplished the tremendous task of reorganising agriculture on socialist principles. The new system of collective farms (*kolkhozes*), that opened the door to a well-to-do and cultured life for the millions of peasants, has triumphed in the village. The basic masses of the peasantry, the collective farmers, have become solid supports of the Soviet power, and the last bulwark of capitalism - the kulak (the rich, exploiting peasant) - has been routed.

The working class has grown enormously. The living conditions of the broad masses of workers have improved. The Soviet Union has been transformed into a land of advanced culture. Universal education has been introduced and the illiteracy of tens of millions of people has been done away with. Millions of children and adults are studying at various schools. Tremendous success has been achieved in the inculcation of socialist labour discipline. The energy and activity, the enthusiasm of the millions of builders of socialism, have grown tremendously.

*"As a result of the First Five-Year Plan, the possibility of building socialism in one country was for the first time in the history of mankind demonstrated before hundreds of millions of toilers of the whole world." In the Soviet Union "the worker and collective farmer have become fully confident of the morrow, and the constantly rising level of the material and cultural living standards depend solely upon the quality and quantity of the labour expended by them. Gone is the menace of unemployment, poverty and starvation for the toiler of the U.S.S.R. Confidently and joyfully each worker and collective farmer looks into his future, and presents constantly rising demands for knowledge and culture." (Resolutions and Decisions of the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., p. 9, Moscow, 1934).*

At the same time, in the lands of capital the masses of toilers suffer untold and unprecedented privations. The army of unemployed grew with each year of the crisis until it reached the stupendous figure of fifty million. This means that the present crisis doomed to all the tortures of unemployment and hunger a number of workers who, together with their families, exceed the population of the biggest capitalist country - the United States of America. Now that the lowest point of the crisis has been passed not only is there no improvement in the conditions of the masses of workers, but, on the

contrary, their conditions are continually growing worse. The slight increase in production in capitalist industry is taking place primarily at the expense of the increased exploitation of the employed workers and the greater intensity of their labour.

*"Amidst the surging waves of economic shocks and military-political catastrophes the U.S.S.R. stands out alone, like a rock, continuing its work of socialist construction and its fight to preserve peace. While in capitalist countries the economic crisis is still raging, in the U.S.S.R. progress is continuing both in the sphere of industry and in the sphere of agriculture. While in capitalist countries feverish preparations are in progress for a new war, for a new redistribution of the world and spheres of influence, the U.S.S.R. is continuing its systematic and stubborn struggle against the menace of war and for peace; and it cannot be said that the efforts of the U.S.S.R. in this sphere have been quite unsuccessful."* (See Stalin, *Leninism*, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B.)," p. 471).

After the end of the civil war in Russia, after the transition to economic construction, Lenin said: *"Now we exert our main influence upon the international revolution by our economic policy."* Hence the tremendous international significance of the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. is evident. The workers of capitalist countries, groaning under the pressure of the crisis, under the yoke of fascism, regard the U.S.S.R. as the fatherland of the world proletariat. The success of the U.S.S.R. encourages the workers of capitalist countries to struggle. The world-historical triumphs of socialism in the U.S.S.R. are a tremendous factor in the world socialist revolution.

The capitalists and their lackeys are beginning to think with anxiety about the fate of the capitalist system. The radical difference, the gulf between the turbulent socialist construction in the Soviet Union and the decay of capitalism, is all too striking. *To whom does the future belong* - to communism or to capitalism - this is the question which the foes of socialism now put before themselves ever more frequently.

*The struggle of two systems (i.e., social orders) - capitalism and socialism - that is the central issue of our times. Two diametrically opposite worlds are facing each other: the world of labour, the world of the workers' government, the world of socialism - in the Soviet Union; the world of the bourgeoisie, the world of*

profit hunting, the world of unemployment and hunger - in all other countries. The banner of the workers of the U.S.S.R. carries the slogan: "Those who do not work shall not eat." On the banner of the bourgeoisie could be inscribed: "The worker shall not eat." It is clear that the conscious workers of the entire world consider the Soviet Union their socialist fatherland.

But the capitalist system of violence and oppression will not vanish by itself. It will perish only as a result of the struggle of the working class. Only the revolutionary struggle of the conscious proletariat will push capitalism, which has become unbearable to the great masses of workers, into the grave.

Capitalism or socialism? With the establishment of the Soviet Union this question arose in its full import. Capitalism or socialism? This question becomes more acute with the growing successes of the U.S.S.R. and the growing disintegration of capitalism.

In all capitalist countries power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Whatever the form of government, it invariably covers the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The purpose of the bourgeois state is to safeguard capitalist exploitation, safeguard the private ownership of the plants and factories by the bourgeoisie, the private ownership of the land by the landlords and rich farmers.

For socialism to triumph, the rule of the bourgeoisie must be overthrown, the bourgeois state must be destroyed and the dictatorship of the proletariat must be substituted in its place. The transition from capitalism to socialism is possible only by means of an unrelenting class struggle of the proletariat against the capitalists, by means of a proletarian revolution and the establishment of a proletarian state. Only by establishing its own state can the working class proceed with the building of socialism and create a socialist society.

There is only one road from capitalism to socialism - and that is the one pointed out by the Communists - the road of proletarian revolution, of the destruction of the bourgeois state machinery, of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

*"Between capitalist and communist society,"* says Marx, *"lies a period of revolutionary transformation from one to the other. There corresponds also to this a political transition period during which the state can be nothing else than the revolutionary dictatorship of the*



**proletariat.**" (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, p. 44, (Marxist-Leninist Library)).

It was this road, the only correct, the only possible road to socialism, that the proletariat of Russia took in 1917.

In the Soviet Union the working class won political power for itself. The October Revolution established the *rule of the proletariat*, the dictatorship of the working class. The working class strives to capture state power not merely for power's sake. State power in the hands of the proletariat is a means for building the new, socialist society.

"Its purpose is to create socialism, to do away with the division of society into classes, to make all members of society workers, to take away the basis for the exploitation of man by man. This purpose cannot be realized at once, it requires a fairly long transition period from capitalism to socialism, because the *reorganization* of production is a difficult matter, because time is required for all the radical changes in every field of life, and because the enormous force of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois habits in economic management can be overcome only by a long, persistent struggle. That is why Marx speaks of the entire period of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, "Greeting to the Viennese Workers," p. 314, Russian ed.)

The transformation from capitalism to socialism cannot be accomplished at once. A fairly long *transition period* is unavoidable. During this period state power is in the hands of the working class, which is building socialism.

The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie means the repression of the vast majority of the population in the interests of a handful of parasites. The dictatorship of the proletariat means the repression of a small group of exploiters in the interests of the vast majority of the population, in the interests of the entire mass of toilers. The proletariat uses its dictatorship to destroy all vestiges of exploitation of man by man. On capturing political power the proletariat becomes the ruling class: it manages all socialised production, it crushes the resistance of the exploiters, guides the intermediate, vacillating elements and classes. Having become the ruling class, the proletariat begins the work of creating a system of society without classes, either ruling or subordinated, since there will be no classes or class distinctions whatever.

Under socialism the division of society into classes is done away with, abolishing class contradictions and the class struggle, doing away with the division into exploiters and exploited. But the road to classless, socialist society lies through a period of the *bitterest class struggle*.

Lenin has incessantly stressed the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a period of long, persistent class struggle against the exploiters, against the remnants of the former ruling class. He wrote:

"Socialism is the abolition of classes. The dictatorship of the proletariat has done everything possible to abolish these classes. But it is impossible to destroy classes at once. Classes **have remained and will remain** during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship becomes unnecessary when classes disappear. They will not disappear without the dictatorship of the proletariat. Classes have remained, but **each of them** has changed its aspect under the dictatorship of the proletariat; also their interrelations have changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat, it only assumes other forms." (*Ibid.*, "Economics and Politics in the Epoch of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," p. 513, Russian ed.)

Having assumed other forms, the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes more persistent. And this is only to be expected: the former ruling classes will do anything to win back their lost position. The exploiters stop at nothing, are ready to commit the worst crimes against the interests of the vast majority of the toilers in order to prevent the end of their rule.

"The abolition of classes is a matter of a long, difficult and stubborn **class struggle**, which, after the overthrow of the rule of capital, **after** the destruction of the bourgeois state, **after** the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, does **not disappear**, but only changes its form, becoming, in many respects, more bitter." (*Ibid.*, "Greeting to the Viennese Workers," p. 315, Russian ed.)

The entire history of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. brilliantly illustrates the truth of this principle expressed by Lenin. The tremendous victories of socialist construction have been achieved in the process of an unremitting and most bitter struggle against all the remnants of the old order of exploitation. The Soviet Union achieved most important and decisive victories over

all the forces of the bourgeoisie. But the resistance of the latter grows stronger. Their methods of struggle against socialism become more vile. Having suffered total defeat in open battle, the kulaks, traders, all the remnants of the previous exploiting classes, try to sneak into Soviet enterprises and institutions and attempt to undermine the powerful socialist structure by means of sabotage, thievery, etc. The most wide-awake vigilance on the part of the proletariat, the utmost strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship are therefore essential.

"A strong and powerful dictatorship of the proletariat - that is what we must have now in order to shatter the last remnants of the dying classes and to frustrate their thieving designs." See Stalin, *Leninism*. "The Results of the First Five Year Plan," p. 437.

Classless society cannot come of itself. It must be won. For this purpose it is necessary actively to overcome the tremendous difficulties on the road to socialism. It is necessary to crush the resistance of all the relics of the old exploiting system. It is necessary to mobilise the energy and activity of the millions of builders of socialism. It is necessary to resist any and all deviations from the general line of the Party. Unfailing alertness is necessary with respect to all attempts at distorting the Marxist-Leninist teaching. The dictatorship of the proletariat is that power which accomplishes the building of classless socialist society. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the leading force in the society that builds socialism. Therefore, in studying the transition from capitalism to socialism, in studying the structure of socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the centre of attention of political economy.

The bourgeoisie is interested in hiding the laws of the inevitable decline of capitalism and victory of communism. Bourgeois professors of economics - these "learned henchmen of the capitalist class," as Lenin expresses it - serve capitalism truly and faithfully, glossing over and embellishing the system of oppression and slavery. Bourgeois economists mask and befog the real laws governing capitalist production. They try to perpetuate capitalism. They depict capitalism as the only possible order of social life. According to them the laws of capitalism are eternal and immutable. By such falsehoods they try to save capitalism from its inevitable destruction.

At the head of the revolutionary struggle of the working class stands the *Communist Party*. Only firm leadership on the part of the Communist Party ensures the victory of the proletariat. All the enemies of communism

venomously hate the Communist Party. They strive in every way possible to split it, to destroy its unity, and rejoice at any deviation from its general line within the ranks of the Party.

Political economy is a sharp weapon in the struggle against capitalism, in the struggle *for communism*. Political economy, like all sciences, and primarily sciences dealing with human society and the laws of its development, is a *class science*.

The proletariat is surrounded by hosts of enemies. A bitter class struggle is in progress. In this struggle all attacks upon the general line of the Communist Party, all attempts to undermine it either in theory or in practice bring grist to the mill of the enemy. That is why a vigilant and unrelenting struggle must be maintained against all deviations from the general line of the Party, a struggle against open Right opportunism as well as against all kinds of "Left" deviations.

*Counter-revolutionary Trotskyism* is of special service to the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the revolution, in its preparations for a new intervention against the U.S.S.R. As one of the varieties of social-democracy, Trotskyism particularly furnishes the imperialist bourgeoisie with all sorts of slanderous fabrications about the revolutionary movement in various countries and about the Soviet Union. Trotskyism is an advance post of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Stalin in his letter of the autumn of 1931 to the editors of the Russian magazine, *Proletarskaya Revolyutsia* (*The Proletarian Revolution*) entitled "Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism," [See Stalin, *Leninism*, pp. 388-400] called the attention of the Communist Party to the necessity of a relentless struggle against all the attempts of an ideology hostile to Leninism to penetrate into the Communist Party, and particularly to the necessity of a determined resistance to all sorts of attempts "to smuggle the disguised Trotskyist rubbish into our literature." The representatives of trends hostile to the proletariat now try to smuggle in their views subtly, unnoticeably. All such attempts must be vigorously resisted. Any show of toleration towards these hostile views, any rotten liberalism with respect to them, is a direct crime against the working class and its struggle for socialism.

The class enemies of the proletariat try in every way to misconstrue political economy and to adapt it to serve their own interests. Bourgeois and Social-Democrat economists trump up all sorts of concoctions in an

attempt to save capitalism. They also try to make use of political economy for their own ends in their struggle against the Soviet Union.

One of the most important tasks in the study of political economy, therefore, is to conduct a relentless struggle against all anti-Marxian and deviationist trends.

### **Review Questions**

1. What aim does Marxism-Leninism set before the proletariat?
2. How do the productive forces of society change?
3. In what way do the various systems of social production differ?
4. What are classes?
5. How does the abolition of classes take place?
6. What is the subject of study of political economy?
7. Of what importance is the study of revolutionary theory to the proletariat?
8. Why is political economy a class science?
9. Of what does the Party character of political economy consist?