

## **Imperialism and Democratic Revolution**

(Excerpt from *New Democratic Revolution is the Main Force of the World Proletarian Revolution*)

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*Note: All footnote page and volume numbers refer to Portuguese editions.*



## Introduction

In its critique of the ICL's founding Parties and Organizations—in particular, of the PCB—the UOC(MLM) describes our defense of the validity of New Democratic Revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries as “dogmatism.” They criticize us for an alleged lack of “objectivity” in our analysis of imperialism and the development of capitalism in the oppressed countries. Throughout their critique, as well as in other documents, the UOC(MLM) leadership formulates a “new” theory of imperialism, which it attempts to portray as the concrete and objective application of Maoism to the current global situation and to that of the oppressed countries. For the UOC(MLM), imperialism constitutes an *“internationalized mode of production”* under which there coexist *“two tendencies: one towards stagnation... and the other towards progress.”* This supposed “progressive tendency” implies that imperialism *“sweeps away the vestiges of pre-capitalist modes of production”* in the countries oppressed by imperialist powers. The sweeping-away of semi-feudalism by imperialism would imply, in turn, the full development of capitalism in such countries, particularly in their countryside, and that their bourgeoisie would accrue *“a rate of profit equal to that of the bourgeoisie of other countries,”* i.e., of the imperialist countries. According to the UOC(MLM), the oppressed countries can be divided into two types: 1) oppressed capitalist countries, and 2) semi-feudal countries, i.e., two types of semi-colonies: the capitalist semi-colony and the semi-feudal semi-colony. According to them, the oppressed capitalist countries and semi-feudal countries are both semi-colonies, but the character of the revolution in the former would be immediately-socialist, while New

Democratic Revolution would be applicable only to the semi-feudal countries.

In analyzing Avakian's revisionist positions, it is not difficult to see that this is precisely the source from which the UOC(MLM) draws their conclusions on imperialism. Similar to this revisionist current, the UOC(MLM) defends imperialism as a global mode of production whose dynamism sweeps away semi-feudal relations of production, resulting in the emergence of oppressed countries that are predominantly-capitalist, and whose revolution must be immediately-socialist. Moreover, the UOC(MLM) applies this Avakianist formula to its "concrete analysis" of the Colombian situation, as we will demonstrate below.

According to the UOC(MLM), Colombia is an *oppressed capitalist country*, and, therefore, the character of the Colombian Revolution must be immediately-socialist. For the Colombian peasantry, the "land to the tiller" slogan is no longer the order of the day. To mention just one statistic: Colombia boasts the highest concentration of landownership in Latin America. According to research conducted by Oxfam, 1% of the largest Colombian landowners own 81% of the land. Hence the nonsense included in the UOC(MLM)'s program, which states that the task of Colombian Communists is to **"teach the peasantry... to struggle against private property, and to convert the ownership of their land into collective ownership and collective exploitation."**<sup>1</sup>

According to the UOC(MLM), if Colombia is an *oppressed capitalist country*, then this condition is

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1 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB's bolding.

expressed even more explicitly in countries like Brazil, India, and the Philippines:

“...The behavior of the **Brazilian, Indian, or Filipino bourgeoisie** over the past few decades is **by no means reminiscent of that of a merely comprador-bourgeoisie**. For example, the Indian State is a **peculiar type of post-colonial capitalist State**, characterized by a bourgeoisie that is neither national... nor comprador (for it is only a servant and intermediary of the imperialists... which has made political decisions independent from, and **in contradiction with, the metropolitan imperialist bourgeoisie**), even less so is it an imperialist bourgeoisie (for the import of capital on behalf of the Indian bourgeoisie is much greater than its export of capital, which itself has certainly increased over the past two decades). The character and role of the **Brazilian bourgeoisie**, with respect to BRICS, proves that its international role is far from that of a comprador-bourgeoisie, or of that which is entirely subjected to imperialism, and which, within its limits, seeks to become a regional actor that has already demonstrated a **dominant position over the other oppressed countries.**”<sup>2</sup>

In other words, the UOC(MLM) leadership concludes that the Brazilian, Indian, and Filipino bourgeoisie no longer have a comprador character. They assert that the Brazilian and Indian bourgeoisie, in particular, although not imperialist, already export capital, compete with the “metropolitan” bourgeoisie, and subjugate other oppressed countries. Contrary to the claims of the PCP, the TKP/ML, the CPI (Maoist), the CPP, the CPB, and the vast majority of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Parties, the UOC(MLM) suggests that the revolutions in these countries would be immediately-socialist.

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2 UOC(MLM), *Revista Negación de la Negación* [Negation of the Negation magazine], no. 6, 2022; PCB’s bolding.



The international line of the ICM, as proposed by the UOC(MLM), suggests downplaying the importance of New Democratic Revolution as an integral part of the World Proletarian Revolution. After all, if imperialism continues to “*sweep away*” semi-feudalism in the oppressed countries, more and more “*oppressed capitalist*” countries will emerge, and immediately-socialist revolution will be applicable to an ever-expanding number of countries around the world. The UOC(MLM)’s analysis and conclusion is a total revision of Leninism, mainly of its theory of imperialism.

Contrary to the UOC(MLM)’s conclusion, the scientific ideology of the proletariat—Marxism-Leninism-Maoism—teaches us that, during the imperialist stage of capitalism, national oppression increases, rather than declines, which constitutes the tendency for political reaction all along the line; that violence is a law of imperialism that buried and abolished the entirety of the progressive character that capitalism once possessed with its passage from the stage of free competition to the stage of monopolies—its highest and final stage. This is what the great leaders of the international proletariat have to say. These are the “ABCs” of Leninism and Maoism, and it is what we are seeing across the world today in a resounding way: the growth of colonial oppression by the imperialist powers and superpowers, and, mainly, the explosive growth of national liberation struggles, from which the Palestinian National Resistance stands out as the most inspiring example for the international proletariat. Imperialism is parasitism, the decomposition of capital; it is an agonizing condition whose crisis constitutes the material basis of the accelerated putrefaction of bourgeois-democracy. It expresses the reactionarization of the State and the

vertiginous growth of fascism across the globe. Thus, quite contrary to the UOC(MLM)'s conclusions, the significance of New Democratic Revolution for the World Revolution has only increased in recent decades. Understanding the relationship between democratic revolution and proletarian revolution is, today more than ever, a question of decisive importance for Communists all over the world.

## 1. The Fallacious “Progressive Tendency of Imperialism”

For the UOC(MLM) leadership, the imperialist stage of capitalism constitutes a particular mode of production of capitalism. Repeating the Avakianist mantra, they claim that, under the stage of free competition, *“the global economy was not cohesive, and the economies of each country were structured as independent processes, external to each other and linked, bit by bit, by the market.”* In other words, they were linked only by the market in the sphere of circulation. Under imperialism, the global economy: *“has been unified under a single process... globalizing production itself, as well as the market, thus breaking the autonomy of the economies of the countries of the world and linking them together by a single **productive process.**”*<sup>3</sup>

This globalized mode of production, as opposed to capitalism in the stage of *free competition*, constitutes the “*progressive*” tendency of imperialism: *“Under imperialism, there coexist **two tendencies**: one towards stagnation and economic and political crises; and the other towards progress, towards the **socialization of global production.**”*<sup>4</sup> According to the UOC(MLM), this socialization of global production constitutes a “*progressive*” tendency, since it leads to the sweeping-away of semi-feudalism:

“Imperialism as a globalized mode of production has linked all countries, with their specific modes of production, into a single global economy. Exported capital acts upon the seeds or developments of capitalism in the oppressed

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3 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

4 *Ibid.*; PCB’s bolding.

countries, and, as a general tendency, accelerates their development, **sweeping away the vestiges of pre-capitalist modes of production.**<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, “*capitalism itself becoming a globalized mode of production*” expresses ever more clearly that “*the proletariat of all countries sell their labor power to the global bourgeoisie.*” The bourgeoisie of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, in turn, have become “*a partner and participant in the global imperialist system.*” And, it “*benefits from imperialist relations... It accrues a rate of profit equal to that of the bourgeoisie of other countries.*” The UOC(MLM) explains thus:

“...Imperialism is a **globalized mode of production** that includes other [modes of production – *Trans.*], influences them, transforms them, erodes them, and exhausts them, **under a global process of production, of capitalist accumulation and generation of surplus-value.**”<sup>6</sup>

The UOC(MLM)’s conception of imperialism, according to its documents, can be summarized as follows: Under the *free competition* stage, the global economy coalesced via the market; under the imperialist stage, capitalism has become a globalized mode of production, linking all countries, regardless of their specific modes of production, together under a single global economy. This connection has led to the sweeping-away of pre-capitalist modes of production, and the conversion of the colonial and semi-colonial bourgeoisie into partners of the imperialist world system, which provides them with a “*rate of profit* equal to that of the

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5 *Ibid.*; PCB’s bolding.

6 *Ibid.*; PCB’s bolding.

bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries.” Hence, there has emerged a global bourgeoisie that exploits the proletariat of all countries under a single productive process. Imperialism can thus be summed up as a *global process of the production, accumulation, and generation of surplus-value*.

This conception is opposed to the Leninist theory of imperialism in its entirety; to the entire Marxist foundations of the study of the capitalist mode of production; and converges with the Kautskysist “theory” of *ultra-imperialism*.

First of all, the UOC(MLM)’s conclusion that, under the *free competition* stage of the capitalist mode of production, “*the global economy was not cohesive,*” is totally contradictory to Marxism. As the Great Marx demonstrated in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, big industry and the world market form a dialectical unity, in which big industry constitutes the principal aspect. According to Marx, big industry develops only to the extent that it unifies the global economy:

**“Modern industry has established the world market,** for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. **This development has, in its turn,** reacted on the **extension of industry;** and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages. We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long

course of development, of a series of **revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.**<sup>7</sup>

This is the period of the flourishing of capitalism, during which the bourgeoisie, as a new, revolutionary social force, relegated all medieval sundries to the past. *Free competition* capitalism could not develop, let alone reach the imperialist stage, if the *economies of each country were structured as independent processes*. The intertwining of the global economy under a single process, the international division of labor, are not particularities of imperialism, they are past historical conquests from the stage of *free competition*. This is what Marx and Engels have to say:

**“The bourgeoisie has** through its exploitation of the world market **given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country**. To the great chagrin of reactionaries, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by **industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe...** In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, **universal interdependence of nations**. And as in **material, so also in intellectual production**. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more

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7 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Foreign Languages Press Peking edition, 1971, p.34; PCB's bolding.

impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a **world literature**.<sup>18</sup>

Can there be any doubt that, for Marx, as established in the foundational work of scientific socialism, global production constitutes a unique process under *free competition* capitalism? The world market implies big industry, both of which constitute contradictory aspects of universal material production, which represents the basis of universal intellectual production. These are historical products of the World Bourgeois Revolution, which ended with the ascension of imperialism and which, with the October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia, saw the bourgeoisie as a class lose its historically-revolutionary and progressive aspects, shifting completely to counterrevolution. Thus, in no way can imperialism promote any sort of progress, but, on the contrary, promotes reaction all along the line; it opposes all advances conquered by humanity.

But the UOC(MLM) is wrong not only when they characterizes elements already present and accounted for under the stage of *free competition* as if they were particularities of the imperialist stage, but they also distort the very characterization of what would constitute *this globalized production*. In addressing these two tendencies of imperialism, they stress the *socialization of global production*, as if it could exist under the capitalist mode of production without its opposing aspect: **capitalist private property**. When they remark that imperialism has emerged as a mode of production that has linked the economies of all the countries of the world together *into a single productive process*, they hide the fact that, alongside the expansion of the

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8 *Ibid.*; PCB's bolding.



socialization of production, the capitalists continue to confront each other as private owners in the capitalist market. In other words, the imperialist world has not been transformed into a single factory, of a single global capital that jointly exploits the proletarians of every country. Such conclusions stink of the “postmodernist” thesis of “global capital” advocated by revisionists and opportunists who extol the bourgeois ideology of “globalization,” *i. e.*, Prachanda and co.

Imperialism, aside from being a “*global process of the production, accumulation, and generation of surplus-value,*” is, simultaneously, a global process of unbridled, violent, and reactionary struggle over the **distribution and private appropriation of this surplus-value**. If the prehistory of capitalism bled from every pore, the modern history of imperialism is the bloodiest war waged by the imperialist bourgeoisie for the distribution of this globally-produced *surplus-value*, and for the spoils, plundering, and pillaging of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Meanwhile, the imperialist bourgeoisie contends with the big bourgeoisie of these countries (bureaucrat- and comprador-) over who will take home the bigger portion of the social *surplus-value* produced within them. Therefore, it is completely fallacious to claim that, under imperialism, the bourgeoisie of the semi-colonies accrue the same *rate of profit* as their imperialist “partners”.

Capitalist private property constitutes the right of the bourgeoisie to appropriate the unpaid labor of others, to appropriate *surplus-value*. The rose-tinted dreams of some progressive tendency of imperialism spread by the UOC(MLM) betray “only” the fact that the contradiction between the increasing socialization of production and the private ownership of the means of production is the

fundamental condition for the existence of capitalism; it is its fundamental contradiction, in which these two aspects form a unity of opposites—capitalism, whose dominant aspect is the private ownership of the means of production. This fundamental condition and contradiction of capitalism is the same during the *free competition* and monopoly stages, but, during the latter, the concentration and centralization of capital undergo greater leaps alongside the simultaneous acceleration of the socialization of production due to the monopolistic character of the dominant aspect. Let us see how Lenin evidently deals with this question when analyzing the phenomenon of the socialization of production under imperialism:

**“Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private.”<sup>9</sup>**

Therefore, monopoly property, characteristic of the imperialist stage of capitalism, cannot promote the socialization of this production without also promoting, at the same time, conflict with it. The socialization of production, during the imperialist era, thus advances in the opposite direction of the progressive character mentioned by Marx in the *Manifesto*. The advance of capitalist production in the stage of monopoly does not sweep away pre-capitalist modes of production. Quite the contrary; finance-capital, mainly through capital export, rests upon those putrefied foundations, preserving them through the evolution of their forms. Brutal monopoly competition is based on the pursuit of *maximum profit*

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9 V. I. Lenin, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 27, p. 336; PCB’s bolding.

and primarily and inevitably tends towards imperialist wars of aggression and plunder, the struggle for the redivision of the world, imperialist world war, colonial slavery, and fascism to confront the World Proletarian Revolution. Imperialism, therefore, primes the objective conditions for the advancement of the World Proletarian Revolution in each country in the form of socialist revolution or New Democratic Revolution in uninterrupted transition to socialism, according to the nature of each country, in a process of unequal development, but with unique proletarian leadership.

The ascension of imperialism and its antithesis—World Proletarian Revolution—ignited the disintegration of the single world capitalist market, and in no way led to a mode of production that linked the countries of the world by a single process. As Comrade Stalin emphasized:

**“The disintegration of the single, all-embracing world market** must be regarded as the most important economic sequel of the Second World War and of its economic consequences. It has had the effect of further deepening the general crisis of the world capitalist system.”<sup>10</sup>

If even a single world market is not assured with the development of imperialism and the advent of the World Proletarian Revolution, much less can we speak of the formation of a *mode of production that links together the countries of the world by a single process*. Much less can we speak of a progressive tendency of imperialism that sweeps away semi-

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10 J. V. Stalin, “Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR,” *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Moscow, Vol. 15, p.85; PCB’s bolding.

feudalism. Chairman Mao repeated these important theses of the VI Congress of the Communist International for the colonial and semi-colonial countries:

“Imperialism ‘first allies itself with the ruling strata of the previous social structure, with the feudal lords and the trading and money-lending bourgeoisie, against the majority of the people. Everywhere **imperialism attempts to preserve and to perpetuate all those pre-capitalist forms of exploitation (especially in the countryside)** which serve as the basis for the existence of its reactionary allies.’... Imperialism, with all its financial and military might, is the force in China that **supports, inspires, fosters and preserves the feudal survivals, together with their entire bureaucratic-militarist superstructure.**”<sup>11</sup>

How is possible to reconcile the defense of Maoism with the misleading thesis of the *progressive tendency of imperialism*? How is it possible to call oneself a Maoist and say that imperialism sweeps away semi-feudal relations in the colonial and semi-colonial countries? The UOC(MLM) affirms that “*in certain countries, the predominant tendency, especially at the beginning, has been to reinforce pre-capitalist modes* [of production – *Trans.*].”<sup>12</sup> They try to reconcile their explicit rupture from Maoism with a quick-fix [*remiendo*]: In certain countries, imperialism, especially at the beginning, reinforced pre-capitalist modes of production. Thus, they turn the line of the Communist International and Chairman Mao into an exception to the rule, creating a false dichotomy of the history of

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11 Chairman Mao, “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. 2, p. 323; PCB’s bolding.

12 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

imperialism. But the UOC(MLM) fails to explain how this imperialist metamorphosis—from reaction all along the line to a supposedly progressive tendency—occurred.

In opposition to revisionist conceptions such as these, Chairman Mao asserted that imperialism “will never turn into a Buddha.” Moreover, he clearly established that the objective of imperialism, in penetrating the oppressed countries, was never to develop a social formation, to enable progress, to sweep away old modes of production. On the contrary:

**“It is certainly not the purpose of the imperialist powers invading China to transform feudal China into capitalist China. On the contrary, their purpose is to transform China into their own semi-colony or colony.”**<sup>13</sup>

Imperialism does not have a progressive tendency, nor can it be considered a mode of production that links together all the countries of the world by a single process. As Comrade Stalin put it, imperialism is:

“The increase in the export of capital to the colonies and dependent countries; the expansion of ‘spheres of influence’ and colonial possessions until they cover the whole globe; the transformation of capitalism into a **world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression** of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of ‘advanced’ countries—all this has, on the one hand, **converted the separate national economies and national territories into links in a single chain** called world economy, and, on the other hand, split the population of the globe into two camps: a handful of ‘advanced’ capitalist countries which exploit and oppress vast colonies and dependencies, and the

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13 Chairman Mao, “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. 2, p. 323; PCB’s bolding.

huge majority consisting of colonial and dependent countries which are compelled to wage a struggle for liberation from the imperialist yoke.”<sup>14</sup>

Note the clear differences in definition. The UOC(MLM) classifies imperialism as a *globalized mode of production that sweeps away pre-capitalist relations of production*; whereas Comrade Stalin defines it as a **world system of enslavement and national oppression**. According to Stalin, imperialism is not a mode of production that links national economies by a *single process*, but rather converts them into **“links in the same chain.”** In this chain of domination, most of the world’s colonial and semi-colonial countries are bound by imperialist domination. It is a completely revisionist conception that imperialism promotes progress in the countries that it oppresses.

The UOC(MLM) states: *“The tendency of the old bourgeois revolution towards democracy proper was replaced by the tendency towards political reaction all along the line.”* They jump from affirming this Leninist thesis to supporting the revisionist thesis about imperialism’s two tendencies. A meticulous reading of Lenin’s formulations on imperialism inevitably leads one to reject the UOC(MLM)’s hypothesis.

In the end, in addition to what we have already seen, Lenin brilliantly established that imperialism has only one tendency:

“Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system,

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14 J. V. Stalin, “Foundations of Leninism,” *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Moscow, 1953, Vol. 11, pp. 33-34; PCB’s bolding.

**the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction** and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field. Particularly intensified become the yoke of **national oppression** and the striving for annexations, *i.e.*, the **violation of national independence** (for annexation is nothing but the violation of the right of nations to self-determination)."<sup>15</sup>

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15 V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 27, p. 441; PCB's bolding.

## **2. Imperialism Impedes the National Development of the Oppressed Countries**



As we have seen, the UPC(MLM) distorts the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the transformation of *free competition* capitalism into monopoly capitalism at the global level, and attributes a supposed progressive tendency to imperialism. This “progress” occurs on a global scale to the extent that imperialism corresponds to a *single productive process*, and, in the oppressed countries, to the extent that it sweeps away *pre-capitalist modes of production*. It is impossible to ideologically reconcile these positions with the Leninist analysis that imperialism particularly intensifies national oppression. In sum, the export of capital by finance-capital is not progressive for the oppressed countries. Lenin highlighted the **“extreme exacerbation of contradictions”** and **“the tendency towards domination, and not freedom”** as the results of this capital export. This particular condition of imperialism results in an intensification of the national liberation struggle, which becomes an inseparable part of the World Proletarian Revolution; the class struggle of the proletariat assumes an internationalist character, and the proletariat emerges as the sole consistent leader of the national liberation struggle and the democratic struggle as a whole. The International Proletarian Movement and the National Liberation Movement—the former as a guide and the latter as a basis—constitute inseparable aspects of the World Proletarian Revolution and the only progressive tendencies in the imperialist epoch.

But the UOC(MLM), in a manner opposed to Leninism, concludes that the main result of capital export to the oppressed countries is imperialism *sweeping-away pre-capitalist relations of production*, and not the intensification of national oppression and its Siamese twin—the reproduction of

semi-feudal relations of production through the evolution of their forms. They regard the predominance of capitalist relations of production in colonial and semi-colonial countries—which occurs under imperialism—as evidence that they possess the same progressive content that they did under the stage of *free competition*. They incorrectly suggest that capital export results in the subordination of feudalism to capitalism, and that this subordination occurs in the oppressed countries only during the imperialist stage. The export of commodities and the creation of the world market characteristic of the stage of free competition already subordinated slave and feudal relations of production to the capitalist mode of production. They thus confuse predominance with subordination, and draw the conclusion that poor countries in which capitalist relations of production prevail over semi-feudal relations of production are “*oppressed capitalist countries*,” and that the revolution in such countries must be immediately-socialist. For the UOC(MLM), predominance is equal to subordination, and thus, New Democratic Revolution is only applicable to countries in which the capitalist mode of production is subordinated to the feudal mode of production. We ask: Where in the world today is capitalism subordinated to feudalism?

The UOC(MLM) believes that the subordination of pre-capitalist relations of production to the capitalist mode of production occurred as recently as the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The subordination of the slave and feudal modes of production to the capitalist mode of production is in no way a product of imperialism or of capital export. This subordination occurred during the stage of *free competition*, and was part of the development of big industry, the creation of the single capitalist world

market, and the international division of labor. Marx delved into this question in *Capital*:

“...But as soon as people, whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labor, *corvée*-labor, *etc.*, **are drawn into the whirlpool of an international market dominated by the capitalistic mode of production**, the sale of their products for export becoming their principal interest, the civilized horrors of overwork are grafted on the barbaric horrors of slavery, serfdom, etc. Hence the negro labor in the Southern States of the American Union preserved something of a patriarchal character, so long as production was chiefly directed to immediate local consumption. **But in proportion, as the export of cotton became of vital interest to these states**, the over-working of the negro and sometimes the using up of his life in seven years of labor became a factor in a calculated and calculating system. It was no longer a question of obtaining from him a certain quantity of useful products. **It was now a question of production of surplus labor itself...**”<sup>16</sup>

Marx clearly emphasized that the world market arose as a result of big industry, and was **dominated by the capitalist mode of production** from the start. Globally, capitalism is already the dominant mode of production, resulting from its development in the *free competition* stage. The UOC(MLM) leadership, however, distorts the Maoist analysis of Chinese society, and claims that:

“From these three texts and from Mao’s discussions it is clear that 1) a semi-feudal and semi-colonial social-formation is characterized by the limited development of capitalism and by the continued domination of feudal relations of production; **the capitalist mode of production is**

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16 Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, *Editorial Venceremos*, Havana, 1965, pp. 192-93; PCB’s bolding.

**subordinated to the feudal mode of production** and to imperialist domination implemented by the big merchant-usurer bourgeoisie.”<sup>17</sup>

The UOC(MLM) concludes that it is possible that the capitalist mode of production is subordinate to the feudal mode of production under imperialism, and claims that this nonsense can be deduced from the works of Chairman Mao. In *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*, the Great Helmsman stated:

“The foundations of the self-sufficient natural economy of feudal times have been destroyed, but the exploitation of the peasantry by the landlord class, which is the **basis of the system of feudal exploitation**, not only remains intact but, linked as it is with exploitation by comprador and usurer capital, clearly **dominates China's social and economic life**.”<sup>18</sup>

The UOC(MLM) interprets the predominance of *latifundista* exploitation as the subordination of the capitalist mode of production to the feudal mode of production in Chinese society. However, in order to reach this conclusion, they must conceal the fact that the dominant aspect in the process of development of the Chinese nation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was imperialism—specifically, the imperialist powers that divided the Chinese coast amongst themselves over the first two decades, and mainly Japanese imperialism which expanded its colonization of northeastern China, moving

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17 UOC(MLM), *Revista Negación de la Negación* [Negation of the Negation], no. 6, 2022; PCB's bolding.

18 Chairman Mao, “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, Vol. 2, p. 323; PCB's bolding.

towards the south-central regions by the end of the 1930s. In other words, it was not nascent Chinese national-capitalism that destroyed “*the foundations of the natural economy of feudal times,*” but capital exported by imperialism. Thus, feudalism prevailed over national-capitalism and not over imperialist-capitalism, which oppressed, subordinated, and subjugated the Chinese nation. Chairman Mao analyzed China’s social development in *On New Democracy* thus:

“...It is thus clear that in their aggression against China **the imperialist powers** have on the one hand hastened the disintegration of feudal society and the growth of elements of capitalism, thereby **transforming a feudal into a semi-feudal society**, and on the other imposed their ruthless rule on China, **reducing an independent country to a semi-colonial and colonial country.**”<sup>19</sup>

Imperialist aggression against China accelerated the growth of bureaucrat-capitalism; exported capital accelerated the conversion of feudal China into semi-feudal China. However, different from the process of capitalist development characteristic of the *free competition* stage, this evolution of feudalism and this growth of mercantile and capitalist relations did not lead to greater national unification. On the contrary, it turned China from an independent feudal country into a semi-colonial country and then a colonial country.

So, how can the UOC(MLM) speak of the subordination of the capitalist mode of production to the feudal mode of production in China? What occurred was just the opposite: Imperialism subordinated the feudal forces in China; it financed, armed, and led the warlords

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19 This quote actually comes from *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*; PCB’s bolding. – *Trans.*

against the bourgeois-democratic forces, impeding the possibilities for the development of national-capitalism in China. This type of subordination was not particular to Chinese society, but became the general rule under imperialism. Chairman Mao described “*the means of military, political, economic, and cultural oppression*” used by the imperialist powers to gradually transform China into a semi-colony and then into a colony as follows:

“(1) The imperialist powers have waged many **wars of aggression against China...**

(2) The imperialist powers have forced China to sign numerous **unequal treaties...**

(3) ...[T]hey have been able to dump their goods in China, turn her into a market for their industrial products, and at the same time **subordinate her agriculture to their imperialist needs.**

(4) The imperialist powers operate many enterprises in both light and heavy industry in China in order to utilize her **raw materials and cheap labor** on the spot, and they thereby **directly exert economic pressure on China’s national industry and obstruct the development of her productive forces.**

(5) ...[T]hey have also secured a stranglehold on her banking and finance.

(6) The imperialist powers... have created a comprador and merchant-usurer class in their service, so as to facilitate their exploitation of the masses of the Chinese peasantry and other sections of the people.

(7) **The imperialist powers have made the feudal landlord class** as well as the comprador class **the main props of their rule in China...**

(8) The imperialist powers supply the reactionary government with large quantities of munitions and a host of military advisers, in order to keep the warlords fighting among themselves and to suppress the Chinese people.

(9) Furthermore, the imperialist powers have never slackened their efforts to poison the minds of the Chinese people...

(10) Since September 18, 1931, the large-scale invasion of Japanese imperialism has turned a big chunk of semi-colonial China into a Japanese colony."<sup>20</sup>

In the relationship between colonial and semi-colonial domination/exploitation, imperialism is the dominant aspect with regards to the Chinese people and nation. The imperialist powers made the feudal landlord class and the comprador class the *props of their rule in China*. It is, therefore, incorrect to attribute this thesis that, in China, the feudal mode of production was subordinated to the capitalist mode of production, to Chairman Mao. In the examples provided by both Marx—taken from the 19<sup>th</sup> century—and Chairman Mao's 20<sup>th</sup> century analysis of China, the capitalist mode of production was already the dominant aspect of the global economy. In *Capital*, Marx showed how the slave relations of production in the cotton industry in the Southern USA were in service of the production of surplus-value in England. Insofar as they guaranteed cheaper raw materials for the textile industry than English, Indian, or Egyptian *cotton*, the cotton produced by the blood of the Black people enslaved by the Yankees served the greater production of surplus-value for the English bourgeoisie. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, imperialism began not only to bind these different relations of production to its whims, but also began to use all the retrograde forces at its disposal to ensure its domination. This is indispensable to reaping profits from exported capital. Through these methods—*unequal treaties, the*

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20 *Ibid.*; PCB's bolding.

*subordination of agricultural production to the needs of the imperialist powers*, the direct installation of imperialist enterprises that exploit cheap raw material and labor in the oppressed countries—the imperialist countries accrue a much greater profit than was possible under *free competition*. This is why Lenin emphasized increased national oppression as one of the results of imperialism.

The UOC(MLM) distorts Chairman Mao's analysis of Chinese society and equates the prevalence of semi-feudal relations of production with the subordination of the capitalist mode of production to the feudal mode of production because it seeks to present its proposal for [immediately-] socialist revolution in the oppressed countries as if it had a basis in Maoism. Therefore, they present the social formation of semi-feudal, semi-colonial China as if semi-feudalism were the dominant aspect, and as if this domination is the sole basis for New Democratic Revolution. They then deduce that a country in which semi-feudalism is not subordinated to capitalist relations of production requires an immediately-socialist revolution. They thus connect New Democratic Revolution only and exclusively to the sweeping-away of pre-capitalist relations of production, and they pose the national question as a question of socialist revolution.

This argument is faulty for two reasons: 1) Imperialism has not swept away semi-feudal relations of production, it has only evolved their underlying forms while preserving them; 2) New Democratic Revolution is not limited to sweeping away semi-feudalism—its most important international value is that it has fully resolved the question of the transition from national liberation to socialist revolution, since its biggest targets are feudalism



and imperialism. Let's look at how Chairman Mao posed the question for the Chinese Revolution:

“Such are the characteristics of China’s **colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society**. **This situation has in the main been determined by the Japanese and other imperialist forces**; it is the result of the collusion of foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism. The contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation and the contradiction between feudalism and the great masses of the people are the basic contradictions in modern Chinese society... But **the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation is the principal one.**”<sup>21</sup>

Take note of how Chairman Mao, in defining China’s character, always emphasizes the semi-colonial aspect before the semi-feudal aspect; the UOC(MLM), in referring to China, always inverts the concepts, placing the semi-feudal aspect at the forefront in order to falsely claim that this was the one and only determining characteristic of Chinese society. The struggle to destroy the *latifundio* in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is of decisive importance precisely because this class constitutes imperialism’s main prop, and is the most backward class. It is possible to unify the majority of the country’s social classes against it in a broad, revolutionary united front of the proletariat, the entire peasantry (poor, middle, and rich peasants), the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and even the middle (national) bourgeoisie, under certain conditions. Only when an imperialist invasion occurs does it become possible to establish an even more broad united front of revolutionary classes under the leadership of the Party of the proletariat. In sum, the contradiction with semi-

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21 *Ibid.*; PCB’s bolding.

feudalism is, in general, the main contradiction during the beginning stages of the New Democratic Revolution, but it is by no means the sole contradiction that is to be resolved by such a revolution.

In the early 1940s, Chairman Mao emphasized that the targets of the New Democratic Revolution in China were imperialism and feudalism. From the mid-1940s onwards, particularly during the Third Revolutionary Civil War (1947-1949), it took aim at three targets: imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism.

**“At present our chief enemies are imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, while the main forces in our struggle against these enemies are the people engaged in manual and mental labor, who make up 90 per cent of the country’s population. And this determines that our revolution at the present stage is a new-democratic, a people’s democratic revolution in character and is different from a socialist revolution such as the October Revolution.”**<sup>22</sup>

This clarification of Chairman Mao’s position is the result of the ideological development of Maoism itself, reflecting transformations throughout China and the world during and after World War II. The development of industrial production in the oppressed countries is a trend present throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which alternated between periods of growth and retrogression. As a result of capital export itself—as we saw in Chairman Mao’s analysis above—imperialism succeeded in installing companies in its colonies and semi-colonies in order to more easily exploit their raw materials and to super-exploit the labor force present there. However,

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22 Chairman Mao, “On the Question of the National Bourgeoisie and the Enlightened Gentry,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 4, p. 214; PCB’s bolding.

because of inter-imperialist contradictions (particularly during World War I and World War II), the contradiction between socialism and capitalism, the contradiction between the oppressed nations/peoples and imperialism, and the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie at the global level, imperialism was forced to intertwine with big local capital in the oppressed countries to develop capitalist enterprise in the semi-colonies. Due to its economic weakness, big semi-colonial capital mainly had to use the State to intertwine with imperialist finance-capital. Bureaucrat-capitalism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries emerged as non-State-monopoly capitalism, but, as it developed, it began to use the old State machinery and became State-monopoly capitalism—State in form, but private in content, produced by (and linked to) imperialism—resulting in the differentiation of two factions of the big bourgeoisie—the comprador faction (the first form of the big bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries), and the bureaucrat faction. In China, this process intensified after 1945 with the defeat and expulsion of Japanese imperialism, a period during which Chiang Kai-shek, as the leader of the old State machine, promoted this State-monopoly capitalism using Yankee finance-capital. This process did not occur only in China. It occurred as an immediate result of the advent of imperialism in all the backward, colonial, or semi-colonial countries of different imperialist powers—a phenomenon that became the norm during the monopoly stage of capital. Class struggle throughout this process and two-line struggle in Marxism led by Lenin, Stalin, and Chairman Mao in succession resulted in the development of the theory of New Democratic Revolution in China, whose targets that are to be destroyed and uprooted are feudalism,

imperialism, and bureaucrat-capitalism—the three mountains that exploit and oppress the masses of people and which subjugate the nation.

To reduce New Democratic Revolution to the sweeping-away of feudalism is to reduce it to agrarian revolution, which would be a falsification of Maoism. To claim that imperialism, allied to the bourgeois-landowner dictatorships in the semi-colonies, can solve the agrarian and peasant problems is an expression of the most infantile revisionist illusions about imperialism and the big bourgeoisie. Finally, as Chairman Mao emphasized:

“[The road to a capitalist society under bourgeois dictatorship] is blocked. In its fundamentals, the present international situation is one of a struggle between capitalism and socialism, in which capitalism is on the downgrade and socialism on the upgrade. In the first place international capitalism, or **imperialism, will not permit the establishment in China of a capitalist society under bourgeois dictatorship.** Indeed the history of modern China is a history of imperialist aggression, of **imperialist opposition to China's independence and to her development of capitalism...** True enough, this is the period of the final struggle of dying imperialism—imperialism is “moribund capitalism.” But just because it is dying, it is all the **more dependent on colonies and semi-colonies for survival and will certainly not allow any colony or semi-colony to establish anything like a capitalist society under the dictatorship of its own bourgeoisie.** Just because Japanese imperialism is bogged down in serious economic and political crises, just because it is dying, it must invade China and reduce her to a colony, thereby blocking the road to bourgeois dictatorship and national capitalism in China.”<sup>23</sup>

The UOC(MLM) leadership goes against these conclusions of Chairman Mao, but they do not say so

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23 Chairman Mao, “On New Democracy,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 2, p. 369; PCB’s bolding.

openly. They prefer to conceal their deviation in order to present as Maoist their theory that some of the countries oppressed by imperialism developed into capitalist societies with bourgeois-dictatorships in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of imperialism's "progressive" tendency. Maoism says the opposite: That imperialism blocked the road to the national development of the oppressed countries. As Lenin said: **"...the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression..."**<sup>24</sup> The UOC(MLM)'s position that imperialism sweeps away pre-capitalist modes of production and forms oppressed capitalist countries has nothing in common with Leninism, nor Maoism.

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24 V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 27, p. 429; PCB's bolding.

### **3. Trotskyist Analysis of the Bourgeoisie in the Oppressed Countries**

Nothing is easier than criticizing the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries in general—an economically-weak, politically-vacillating bourgeoisie who are incapable of leading their own bourgeois revolution, who are conciliatory with imperialism and the *latifundio*, who are scared of proletarian revolution, and who are weak-willed in their support for the peasants' struggle for land. All of these descriptions are true. Nevertheless, as a rule, the more haughty and sweeping the criticisms of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, the more superficial the class analysis of those societies. The history of the proletarian revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the oppressed countries, proves the danger of looking at the bourgeoisie throughout the world, and even in any given country, as if they are a single bloc with no internal differences.

For example, the UOC(MLM) claims that "*It is incorrect to assert the existence of a national bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries across the board and without analyzing the class structure.*" They claim this because they believe that in such oppressed capitalist countries there exist no national bourgeoisie, that there is only the local section of the global bourgeoisie; there are no bourgeois lackeys, but an international association of the bourgeoisie that oppress the proletariat of all countries. According to the UOC(MLM):

“...the economic independence of the country contradicts its class interests... But **it is not simply an employee of imperialist capitalist business**, it is a partner and participant in the global system of imperialism... [the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries] *accrue a rate of*

*profit equal to that of the bourgeoisie of other countries...*<sup>25</sup>

They turn everything upside down and simply do not consider the existence of a vast stratum of petty- and middle-bourgeoisie who exploit the proletariat in the oppressed countries, but who are simultaneously in contradiction with imperialism and the big bourgeoisie of such countries. In their program. They do not even distinguish between the Colombian big bourgeoisie and middle-bourgeoisie. For the UOC(MLM), there is only *the bourgeoisie*, who is a partner and participant in the unified global society of the bourgeoisie. All this “anti-bourgeois” discourse may sound revolutionary and “leftist,” but it is far from scientific, since it does not correspond in any way to a concrete analysis of the concrete situation of the oppressed countries of the world, particularly of Latin America.

The existence of the intermediate stratum, of these smallholders who exploit wage-labor but who simultaneously work in their own “businesses” is plain as day in Latin America. The enormous services sector in all these economies, in large part due to small and middle proprietors, is a patent expression of this reality. To ignore them, to classify them only as proletarian-proprietors or as the big bourgeoisie, only flips the issue on its head instead of solving it. This is a very important group which has become a breeding ground for fascist ideas just as has happened throughout history, and it is necessary for Communists to dispute this and present a program appropriate for the character of the revolution

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25 UOC(MLM), *Revista Contradicción* [Contradiction Magazine], no. 12, 1993; PCB's bolding.



necessary for the transformation of these societies. When discussing this question, Lenin affirmed:

“What is Martynov’s muddle-headedness due to? To the fact that he confounds democratic revolution with socialist revolution; that he **overlooks the role of the intermediate stratum** of the people lying between the ‘bourgeoisie’ and the ‘proletariat’ (the petty-bourgeois masses of the urban and rural poor, the ‘semi-proletarians,’ the semi-proprietors); **and that he fails to understand the true meaning of our minimum program.**”<sup>26</sup>

The UOC(MLM) mentions the semi-proletarians and smallholders, but completely ignores the rest of the intermediate stratum and completely disregards the need for a minimum program for the revolution, that is, for a *New Democratic program*. In Russia, the liberal bourgeoisie was reactionary across the board. That is why the Leninist tactic established in 1905 was to wage a bourgeois revolution against the bourgeoisie. However, this condition is different from that of the oppressed countries, where the local bourgeoisie have certain particularities that differentiate them from the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries. Stalin dealt with this question in the decisive debates against Trotskyism in the Communist International’s line towards the Chinese Revolution in the 1920s:

“The principal error of the opposition is that it identifies the 1905 Revolution in Russia, an imperialist country which oppressed other nations, with the revolution in China, an oppressed, semi-colonial country, which is compelled to fight imperialist oppression on the part of other

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26 V. I. Lenin, “Social-Democracy and the Provisional Revolutionary Government,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 10, p. 13; PCB’s bolding.

states. Here in Russia, in 1905, **the revolution was directed against the bourgeoisie, against the liberal bourgeoisie, in spite of the fact that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution.** Why? Because the liberal bourgeoisie of an imperialist country is **bound to be counter-revolutionary.** For that very reason among the Bolsheviks at that time there was not, and could not be, any question of temporary blocs and agreements with the liberal bourgeoisie."<sup>27</sup>

And, in establishing the directives for the general line of the revolution in the oppressed countries, Comrade Stalin framed the question this way:

“Revolution in imperialist countries is one thing: there the bourgeoisie is the oppressor of other nations; there it is counter-revolutionary at all stages of the revolution; there the national factor, as a factor in the struggle for emancipation, is absent. Revolution in colonial and dependent countries is another thing: **there the imperialist oppression by other states is one of the factors of the revolution;** there this oppression cannot but affect the national bourgeoisie also; there the national bourgeoisie, **at a certain stage and for a certain period, may support the revolutionary movement of its country against imperialism;** there the national factor, as a factor in the struggle for emancipation, is a revolutionary factor. To fail to draw this distinction, to fail to understand this difference and to identify revolution in imperialist countries with revolution in colonial countries, is to depart from the path of Marxism, from the path of Leninism, to take the path of the supporters of the Second International.”<sup>28</sup>

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27 J. V. Stalin, “Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.),” *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Moscow, 1953, Vol. 10, p. 5; PCB’s bolding.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 4; PCB’s bolding.

The founding Parties and organizations of the ICL follow the path of the Communist International, with the great developments of Maoism. We therefore defend the universality of New Democratic Revolution for the oppressed countries. The main international task of these revolutions is to defeat imperialism imposed upon the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It was Chairman Mao who, in applying the line of the Communist International for the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries, and in leading the first victorious revolution in such a country, fully developed this theory, establishing the definition of New Democratic Revolution. Maoism has developed the understanding of the particularities of the bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries, drawing a distinction between the big bourgeoisie and the middle-bourgeoisie. Part of the big bourgeoisie—a lackey of imperialism—can turn on a certain imperialist power, like Chiang Kai-shek in the Anti-Japanese War; but it can never rebel against imperialism as a whole. The middle-bourgeoisie or genuine national bourgeoisie, on the other hand, shares contradictions with both the big bourgeoisie and imperialism, since both restrict their profits and are both monopolist bourgeoisies. The imperialist bourgeoisie has imposed itself owing to the magnitude of its capital and under the condition that its States politically and militarily dominate the oppressed peoples and nations; the big bourgeoisie of the colonial and semi-colonial countries—in addition to their powerful capital—dominate and control the State machinery of their respective countries. As monopolist bourgeoisies, they reap superprofits from the superexploitation of the proletariat, but also from the restriction and limiting of the middle-bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie's rates of

profit. This is the economic basis of the national bourgeoisie's contradiction with imperialism. However, this same national bourgeoisie, though they suffer from unequal competition with imported goods on the national market, also depends on the big bourgeoisie and imperialism itself for the sale of part of their goods and services. They depend in many ways on both, and it is because of this contradiction with the proletariat that they fear proletarian revolution. For this reason, the national bourgeoisie invariably vacillates, and the proletariat should not rely on them as a dependable ally. But it is indispensable for the proletariat to establish a minimum program that considers the national bourgeoisie's interests, particularly guaranteeing their property and a market for their merchandise, in this way seeking to unite the most forces to defeat semi-feudalism and imperialism. Applying Comrade Stalin's line, Chairman Mao noted:

“Being a bourgeoisie in a colonial and semi-colonial country and oppressed by imperialism, the Chinese national bourgeoisie retains a certain revolutionary quality at certain periods and to a certain degree—**even in the era of imperialism**—in its opposition to the foreign imperialists and the domestic governments of bureaucrats and warlords (instances of opposition to the latter can be found in the periods of the Revolution of 1911 and the Northern Expedition), and it may ally itself with the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie against such enemies as it is ready to oppose. In this respect the Chinese bourgeoisie differs from the bourgeoisie of old tsarist Russia. Since tsarist Russia was a military-feudal imperialism which carried on aggression against other countries, the Russian bourgeoisie was entirely lacking in revolutionary quality. There, the task of the proletariat was to oppose the bourgeoisie, not to unite with it. But China's national bourgeoisie has a revolutionary quality at certain periods and to a certain degree, because

China is a colonial and semi-colonial country which is a victim of aggression. Here, **the task of the proletariat is to form a united front with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism and the bureaucrat and warlord governments without overlooking its revolutionary quality.**<sup>29</sup>

And he developed the position of the Communist International by clearly distinguishing between the national bourgeoisie and the big bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries:

“At the same time, however, being a bourgeois class in a colonial and semi-colonial country and so being extremely flabby economically and politically, the Chinese national bourgeoisie also has another quality, namely, a **proneness to conciliation with the enemies of the revolution.** Even when it takes part in the revolution, it is unwilling to break with imperialism completely and, moreover, it is closely associated with the exploitation of the rural areas through land rent; thus it is neither willing nor able to overthrow imperialism, and much less the feudal forces, in a thorough way. So neither of the two basic problems or tasks of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution can be solved or accomplished by the national bourgeoisie. **As for China's big bourgeoisie, which is represented by the Kuomintang, all through the long period from 1927 to 1937 it nestled in the arms of the imperialists and formed an alliance with the feudal forces** against the revolutionary people.”<sup>30</sup>

Chairman Mao thus concluded that the national bourgeoisie, to an extent, possesses a revolutionary character, but, at the same time, tends to conciliate with enemies of the revolution. The big bourgeoisie, on the other hand, embraces imperialism with open arms and

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29 Chairman Mao, “On New Democracy,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 2, p. 362-363; PCB’s bolding.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 363; PCB’s bolding.

allies itself with the feudal forces against the people. The New Democratic Revolution targets the big bourgeoisie—bureaucrat-capitalism—but preserves the private property of the middle- and petty-bourgeoisie, as well as their other rights. This was well-established by Chairman Mao with the Six Laws of the United Front. This is the Maoist development of the analysis of the social classes in the oppressed countries, particularly of the bourgeoisie and its factions.

According to the UOC(MLM), there is only the bourgeoisie in general in these *oppressed capitalist countries*, and it has allied so closely with the imperialist bourgeoisie that it has become a member of the international association of the bourgeoisie and shares its rate of profit. Moreover, they state that there only exists the monopoly-bourgeoisie, whether local or foreign, and that, in the case of some of these countries, both are imperialist. With regards to Colombia, they state:

**“The so-called national bourgeoisie not only does not exist in modern Colombian society, but those who serve as its spokespeople are, in reality, the extinguishers of the class struggle and shameless conciliators with the hated enemies of the people.”**<sup>31</sup>

They claim that the national bourgeoisie does not exist in Colombia, yet that the supposed representatives of this non-existent class conciliate with the enemies of the people. Conciliation with the enemies of the people is typical of the national-bourgeoisie. But this does not negate the revolutionary role that they can play,

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31 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

particularly during periods of direct imperialist aggression towards national territory, either because of the development of the revolution in that country or the accentuation of inter-imperialist contradictions.

Proletarian revolution in the oppressed countries requires the New Democratic stage. The outstanding bourgeois-democratic tasks in such countries, in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, can only be accomplished by the democratic revolution of a new type—that is, led by the proletariat in uninterrupted transition to socialism. To rail against the importance of the peasantry's struggle for land, to rail against the importance of neutralizing the intermediate stratum of the national bourgeoisie (particularly during the national liberation stage), is to reject Maoism and adopt the rotten Trotskyist program for the colonial and semi-colonial countries:

“With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, **the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat** as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.”<sup>32</sup>

This is the fake leftist position appropriated by Trotsky, of solving the democratic, national, and peasant questions immediately by the proletarian dictatorship. The UOC(MLM)'s characterization of the national bourgeoisie smacks of this same essence.

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32 Leon Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, Sedov, 1985, p. 96; PCB's bolding.

#### **4. New Democratic Revolution and the National Question**



The UOC(MLM)'s defense of immediate socialist revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries obeys the following logic: **major premise:** as a result of the *progressive tendency* of imperialism to "*sweep away pre-capitalist modes of production,*" there have arisen "*oppressed capitalist countries*" across the world; **minor premise:** New Democratic Revolution seeks to eliminate semi-feudalism, **therefore:** the revolution in the "*oppressed capitalist countries*" must be immediately-socialist. Both the premises and the conclusion drawn from this theory are totally false. First of all, there is no progressive tendency of imperialism. As Chairman Mao said, the objective of the imperialist powers' export of capital is not to develop capitalism, but to colonially subjugate the oppressed countries. Second, the theory of New Democratic Revolution seeks to destroy imperialist domination, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism. Therefore, even if, hypothetically, semi-feudalism does not exist in a given semi-colonial country, its revolution must necessarily be a New Democratic Revolution in uninterrupted transition to socialism because it is oppressed by imperialism. This revolution invariably entails a civil war waged against the big bourgeoisie and the *latifundio*, as well as a national war against imperialist domination.

But the UOC(MLM) has a completely distorted perception of the content of New Democratic Revolution. In addition to reducing its objectives exclusively to agrarian revolution, they claim that one of the objectives of such a revolution is to "*develop capitalism,*" as opposed to "*socialist revolution,*" whose objective is to "*abolish capitalism.*" Furthermore, they eliminate the national liberation character of such "*oppressed capitalist countries,*" counterposing a "*socialist anti-*

*imperialism*” to the democratic struggle for the national sovereignty of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The question is posed like this in their *Program*:

“The revolutionary anti-imperialist movement in the oppressed capitalist countries in this period has **ceased to be a bourgeois-democratic liberation movement and has become socialist...** To consider that, even in these countries, the anti-imperialist revolutionary movement is democratic in content **that does not conflict with the national basis of capitalist power, but instead favors its development,** and, as such, **requires a stage before socialist revolution,** treats the issue **in a like manner to a semi-feudal country.**”<sup>33</sup>

In other words, according to the UOC(MLM), in a *semi-feudal country*, the democratic stage prior to the socialist stage is justified. In such a case, the anti-imperialist movement of the revolution is a *bourgeois-democratic liberation movement*, and, therefore, it does not conflict with the *national basis of the power of capital*, but rather *favors its development*. How can an organization that claims to be Maoist present the content of New Democratic Revolution, developed by Chairman Mao, in this way? How can they sum up the meaning of the democratic stage of the socialist revolution as formulated by the Great Lenin in such a way? This is no more than a cheap trick to justify the old Trotskyist “theory” of “permanent revolution” in the oppressed countries.

According to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, national liberation is a bourgeois-democratic demand that had been abandoned by the bourgeoisie of the advanced countries by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and which, since

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33 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the national bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries have themselves been unable to sustain. It was the advent of imperialism, the passage of capital to its monopolistic and ultimate stage, which signaled the end of the era of the World Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution and which rang in the era of the World Proletarian Revolution, already underway with the Great October Socialist Revolution and the passage of the bourgeoisie, as a historical social class, into the arms of counterrevolution. But, even if the democratic revolution is a bourgeois revolution, it becomes a bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type, or a New Democratic Revolution in uninterrupted transition to socialist revolution when it is led by the proletariat and supported by the worker-peasant alliance. Consequently, the national liberation struggle transcends its bourgeois content, it is no longer narrow-nationalist but internationalist in content, since it struggles against the national oppression of all people, not just of its own people. It thus assumes a proletarian content and not a bourgeois-nationalist content, and becomes part of the World Proletarian Revolution.

Although New Democratic Revolution clears the path for the development of capitalism by destroying feudalism, imperialism, and bureaucrat-capitalism in the country in question, destroys monopoly ownership of the means of production, and enables the growth of small and medium property, the development of capitalism is not an objective of the democratic revolution of a new type, since it is takes place under the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary classes led by the proletariat. Finally, the objective of the New Democratic Revolution is to transition **uninterruptedly to socialist revolution**; to establish the proletarian dictatorship and promote

socialist construction; this is the principal task and objective of the New Democratic Revolution. Let's take a look at how Chairman Mao addressed the issue:

**“Although such a revolution in a colonial and semi-colonial country** is still fundamentally bourgeois-democratic in its social character during its first stage or first step, and although **its objective mission is to clear the path for the development of capitalism**, it is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and a state under bourgeois dictatorship. It belongs to the new type of revolution led by the proletariat with the aim, in the first stage, of establishing a new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes. **Thus this revolution actually serves the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism.** In the course of its progress, there may be a number of further sub-stages, because of changes on the enemy's side and within the ranks of our allies, but the **fundamental character of the revolution remains unchanged.** Such a revolution attacks imperialism at its very roots, and is therefore not tolerated but opposed by imperialism. However, it is favored by socialism and supported by the land of socialism and the socialist international proletariat.”<sup>34</sup>

Chairman Mao is crystal clear: The objectives of the first stage of the revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is to *clear the path for the development of capitalism*. This is an inevitable tendency, but it does not, in any way, constitute the content of this stage, because it is no longer a bourgeois revolution of the old type. The objective of the democratic stage of the revolution is, therefore, *to clear the path for the development of socialism*. New

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34 Chairman Mao, “On New Democracy,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 2, p. 358; PCB's bolding.

Democratic Revolution is composed of stages, but its *fundamental character remains unchanged*. What is this character? It is proletarian. That is why imperialism does not tolerate it, but struggles against it. To claim that the objective of New Democratic Revolution is the development of capitalism is to find common ground with Liu Shao-chi's rotten falsification of the democratic revolution and China. It is to find common ground with the rightism into which so many Communist Parties in the oppressed countries have sunk when they claim that the objective of the democratic revolution is to develop capitalism in general, and that the objective of the agrarian revolution is to develop capitalism in the countryside in particular; Parties which, in their putrefaction brought on by the collapse of the revisionist and social-imperialist USSR, would go on to conclude that the character of the revolution in their countries is immediately-socialist, since they are now dependent capitalist countries.

In his *Speech at a Conference of Cadres in the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area* (1948), Chairman Mao states that the New Democratic Revolution is a "*revolution against imperialism, feudalism, and **bureaucrat-capitalism**, waged by the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat.*"<sup>85</sup> In other words, during the democratic stage, in addition to the confiscation of land from the landowners and its distribution to the poor peasantry with little or no land, all imperialist and bureaucratic capital is also expropriated, all the imperialist industries, as well as those of the big local bourgeoisie, become

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35 Chairman Mao, "Speech at a Conference of Cadres in the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area," *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 4, p. 247; PCB's bolding.

property of the New Democratic State. That is, it socializes the most critical part of the country's industry, transportation, big commercial enterprises, services, and banks, and foreign businesses. In view of all this, how, then, can the UOC(MLM) claim that New Democratic Revolution "*does not conflict with the national basis of capitalist power*"? This is an unacceptable lie, it is a crude rejection of one of the fundamental theories of Maoism, which solved the problems of revolution for the vast majority of the world's countries, for the vast majority of people on earth! What about that [rejection] is Maoist?

Indeed, after completely distorting the Maoist content of New Democratic Revolution, the UOC(MLM) concludes that this is the means with which to resolve the national question "*in a like manner to a semi-feudal country.*" Here, the UOC(MLM) reinforce their conception that New Democratic Revolution is only valid insofar as semi-feudalism is concerned, thereby completely disregarding national oppression and the national liberation struggle as a bourgeois-democratic task. The above quotation proves that this point of view is false, as Chairman Mao specifies the necessity of a "*first stage of first step*" in the "***revolution in a colonial and semi-colonial country.***" Chairman Mao emphasized imperialist oppression, rather than feudal oppression, as the issue that distinguishes New Democratic Revolution from socialist revolution.

In this way, the UOC(MLM) completely mixes up bourgeois revolution and agrarian-peasant revolution, and completely disregards the fact that the struggles against national oppression and bureaucrat-capitalism are democratic tasks fulfilled during the first stage of the socialist revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial

countries. Lenin confronted this same delusion in two-line struggle against the Mensheviks after the Russian Revolution of 1905:

**Every peasant revolution directed against medievalism, when the whole of the social economy is of a capitalist nature, is a bourgeois revolution. But not every bourgeois revolution is a peasant revolution...** In other words, there can be a bourgeois country without a peasantry, and there can be a bourgeois revolution in such a country without a peasantry. A bourgeois revolution may take place in a country with a considerable peasant population and yet not be a peasant revolution; that is to say, it is a revolution which does not revolutionize the agrarian relations that especially affect the peasantry, and does not bring the peasantry to the fore as a social force that is at all active in creating the revolution... **The principal source of the error in the tactical line pursued by Plekhanov and his Menshevik followers during the first period of the Russian revolution (i. e., during 1905-07) is their complete failure to understand this correlation between bourgeois revolution in general, and a peasant bourgeois revolution.**<sup>36</sup>

Because of its social characteristics, New Democratic Revolution is a bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type; *i. e.*, it carries out necessary democratic tasks under the leadership of the proletariat, which establishes its hegemony by allying with the peasantry through its proletarian agrarian program, before passing uninterruptedly to socialist revolution and construction. The peasant revolution is one of its most important tasks, but it is not the only one. Representing the democratic revolution as a peasant revolution is nothing more than sophism on the part of the

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36 V. I. Lenin, "The Agrarian Program of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907," *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 16, p. 350-51; PCB's bolding.

UOC(MLM), which it uses to appropriate Maoism and to substantiate the old thesis of immediately-socialist revolution in the oppressed countries. Lenin is abundantly clear in his historical analysis: The current peasant revolutions are, necessarily, bourgeois revolutions—for the right to individual and private landownership constitutes the essence of the peasant struggle. Therefore, not every bourgeois revolution is necessarily a peasant revolution; and a given revolution does not shed its bourgeois character just because it lacks the participation of the peasantry. The same is true of national liberation revolutions, which do not shed their bourgeois-democratic character just because the peasantry may, hypothetically, no longer exist in an oppressed country. This is because, under the imperialist stage of capitalism, national liberation remains a bourgeois task which can only be carried through to victory under proletarian leadership, passing uninterruptedly to socialism.

The UOC(MLM) leadership seeks to absolutely equate the anti-imperialist struggle with the national liberation struggle. The entire International Proletarian Movement is anti-imperialist, because, under the stage of monopoly-capitalism, the struggle against capitalism is the struggle against imperialism. The particularity of this struggle in the oppressed countries is such that the anti-imperialist struggle assumes a democratic, national liberation character. But, according to the UOC(MLM), this conception is “unscientific”:

“The problem lies in how to scientifically understand the relationship between the struggle against foreign imperialism and the struggle for socialism in an oppressed country... And, in this case, in which the proletariat has its sights set directly on socialism, **the struggle against imperialism** fully aligns with the general internationalist



character of the proletarian struggles, thus **ceasing to be a democratic struggle in defense of the bourgeois nation** and becoming an anti-capitalist struggle to sweep imperialism from the face of the earth.”<sup>37</sup>

In other words, according to the UOC(MLM) leadership, in the course of the struggle for socialism in an oppressed country, the struggle against imperialism ceases to be a national-democratic struggle and becomes solely a social-struggle between labor and capital, between the workers (allying themselves with the poor peasantry, at most) and the global bourgeoisie. This has nothing to do with either Leninism or Maoism. As the Great Lenin said:

“Every war is a continuation of politics by other means. The national liberation politics of the colonies will inevitably be continued by **national wars** of the colonies against imperialism.”<sup>38</sup>

And:

“Whoever expects a **‘pure’ social revolution will never live to see it.** Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.”<sup>39</sup>

According to Leninism, no revolution will be socially “pure,” consisting of one social class versus against another social class. According to Lenin, he revolutions against imperialism that unfold in the colonies are, by their very character, inevitably, national

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37 UOC(MLM), *Revista Contradicción* [Contradiction Magazine], no. 7; PCB’s bolding.

38 V. I. Lenin, “The Junius Pamphlet,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 30, pp. 6-7; PCB’s bolding.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 56, PCB’s bolding.

revolutions, and, by their political content, bourgeois revolutions—but of a new type, of a New Democratic type, as Chairman Mao explained. The anti-imperialist struggle in the oppressed countries, therefore, has a social character, with the revolutionary classes consisting of: the proletariat—the leading force, the peasantry—the main ally, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and, under certain circumstances, the national—or middle—bourgeoisie. It has a national character, because it is the struggle of an oppressed nation against an oppressive power. And it has a bourgeois political character, because defense of the nation is an outstanding bourgeois task, which does not suppress the private ownership of the means of production as a whole, but only that of the big local and foreign monopolist-bourgeoisie, since it concentrated the private property of the basic means of production. Thus, the proletarian revolution is invariably internationalist. Lenin stated the following with regards to the democratic content of the national liberation struggle under the imperialist era:

“The **undeveloped countries** are a different matter. They embrace the whole of Eastern Europe and **all the colonies and semi-colonies**... In those areas, as a rule, there still exist oppressed and capitalistically undeveloped nations. Objectively, these nations still have general national tasks to accomplish, namely, **democratic tasks, the tasks of overthrowing foreign oppression.**”<sup>40</sup>

Thus, in the oppressed nations, the anti-imperialist struggle cannot be reduced to a social struggle, for it is in this struggle that democratic and national elements—

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40 V. I. Lenin, “A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 30, p. 117; PCB’s bolding.

indispensable for the victory of the revolution—converge. To toss out these elements is to lead the proletariat to defeat. The differences and similarities between revolutionary civil war and national revolutionary war were brilliantly addressed by Chairman Mao in developing Protracted People's War for New Democratic Revolution in uninterrupted transition to socialism in China:

“The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries. But while the principle remains the same, its application by the party of the proletariat finds expression in varying ways according to the varying conditions. Internally, **capitalist countries** practice bourgeois democracy (not feudalism) when they are not fascist or not at war; in their external relations, **they are not oppressed by, but themselves oppress, other nations...** China is different however. **The characteristics of China are that she is not independent and democratic but semi-colonial and semi-feudal**, that internally she has no democracy but is under feudal oppression... Basically, the task of the Communist Party here is not to go through a long period of legal struggle before launching insurrection and war, and not to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but the reverse. When imperialism is not making armed attacks on our country, the Chinese Communist Party **either wages civil war** jointly with the bourgeoisie against the warlords (lackeys of imperialism), as in 1924-27 in the wars in Kwangtung Province and the Northern Expedition, or **unites with the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie to wage civil war against the landlord class and the comprador bourgeoisie** (also lackeys of imperialism), as in the War of Agrarian Revolution of 1927-36. When imperialism launches armed attacks on China, the Party unites all classes and strata in the country opposing the foreign aggressors to **wage a national war** against the

foreign enemy, as it is doing in the present War of Resistance Against Japan.”<sup>41</sup>

One of Chairman Mao's greatest contributions to the military theory of the proletariat lies his discovery of the particularities of the proletarian revolution in the oppressed countries, which develops either as a revolutionary civil war or as a national revolutionary war. In other words, in the course of the different stages of this revolution, the conditions of war change according to whether the main contradiction is a civil war or a national war. In the case of the Chinese Revolution: During the First Revolutionary Civil War (1924-1927), the proletariat and the poor peasantry allied with the urban petty-bourgeoisie in the struggle against the northern warlords and imperialist domination; in the Second Revolutionary Civil War (1927-1936), the proletariat allied only with the peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeoisie in the struggle against the landowners; in the War of National Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945), the proletariat allied with all the classes and social strata that opposed the occupation of Japanese imperialism.

Chairman Mao emphasized that understanding these changes in the characteristics of the revolutionary war is fundamental to its correct direction. It shows how the laws of war are modified as the characteristics of the revolutionary war change, *i.e.*, whether it is a civil war or a national war:

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41 Chairman Mao, "Problems of War and Strategy," *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 2, pp. 226-27; PCB's bolding.

**“Thus the different laws for directing different wars are determined by the different circumstances of those wars—differences in their time, place and nature. As regards the time factor, both war and its laws develop; each historical stage has its special characteristics, and hence the laws of war in each historical stage have their special characteristics and cannot be mechanically applied in another stage.”**<sup>42</sup>

Thus, Chairman Mao emphasized the modification of the laws of revolutionary warfare in accordance with its status as a civil war or a national war:

“‘In China the armed revolution is fighting the armed counterrevolution. That is one of the specific features and one of the advantages of the Chinese revolution.’ This thesis of Comrade Stalin’s is perfectly correct and is equally valid for the Northern Expedition, the War of Agrarian Revolution, and the present War of Resistance Against Japan. They are all revolutionary wars; all directed against counter-revolutionaries and all waged mainly by the revolutionary people, differing only in the sense that a civil war differs from a national war, and that a war conducted by the Communist Party differs from a war it conducts jointly with the Kuomintang. Of course, these differences are important. They indicate the breadth of the main forces in the war (an alliance of the workers and peasants, or of the workers, peasants and bourgeoisie) and whether our antagonist in the war is internal or external (whether the war is against domestic or foreign foes, and, if domestic, whether against the Northern warlords or against the Kuomintang); they also indicate that the content of China’s revolutionary war differs at different stages of its history. But all these wars are instances of armed revolution fighting armed counterrevolution, they are all revolutionary wars, and all exhibit the specific features and advantages of the Chinese revolution... The main task of the party of the Chinese

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42 Chairman Mao, “Problems of Strategy in China’s Revolutionary War,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 1, p. 196; PCB’s bolding.

proletariat, a task confronting it almost from its very inception, has been to unite with as many allies as possible and, according to the circumstances, to organize armed struggles for national and social liberation against armed counterrevolution, whether internal or external.”<sup>43</sup>

Chairman Mao correctly emphasized the decisive importance of accounting for differences in the content of the revolutionary war in its various stages. He pointed out how both civil and national war led by the Communist Party are identified as revolutionary wars, but present great differences in terms of the extent of the revolutionary forces and in terms of the objectives against which each of these types of revolutionary wars are directed. Finally, shortly before the outbreak of the War of National Resistance Against Japan, Chairman Mao stated:

“It was largely owing to the organized, armed masses of the people that the weak and small force of the Chinese Red Army was able to win many battles in the period of the Agrarian Revolutionary War. Logically, **a national war should win broader mass support than an agrarian revolutionary war...**”<sup>44</sup>

One of the particularities of People’s War in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is its development throughout its different stages as either a revolutionary civil war or a national revolutionary war. The laws of revolutionary war are modified from one stage to the next, since the objectives and forces in struggle are likewise modified. National revolutionary war allows for

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43 *Ibid.*, p. 228; PCB’s bolding [Actually from “Problems of War and Strategy.” — *Trans.*

44 Chairman Mao, “On Protracted War,” *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Vol. 2, p. 171; PCB’s bolding.

the unity of greater forces and greater popular support than the internal civil war. These are all great contributions to the international proletariat made by Maoism. But the UOC(MLM) belittles this entire ideological development when it says:

“No matter the particularities, the capitalist character of a society of an oppressed country demands an anti-imperialist movement, not in a separate stage...”

And:

“Neither nationalism, nor jingoism, nor national sovereignty are flags of the workers’ movement; on the contrary, they are the old and worn out flags of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie.”<sup>45</sup>

In denying the stages of the process of development of the revolutionary war in the oppressed countries, the UOC(MLM) leadership uncovers only its own misrepresentation of the law of contradiction. As Chairman Mao stated: Every process of development of a thing has stages. By melding together qualitatively distinct stages of Protracted People’s War, the UOC(MLM) applies the rotten philosophy of “two combines into one,” characteristic of Prachanda. In denying the necessity of revolutionary national war for the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the UOC(MLM) repeats the rotten theory of “national nihilism” as advocated by the revisionist Avakian. By lashing out against the flag of national sovereignty, accusing it of being a “worn out bourgeois flag,” they express only the

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45 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

sterile, petty-bourgeois, and infantile “left” opportunism characteristic of Trotskyism. It is clear that the flag of national sovereignty is a bourgeois flag, but it was nevertheless abandoned by the bourgeoisie with the ascension of imperialism, and it thus falls to the proletariat to pick it up and consistently lead the national liberation movement. Therefore, it is not a worn out flag; it is the order of the day and indispensable for the advancement of the World Proletarian Revolution. As stated by the Great Lenin:

“Characterizing the approach of the world social revolution in the Party Program we adopted last March, we said that **the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism.** That is confirmed by the course of the revolution, and will be more and more confirmed as time goes on.”<sup>46</sup>

In conclusion, Lenin’s words completely refute the petty-bourgeois arrogance of the UOC(MLM), who seek to deny the validity and importance of the national liberation struggle as an inseparable part of New Democratic Revolution, as well as its importance to the World Proletarian Revolution. They thus demonstrate a lack of understanding of the problems of proletarian revolution in the oppressed countries, which are the vast majority of the world’s countries and thus have greater weight in the World Proletarian Revolution. They do not understand that the contradiction between the

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46 V. I. Lenin, “Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 39, pp. 338-39; PCB’s bolding.



imperialist countries and the oppressed countries is, in general, the main contradiction of the imperialist era. Even if the inter-imperialist contradictions snowball into world war, they will inevitably be transformed into wars of national liberation, as well as revolutionary civil wars between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries.

Lenin said:

“It is perfectly clear that in the **impending decisive battles in the world revolution**, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed **towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism** and will, perhaps, **play a much more revolutionary part than we expect**. It is important to emphasize the fact that, for the first time in our International, we have taken up the question of preparing for this struggle.”<sup>47</sup>

The recent tactical counteroffensive of the heroic Palestinian National Resistance thoroughly confirms Lenin’s revolutionary words. The ICL honors and carries forward this great Leninist principle.

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47 V. I. Lenin, “Report on the Tactics of the RCP,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 39, p. 37; PCB’s bolding.

## **5. Capitalist Penetration of the Countryside and the Peasant Problem in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries**

Thus far, in addressing New Democratic Revolution, we have, to a certain extent, stopped short of analyzing the agrarian and peasant problem in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. We have done this to emphasize that the task of national liberation is a democratic task which can be accomplished only by New Democratic Revolution, for such a revolution is based on a front of revolutionary classes united under the leadership of the proletariat through its Communist Party. This approach is more convenient, since national oppression is far more visible than semi-feudalism; the latter subsists only in an underlying form, oftentimes camouflaged by the evolution of such forms. In this section and further on, we seek to analyze, from a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective, the general characteristics of capitalist penetration of the countryside, its development, and the current state of the peasant problem in the colonial and semi-colonial countries under the imperialist stage of capitalism.

The UOC(MLM) interprets the agrarian and peasant problem in Colombia and in other countries the same way that certain Brazilian Hoxhaists do: 1) By using Lenin's "The Development of Capitalism in Russia" as the sole and exclusive theoretical foundation of their analysis, as if Lenin's views on the question remained static; 2) by mechanically transplanting the same categories from Lenin's analysis to Latin America while ignoring the particularities of the Russian countryside; and 3) by considering the development of capitalism in Russian agriculture from 1861 to 1897 during the *free-competition* stage of capitalism as analyzed by Lenin to have inalterably continued into the monopolist, imperialist stage. In doing so, they conclude that capitalism in Latin America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has

advanced in much the same way as in Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Just like the Brazilian Hoxhaists, the UOC(MLM) concludes that the peasant problem is a non-issue because *peasant differentiation* has completely come to an end in the Latin American countryside and because only two classes exist there: the agricultural bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat. Smallholdings persist as nothing but artifacts which are to be respected, but which, in practice, play no role in the revolutionary process. The agrarian program must, therefore, be a socialist program; and this is where the UOC(MLM) repeats the same mistake as the Brazilian revisionists: They confuse nationalization with collectivization of land, and claim that Lenin applied a socialist program to the Russian peasantry during the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. Let us take a closer look at the dire consequences of such a distortion of theory and reality.

As we saw in a previous section, the UOC(MLM) asserts that imperialism possesses a supposed *progressive tendency*, which, in turn, implies that the export of capital to the semi-colonies *sweeps away pre-capitalist modes of production*, particularly in the countryside. They claim:

“Exported capital acts upon the seeds or developments of capitalism in the oppressed countries, and, as a general tendency, accelerates their development, **sweeping away the vestiges of pre-capitalist modes of production and accelerating the fragmentation of the peasantry.**”<sup>48</sup>

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48 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

They thus conclude that the process analyzed by Lenin in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia has unfolded in the same way in 20<sup>th</sup> century Colombia:

“In Colombia, the fragmentation and differentiation of the peasantry between agricultural proletarians and agricultural bosses [*patronos*] is a fact. This is the most notable phenomenon of the economic and social development of agriculture over the past half century. The essence of this process is the **differentiation of the peasantry into classes, and not the ‘evolution of semi-feudalism.’** This process has been accelerated mainly **through the violent expropriation of independent farmers** and the concentration of land and capital.”<sup>49</sup>

In other words, according to the UOC(MLM), the export of capital by imperialism accelerated the process of differentiation of the peasantry, dividing them into an agrarian bourgeoisie and rural proletariat; as a result of this division, the process of violent expropriation of the poor peasantry has been accelerated. They thus conclude that the agrarian bourgeoisie which sprang from the fragmentation of the peasantry expropriates the smallholders, thereby concluding capitalist development in the Colombian countryside. Expropriation, then, has, on the one hand, strengthened this newly-created agrarian bourgeoisie and has concentrated land in its hands, and, on the other hand, it has engendered an agricultural proletariat who own no instruments of production and who are forced to sell their labor power.

The UOC(MLM)’s theory of the emergence of an agrarian bourgeoisie from peasant differentiation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries under the imperialist era serves only to beautify the expropriation of the

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49 *Ibid.*; PCB’s bolding.

peasantry and to paint the evolution of the forms of semi-feudalism with a progressive hue. In its study of the Colombian experience, the UOC(MLM) arbitrarily intertwines the differentiation of the peasantry with the emergence of new bosses and the violent expropriation of the smallholders. They emphasize that the particularity of the Colombian experience lies in the extreme violence of these expropriations, and they provide us with impressive data detailing 165,000 deaths from 1946-1957. The questions that the UOC(MLM) avoids are: Which class conducted these expropriations? Which class is responsible for this slaughtering of the Colombian countryside? Is the agrarian bourgeoisie, which sprang from peasant differentiation, responsible?

The UOC(MLM) cunningly dodges this question, because if addressed, it would indicate that the class responsible for these expropriations was the old *criollo latifundista*. They would thus be forced to conclude that these expropriations do not represent the emergence of a new class in the countryside as a result of peasant differentiation, but the strengthening of the old rural oligarchies so familiar and archaic in Latin America. What the UOC(MLM) *does* is combine two different analyses made by Lenin in 1899, and point to them as the cause of the violent expropriation of the Latin American peasantry.

In his masterful work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, the Great Lenin, in studying the evolution of capitalism in the Russian countryside, analyzed two processes that were linked in objective reality: The peasant economy and the *latifundista* economy. In the chapter concerning capitalist development in the peasant *hacienda*, Lenin studied the process of peasant differentiation in detail, and showed

how the development of the market economy invariably led to the division of the peasantry into two opposed classes: the agrarian bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat. This study was particularly important in Russia, since the populist movements asserted that the Russian peasantry represented the most solid basis for the construction of socialism. Therefore, the populists considered the advancement of the market economy and peasant differentiation to be reactionary. Lenin, on the other hand, showed the progressive character of such a process, since the peasantry—as well as the landowners—constituted inseparable aspects of the feudal Russian economy. Thus, Lenin started from the peasantry in analyzing the rural bourgeoisie, “*abstracting*” the landowners—that is, not taking them into initial consideration—in order to more clearly demonstrate the capitalist evolution of the Russian peasant economy. Lenin demonstrated that the rich peasantry, in leasing land from the poor peasantry, ultimately concentrated these lands among themselves. This process led to a gradual process of expropriation, distinct from the expropriation practiced by the landowners. At the end of this chapter, Lenin emphasized that the newly-created agrarian bourgeoisie was not the true ruling class of the countryside; instead, that position remained with the old landowner class:

“When we said above that the peasant bourgeoisie are the masters of the contemporary countryside, we disregarded the factors retarding differentiation: bondage, usury, labor-service, *etc.* **Actually, the real masters of the contemporary countryside are often enough not the representatives of the peasant bourgeoisie, but the village usurers and the neighboring landowners.** It is, however, quite legitimate to disregard them, for otherwise it is impossible to study the

internal system of economic relationships among the peasantry.”<sup>50</sup>

The UOC(MLM) completely dismisses the actual rulers of the Colombian countryside, and presents peasant differentiation and mass expropriation as threads in a continuous process of total capitalist evolution in the countryside of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The development of capitalism in Russia differs significantly from that in Latin America in terms of time (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) and space. The process Lenin studied began in 1861, when Czar Alexander II promulgated the so-called “emancipation” of the serfs in Russia. The so-called “end of serfdom” was a direct consequence of the growth of the peasant struggle against the *latifundios*, but the “solution” was the Czarist government’s maneuvering against the peasantry. Since ancient times, the Russian peasantry had been organized in the communities mentioned above, which enjoyed certain important particularities: 1) community lands were distributed equally among its members, and from time to time, ownership was rotated; 2) tribute and feudal indemnities were paid “collectively” by all peasants; if one failed to pay, the cost would need to be covered by the others; 3) the peasantry were forbidden to sell their plots of land and leave the community. Up until 1861, each of these communities were dominated by a neighboring landowner, or directly by the imperial family. With the “emancipation” manifesto, the communities became officially separated from the neighboring *latifundios* to which they were previously bound.

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50 V. I. Lenin, “The Development of Capitalism in Russia,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 3, p. 192’ PCB’s bolding.



However, links between the peasant *hacienda* and the *latifundio* were maintained by two means: ransoms and enclosures. The ransom was the price the peasant had to pay for their “emancipation,” that is, the price for the plot of land they owned. The enclosures were large areas among peasant communities expropriated by the landowners at the issuing of the emancipation. These areas were generally the richest in natural resources and the most fertile. The enclosures and ransoms impeded the free development of the peasant communities, since they needed to lease part of the *enclosed* lands—the forests, as a source of wood, for example—in order to produce; in addition to spending a large part of their budget to pay back the ransom. In *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin focuses his analysis on this process within the peasant community, highlighting its most significant outcome: peasant differentiation, where wealthier peasants leased the plots of poorer members of the same community. This differentiation polarized the community, dividing it into rich and poor peasants, and driving the peasantry toward fragmentation into a peasant bourgeoisie and a rural proletariat. In his analysis of capitalist development in the *latifundista* economy, Lenin focused on the transformation of the system of *corvée* labor (characteristic of feudalism) into wage-labor (characteristic of capitalism).

Since Lenin had this process of capitalist development in mind in this document, he did not analyze the previous, older contradiction between the landowners in peasants, characteristic of feudalism or semi-feudalism. He did not analyze, for example, the impact of the ransoms or enclosures on the peasantry, because he concluded that the process of the

proletarianization of the poor peasantry had already been consolidated. For example, the Agrarian Programme proposed by Lenin at the Second Congress of the RSDLP in 1903 defended the expropriation and return to the peasantry only of that land which had been enclosed, not the land of the entire *latifundio*. At that time, there was no understanding of the need for a *peasant agrarian revolution* as an essential aspect of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, since the economic data pointed towards the consolidation of capitalism in the Russian countryside.

However, the social process is always more compelling than the statistics. When the revolutionary process erupted in January of 1905, and then in March of 1905, the peasantry entered the arena of class struggle with a force that swept everyone off their feet. This mass struggle was not between the rural proletariat and the peasant boss [*patrón*] or the landowner employer in pursuit of better wages. The masses demanded one thing: land; not only the enclosed land—expropriated by the aristocracy in 1861—but all the land in Russia. The demand for *nationalization of all lands* and the right to its private use by all those who worked on it arose from this mass struggle.

Lenin was the first one to fully grasp the significance of the peasant insurrection, which would last until December of 1907, to the Russian Revolution. At the III Party Congress in April 1905, Lenin put forward the Bolshevik position, which, up to that point, had been the struggle for the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution. This position defended the idea that this hegemony could only be achieved if it was supported by the peasantry. The fundamental tactic of the Bolsheviks then became the *“revolutionary*

*dictatorship of the workers and peasants*” as the only means with which to more radically carry out the bourgeois-democratic revolution and ensure its uninterrupted graduation to socialist revolution.

In accordance with this tactic, the Bolsheviks not only had to direct their attention towards the contradiction between the agricultural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie, but also towards the capitalist *latifundio*. After 1905, Lenin began to emphasize:

“At the present time, as well as in the future, pending the complete victory of the peasant uprising, a revolutionary slogan **must necessarily take into account the antagonism between peasant and landlord...**”<sup>51</sup>

The 1905 Revolution, with all of its other lessons, implied the modification of important aspects of the tactics of the Bolsheviks’ agrarian and peasant programs. A true revolutionary program is drawn up based on the concrete struggle of the masses, and not on a simple collection of statistical data. These modifications do not detract from the importance of Lenin’s brilliant work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, since it was fundamentally correct in its analysis of the tendencies of Russian development. Thus, it armed the Red Bolshevik Fraction of Social Democracy with a powerful class analysis. But the revolutionary struggle of the masses proved that the evolution of such tendencies would not be as rapid as Lenin first suspected in 1899. After all, the class struggle is the main data for interpretation of social reality:

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51 V. I. Lenin, “On Our Agrarian Programme,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 37; PCB’s bolding.

“Here, too, we must make allowance for the fact that the absence of an open mass movement at that time made it impossible to solve this question on the basis of precise data... No one could say in advance with certainty to what extent **disintegration among the peasantry had progressed** as a result of the partial transition of the landlords from the labor-service system to wage-labor. **No one could estimate how large was the stratum of agricultural laborers which had arisen after the Reform of 1861** and to what extent their interests had become separated from those of the ruined peasant masses.”<sup>52</sup>

Experience taught the Bolsheviks that this differentiation had not been as thorough; that the main contradiction in the Russian countryside was between the peasantry and the landowners, not between the agrarian bourgeoisie and the agricultural proletariat. Lenin was fully aware of this shortcoming, and, applying the mass line to the process of development of revolutionary ideology, the guiding thought of the Russian Revolution proved that the basis of the errors of the Agrarian Program of 1903, which advocated for agrarian revolution only on the land expropriated by the landowners and not on all *latifundio* lands, was an **“overestimation of the degree of capitalist development in Russian agriculture.”** Lenin said:

“...the mistake of our cut-off lands programme of 1903. That mistake was due to the fact that while we correctly defined the trend of development, we did not correctly define the moment of that development. We assumed that the elements of capitalist agriculture had already taken full shape in Russia, both in landlord farming (minus the cut-off lands and their conditions of bondage—

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52 V. I. Lenin, “The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1905,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 16, p. 246; PCB’s bolding.

hence the demand that the cut-off lands be returned to the peasants) and in peasant farming, which seemed to have given rise to a strong peasant bourgeoisie and therefore to be incapable of bringing about a 'peasant agrarian revolution'. The erroneous programme was not the result of 'fear' of the peasant agrarian revolution, but of an **over-estimation of the degree of capitalist development in Russian agriculture. The survivals of serfdom appeared to us then to be a minor detail**, whereas capitalist agriculture on the peasant allotments and on the landlords' estates seemed to be quite mature and well-established."<sup>53</sup>

Lenin went on to describe the process of understanding the inadequacy of the line and its need for further refinement:

**"The revolution has exposed that mistake; it has confirmed the trend of development as we had defined it. The Marxist analysis of the classes in Russian society has been so brilliantly confirmed by the whole course of events in general, and by the first two Dumas in particular, that non-Marxist socialism has been shattered completely. But the survivals of serfdom in the countryside have proved to be much stronger than we thought: they have given rise to a nation-wide peasant movement and they have made that movement the touchstone of the bourgeois revolution as a whole. Hegemony in the bourgeois liberation movement, which revolutionary Social-Democracy always assigned to the proletariat, had to be defined more precisely as leadership which rallied *the peasantry* behind it. But leading to what? To the bourgeois revolution in its most consistent and decisive form. We rectified the mistake by substituting for the partial aim of combating the survivals of the old agrarian system, the aim of combating the old agrarian system as a whole. Instead of purging landlord economy, we set the aim of abolishing it."**<sup>54</sup>

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53 *Ibid.*; p. 283-84; PCB's bolding.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 284; PCB's bolding.

First of all, the UOC(MLM), combines two distinct phenomena (peasant differentiation and violent expropriation) into one phenomenon, and seeks to *concretely analyze* peasant expropriation in the 1950s as a process of capitalist development in the countryside, and not as the strengthening and capitalization of the ancient *latifundio*. There is nothing dialectical about this approach; it is, once again, the process of *combining two into one*. Secondly, they totally disregard Lenin's analyses after the 1905 Revolution and the rectifications made therefrom regarding the pace of capitalist development, as well as the development of the tactic of struggling not only against *remnants of the old agrarian system*, but also towards the destruction of the *latifundista* system. Thus, they distort Lenin's theory on which they supposedly base their incorrect analysis of the possibility of capitalist development of agriculture in the colonial and semi-colonial countries under imperialism, which "*sweeps away*" semi-feudal relations of production.

And this distortion gets even worse when they analyze the relations of production between the "rural proletariat" and the "capitalist *latifundio*" in Colombia. The UOC(MLM) claims that sharecropping [*aparcería*] in the Colombian countryside does not imply semi-feudal relations of production, but covert forms of wage-labor, purely capitalist in character. Once again, they misapply Lenin's teachings in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. Once again, they disregard the later Leninist developments on the question and instead pose the question as follows:

"The rise of the agricultural proletariat is, in reality, the disintegration of the peasantry, especially the

smallholders, who subsist in the countryside not as serfs, but as semi-proletarians who play a particular role in the network of capitalist relations of production in the countryside, **bound to the land by a small parcel** to ensure cheap labor on the modern plantation or in cattle ranching [*ganadería*]... Sharecropping, which, historically, has served as a transitional system between feudal and capitalist relations—that is, the characteristically representative of semi-feudalism—has evolved its true content in Colombia and has **become one of the modalities of the retention of workers on the land in order to obtain a wage-labor force**, cheap and nearby the capitalist *haciendas*. That is, **it has become a modality of capitalist exploitation of the land**. These **wage-labor relations of production have been concealed under the old cover of sharecropping, which, in appearance, is semi-feudal**, but, in essence, is capitalist.”<sup>55</sup>

In *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin analyzes this exact same type of relationship—sharecropping—in which the landowner hands over a parcel of land to the peasantry in his pursuit to ensure labor power in the countryside, to have it available at times when agricultural labor requires a greater number of workers, such as during planting or harvesting. Lenin characterizes this form of exploitation as a mix between the system of labor-service (feudal) and the capitalist system (wage-labor). That is, a semi-feudal form. The UOC(MLM) leadership claims that, in Colombia, this form has been completely converted to the form of “*capitalist exploitation of the land*.” But how could this conversion have occurred if one of the conditions for capitalist relations of production is the freeing (dispossession) of the worker from the instruments of production? The economic explanation they provide for

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55 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

this conversion from sharecropping as a characteristically-semi-feudal relationship to a characteristically-capitalist relationship is as follows:

“Currently, the characteristically-capitalist relations of production present in the system of sharecropping are concealed. The capitalist... invests his capital in agriculture, one part in the form of constant capital (tools, equipment, seeds, fertilizer, and other inputs) and one part in the form of variable capital (the minimum wage that he is compelled to pay the sharecropper ‘in advance,’ officially because of the part he plays in the generation of ‘profits’). Thus, it is this variable capital, that is, capital invested in the purchasing of labor-power for production, that, at the time of the alleged ‘division’ [of profits] is deducted from the sharecropper’s share, if he gets a share. If he does not, then he is not obligated to return any such ‘advance’ wages. In reality, this is wage-labor, concealed under the old cover of sharecropping. **It doesn’t matter that, in some cases, the sharecropper is afforded the right to cultivate a small parcel of land by on his own.** We are already familiar with the role played by this proletarian access to land in the overarching capitalist relations of production in the countryside: the retaining of cheap labor for the cash crop plantations and for cattle ranching.”<sup>56</sup>

First of all, the binding of a worker to the land, whether by means of force or by the “free” allotment of a parcel of land, constitutes an element of feudalism. This “sharecropping” arrangement is very common in Brazil, and often presents an exploitative relationship as if it is a free association between landowners. In the example given by the UOC(MLM), this is a form of sharecropping in which the worker does not own any instruments of production, he only “earns” a parcel of land for his own

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56 UOC(MLM), *Revista Contradicción* [*Contradiction Magazine*], no. 18, 1996; PCB’s bolding.



cultivation. The UOC(MLM) then claims that the *sharecropper's* share of the profit is not truly profit, but salary; as proof, they say that if the business is at a net-loss and there is no profit to share in the first place, then the sharecropper keeps his [advance] share and is not obligated to return it. This only proves that the sharing of profits is a farce. It does not prove the UOC(MLM)'s conclusion that this form of sharecropping constitutes capitalist relations of production. This is impossible to verify, since the binding of labor power [to the land], whether based on obligations or given "freely" (through the allotment of a parcel of land) cannot be interpreted as a free wage-labor relationship that is characteristically-capitalist.

When the UOC(MLM) says that "*it doesn't matter*" that some sharecroppers may cultivate a small parcel of land, they are simply sidestepping the essential particularity of this relationship. It is precisely this "right" to cultivate a plot of land "afforded" to the worker that enables, for various reasons, the superexploitation of the masses of workers. The UOC(MLM) leadership is aware of this superexploitation. They even note its social importance for the entire system of exploitation in Colombia. But they do not explain which economic conditions ensure this superexploitation:

"[Smallholders] play a particular role in the network of capitalist relations of production in the countryside, bound to the land by a small parcel to ensure cheap labor on the modern plantation or in cattle ranching... **They are the main source of latent relative surplus population, which, in Colombia, is one of the most important causes of wage**

**stagnation**—not just in the countryside but also in the cities —and therefore, of the superexploitation of the proletariat.”<sup>57</sup>

The UOC(MLM) points out an objective problem—the relationship between the oppression of the peasantry by the *latifundio* and the superexploitation of the labor force by the bourgeoisie in its process of extracting surplus-value in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. However, they once again circumvent the issue without grasping its essence. They emphasize that the binding of the labor force [to the land] in the countryside through the allotment of land parcels acts as the source of superexploitation in Colombian society in general, as it causes latent relative surplus population. In other words, they emphasize only one side of the issue—the increase in competition among workers in the countryside, competition that enables the lowering of the price of labor power, to a certain extent. But this competition is more intense in the cities than in the countryside. So this cannot be the explanation for this particular phenomenon. The superexploitation of the peasantry in sharecropping was first explained by Lenin. This is why we make the claim that the UOC(MLM) leadership has misapplied the lessons taught in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*:

“Thus, under labor-service... **the prices paid for labor are usually less than half those under capitalist hire.** Since labor-service can only be undertaken by a local peasant, and one who must be **‘provided with an allotment,’** the fact of the tremendous drop in pay clearly indicates the **importance of the allotment as wages in kind.**”<sup>58</sup>

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57 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.

Lenin is considering an example very similar to that presented by the UOC(MLM). A landowner hires a peasant through a parcel next to his property; he spends on this worker half of what he would spend had he used the capitalist system, *i.e.*, had he hired a temporary worker from a different region. Lenin then lays out two means that enable the lowering of the price of labor power. The first is competition amongst the peasantry in the area around the *latifundio*. Since they own the parcel of land, they can generally only sell their labor force to the nearby landowner. The other neighboring peasants are in the same boat. This depresses the price of labor power because it represents—as the UOC(MLM) points out—*the source of latent relative surplus population*. The second means lies in *the importance of the peasant parcel to the peasant's natural wage*. In other words, because the peasant owns a plot of land, the produce from this land serves, to a certain extent, to cover part of the costs of the annual reproduction of his labor power, even if he is economically-ruinous. Since a part of his necessary labor is covered by the labor he performs on “his” plot of land, the “*natural wage*,” as Lenin refers to it, enables the landowner-employer to disburse half of the wages he would otherwise pay to a seasonal worker from another region, who has no parcel of land. Lenin explains this more clearly in another work:

“How is a peasant able over a number of years to perform work that is worth 10 rubles 69 kopeks for 6 rubles? **He is able to do it because his allotment covers part of the**

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58 V. I. Lenin, “The Development of Capitalism in Russia,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 3, pp. 212-213; PCB's bolding.

expenditure of his family and *makes it possible* for his wage to be forced down below the 'free-hire' level.<sup>59</sup>

This is the secret that enables the depreciation of wages of the peasant sharecropper, which, in turn—as the UOC(MLM) leadership points out—exerts downward pressure on the wages of workers in the economy as a whole, thereby ensuring the superexploitation of labor, which, according to Marx, is the purchasing of labor power for a price lower than its value. Thus, the question arising from the analysis of this form of sharecropping is whether it aligns more closely with purely-capitalist relations of production, or semi-feudal relations of production. We can outright reject the UOC(MLM)'s notion that it is *of little importance whether or not the sharecroppers can cultivate a parcel of land on their own*. No, in this case, it is most important.

In a thorough economic analysis of this type of sharecropping, we observe that, as in all capitalist wage-labor relationships, the "sharecropper" spends part of the day engaged in necessary labor—reproducing their own labor power, as Marx describes it—and another part of the day performing surplus-labor. Let's say that the wage of a peasant with a parcel of land is 6 rubles, while that of the "free" wage-laborer is 10 rubles for the same work and the same duration. It is easy to deduce that the surplus-value extracted from the peasant is 4 rubles greater than that extracted from the "free" wage-laborer. If the value produced over the course of this duration was 20 rubles, then the surplus-value produced by the peasant-wage-laborer would be 14 rubles, and that of the

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59 V. I. Lenin, "The Agrarian Question in Russia Towards the Close of the Nineteenth Century," *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 17, p. 74; PCB's bolding.

“free” wage-laborer 10 rubles. According to Marx, the rate of surplus-value is:

$$\text{rate of surplus-value} = \text{surplus-value/wage}$$

For the “free” wage-laborer:  $10/10 = 1 = 100\%$ . Meanwhile, the rate of surplus-value obtained from the exploitation of the “sharecropper” will be:  $14/6 = 2.3 = 230\%$ . It is precisely the cultivation of the parcel “ceded” by the landowner to the sharecropper that ensures this disparity in the rate of surplus-value. But the while, the UOC(MLM) claims that “*it doesn't matter.*”

As Lenin explained, the secret of this super-exploitation lies in the peasant's work on their own parcel, which serves as their *natural wage*, covering a *portion of the peasant family's expenses*. This allows the peasant to reproduce their labor power while accepting a wage from the landowner that is 4 rubles lower. However, the landowner owns the parcel ceded to the peasant-wage-laborer “free of charge.” The peasant does not independently produce on this parcel of land, because he is subject to a relationship between the landowner who ceded the parcel of land, and the peasant who cultivates it. This allotment, as we have seen, is not free of charge, since the peasant's labor on this land provides the landowner with an additional surplus of 4 rubles. The peasant's labor on this parcel is therefore also divided between necessary- and surplus-labor. His labor on this parcel which supplies the 4 rubles taken from his wage by the landowner is surplus-labor, which the landowner directly appropriates. The land is thus not provided free of charge to the peasant; the value of hidden rent that the peasant pays to the landowner is

equal to the value that the landowner deducts from his salary.

These are the relations of production hidden by *sharecropping*, which seeks to bind labor power to the countryside. It appears to be a free allotment of land, as a favor granted by the landowner to the peasant. The peasant feels obligated to repay this gift with extra work, for example, by repairing fences and performing other duties on the property, or by his wife performing domestic labor in the house. It is obvious that the rest of his family is included in the labor performed for the generous landowner. This is the link that establishes personal dependence. This alone explains why the peasant accepts his "binding" to the land and his low wages, because he has no choice in the situation. This is a servile wage-labor relationship, characteristic of semi-feudalism, not at all of capitalism. This example clearly illustrates how, underneath forms of wage-labor, there exist pre-capitalist relations of production that are reproduced and preserved by imperialism because they are useful in reaping *maximum profit*. This reflects the historical and ongoing reality of oppressed nations, where the reactionary imperialist bourgeoisie, through capital export, has fostered bureaucrat-capitalism atop pre-capitalist, feudal, or semi-feudal foundations. It sustains and perpetuates these underlying property relations and labor exploitation by evolving their forms. In other words, contrary to the UOC(MLM) leadership's claim that such sharecropping is "*semi-feudal in appearance but capitalist in essence*," it is actually capitalist in appearance and semi-feudal in essence.

Once again, the UOC(MLM) leadership not only misapplies Lenin's teachings in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* but also fails to consider his

broader work, particularly how he later developed his analysis of this type of sharecropping relationship. They cite the following passage from Lenin as proof that this relationship is characteristic of capitalism:

“The allotment of land to the rural worker is very often to the interests of the rural employers themselves, and that is why the **allotment-holding rural worker is a type to be found in all capitalist countries.** The type assumes different forms in different countries: the English cottager is not the same as the small-holding peasant of France or the Rhine provinces, and the latter again is not the same as the Knecht in Prussia. Each of these bears traces of a specific agrarian system, of a specific history of agrarian relations—but this **does not prevent the economist from classing them all as one type of agricultural proletariat.**”<sup>60</sup>

The UOC(MLM) interprets this passage as supporting their classification of this form of sharecropping as characteristically-capitalist. First of all, the fact that this relationship exists in all capitalist countries does not mean that it is characteristic of capitalism. Secondly, as we saw in his texts after 1905, Lenin acknowledged that, at certain points, he overestimated the level of development of capitalism in Russian agriculture, and that it was difficult to “*estimate how large was the stratum of agricultural laborers which had arisen after the Reform of 1861 and to what extent their interests had become separated from those of the ruined peasant masses.*” Lenin himself would later classify this type of exploitative relationship with greater precision:

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60 V. I. Lenin, “The Development of Capitalism in Russia,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 3, pp. 183-84; PCB’s bolding.

“...in all capitalist countries, even the most advanced, **there still exist survivals of medieval, semi-feudal exploitation of the neighboring small peasants by the big landowners** as in the case of the *Instleute* in Germany, the *métayers* in France, and the **sharecroppers in the United States** (not only Negroes, who, in the Southern States, are mostly exploited in this way, but sometimes whites too).”<sup>61</sup>

Lenin analyzed the typical sharecropping relationship in the southern United States as a transitional form between slave-labor and wage-labor. This analysis is particularly relevant for studying the socio-economic formations of Brazil and Colombia, given the significant historical role of the exploitation of enslaved Black people in these countries:

“The typical white farmer in America is an owner, the typical Negro farmer is a tenant... These are not even tenants in the European, civilized, modern-capitalist sense of the word. They are chiefly *semi-feudal* or—which is the same thing in economic terms—**semi-slave sharecroppers**.”<sup>62</sup>

And he classifies this type of sharecropping as the basis:

“...It is the typically Russian, ‘purely Russian’ labor service system, which is known as share-cropping.”<sup>63</sup>

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61 V. I. Lenin, “Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question for the II Congress of the Communist International,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 41, p. 185; PCB’s bolding.

62 V. I. Lenin, “New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 27, pp. 148-49; PCB’s bolding.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 148; PCB’s bolding.



This type of sharecropping, like in its more evolved form, which is designed only to bind labor power to the countryside, cannot be considered as capitalist in character. The particular feature that enables the reduction of the price of this wage-laborer-peasant's labor power below its value is the landowner's indirect exploitation of the peasant's labor on their own parcel of land. The UOC(mlm) highlights the significance of this type of relationship in semi-colonial economies as a major source of the superexploitation of the proletariat and the oppressed masses. However, they misinterpret the economic and social nature of these relations of production, mistakenly categorizing them as characteristically-capitalist when they are characteristically-semi-feudal. This is a theoretical question of the greatest importance, resolved by Lenin and previously addressed by the great Engels: "**actual semi-serfdom** sanctioned by law and custom and the resulting possibility of the unlimited exploitation of the rural workers..."<sup>64</sup>

If the leadership of the UOC(MLM) were consistent in their analysis of Colombia and acknowledged the grave mistake of classifying sharecropping as a characteristically-capitalist relation of production, they would be compelled to conclude that the superexploitation of the Colombian proletariat, rooted in sharecropping relations, is based on semi-feudal rather than capitalist relations of production. This conclusion holds profound implications for the Colombian revolutionary process, as recognized by the PCC (Red Fraction) and Poder Proletario-OP-MLM, providing renewed impetus to the proletariat's advance toward the

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64 F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Progress Publishers, Vol. 3, 1976, p. 502; PCB's bolding.

reconstitution of its vanguard Party and the triumph of the Colombian Revolution.

From the practical perspective of the class struggle in recent years in Colombia, we believe there are many factors that justify such a rectification. Colombia and Mexico are, *par excellence*, the homelands of the peasant guerrillas in Latin America. The decades of uninterrupted peasant guerrilla activity in Colombia reflect the immense efforts of the peasant masses, efforts that have not succeeded primarily because they lacked a proletarian leadership capable of guiding them.

From a theoretical standpoint, we believe that the errors in the analysis of Latin American socio-economic formations lead the UOC(MLM) to present an agrarian program incapable of mobilizing the peasant masses. This is partly because it leads them to dismiss the agrarian question as a strategic task of the Colombian revolution. They conclude that the process of peasant differentiation is complete, which means they view the fundamental classes in the Colombian countryside today as the agricultural proletariat and the rural bourgeoisie. According to their analysis, the old *latifundio*, based on characteristically capitalist relations of production, has evolved into big capital. Thus, they argue that there is no longer an economic basis for a clear antagonism between peasants and landowners, since the latter have transformed into proletarians and capitalists. What remains, they claim, is merely a remnant of small production, similar to what survives in the cities.

The peasant differentiation identified by Lenin in 1899 can no longer develop in the same way in the era of imperialism, particularly in colonial and semi-colonial countries. In the differentiation present in rural communities today in Brazil, the peasantry is divided

into a rich or middle peasantry that exploits the labor of the poor peasantry, especially the landless or those with little land. However, the conditions for transforming this rich peasantry into an agrarian bourgeoisie have been completely altered. We are now in the era of imperialism and monopoly capital, where even the rich peasantry cannot progress significantly as it competes with large-scale agricultural production rooted in the old *latifundio*, which is allied with the big bourgeoisie and, in most cases, intertwined with finance-capital. Even if a peasant *is* differentiated and exploits the poor peasantry in their village, at most, he becomes a privileged servant of the local *latifundio*; very rarely will he ascend to the status of bourgeoisie, just as small industries in urban centers can only survive as auxiliary units to big production, generally in a state of permanent ruin.

Another particularity of Latin America, in contrast to the Russian conditions studied by Lenin, is that its agrarian economy did not evolve into a mercantile form only in the nineteenth century; it was born in such a condition, oriented towards the foreign market, under the framework of the international division of labor. For this reason, the characteristic feature of the socio-economic formations in some Latin American countries is the *plantations* system, characterized by large-scale monoculture production for export, which was historically based on slave and serf labor. In Russia, following the 1861 Reformation, peasant communities owned half of the arable land. Small peasants were semi-owners of plots of this land, known as *nadiels*, and leased them. In contrast, land leasing by poor peasants is a rare phenomenon in Latin America. In Brazil, it primarily emerged in more recent history, within the "Settlement Projects" as part of the bureaucratic "agrarian reform"

implemented by the old State. These projects often entailed the poorest peasants leasing their land to neighboring landowners or to wealthy local peasants. Alternatively, these peasants, often from the same continuous stretch of land, may lease it collectively to large soybean and sugarcane plantations, which are surrounded by *latifundios*. Another common scenario is when they convert their land into pasture and lease it to landowners who raise cattle, or they may jointly lease half of it to others for cattle farming. But this is a recent phenomenon, a result—and not a cause—of the development of capitalism in agriculture. What has always happened, and continues to happen, is that poor landless peasants or small landowners lease a plot of land from a neighboring landowner, generally for a period of ten years. They are allowed to cultivate half or a third of it, but at the end of the contract, they must surrender the parcel, along with hundreds of hectares of the landowner's land used for pastures. As part of the contract, they are also required to maintain the fences of the entire *latifundio* and provide other services.

The Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms transplanted to Latin America an outdated system rooted in the feudal monopoly of land, where, in many cases, a feudal system was established, and in others, a feudal-slave system. In both instances, as a general rule, peasants were entirely excluded from ownership of land. In Brazil, the peasant was generally a tenant on the landowner's land. He only became "free" if he fled to more remote areas beyond the agricultural frontier, where he established his own settlement, his own natural economy, and his precarious freedom, compared to his previous serfdom. This continued until the landowner arrived with a "legal" or forged title deed, backed by the

notary bureaucracy of the old State and the oligarchic power it represented, to expropriate the peasant's land. The legacy of the owner-peasants in Brazil, constantly battling landowner expropriation, forms a core and essential part of our history, a continuous peasant struggle punctuated by periods of advance and retreat.

The capitalism that penetrated and developed in Latin American agriculture is distinctly different from the form it took in the Russia analyzed by Lenin. In Russia, the rich peasants had no means of transforming themselves into an agrarian bourgeoisie; instead, it was the old *latifundio* that became bourgeois. The role played by Brazil in the world economy facilitated capitalist relations in agriculture, leading to accentuated capitalist development in agriculture. However, this capitalism is not the same as the one Lenin analyzed in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russia, during the era of *free competition*. It is a capitalism that emerged in the epoch of imperialism and in an oppressed country. Russia was, as Lenin described it, a "*military-feudal imperialist*" State. In Brazil, what developed was bureaucrat-capitalism, shaped by imperialism and entirely serving the needs of imperialist powers. Unlike in Russia, there was no national industry for agricultural machinery to foster independent national agricultural development. Instead, capitalist development in Brazil was always subordinated to the interests of the metropolis. This is why imperialism never fully eradicated semi-feudal relations of production in the countryside, which have continued to subsist in a concealed way through the evolution of their forms.

In colonial and semi-colonial countries, the peasantry constitute the main force, not the agricultural proletariat. Although peasants are expelled from the

countryside, it is the agricultural proletariat that diminishes in number with the advance of mechanization—now at the stage of robotics and the remote operation of machines. Semi-feudal exploitation forms the foundation of bureaucrat-capitalism engendered by imperialism, a necessity for the semi-colonial subjugation of the country and for the super-exploitation of its proletariat and other working masses. This is why it continues to reproduce itself, and why the peasant economy, despite being ruinous, does not disappear; it is essential for the type of capitalism that persists in the oppressed countries. With this backward and anachronistic economic base, the corresponding superstructure is maintained, primarily as semi-feudalism in new, seemingly-bourgeois forms, and secondarily, as old forms, such as civil rights inequality in the countryside. All of these are old structures that can only be eradicated through the destruction of *latifundista* property. This is a task of utmost importance for the proletarian revolution, and the more radically it advances, the closer we will be to socialism. Therefore, peasant expropriation in colonial and semi-colonial countries does not represent progress; rather, it signifies backwardness, the depopulation and hollowing out of the countryside. This has become the primary counterrevolutionary policy of imperialism in the oppressed countries, especially Yankee imperialism in Latin America, and particularly after the victories of the Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Cuban Revolutions. In 1894, Engels highlighted this issue in his criticism of Kautsky regarding the Agrarian Program of the Social Democratic Party of Germany:

“The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat, whom we can win to our side while they are still peasants, the **more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished**. It will serve us nought to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere to its utmost consequences, until the last small handicraftsman and last small peasant have fallen victim to capitalist large-scale production.”<sup>65</sup>

The masses who will sweep away the landowners and the monopoly on landownership in the most radical way will be the peasantry, mainly the poor peasantry. The flag that these masses can rally around is the immediate confiscation of land and its redistribution to them. This struggle must be broadly linked to the struggle for the conquering of power, because while the peasant problem is fundamentally the problem of land, the problem of land is the problem of political power, of the collapse of the power of the *latifundio* and the imperialist, semi-colonial domination upon which it relies through bureaucrat-capitalism.

Therefore, the agrarian program of the UOC(MLM) for the colonial and semi-colonial countries is entirely flawed, as can be demonstrated:

“It is essential that the agricultural proletariat, which lacks the same degree of concentration as the industrial proletariat, remain independent from the peasantry, both in its program and its organization; only in this way can it extricate itself from the rural petty-bourgeois atmosphere of the landowner and the illusion of smallholdings. Only in this way can it **teach the peasantry** that their only safety lies in an alliance with the proletariat **against private property and the conversion of their land to collective ownership and**

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65 *Ibid.*, p. 497; PCB's bolding.

**exploitation.** Individual exploitation, conditioned by individual ownership, is what drives the peasants to ruin.”<sup>66</sup>

The UOC(MLM) leadership consistently accuses us of being “leftists,” but there is no more “left”-opportunist agrarian-peasant program than their own; it is “left”-opportunist and idealist. Attempting to mobilize the limited agricultural proletariat to teach poor, landless peasants about the importance of fighting against private property and persuading them to convert their smallholdings into collective farms is more naive than the dreams of the Russian populists who sought to transform peasant communities into strongholds of socialism. It demonstrates total ignorance of the peasantry and their greatest demand—land—which is turning them against the proletariat and is driving them into the arms of counterrevolution. It is sterile, doctrinaire idealism and just foolish. What is more, implementing such a policy among the peasantry is a betrayal of the proletariat’s strategy for establishing hegemony within the united front and for its conquest of power.

What the peasant understands is that the lack of land, or having land of insufficient quantity and poor quality, is the immediate cause of their ruin. This sensible understanding is revolutionary, because it directs their fury against the opposite class: the landowner who concentrates and monopolizes land and natural resources. Yes, it is necessary, in the course of the struggle, to convince the peasantry that it is not enough to just destroy the nearby landowner; the entire landlord system must be destroyed, the large private enterprises in the liberated areas must be confiscated for the new people’s

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66 UOC(MLM), *Programa para la Revolución en Colombia* [Program for the Revolution in Colombia], 2015; PCB’s bolding.



revolutionary State, until it is established across the country. In the course of this struggle, only in this way, will they learn that private property is not their salvation, that if they stop their struggle halfway, they will be ruined again, and the land will become concentrated again. The same unbreakable cycle that traps the workers' struggle will be repeated if it is restricted to economic or trade union battles. In the conditions of imperialism, only when power is in the hands of the revolutionary united front, led by the proletariat through its Communist Party, will the peasants fully grasp the limitations of smallholdings. This understanding will develop during the revolutionary war, when they will begin to recognize the importance of the new relations of production. Most importantly, they will learn that freedom is more significant than landownership. As Lenin stated, the peasant, in his struggle for land, takes up the rifle, and with the rifle, he discovers freedom. This freedom becomes more important to him than land, transforming him into a revolutionary peasant, firmly united with the proletariat. And Lenin reaffirmed the following regarding the illusion of attempting to convince the peasantry with nothing more than well-meaning proclamations and appeals:

“The proletariat must now solve the second problem: it must prove to the peasant that the proletariat can provide him with the example and practice of economic relations of a higher level than those under which every peasant family farms on its own. The peasant still believes only in this old system; he still considers this the normal state of affairs. That is beyond doubt. **It would be absurd to think that the peasant will change his attitude to vital economic problems, as a result of our propaganda.** His is a wait-and-see attitude. From being neutrally hostile, he has become neutrally sympathetic. He prefers us to any other form of government

because he sees that the workers', the proletarian state, the proletarian dictatorship, does not mean brute force or usurpation, as it has been described, but is a better defender of the peasants than Kolchak, Denikin, and the rest are."<sup>67</sup>

Besides the illusion of convincing through propaganda, the UOC(MLM) presents collectivization as an immediate task. This was not the approach of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which, despite establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and nationalizing landownership, did not immediately collectivize peasant production. Lenin addressed the issue of land collectivization during the Russian Revolution as follows:

“As to the mode of cultivation of the land that the victorious proletariat confiscates from the big landowners, the **distribution of that land among the peasantry for their use has been predominant in Russia**, owing to her economic backwardness; it is only in relatively rare and exceptional cases that state farms have been organized on the former estates which the proletarian state runs at its own expense, converting the former wage-laborers into workers for the state and members of the Soviets, which administer the state.”<sup>68</sup>

The flag of nationalization, hoisted by the peasantry in 1905 and adopted by the Party from that moment onward, is not equivalent to the collectivization of agriculture, let alone its socialization, as

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67 V. I. Lenin, “Our Foreign and Domestic Position and Party Tasks,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 42, p. 29; PCB’s bolding.

68 V. I. Lenin, “Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question for the II Congress of the Communist International,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 41, p. 184; PCB’s bolding.

misrepresented by both the revisionists and the Trotskyists. Lenin defined “the nationalization of the land, which was more or less consistently demanded by all representatives of the peasantry between 1905 and 1907,” as the most radical form of dismantling serfdom—a bourgeois-democratic task. Therefore:

“The abolition of private property in land in no way changes the bourgeois basis of commercial and capitalist landowning. **There is nothing more erroneous than the opinion that the nationalization of the land has anything in common with socialism**, or even with equalized land tenure. Socialism, as we know, means the abolition of commodity economy. **Nationalization, on the other hand, means converting the land into the property of the state, and such a conversion does not in the least affect private farming on the land... Nationalization makes a clean sweep of all medieval relations in landowning**, does away with all artificial barriers on the land, and makes the land really free... **Nationalization would hasten the death of serfdom and the development of purely bourgeois farming on land free of all medieval lumber**. That is the real historical significance of nationalization in Russia—what it has come to mean by the end of the nineteenth century.”<sup>69</sup>

Nationalization was never a flag hoisted by peasantry in Latin America. Therefore, our slogan should be “land to those who live and work on it.” The experiences of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the Great Chinese Revolution demonstrated that the agrarian-peasant revolution was, above all, the path to ensuring land nationalization and, later, agricultural collectivization. This also ensured the hegemony of the

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69 V. I. Lenin, “The Agrarian Question in Russia Towards the Close of the Nineteenth Century,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 17, p. 131-32; PCB’s bolding.

proletariat in both cases—the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia and the joint dictatorship of revolutionary classes in China, in uninterrupted transition to socialism. Lenin stressed that, despite the economic challenges that could arise from excessive land distribution, the key to the success of the agrarian program lies in ensuring the triumph of the revolution and consolidating New Power:

“It would, however, be grossly erroneous to exaggerate or to stereotype this rule [of collectivization] and never to permit the free grant of part of the land that belonged to the expropriated expropriators to the neighboring small and sometimes middle peasants. First, the objection usually raised to this, namely, that large-scale farming is technically superior, often amounts to an indisputable theoretical truth being replaced by the worst kind of opportunism and betrayal of the revolution. To achieve the success of this revolution, the proletariat should not shrink from a temporary decline in production... What is most important to the bourgeois is production for the sake of production; what is most important to the working and exploited population is the overthrow of the exploiters and the creation of conditions that will permit the working people to work for themselves, and not for the capitalists. It is the primary and fundamental task of the proletariat to ensure the proletarian victory and its stability. There can, however, be no stable proletarian government unless the middle peasantry is neutralized and the support is secured of a very considerable section of the small peasantry, if not all of them.”<sup>70</sup>

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70 V. I. Lenin, “Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question for the II Congress of the Communist International,” *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 41, p. 184-85; PCB’s bolding.

Imperialism and the development of capitalism in the countryside do not resolve the agrarian-peasant problem in colonial and semi-colonial countries. This is why semi-feudalism, which is the basis of the fundamental social contradiction in the countryside of these countries, is characterized by the antagonism between the poor peasantry and the *latifundio*. The agrarian program that Communists must implement should be rooted in the concrete experience of leading the struggle of these masses in defense of their demands, especially land for those who live and work on it. Advancing in this struggle inevitably brings the issue of revolutionary violence and the fight for power to the forefront. After all, as Chairman Gonzalo brilliantly asserted:

**“...to speak of the peasant question is to speak of the land question, and to speak of the land question is to speak of the military question, and to speak of the military question is to speak of the question of power, of the New State which we will reach through the democratic revolution led by the proletariat through its Party, the Communist Party.”<sup>71</sup>**

To neglect leading the peasant struggle for land is inevitably to turn away from the military problem, a matter that is immediately raised in the initial and most fundamental stages of the struggle for land.

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71 Chairman Gonzalo, *General Political Line*, 1988.