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Marxism and the end of capitalism

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Abstract:

The development of society occurs through the change of its socio-economic structures. In Marx's opinion, in accordance with the provisions of Hegelian dialectics, this change occurs as a result of the resolution of the internal contradictions of each of them, leading to its transformation into "its other" – a formation of a higher level. The capitalism that dominates the planet today arose from feudalism, and must disappear as a result of the resolution of its basic contradiction – the contradiction between labour and capital (between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie). As a result of the revolution, the latter will take power with the ultimate goal of building a classless society. In reality, however, capitalism differs from previous formations in that under it the social division of labour is not limited to the ruling and exploited classes of each country. It takes on an international (or, more precisely, inter-civilizational) character: Western European civilization exploits all the others that have been turned into colonies. Due to this, its development is accelerated, which benefits not only its bourgeoisie, but also all segments of the population. Accordingly, in this division of labour, the workers of the "advanced countries" also find themselves on the side of their bourgeoisie. For them, the anti-capitalist revolution loses its meaning. And yet such a revolution took place, but not in the place and not in the way that Marx had assumed. It did not take place in "most advanced countries", but in one country-civilization – in Russia. Russia, on the other hand, had not yet

had time to completely get rid of feudal relations, and at that time it was gradually turning into a semi-colony of the West. But it was in a special economic geographical position (severe climate), which, firstly, complicated its colonial exploitation, and secondly, conditioned communal traditions. All this made the revolution in it directed both against world capitalism in the face of its not yet fully formed comprador bourgeoisie, and against the remnants of feudalism, that is, not proletarian, but nationwide, mainly peasant. It was able to win and survive only thanks to the sharpening of the contradictions between the imperialist powers at that time. The Soviet Union, which emerged as a result of the revolution, began to develop economically and culturally intensively, clearly demonstrating the advantages of post-capitalist (socialist) socio-economic relations. However, the disintegration of its dominant social group (nomenclature) under the influence of the capitalist encirclement led to the elimination of these achievements. And then the development of the situation went in a "natural" way. The conditional West continued to exploit other civilizations. But its forms changed. If at first it was robbery by various kinds of conquistadors and unequal exchange in trade, then in the "classical" period there was an organized exploitation of colonies by the countries of the metropolis through the comprador bourgeoisie. But with the formal dismantling of the colonial system after World War II, Western multinationals come to the fore, moving production from their home countries to former colonies with cheap labour. The organization of production in the former colonies became possible thanks to global scientific and technological progress. It involves the transfer of advanced technologies, appropriate equipment, the training of qualified labour, etc., that is, the industrialization of former colonies with the simultaneous deindustrialization of former colonial powers. This changes the social composition of the population in both countries due to changes in the level of education, well-being and social status in general. The difference in intellectual level between these groups of states – the basic condition for the capitalist division of "mental" and "physical" labour – has begun to level out, leading to the end of capitalism. The collective West does not want to lose its privileges, but sooner or later it will be forced to limit its consumption to what it has earned. And then, thanks to the continuing scientific and technological progress, all of humanity will unite into a single egalitarian social organism.

Keywords: the main contradiction of capitalism, the social division of labour, the colonial system, the transfer of production, the revolution in Russia, the role of the proletariat, the elimination of the division of mental and physical labour, the unification of mankind.

Introduction

The socio-economic structure, which is commonly called capitalism, which at one time replaced feudalism, has existed for several centuries. During this time, it has been constantly changing, but it has been distinguished by its certain stability for the last few decades. This circumstance formed the idea that social development had reached a level that no longer implied significant changes. This point of view was most fully presented in the work of F. Fukuyama "The End of History and the Last Man" (1992). The author claimed that the collapse of communism and the spread of Western-style liberal democracy in the world meant the end of the century of ideological confrontations, global revolutions and wars, and with them the end of art and philosophy. However, in recent years, scientific and technological progress, as well as a number of other factors, have caused and continue to cause significant social changes. And, accordingly, there are more and more attempts to determine the patterns and future results of these changes. At the same time, they often turn to the socio-economic theory of K. Marx, developed by him in the second half of the nineteenth century, in which he analyses capitalism as a socio-economic structure in its development and, among other things, presents its inevitable end as a result of its own internal development. In this work, the author aimed to analyse Marx's views in this aspect in comparison with the real course of history.

1. Did Marx understand the nature of capitalism?

In accordance to Marx's theoretical ideas the change of socio-economic structures, in the development of mankind, took place as a result of the resolution of their inherent internal contradictions. Also, the end of the last class formation – capitalism – is regularly predetermined by its very nature. Believing that the main contradiction of capitalism is the conflict between labour and capital, Marx actually directed all his scientific activity to the analysis of this socio-economic structure and achieved exceptional success in it.

The results of his research are presented in numerous scientific works among which his main work stands out - "Capital. Critique of Political Economy". In his scientific works, as F. Engels wrote, Marx was able "to explain the inevitability of the emergence of the capitalist mode of production in its historical connection and its necessity for a certain historical period, and therefore the inevitability of its destruction ... to expose also the inner ... nature of this mode of production... This was done thanks to the discovery of surplus value. It has been proved that the appropriation of unpaid labour is the basic form of capitalist production...

These two great discoveries - the materialist conception of history and the exposure of the mystery of capitalist production - we owe *to Marx*" [1, Vol. 20, pp. 26-27].

However, any science, performing the most important role in *understanding* its object, the main social role is played by the *forecast of* its further movement, thereby contributing to the achievement of the corresponding results. And this fully applies to the sciences of society. Only on their basis it is possible to reasonably plan human activity, guided not by sweet *projects* (utopias) invented "out of the head", but *by scientific forecast* of the future. Therefore, Marx's "Capital", which provides a scientific analysis of contemporary society, was supposed to serve as the basis for such a forecast of the future for those who wanted to contribute to its onset. He became the one (although not immediately). Even European social democracy, if not completely, then to a large extent relied on Marx's theoretical developments. "Capital" became a kind of bible for the Russian social democrats (later the Bolsheviks and Communists), led by Lenin.

Marx's materialistic understanding of history is mainly manifested in the assertion of the leading role in the society development of its *productive forces*, which determine all other processes in it, primarily the nature of production relations. "In the social production of their lives, people enter into definite, necessary, independent of their will relations – relations of production, which correspond to a certain stage of development of their material productive forces. ... At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production... From the forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then the epoch of social revolution begins. With a change in the economic basis, a revolution occurs more or less rapidly in the entire enormous superstructure" [1, Vol. 13, pp. 6-7].

This clear general scheme of the development of society, especially with regard to capitalism, was thoroughly detailed by Marx and very convincingly substantiated – at the level of the knowledge about society that it possessed in the middle of the nineteenth century. Therefore, his doctrine naturally made a very strong impression on the opponents of capitalism. Naturally, since the scheme as a whole was quite consistent with the truth. But even the genius of Marx could not take into consideration all (including very important) the points that at that time were not yet sufficiently developed, which created significant gaps in his theory. First of all, this concerned the central point of the dialectics of social development – the mutual influence of productive forces and production relations.

Marx's brilliant formulation, which points to the direct dependence of the nature of production relations on the degree of the productive force development, says nothing, however, about *the mechanism* of their interaction. These questions were considered by the classics of Marxism specifically in the analysis of certain social processes. But in general, this mechanism was not revealed by Marx. And nevertheless, there is a really existing certain social phenomenon, a kind of "intermediate link" that in all cases connects productive forces with production relations – *the social division of labour*. A separate work is devoted to a detailed consideration of this issue [2], but here we will turn only to the influence of the division of labour on the nature of socio-economic structures.

In general, the thinkers of antiquity paid attention to this social phenomenon. And the "father of political economy" Adam Smith considered it an important factor in increasing labour productivity [3], "practically the only factor of economic progress" [4]. Its importance was also recognized by the classics of Marxism. Their point of view as a whole did not contradict the views of Adam Smith, i.e., the division of labour seemed to them to be just a *specialization* of the functions of performers, increasing their productivity. However, the classics of Marxism expanded the meaning of this phenomenon, including believing that "the division of labour becomes a real division only from the moment when the division of material and spiritual labour appears" [1, Vol. 3, p. 30].

But in fact, the latter arose almost simultaneously with the division between individual performers (or their groups) of what they called material labour (i.e., its peculiar *technological* specialization – the "horizontal" division of labour), creating a different type of division of labour from the previous one – *social*, associated with the division of *individuals* (or their groups) participating in the production process into *direct executors* and *managers*, relatively speaking, performing "material" and "spiritual" functions ("vertical" division of labour). It was precisely this that connected production relations with productive forces in accordance with their nature and level of development.

According to Engels, "the first major division of society into two classes – masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited – arose from the first major social division of labour" [1, Vol. 21, p. 161]. In fact, the classics of Marxism proceeded from the fact that, although the very nature of classes and their relations in other "historical conditions" differed depending on the socio-economic structure, they always represented antagonistic social groups in the production process, *but in essence it did not change*. Therefore, they did not need to single out the social division of labour as a *special mechanism* of connection between productive forces and

production relations. But precisely because of the *special* nature of the division of labour under capitalism, its basic contradiction differed significantly from the previous formations. As a result, the "nature of capitalism" in reality also turned out to be essentially different from the assumed by Marx.

2. Social division of labour and socio-economic formations

In fact, the "mechanism" of the birth of new socio-economic formations in reality looks like this. Spontaneous *scientific and technological progress* and, as a consequence, the development of *productive forces* led to changes in the social *division of labour*, acquiring forms corresponding to its new content: "Labour is organized and divided in different ways, depending on what tools it possesses. A hand mill presupposes a different division of labour than a steam mill" [1, Vol. 4, p. 152]. And this, in turn, led to the formation of *new social groups* participating in the process of production and, accordingly, to changes in the relations between them, i.e. *industrial relations*.

Of course, the class struggle throughout the existence of class society played a very significant role in the formation of production relations. But the leading factor here has always been the economic efficiency of the "vertical" social division of labour. For example, in slave-holding society, the uprisings of the oppressed never led to its fundamental changes. Its advantages in labour productivity in comparison with the primitive communal system due to the simultaneous use of a significant number of workers made this system very stable. At the same time, slave-holding states developed among a mass of communal social formations that had not yet entered the stage of class society, absorbing them and gradually turning into state-civilizations themselves.

However, their relatively low *general* intellectual potential, which was a consequence of both the rigid detachment of the majority of the population from "mental labour" and the disinterest of the performers in the results of production, together with the excesses of the ruling class, most of which was not directly related to production, gradually undermined the stability of the slave-holding states, and weakened, sooner or later each of them became victims of *external* forces. At the same time, the slave-holding state-civilization simply disappeared, and by no means *turned into* "its other" – feudal society – as a result of internal revolutionary changes.

Nevertheless, feudal society, *which arose* (centuries later!) on the ruins of slave-holding society in the form of *feudal civilizations* divided into separate states, in accordance with Hegelian dialectics, really represented an antithesis in relation to slave-holding society. The reason for this was the changes in the nature of the "vertical" division of labour. To some extent, the use of the scientific and technical achievements of its predecessor allowed feudalism to return to *individual* production at a new level, in which the direct executors, who partially owned the means of production, were already interested both in the results of their labour and in the development of its technology and tools. The exploitation of the oppressed class by the ruling class acquired a personal character to a certain extent, which required greater participation of representatives of the ruling class in production.

All this reduced the ability of the oppressed performers to actively oppose the ruling class. Nevertheless, peasant uprisings repeatedly shook feudal states, but did not lead to any significant changes in the social system. And it embraced almost the entire Oecumene in various specific forms at the time, and despite the negative consequences of feudal fragmentation, it was distinguished by high stability. Feudal civilizations, as well as their constituent states, constantly sought to squeeze each other, but due to their approximately equal level of development, this did not lead to significant results. Their development continued, making corresponding changes in the division of labour in society. In particular, two new social strata arose and developed, aimed at serving the needs of the ruling class (feudal lords) – artisans and merchants.

This had been going on for centuries – until the end of the XV century, when very significant changes took place in the world associated with the Great Geographical Discoveries. One of the feudal civilizations, namely the Western European Christian civilization, which due to its advantageous geographical position mastered the methods of navigation of the open sea, as a result of the organization of long-distance sea expeditions, came to the civilizations of the New World, which were at a lower level of development. And then, according to Engels, for Western Europeans "the world at once became almost ten times larger, instead of a quarter of one hemisphere, the whole globe now appeared before the eyes of Western Europeans, and they hurried to take possession of the remaining seven quarters" [1, Vol. 21, p. 83].

The formation of a new socio-economic structure began. "The discovery of gold and silver mines in America, the eradication, enslavement and burial alive of the native population in the mines, the first steps in the conquest and plunder of the East India, the transformation of Africa into a reserved hunting ground on black people - such was the morning dawn of the

capitalist era of production. These idyllic processes are the main moments of primitive accumulation". It was "treasures obtained outside Europe through direct robbery, enslavement of natives, murders, flowed into the metropolis and there turned into capital" [1, Vol. 23, pp. 760, 763]. This was the beginning of capitalism.

3. The Basic Contradiction of Capitalism

It should be noted, however, that Marx is dealing here with *primary accumulation*. He did not consider these processes to be particularly important in relation to *the further* functioning of capitalism, because he believed that basically the initial capital is gradually replaced by surplus value through the exploitation of labour power, and thus does not play a fundamental role in the subsequent process. That is why in "Capital" he does not specifically consider the question of processes in the colonies within the framework of the general theory of a given socio-economic structure and in the twenty-fifth chapter of the first volume of "Capital", which is devoted to them, he is "not concerned with the position of colonies," but only with questions of the identity of certain processes in the metropolis and in the colonies [1, Vol. 23, p. 784].

In fact, *the presence of colonies* in the general system of this formation is its *main distinguishing feature* in comparison with others. If in slave-holding and feudal society the "vertical" (social) public division of labour takes place (although in different ways) at the level of production classes, then under capitalism its main type (naturally, while also preserving the former one) becomes *international (more precisely, inter-civilizational) division of labour*. Under capitalism, two complementary modes of production seem to coexist in the metropolitan countries and in the colonies, but essentially, they are one and the same mode of production, since "in fact, these modes of production are linked to each other. The most advanced depend on the most backward, and vice versa: development is the other side of underdevelopment" [5, p. 65]. But Marx did not take into consideration the fact that *this* division of labour "is concretized in the form of a model of development and backwardness, which will oppose the two camps of mankind – *the haves* and *the have-nots* – separated by an even more radical gap than the one that separates the bourgeoisie and the proletariat of the developed capitalist countries" [6, p. 149]. This makes it *the main contradiction of capitalism*.

As an example of the role played by the colonies in the development of the West, we can cite the information mentioned by Lenin in his work "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" concerning England as the most characteristic metropolitan country: "The national income of England approximately doubled between 1865 and 1898, and the income from 'abroad' during this time increased by nine (!) times" [7, Vol. 27, p. 403]. So, what was the main thing for the development of capitalism – the internal processes in the "civilized countries", analysed by Marx in detail, or their exploitation of colonies?

In reality, "the very existence of capitalism depends on this natural stratification of the world... Capitalism... it would not be able to develop at all without the obliging help of someone else's work". In particular, it was the plundering of the colonies that made possible the so-called "industrial revolution" that began in Europe at the end of the 18th century. "This revolution was not just an instrument of development taken by itself. It was an instrument for dominating and destroying international competition. By mechanization, the industry of Europe became capable of supplanting the traditional industry of other nations. The ditch, dug then, could only widen later. The picture of world history from 1400 or 1450 to 1850-1950 is a picture of the ancient equality, which collapsed under the influence of many centuries of distortion that began at the end of the fifteenth century. Compared to this dominant line, everything else was secondary" [5, pp. 179, 551].

Marx did present a profound and practically exhaustive picture of the processes in capitalist society *within* the metropolitan countries. In developing a "market economy" with *equivalent exchange* in relations with the colonies, for instance, in the field of trade, they sought to get rid of even the main thing that, in Marx's opinion, lay in general at the foundation of capitalist relations, namely, "the rules of the traditional market, which are often too restrictive... Obviously, we are talking here about non-equivalent exchanges, in which competition, which is the basic law of the so-called market economy, does not occupy its proper place" [5, p. 58]. That is, what Marx so scrupulously studied turns out to be *by no means the main* thing in relation to the development of capitalism *as a whole*! How could such an outstanding researcher make such a significant mistake?

There was no mistake at all. In the same way, after some time, it is possible to "convict" *any* scientist, including Newton and Darwin, of mistakes. In fact, they did not make mistakes (that is, logically incorrect construction of the theory), but *delusions* naturally caused by *the fundamental incompleteness of knowledge*. Moreover, the classics of Marxism were well aware that "world history has not always existed; history as world history is the result" [1,

Vol. 25. P. 1, pp. 174, 214; Vol. 23, pp. 174, 594; Vol. 12, p. 736]. And before the formation of a single society-humanity, "to consider society as a single subject means to consider it incorrectly. In one subject, production and consumption appear as moments of one act" [1, Vol. 12, p. 720]. At that time, Marx did not see such a subject in humanity, though it *already existed* on the basis of the international (inter-civilizational) division of labour, in which capitalism had already involved almost all of humanity.

Of course, there was a technological ("horizontal") international division of labour and, accordingly, international trade before, and the rudiments of an unequal social ("vertical") division of labour also appeared – "all this arose earlier, but it was the search for and colonization of overseas lands that first united the disparate rudiments of a new division of labour into a single complex" [8, p. 518]. "The global significance of the West has become a reality in the history of the planet, and the 'Western question' has become, in a sense, fatal. The offensive of the West has radically influenced the face of the modern world. And it was not only in pre-civilized societies that fragile social structures collapsed. Fully developed non-Western civilizations also convulsed and deformed under the influence of this literally world revolution inspired by the West" [9, p. 560]. Thus, the real formation of "classical" capitalism began.

Thinking in accordance with Hegel's ideas of development that capitalism "grows" out of feudalism, Marx believed that *all* countries in their development, albeit at different time, follow the same path, and "the country that is more industrially developed shows the less developed country only a picture of its own future" [1, Vol. 23, p. 7]. In reality, however, capitalism *by its very nature* presupposes *the obligatory simultaneous* existence of both "developed" and "developing" countries, for the existence of backward countries is *a necessary condition* for the existence of capitalism as a mode of production [10, pp. 383-384] (as well as the simultaneous existence of workers and the bourgeoisie for *a given* class society). With their disappearance, capitalism will inevitably disappear as a result of the proletarian revolution.

4. Revolution "against Capital"

In theory, everything was consistent and logical, but in practice, the first revolution, which abolished private ownership on the means of production, to the great surprise and embarrassment of the revolutionaries themselves, did not take place *in the majority* of the

most *industrially developed* countries, as the classics of Marxism assumed, but *in one*, much *less developed one* and even a country that has not completely got rid of feudal relations - Russia. But it happened there. Russian revolutionaries firmly believed in the truths proclaimed in "Capital". And the revolution took its own path, significantly different from what was expected. It is not without reason that the young journalist Antonio Gramsci quite rightly called it "a revolution against Marx's "Capital" [11]. And so, it was. But it did happen nonetheless! Moreover, V.I. Lenin played a huge role in its victory and development.

And Lenin was an orthodox Marxist who fully accepted Marx's theoretical propositions. But, as a genius, he understood and analysed the current political situation *much more deeply* than anyone else, and acted in accordance with the requirements of the moment. As early as 1917, he was not at all sure that the expected revolution would begin in his lifetime. But once it did begin, his actions were strictly calibrated in accordance with the domestic and international situation, and for the most part adequate to it, regardless of any general considerations. And the greatest event of modern history, the Great October Socialist Revolution, took place in complete *disagreement* with Marx's basic assumptions.

But anyway, the Bolsheviks who led it had to live and act further: to develop and defend it, while also trying to understand how all this could have happened and what to do next, if something went wrong. And they managed to preserve and continue the revolutionary gains, but with understanding the situation was much worse as the events clearly did not fit into the framework of the Marxist theory adopted by them. After all, in accordance with it, the revolutionary-Leninists prepared and carried out this revolution only and exclusively *as a part* (their part – according to Lenin "narrowly national") of the world revolution. Moreover, there was hope for a universal character not only before the revolution, but remained for a long time after its accomplishment. Even in the spring of 1918, Lenin considered the Russian revolutionaries to be nothing more than a socialist detachment, "splintered by events from the ranks of the socialist army" and forced to "wait until the socialist revolution in other countries comes to the rescue" [7, Vol. 34, pp/ 253, 335, 225, 15]. But the revolutions in other countries (including the most anticipated German one) were successfully strangled by capitalism, while the Russian one – against all odds! – withstood. And it continued to develop.

Of course, the Bolsheviks in general, and Lenin in particular, did not lose interest in theoretical questions related to the specifics of the Russian revolution, but current tasks overshadowed them. There was a lot of work to do! The time for analysis came much later, when they began to persistently search for an explanation for the discrepancy between

practice and theory – retroactively "correcting" theory so that it could explain the discrepancy between practice and Marx's predictions. As a result, the so-called "weak link theory" appeared. And, of course, they referred to Lenin. And *before* the revolution, in his article "On the Slogan of the United States of Europe" (1916), he really assumed that as a result of the uneven economic and political development of capitalism, "the victory of socialism is possible (!) initially in a few or even in one, separately, capitalist (!) country. The victorious proletariat of this country, having expropriated the capitalists and organized socialist production in its own country, would stand against the rest, the capitalist world, attracting to itself the oppressed classes of other countries..." [7, Vol. 21, p. 311].

That is, Lenin *assumed the possibility of the* victory of the revolution in one country, but one *that could* "stand up against the rest of the capitalist world" (i.e., an *advanced country*). But from this *single* statement a far-reaching conclusion was drawn that "on the basis of a study of imperialist capitalism, Lenin, proceeding from Marx's theory, came to the conclusion that the old formula of Engels and Marx was already (!) not correspond to the new historical situation, that the socialist revolution may well be victorious in one country, taken separately" [12, Vol. 9, pp. 87]. But not only that: it turns out that "the chain of the imperialist front, as a rule (!), must break where the links of the chain are weaker (!), and in any case not necessarily (!) where capitalism is more developed" [12, Vol. 6, pp. 98, 99]. But one way or another, the anti-capitalist revolution in Russia took place. However, it turned out to be not the implementation of the rule, but an *exception* to it, caused by Russia's *special position* in the world. And the revolution was able to win and survive only as a result of a sharp conflict between the "advanced countries", primarily Germany, deprived of colonies, and the impudent Anglo-Saxons. And when the West later organized itself internally under the auspices of the United States, local socialism in Russia came to an end.

The revolution, for which the Bolsheviks were preparing and led, was assumed by Marxism to be the cause of the working class. But it was accomplished thanks to the alliance of the "proletarians of the city and the proletarians of the countryside". From the rostrum in Smolny on October 25, Lenin proclaimed: "Comrades! The workers' and peasants' (!) revolution, the necessity of which the Bolsheviks have been talking about all the time, has taken place". Workers, as the most organized and trained social group, played a very important role in it. But in terms of actual participation in the revolutionary transformations, it turned out to be predominantly peasant, because the peasants made up the majority of the population, and they

needed land. And later, already in the Soviet Union, the majority of its dominant social group (nomenclature) were natives of the peasantry [13, p. 230].

However, the revolution was still traditionally considered proletarian, meaning the industrial proletariat. Lenin's words about the desperate hope for "powerful support from the rebellious workers of other countries" are particularly noteworthy here. This is a fundamental question: how much support could be counted on at all? That is, to what extent the slogan "Workers of all countries, unite!" corresponded to the *real* state of affairs, unite in *a joint struggle for the overthrow of capitalism in your "advanced countries"*. As it turned out later, it did not correspond to much. Its very proclamation was a consequence of the idea that the main contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It undoubtedly existed and exerted a very significant influence on the processes in capitalist society (including the labour movement), but to a large extent depended on the really *main* contradiction of capitalism – the nature of the inter-civilizational division of labour, which primarily determined the social position not only of the bourgeoisie, *but also of the proletariat* of the "advanced countries".

In his work *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, published in 1847, Engels draws a very unsightly picture of this situation, both in industry and in everyday life. At the end of the century, when his book was republished in the United States, he noted a "lasting improvement" in the condition of the British working class [1, Vol. 21, p. 396]. In this regard, F. Braudel, who believed that "the English people paid hard for their victories", said that "after 1850, later, all (!) English people (whatever their social inequalities) took part in the world triumph of England" [5, p. 636]. Indeed, all of them, including the working class, at the expense of the exploitation of the colonies. Engels noted the first s of this when in 1858 he wrote to Marx about the "bourgeoisification" of the working class in England, considering this phenomenon quite natural for a nation "exploiting the whole world" [1, Vol. 21, p. 65]. Thus, the workers of the "advanced countries," in the words of Engels, "took the side" of their bourgeoisie. They continued to fight it, but no longer for changing the world, but for a "fair" division of the colonial pie.

Attempts at revolution in the countries of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, caused by the events of the First World War, were defeated precisely because they were not supported by the broad mass of the working people. Trotsky was sorely mistaken when he asserted that "the working people have not the slightest interest in defending the present borders, especially in Europe, either under the command of their bourgeoisie, much less in a

revolutionary uprising against it" [14, p. 193]. But they were really interested in it. As early as 1920, the Social Democrat Bertrand Russell rightly asserted: "One can imagine the Bolshevization of England as a result of an unsuccessful war that resulted in the loss of India... But now the ordinary worker in Britain will not risk what he has for the sake of a doubtful gain in case of a successful revolution" [15, p. 51]. But even later, after the real "loss of India," the British workers did not show any aspirations for the "Bolshevization of England". They do not show them to this day.

5. Causes of the Russian Revolution

However, the question of the reasons for the discrepancy between the real revolutionary events and those assumed according to Marx's theory has not lost either its theoretical or practical significance yet. And there were two of these reasons: 1) that, as has been said, in contrast to the real situation, Marx considered the main contradiction of capitalism to be the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, while this was *the international (inter-civilizational) division of labour*; 2) the fact that Russia occupied *a special position* in this division. It was noted above more than once that it was precisely the existence of the international "vertical" division of labour that was the main feature of capitalism in relation to other socio-economic structures, and it was the very division that determined both its main characteristics and the driving forces and features of development. In particular, it also determined the nature of the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And Marx presented these relations quite accurately – up to the middle of the 19th century. But later the situation changed dramatically, and it was not the proletarian revolution in the "advanced countries" that would put an end to capitalism. What would it be then?

We will return to this question below, but for now let us turn to the causes of the *Russian revolution*. For this purpose, let us consider the very "special position" of the Russian Empire in the world, which often explains the peculiarities of the Russian revolution. For example, E. Ilyenkov correctly noted that "the system of ideas called 'Marxism' is a naturally ripe result of the development of the traditions of 'Western culture', or, to be more precise, of Western European civilization", but he mistakenly believed that "Russia ... was an integral part of the "Western world", and the revolution of 1917 was forced to solve a typically "Western" problem. And the unforeseen "negative phenomena" that took place in this case were caused primarily by the remnants of "pre-bourgeois, pre-capitalist forms of regulation of life", which

"precisely prevented the establishment of the genuine ideas of Marx ... and led in a number of well-known cases to their "distortion" [16, pp. 156-158]. In fact, the socialist revolution in Russia was not at all a revolution in a "single country" of this Western world. Strictly speaking, it was not a revolution in a "single country" at all.

Speaking of Russia (the Russian Empire), we actually have in mind *the Eurasian civilization*. The Eurasian space as an encompassing landscape with a huge variety of natural conditions is socially united by something in common. Despite the possibility of the existence and development of the population in each specific landscape, on the whole, unfavourable natural conditions throughout the entire space of this civilization have something in common, which significantly limits the possibility of obtaining surplus product. It is "in a hot climate that the needs of the worker are less than in European countries with a temperate climate. The modest size of what he took from the harvest for his subsistence left a larger surplus product for exchange (with colonies – non-equivalent – L.G.)" [5, p. 517]. In the majority of Eurasia, inhabited by the Russians and "colonized" by them, the natural conditions were very harsh. And whether it was snow-covered forest thickets, scanty tundra or arid steppes - *in this regard*, specific details are not very important. The main thing is that "the climate in Russia is harsher than in any industrial country in the world, and this affects the efficiency of any production, if efficiency is determined by the cost/benefit criterion" [17, p. 51].

As for political power, as well as internal social relations, the harsh natural conditions (even regardless of their specific nature) undoubtedly made a significant contribution to the formation of *both authoritarianism in governance and communal principles in the people's* (as F. Braudel put it, "real") *life*, because both contributed to survival due to the consolidation of the ethnos. This predetermined, in particular, the peculiar nature of the Russian colonization of the Eurasian spaces – without the formation of a classical empire (such as the Roman or British), when the population of the metropolis *gets rich at the expense of the colonies*. These relations were special because Russia itself was special. And this peculiarity stemmed from its geographical position as well as the peculiarities of the West itself (then Western Europe) from its [17].

Of course, such a role of Russia was not connected with any specific *innate* "Russian character", much less with the special "humanism" of Russian tsarism. Again, it was determined by the objective conditions of that time, which took place both in the so-called "metropolis" and in potential "colonies". And the main of these conditions is the economic inexpediency of the exploitation of such "colonies" by the "metropolis". The situation began to change only with an

increase in labour productivity (not without the influence of the industrial revolution in the West itself). Having ties (including trade) with Western "advanced" countries, Russia accepted some of their achievements in production and culture. And starting from the era of Peter I, borrowing became much more intensive, which, accordingly, accelerated the development of Russia. Accordingly, its intensive colonization by Western countries began *by economic means*, i.e., the imposition of so called "dependent capitalism" in Russia – the colonial component of the capitalist structure, through the use of foreign capital.

By 1913, banks, through the ownership of controlling stakes, disposed of 88% of the property of enterprises in the metallurgical industry, 96% in shipbuilding, 81.2% in car building, 75% in the coal industry, 60% in all oil production, and 80% in copper mining. All major economic reforms in 1906-1909 were carried out with the participation of foreign investments. 60-70% of the shares of industrial enterprises were in the portfolios of banks and quoted on foreign exchanges. Foreign capital in Russia actually owned industry both through direct participation in industry and through the subordinate "subsidiary" system of Russian banks.

At the same time, for foreign financial capital, the disposal of Russian savings was guaranteed by the system of relations that was created between this capital and the Ministry of Finance of Russia as a result of the huge foreign debt of the tsarist government. Accordingly, foreign capital, coming into Russia, got the opportunity to grow faster (!) than at home. Every year, foreign capital exported (!) huge profits from Russia (which significantly exceeded investments in Russian industry). However, this position was also situational: if at the end of the 19th century foreign capital contributed to the acceleration of the country's industrialization, then from the beginning of the 20th century it began to gradually turn into a brake on the economic development of Russia [18, pp. 58-61].

In his first scientific work "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", Lenin repeated the "mistake" of Marx, who believed that the main feature of capitalism is market relations with equivalent exchange. In fact, there could be no question of any equivalent exchange here – colonial "dependent capitalism" was being formed. So, no revolution in Marx's understanding could have taken place here at all, by definition. As, however, in the "advanced countries". For the abolition of capitalism as a socio-economic structure presupposes the obligatory resolution not of the *internal* contradictions in the imperialist countries, but of the *international* contradictions within *capitalism as a world system as a whole*, that is, *between* the "advanced" and the "backward" countries. Accordingly, revolutionary transformations were to be carried out not *within* the "advanced countries", but *against* them.

6. The Soviet Union – Achievements and Defeat

Since Russia was not one of the "advanced" (i.e., imperialist) countries in mind by the classics of Marxism, the revolutionary processes were carried out *in Russia itself*, but in the final analysis *they were objectively directed against imperialism as a whole, which sought to turn it into a colony*. Therefore, despite the sharp contradictions that existed between the imperialist countries, the events in Russia caused intervention on the part of as many as fourteen "advanced" powers! And only the above-mentioned contradictions saved the Russian revolution: after all, at that time the "advanced countries" had no time for it – it was at that time that they were intensively sorting out relations among themselves.

The revolution in Russia took place not because it turned out to be the "weakest link" in the "chain" of the imperialist countries, but, on the contrary, because it was the "strongest link" among the colonial countries. Its economic development exceeded the level of others, and its comprador bourgeoisie, due to the residual phenomena of feudalism, had not yet had time to form a monolithic social group, and the *working people* who rebelled under the leadership of the Bolsheviks managed to cope with it. The situation was different in its time with the bourgeois revolutions in Western Europe. The fact is that by the time of the bourgeois revolutions, capitalism *had already won* in it in socio-economic terms. It was only a question of the seizure of *political power* by the *already economically dominant* social group. As a result of the October Revolution, a new socio-economic system *had to be created* yet, and a new dominant social group *had to emerge* yet.

The expected "dictatorship of the proletariat" did not work out at once. And not only because it was still small in number. The main thing was that it still had strong "old prejudices that chained the worker to the old world" [7, Vol. 43, p. 308], and the revolutionaries had to "struggle with the shortcomings in the working milieu of the common interest consciousness, with individual manifestations of syndicalism" [7, Vol. 39, p. 309]. Therefore, in reality, not the entire proletariat as a "self-organizing mass", as it was originally assumed, but only the "vanguard (!) of the proletariat took into its own hands the construction of power" and began to establish "the dictatorship of the revolutionary elements (!) class" [7, Vol. 39, pp. 295, 267]. There was a "separation of the revolutionary and only the revolutionary part (!) proletariat into the party and the same part (!) of the party into its leading centres" [7, Vol. 41, P. 448]. Accordingly, the place of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a "self-organizing mass" is taken by the dictatorship of that relatively narrow *group of people* who have "separated" into the above-mentioned "leading centres" organized into a hierarchical structure,

i.e., the party, economic and administrative *nomenclature*, which has become the *dominant* social group. Under her leadership, the *construction* of a new socio-economic structure was carried out.

But despite all the peculiarities and difficulties of the Russian revolution due to its "prematurity", the socialist system being established in the former Russian Empire by its very nature ensured the main thing – *the successful development* of the emerging socialist Soviet Union. And its formation in the Soviet Union was greatly facilitated by the already existing peculiar social ideology, the development of which was facilitated by all the same economic and geographical factors, affecting production processes. They essentially led to the development of a *collectivist* ideology on the basis of the *communal* ideology that has always been characteristic of Russia. Together with a relatively high scientific and technical level, this greatly contributed to the victory of socialist relations. As Marx wrote, "Russia is the only country in Europe in which communal land ownership has been preserved on a broad national scale, but at the same time Russia exists in modern historical environment, it is a contemporary of a higher culture, it is connected with the world market, which is dominated by capitalist production" [1, Vol. 19, p. 413]. Believing that it is "the commune that is the fulcrum of the social revival of Russia" [1, Vol. 19, p. 251], Marx assumed that among Russian peasants "the habit of artel relations would greatly facilitate their transition from parcel cultivation to collective cultivation" [1, Vol. 19, p. 414]. And he was absolutely right.

The formation of socialist production relations provided the USSR with a very high rate of scientific and technological development. During its existence, it has firmly taken second place in the world in economic terms. This was facilitated by the fact that the Soviet Union managed to avoid the capitalist forced international "vertical" division of labour. In his report to the Fourteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Stalin said: "We must build our economy in such a way that our country does not become an appendage of the world capitalist system, so that it is not included in the general system of capitalist development as its subsidiary enterprise, so that our state develops not as an auxiliary enterprise of world capitalism, but as *an independent economic unit* based mainly on the *domestic* market" [12, Vol. 7, p. 298] (our italics – L.G.). That, in fact, was done. Accordingly, the national economy, science and culture developed at a rapid pace. The well-being of the Soviet people grew. The defensive power was strengthened, which did not allow the imperialist countries to carry out the military liquidation of the USSR. And the Soviet Union really turned out to be invincible in the face of external forces. But it was defeated due to the betrayal of its own "elite".

Indeed, the main reason for the collapse and social transformation of the Soviet Union (in other words, the counter-revolution) was the ideological decay of its dominant social group, the nomenclature, which became the basis for the formation of the Russian comprador bourgeoisie. There were a lot of reasons for this, the main of which was the ideological influence of the capitalist environment. It had practically no effect on its first generation – people who were ideologically convinced, tempered by the underground, revolutionary events, intervention and civil war, and the strain of industrialization Not to mention the Great Patriotic War. For all the internal disagreements caused by the lack of generally accepted theoretical justifications, they were mostly selfless people who were devoted to their life's work to the end. But with the further *self-reproduction* of the nomenclature, in addition to competence and dedication to the cause, the readiness of those who were co-opted into it to defend its *common interests as a special social group began to play an increasingly important role*. And the further it went, the more important role this circumstance began to play. And the example of the "sweet life" of the Western "elite" began to make an increasingly strong impression on this "elite" of the USSR, which marked the beginning of its decomposition.

At the same time, one of the important concrete reasons for the subsequent events was the profanation of Marxist theory, which was being turned into something blasphemously called "Marxism-Leninism". It was a mixture of arbitrarily interpreted quotations from the works of the classics of Marxism, and "innovations" objectively aimed at justifying the revisionist course of the "late" nomenclature. Instead of developing Marx's teaching, including subjecting some of his propositions to dialectical negation (and "in no field can development take place that does not deny its former forms of existence" [1, Vol. 4, p. 297]), their "science" was "characterized by the fact that what at a certain historical stage of development was new, original, profound, and well-founded, it repeats at a time when it is flat, lagged behind and falsely" [1, Vol. 25, P. II, p. 348].

Thus, neither the revolution in Russia nor the resulting Soviet Union was able *to finally put an end to capitalism*, not only throughout the world, but even in its own Eurasian civilization. However, the achievements were historically extremely important. Despite the relatively short period of its existence, the Soviet Union was able to fulfil a number of objective tasks that contributed to world development, that is, *it brought* the end of capitalism as close as it could:

- 1) it clearly demonstrated the possibility of the liquidation of capitalism, as well as the construction and successful functioning of a "post-capitalist" (socialist) public system;
- 2) significantly contributed to the elimination of the colonial system in its "classical"

form in the world;

3) at the cost of enormous sacrifices, he prevented the domination of the most reactionary form of capitalism on the planet – fascism (Nazism);

4) to a very large extent contributed to the implementation and protection of certain revolutionary transformations in a number of countries (this is especially true of the Chinese revolution).

7. The End of Capitalism is the Resolution of its Fundamental Contradiction

Nevertheless, on the whole, the objective task of eliminating capitalism as a socio-economic system has remained unresolved, and the question of the anti-capitalist revolution has not been removed from the agenda of human development. But the proletariat in the form in which it was presented to the classics of Marxism has not already existed for more than a hundred years. And the main thing is that all this time the contradictions have been growing not so much *within* the imperialist countries as *between them and the rest of the world*. And in this confrontation the "proletariat" of the "advanced countries" has been and will be *on their side*. Only former colonies can form the driving forces of current and future revolutionary change. And the economic conditions for them, as Marx pointed out, are created by *the very development of capitalism* as a world system.

The terms "imperialism", "capitalism" and "colonialism" actually denote one and the same phenomenon, only taken in its different aspects. The term "imperialism" reflects the position of the metropolitan countries in relation to the colonial countries, as well as their relations with each other in relation to the latter. The term "capitalism" is used to denote the totality of economic relations within the metropolitan countries – in each separately and (conditionally) in all together, that is, if, according to the above-mentioned expression of Marx, "the entire trading world is considered as one nation". And, finally, "colonialism" is the position of colonial (later "developing") countries in relation to metropolitan countries. Only together they reflect the capitalist socio-economic structure in its entirety and integrity.

And the classics of Marxism hoped precisely for *an internal* revolutionary reorganization exactly in the "advanced countries". Well, as soon as Europe and North America are reorganized, this will give such a colossal force and such an example that the semi-civilized

countries will follow us by themselves; economic needs alone will take care of this" [1, Vol. 35, p. 298]. But why does "Europe and North America" need a socialist revolution – in order to lose a significant part of their income? Including their workers: instead of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, "the workers also quietly enjoy the colonial monopoly", which can be lost in such transformations. But since "the liberated proletariat cannot wage colonial wars, we will have to come to terms with this" [1, Vol. 35, p. 297]. But there is no such desire among the workers of the "advanced countries"...

As we have already noted, on the basis of the ideas about society that existed in his time, Marx proceeded from the assumption that the main contradiction of capitalism, which is gradually embracing the whole world, is the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie – the two classes that determine the social structure of society. "According to our assumption, i.e., suggesting the general and exclusive domination of capitalist production, with the exception of the capitalist class [with their servants – L.G.] in general, there are no other classes except the class of workers" [1, Vol. 24, p. 391]. He considered the existence of colonies to be an important circumstance, but temporary and insignificant for the development of capitalism as a socio-economic structure.

In fact, however, capitalism *divided the world* into two parts, different in size, in importance, and in functions: the *metropolises* and *the colonies*. Indeed, formally there were only bourgeois and workers in both parts. However, in the first part there was, so to say, the "classical" bourgeoisie, realizing its own relations of ownership of the production means, and in the second, the comprador bourgeoisie, carrying out the will of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. And there were workers in both parts, but, on the contrary, it was in the colonies that they were subject to exploitation in full accordance with Marx's theory, and in the metropolis for some time they themselves began to partially enjoy the results of this exploitation. Therefore, the workers of the "advanced countries" who are in the "upper part" of this "vertical" are not very inclined to change the situation.

8. The Crisis of the Inter-Civilizational Division of Labour

But the former colonies are very interested in the elimination of their colonial dependence. They are not able to break out of it by themselves, and yet gradual changes in this respect are taking place. And they occur, as Marx predicted, as a result of the *development of capitalism itself* as a social system, including the changes in the methods of colonial exploitation.

Capitalists in the "advanced countries" throughout the existence of this social system were concerned with only one thing: to "pump out" the maximum profit from the colonial countries. This has been going on throughout the fifth century.

But at the same time, the methods that provide the maximum effect, in accordance with the incessant scientific and technological progress, as we have already noted, changed quite significantly. At the first stage, there was the usual robbery of overseas peoples by Western European conquistadors, or unequal trade relations (unequal exchange), carried out by merchants from various Western European states. In the second, the latter sought to change these relations by turning overseas countries into their colonies and organizing their *orderly* exploitation. This also led to conflicts between the countries of the metropolis. The resources obtained were used for the industrial revolution in Western Europe, which marked the second ("classical") stage in the development of capitalism. And, finally, after the Second World War, the third stage of capitalism began. With the formal liquidation of the colonial system, the unequal international (inter-civilizational) division of labour continued to be preserved, but again changed its forms.

Now, instead of the metropolitan states, their transnational corporations are beginning to play the main role in it. Moreover, it turned out that they could get more profit by *transferring* many branches of production from the "advanced countries" to former colonies with *cheap labour*. At the same time, it was on the basis of transnational corporations, driven by the thirst for maximum profit, that the West united under the leadership of the United States. This third period ensured the further flourishing of capitalism and at the same time marked the "beginning of the end" of capitalism as a socio-economic structure, since, as a result of the gradual increase in the level of scientific and technological development of the former colonial countries, it turned out to be incompatible with the vertical (social) division of labour between civilizations.

In order to organize production in them, it was necessary to supply them with modern technological equipment and advanced technology, provide technical guidance, and improve the skills of the local workforce. The mechanism worked, but its functioning gave rise to other socio-economic consequences in addition to the desired one. If production is organized in a former colony, then due to its economic inexpediency, similar production in the metropolis is curtailed. That is, with the *industrialization* of "developing" countries, *deindustrialization* of "developed" countries takes place at the same time, which leads to a gradual equalization of

their scientific and technological potentials. And this affects not only the ratio of their GDP, but also in a number of social processes.

The fact is that such a profitable investment of capital for transnational corporations turned out to be fraught with a number of socio-economic phenomena both in the former metropolises and in the former colonies. In the latter, progressive technologies are being introduced, a qualified workforce is being trained, and its standard of living is rising. And in the former metropolises, wealth is growing, but only of *the upper strata of the financial bourgeoisie*. The rest of the population either receive practically nothing from this, or their well-being is falling. And the deindustrialization of these countries also leads to a decrease in the skills of their workforce. The economy is gradually transforming, turning from a producing economy into a service economy.

As a result, due to such a redistribution of production, social stratification in the Western countries themselves is increasing: transnational oligarchs are getting richer, and the so-called "middle class", on which the social stability of these countries was based, is decreasing in number and becoming poorer due to the unwillingness of large capitalists to share income. And this is natural, since along with the transfer of material production to the countries of "dependent capitalism", the role of those social strata that previously provided its intellectual component in the countries of the "core" is also decreasing. Here is the opinion of the former vice president of Lehman Brothers (who, by the way, started the 2008 crisis) Lawrence MacDonald about the situation in the United States: "Globalization has deprived the middle class in the West of jobs, enriched the owners of companies... Since 1973, the incomes of the richest 1% of Americans have increased by 73%, the incomes of everyone else have decreased by 5%". And, very importantly, also from an ideological point of view, since "middle-class incomes of Americans and Europeans grew by 1-5% from 1988 to 2008, while middle-class incomes in Asia grew by 60-70%" [19]. All this inevitably leads to an increase in internal tension and a decrease in stability in "civilized" countries and strengthens the positions of "developing" countries.

An important role was also played by the violation of the world monopoly of capitalism of the "developed countries" on "mental labour" associated with the emergence of a new social system – socialism. At one time, thanks to the latter, energetic technological and cultural progress began in the USSR, which significantly disrupted the nature of the world division of labour. The crisis of socialism in the USSR slowed down this process, but it can no longer be stopped. On the one hand, socialist China began to develop rapidly. On the other hand, the

export of capital led to the creation of capitalist industrial "semi-peripheries," which against the background of the deindustrialization of the core countries became new centres of condensation of technological and scientific progress. As a result, the West began to increasingly lose its global monopoly on "mental labour," which directly violates the previously established global division of labour, which provides it with the very possibility of exploiting most of the world.

Well, the main consequence of the ongoing changes was objectively the acceleration of the pace of development in the "developing" countries, and its decrease in the "developed" countries. For example, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) account for 43% of the world's population and 7.5% of GDP growth per year, and the United States and other Western countries account for 2.5% (out of 17% of the world's population). This is also due to the flow of technologies, as well as engineering and skilled workers to the former, the intensification of scientific research in them, on the one hand, and the above-mentioned gradual transformation of the economy of Western countries from industrial to "service" on the other. Now the number of such countries is growing, which, by the way, leads to the rapid expansion of this organization.

As a result, many recent "underdeveloped" countries are less and less technologically and scientifically dependent on the former metropolis. And these processes are accelerating, exerting an ever-increasing destructive influence on the entire system. As a result, the ratio of the share of the G7 and BRICS countries in world GDP in terms of purchasing power parity is changing quite rapidly: in 1995 – 44.9% / 16.9%; 2010 – 34.3/26.6%; 2023 – 29.9%/32.1% [20]. At the same time, the gap will inevitably widen, since even after the expansion of the BRICS, the average growth rate in the economy in the new composition will reach a value of 4.4% per year against the world indicator of 3.2%, and the growth rate of the G7 countries will be only 1.7%.

And there is no reason to assume that this trend will somehow change in the future. As a result, many of the recent "underdeveloped" countries are not only less and less technologically dependent on the countries of the former metropolis, but sometimes even surpass them. And these processes are accelerating, having an ever-increasing impact on the entire system in financial, political, social, military and other respects. This global crisis of the international "vertical" division of labour is steadily leading to the *liquidation* of the latter, i.e., to a *revolutionary* change in the socio-economic system in the world, and then to a social revolution fixing a new world socio-economic situation.

9. Conclusion

The system to which the anti-capitalist revolution was leading was called *socialism*. Its specific forms depend on the specific characteristics of states (or their regional associations). In the absence of social antagonism, the role and influence of the group that *controls* the means of production will constantly decrease as the direct management of production is transferred to *technical systems*. The task for production developed by the public consciousness (one might say, the *noosphere* of society) will no longer be transferred by its representatives to those who are directly engaged in production, for its implementation by the *technosphere*. With the complete solution of this problem, that is, with the complete *abolition* of the "vertical" division of labour by ensuring the above-mentioned direct connection between the noosphere and the technosphere of society (which depends, again, on the level of scientific and technological progress), local (regional) socialism will finally be replaced by society-humanity.

However, those social groups that linked their existence with one or another socio-economic structure were never ready to take its natural death for granted, and resisted the dictates of history with all their might. In the same way, today the former "advanced countries" (which are now called the "collective West") are not ready to agree that they, like everyone else, will have *to earn their own living completely*. And they resist this in all possible ways, which leads to many international conflicts. In particular, military force is used, which in modern conditions creates serious problems for the whole world. The rest of the countries (the "world majority") will have to do a great deal to prevent the stubborn resistance of the imperialist minority to natural social processes from taking the form that is dangerous to the very existence of humanity.

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