

China's "Triple Revolution Theory" and Marxist Analysis

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In what is known as the New Era, beginning in 2012 with the rise of Xi Jinping as chairman of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and president of the People's Republic of China (PRC), there has been a steady advance of the Sinicisation of Marxist theory and of the concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics, spreading to all aspects of society and adopted as a governing principle for China as a whole. This transformation is not, however, seen as a sharp break with the past, but as a further progression of the Chinese Revolution, as symbolised by its three paramount leaders over its history, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Xi Jinping, symbolising the periods of the Revolutionary Seizure of Power, Revolutionary Reform (or Reform Revolution), and the New Era, now seen as representing the period of Transitional Revolution aimed at completing the revolution. The call to "carry the revolution to its completion," which was first introduced by Mao, was taken up again by Xi in 2016, and in the last several years has been a persistent theme in his speeches, and in the longer-range strategies the CPC has been promoting. It thus represents a new phase in the Chinese Revolution, which recently celebrated in seventy-fifth anniversary.



These shifts in the historical progression of the Chinese Revolution have led to various attempts to theorize the three stages of the revolution. Here Cheng Enfu and Yang Jun provide what they call "Triple Revolution Theory." Their article is a product of the Sinicisation of Marxism and is primarily written for a Chinese audience and for Marxists worldwide who have been following the progress of the Chinese Revolution. Since their argument is both logical and historical in character, while also depicting various alternative points of view, it should be readily understandable to patient and attentive readers. Nevertheless, we encourage MR readers who find the journey labourious to leap to the end, namely the conclusion in part IV, since this addresses what "carrying the revolution to completion" really means in the view of

these authors. Having done so, it will be possible to examine their whole argument from beginning to end, with new and deeper insights into the evolution of Chinese Marxist thought in the present as history.

— The Editors

Within Chinese Marxism, Xi Jinping has reintroduced the notion, originating with Mao Zedong, of “vigorously advancing the spirit of carrying the revolution through to its completion.” The basis for this position is that “carrying the revolution through to its completion” represents the essence of Marxist doctrine and is the fundamental theme running through the history of the international Communist movement. It constitutes, in Xi’s conception, an urgent demand of the Communist Party of China (CPC) as it actively pursues the Great Struggle.

Such a view demands that we engage with the rich, multilevel connotations of revolution, and, in creative fashion, the scientific and technological revolution. We can see this in terms of the “Triple Revolution.” First, revolution takes the form of a seizure of power, in the sense of overthrowing the old regime and establishing and defending the new ruling authority. Second, revolution embodies reform, in the sense of the self-improvement and development of the socialist system. Third, the revolution is a “transitional revolution,” in the sense of a transformation from the primary stage of socialist society to the subsequent stage and to communist society. The Triple Revolution Theory advanced here is an overall category that involves succession in time, connection upward and downward in space, and, in the field of logic, progressive cause and effect.

Completing the Revolution

Since socialism with Chinese characteristics entered the New Era, it has been common for thinkers at home and abroad mistakenly to belittle or even reject Marxism, socialism, communism, and the revolution as associated with old-style Communists, claiming that these concepts amount to an “outdated theory.” In this connection, Xi, as CPC General Secretary, has stressed on many occasions that “we must continue to hold high the banner of revolution” in the New Era, and that we need to be more “thorough” in furthering the revolution.¹ More significantly, it was on December 30, 2016, in his speech at the New Year Tea Party of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference National Committee, that Xi urged the whole society to “vigorously advance the spirit of carrying the revolution through to its completion.”² This was the first time since the Reform and Opening Up that the top leaders of the party and state had revisited Comrade Mao’s great call to “carry the revolution through to its completion,” a call issued more than half a century ago in an official public speech. Acknowledging that the revolution had not yet been completely successful, Comrade Xi urged his listeners to show determination and strength in carrying it forward to total victory.

On January 5, 2018, at the opening ceremony of a motivational seminar of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi further highlighted the identity and social role of Communists: “We are revolutionaries. Don’t let us lose the revolutionary spirit.”³ On the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the new China, he paid a special visit to the Beijing Xiangshan revolutionary memorial site and reiterated: “Continue and carry forward the revolutionary spirit of the older generation of revolutionaries.” He went on to state: “It is better to be brave enough to chase down the

¹ ↪ “To Implement the New Development Concept and Promote the Development of High Quality, and to Strive to Create a New Situation in the Rise of the Central Region,” People’s Daily, May 23, 2019.

² ↪ Xi Jinping, “Speech at the New Year Tea Party of the CPPCC National Committee (December 30, 2016),” People’s Daily, December 31, 2016.

³ ↪ “Time Does Not Wait for Me; Seize the Day to Work and Create a New Situation in the Cause of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in a New Era,” People’s Daily, January 6, 2018.

aggressors, not to sell one's name and learn from the overlord."⁴ At the same time, the word "revolution" has figured with great frequency in Xi's public statements, featuring more than a thousand times in his important speeches on governing the country in the New Era. Phrases in which these references to revolution appear include "Revolutionary Ideal," "Revolutionary Culture," "Revolutionary Style," "Revolutionary Feelings," "Revolutionary Struggle," "Revolutionary Purpose," "Revolutionary Will," "Revolutionary Fighting Spirit," "Revolutionary Discipline," "Revolutionary Traditional Education," "Self-Revolution," "Revolutionary Soldiers in the New Era," "New Military Revolution," "New Round of Scientific and Technological Revolution," "New Round of Technological Revolution," "New Round of Industrial Revolution" (and "New Industry Revolution"), "Energy Production Revolution," "Consumption Revolution," "Supply Revolution," "Technology Revolution," "System Revolution," "Toilet Revolution," and so on. Of course, simply invoking a term is not true knowledge, so we cannot help asking: aside from the revolutions in science, technology, industry, and military affairs, why has Xi repeatedly emphasised the discourse of "revolution," and insisted that it be put into practice? What should this revolution include? We attempt to break this down in what follows.

I. The Inevitability and Rationality of "Vigorously Carrying the Revolution Forward to Its Completion"

A. "Carrying the revolution forward to its completion" is not only important, but also necessary. The basis of its inevitability and rationality lies in the objective nature of the development of theoretical logic, historical logic, and realistic logic. From the perspective of theoretical logic, this is the essential feature of Marxist theory; from the perspective of historical logic, this is the whole theme of the history of the international Communist movement; and from the perspective of practical logic, this is the urgent requirement for the CPC to actively respond to the Great Struggle.

B. "Carrying the revolution through to its completion" represents the essence of Marxist theory. Fundamentally opposed to the bourgeois ideologies of the past, with their conservatism, vulgarity, and rigidity, Marxism is "the theory of revolution first."⁵ This revolution is embodied in the whole process of establishing, developing, and applying Marxist theory. On the one hand, the emergence of Marxism was by no means a matter of a sectarian theory falling from the sky. Marxism was the inevitable product of scientific criticism of the capitalist mode of production, and of previous revolutionary innovations in the human social sciences. Today, the world is undergoing a vast and endless process of development. Accordingly, the revolution represented by Marxist theory will continue. Marxists are still criticising contemporary capitalism and engaging in revolutionary struggle against the ideas and theories of the Western bourgeoisie, so as to take advantage of all the positive and beneficial achievements of world civilisation and to allow Marxist theory to develop further. In the Marxist view, nothing in the world is eternal or sacred. All existing things display the contradictory movement of the unity of opposites. Revolution and criticism make up the inexhaustible driving force and internal source of the development of reality, and they are also the root of the eternal vitality and youth of Marxist theory.

⁴ *Do Not Forget the Original Aspiration, Remember Our Mission, Forge ahead with Confidence, and Continue to Consolidate and Develop New China*, "People's Daily, September 13, 2019. Xi has repeatedly stressed at many symposia that best commemoration of China's revolutionaries is to carry forward the revolutionary cause that they pioneered and strove for. This has been the case at events celebrating the births of revolutionaries such as Mao, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Deng, Chen Yun, Hu Yaobang, and more. At the same time, Xi has also repeatedly stressed in a series of visits and commemorative activities at significant sites of the Red Revolution that we should strive to advance the great cause for which the revolutionary martyrs fought and sacrificed themselves so as to honor the revolutionary heroes. For example, in May 2019, he revisited the starting place of the Red Army's Long March in Yudu, Jiangxi Province. In Zhangye, Gansu Province, he paid tribute to the West Road Army of the Chinese workers' and peasants' Red Army in August of that year and, one month later, in Xinxian County, Henan Province, he commemorated the martyrs of the Hubei Henan Anhui Soviet Area. Then, in July 2020, Xi visited the Siping Campaign Memorial Hall in Jilin Province.

⁵ ↪ Zhu Jiamu, "Marxism Is the Theory of Revolution First," *Research on World Socialism*, no. 6 (2018).

Viewed differently, Marxism as it criticises the old world and discovers the new requires the overthrow of the previous conditions so as to establish new conditions in practice, thus revolutionising the existing world.⁶ It thus incorporates theoretical and practical knowledge of how to “change the world” so as to realise the complete liberation of humankind. During his life, Karl Marx, as the main founder of Marxism, came to be esteemed as a thinker, politician, philosopher, and economist, and much more. Frederick Engels, who shared forty years of revolutionary friendship with him, spoke highly of his old comrade, remarking at one point: “Marx is first and foremost a revolutionary.”⁷ At the commemorative meeting marking the two hundredth anniversary of Marx’s birth, Xi pointed out that Marx always stood in the forefront of the revolutionary struggle, from the establishment of the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee, to his participation of the League of the Just by drafting the Communist Manifesto as the programmatic document of scientific communism; from directly participating in European revolutions of 1848 and founding the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, to participating in the first international founding conference of the First International and drafting important documents such as the Founding Declaration and Provisional Articles of Association. “Being a revolutionary first” is applicable not only to Marx, but also to Engels, and to all proletarian revolutionary leaders, including Lie Ning, Mao, and Deng Xiaoping.⁸ In short, since “Marxism is essentially a revolutionary theory and revolutionary program,” abandoning this “revolutionary soul” is tantamount to debilitating, suffocating, and even disintegrating Marxist theory in its entirety.⁹

C. “Carrying the revolution through to its completion” is the whole theme of the history of the international Communist movement. Revolution is the locomotive that drives history forward. As the most profound, extensive, and thorough revolutionary movement in human history, the international Communist movement, which sets out to replace capitalism and establish socialism in order to realise communism, has changed the process of world history in unprecedented ways. From the Paris Commune in France to the October Revolution in Russia, from China’s new democratic revolution to the rising proletarian movement in developed capitalist countries and developing countries since the Second World War, this series of revolutionary waves has effectively reconstructed the relationship of forces between global socialism and capitalism. However, the revolutionary situation is complex and changeable.

In the revolutionary will Engels wrote before his death (the introduction to Marx’s *The Class Struggles in France*, also known as Engels’s “last testament”), he predicted that various opportunistic leanings might appear in the Second International. He repeatedly warned revolutionary comrades in various countries that the International, while adapting to the new characteristics of the changing revolutionary situation, should also maintain its fundamental positions, that is, that it should never give up its quest for revolutionary power: “The right to revolution is, after all, the only really ‘historical right.’”¹⁰

However, Eduard Bernstein, the main representative of Second International revisionism; Karl Kautsky, the most important theorist of the German Social Democratic Party; and later, Mikhail Gorbachev of the former Soviet Union tampered with, abandoned, and even betrayed the series of basic principles and policy propositions of Marxism that enjoined them to “carry the revolution through to its completion.” As a result, the international Communist movement split between scientific socialism and social democracy, and even triggered the historical tragedy of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in Eastern Europe.

⁶ ↪ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), 38.

⁷ ↪ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Marx and Engels Anthology*, vol. 3 (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2009), 602.

⁸ ↪ Xi Jinping, “Speech at the 200th Anniversary Meeting to Commemorate the Birth of Marx,” *People’s Daily*, May 5, 2018.

⁹ ↪ Robert Charles Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, trans. Gao An (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2012), 26.

¹⁰ ↪ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 27, 521.

Historical experience and its lessons show fully that “carrying the revolution through to its completion” is the authentic thread that runs through the 170-year history of the international Communist movement. To reject and bid farewell to the revolution is to put an end to the history, and even the future destiny, of the international Communist movement. In today’s world, “we are still in the historical era specified by Marx,” that is, the “era of transition from capitalism to socialism.”¹¹ The present era continues to be dominated by the new imperialism, but it is also the era when the working class all over the world will carry out a new “Great Revolution.” As long as this great historical era has not fundamentally changed, the international Communist movement must seize the opportunities before it and once again raise the banner of “carrying the revolution through to its completion,” so that it can hope to gradually lift the world socialist cause out of its present trough and go forward to a climax in the twenty-first century.

D. “Carrying the revolution through to its completion” is an urgent requirement if the Communist Party of China is to respond actively to the “Great Struggle.” Over the century since its birth, the CPC has grown and expanded in the course of its struggles. Today’s world is experiencing great changes, unprecedented in the past century, and China’s development under the leadership of the CPC has experienced its most successful historical period of modern times. Some thinkers, however, contend that development is premised on stability, arguing that struggle destroys harmony. They go on to advocate the “Theory of the Extinction of Struggle.” This view maintains that development needs a stable and harmonious environment. In its superficiality, such analysis reverses the relationship between cause and effect. In class society, it is only through struggle that we can achieve stability and harmony. A one-sided pursuit of stability and apparent harmony will lead to risks and crises. For a long period following the Eighteenth Party Congress, we were “only talking about harmony, not fighting.”

But today, as Xi has repeatedly stressed, we are “carrying out a ‘Great Struggle’ with many new historical characteristics.”¹² This is because as we proceed on our journey of realising the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, facing a complex domestic and international environment, we are not only encountering once-in-a-lifetime historical opportunities, but also confronting unprecedented challenges, risks, resistance, and contradictions. Communists must engage in “great struggles,” instead of merely preening their feathers. Since the Nineteenth Party Congress, Xi has made the universality of the Great Struggle even clearer, pointing out that we are faced with a great number of major struggles. These include constructing economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological civilisation; strengthening the army and national defence; engaging in work around the questions of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan; pursuing diplomatic work; and further building the party.¹³

The Great Struggle as the first of the “four greats” (the other three are “Great Projects,” “Great Undertakings,” and “Great Dreams”) is not limited to a certain field, but runs through the entirety of the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We see it in the overall scheme of the “Five in One,” and in the strategic layout of the “Four Comprehensives” and the “Five Development Ideas,” involving all fields in the New Era. The spirit of the work being performed on all fronts lies in the recognition that our work proceeds through a process of struggle, and that we must be proactive and dare to take responsibility. Therefore, in order to win new victories in the Great Struggle during the new era, there is an urgent need to carry forward the revolutionary spirit of this struggle.

¹¹ ↪ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2017), 66; Jiang Hui, “We Are Still in the Historical Era Specified by Marxism—An Interview with Jiang Hui, Member of the Party Group of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Director of the Institute of Contemporary China Studies,” *Marxist Studies*, no. 1 (2019).

¹² ↪ Xi Jinping, Speech at the 120th Anniversary Symposium on Comrade Mao Zedong’s Birthday (December 26, 2013) (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2013), 24.

¹³ ↪ “Tenacious Struggle to Achieve ‘the Goal of Two Centenaries,’” *People’s Daily*, September 4, 2019.

In the past, the CPC was able to win state power through armed combat because of the revolutionary spirit that drove the Great Struggle and the revolutionary movement. Today, the historical character of the present era dictates that the new Great Struggle will be arduous and long-term in nature, with complex factors superimposed on one another. To achieve the final victory of this Great Struggle, we must keep pace with the times, maintain the revolutionary nature of the CPC, carry the revolutionary spirit forward, and pursue the revolution to its completion. It can be seen that the CPC is not only the ruling party, but also the party of construction and the revolutionary party. If this is not the case, then the party will lose its ruling position as its revolutionary nature fades. In such circumstances, the achievements of construction recorded in the Great Struggle will not only be undone, but the party and the country will perish and be eliminated by history. The lessons of the collapse of the Communist parties of the former Soviet Union and of the Eastern European socialist countries must be learned and attended to.

Since the significance of “revolution” is so great, what should be the content of the revolution referred to in the call to “vigorously advance the spirit of carrying forward the revolution to its completion”? At present, there are three main theoretical elaborations presented in academic circles. One is the Three Revolutions Theory based on vertical logic (New Democratic Revolution, Socialist Revolution, and Socialist Reform and Opening Up). The second is the Theory of Three Revolutions fashioned around a horizontal logic (revolution in the economic field, revolution in the political field, and revolution in the ideological and cultural field). The third is the “Two Revolution Theory” position (Social Revolution and Self-Revolution), advanced from the point of view of subjective and objective logic. Each of these three elaborations rests on combining the “narrow” revolutionary view with the broad revolutionary view. This combination of theories is of great value, and together they objectively summarise and refine the Marxist revolutionary view, the history of the international Communist movement, and the whole of revolutionary history since the founding of the CPC. However, defects and deficiencies are apparent in each of these perspectives. The Theory of Three Revolutions does not directly reflect the principle of thoroughness implicit in revolution, while the Three Revolutions Theory and Two Revolutions Theory do not reflect the phased historical characteristics of revolution. In this regard, we must make a deeper scientific analysis on the basis of these three theoretical elaborations.

Generally speaking, the revolution involved in “vigorously advancing the spirit of carrying the revolution through to its completion” should have rich connotations at multiple levels and in various dimensions. In addition to the scientific and technological revolution and the revolution in military affairs and productivity, the revolution is principally manifested through its following three basic properties. First, it involves a “Revolutionary Conquest of Power,” in the sense of overthrowing the old regime and establishing and defending the new order; this is the original connotation of revolution. Second, it is a “Reform Revolution” in the sense that it includes the self-reform and improvement of the socialist system; this is the expanded connotation of revolution. Third, it is a “Transitional Revolution” in that it involves a transformation from the primary stage of socialism to the subsequent stage and to communist society, which is the ultimate purpose and meaning of revolution. The triple revolutions of the Revolutionary Conquest of Power, the Reform Revolution, and the Transitional Revolution have the significance, content, and nature of: economy, politics, culture (including ideas and theory, spirit, and education), society (including family and marriage relations, social atmosphere and customs), and the wider philosophical dimensions of subject and object. The Triple Revolution Theory advanced here is interrelated and inclusive, forming a “trinity,” an organic system with properties that encompass successive time, connectivity in space, and logical causality and that provides the setting for the advance of China’s society in the direction of progress and civilisation. The following provides a specific explanation, drawing on contemporary Chinese and foreign theories and reality.

II. The “Revolution” Requires a Revolutionary Conquest of Power in the Sense of Overthrowing the Old Regime and Establishing and Defending the New Order

A. The first action required for carrying the revolution through to its completion is “the overthrow of the existing power and the dissolution of the old relationships.”¹⁴ The primary goal and core issue is to seize and consolidate political power; otherwise, socialism cannot be established. Where China is concerned, the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) marked a critical victory for our party in the Revolutionary Conquest of Power. However, the failure of the Paris Commune and the restoration of the capitalist system in the Soviet Union give cause for serious thought. Even if the CPC has seized power, for a long time it will continue to face the problems of ensuring system security and ideological security, with the possibility of bourgeois forces seizing power back again. Therefore, the Revolutionary Conquest of Power remains unfinished business: “In a certain sense, a temporary restoration is also a regular phenomenon that is difficult to completely avoid.”¹⁵ From a domestic perspective, “the exploiting class as a class has been eliminated, but class struggle will exist for a long time within a certain range.”¹⁶

In terms of international factors, hostile Western forces are intensifying their class struggle in the political and military fields, seeking to use the methods of “colour revolution” to Westernise and divide China. The United States and its allies regard China as their prime competitor or “main enemy,” and under the banner of a so-called rebalancing of power in the Asia-Pacific, set out to comprehensively curb China’s peaceful development in science, technology, and other fields. In sum, the socialist system after seizing power is invariably faced with contradictions and conflicts between subversion and anti-subversion, evolution and anti-evolution, and under certain conditions the corresponding struggles may even intensify. In order to defend the fruits of the revolutionary victory, we must further consolidate the new political order through socialist economic, political, cultural, social, and national defence construction. Together, these make up the vital content of state power once the Revolutionary Conquest of Power has been accomplished.

Globally, in addition to the world’s socialist countries—the “one big and four small” (China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, and Laos)—the Communist parties of most countries are continuing their unremitting efforts to overthrow the old order and establish the new political power. Nevertheless, the power of world socialism is still weak compared to capitalism, and around the globe socialism remains on the defensive. The global task represented by the Revolutionary Conquest of Power still faces massive obstacles. Amid increasing globalisation, the strategic goal of seizing and then defending state power requires the Communist parties of most countries to employ correct revolutionary strategies and to show a high degree of flexibility in responding to quickly changing situations. Only in this way can the world working class and working people secure the real victory of the Revolutionary Conquest of Power.

B. The revolutionary path requires flexible use of the “Violent Seizure of Power” and “Peaceful Taking of Power.” In practice, the socialist countries that have secured the initial victory in the Revolutionary Conquest of Power have basically come to control political power through violent revolution. A certain strand in public opinion thus regards violent revolution in absolute terms as the only means through which political power can be seized, equating the Revolutionary Conquest of Power with violent revolution. Marx indeed stated that the goals of communists “can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.”¹⁷ But while Marx and Engels argued that “the

¹⁴ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 3, 206.

¹⁵ ↪ Deng Xiaoping, Selected Works, vol. 3 (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1993), 383.

¹⁶ ↪ Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, People’s Daily, March 22, 2018.

¹⁷ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 6, 519.

proletariat cannot seize political power...without violent revolution," Marx also observed that "where peaceful propaganda and encouragement can achieve this goal faster and more reliably, holding an uprising is crazy."¹⁸ Engels, in his preface to the English version of the first volume of *Capital* in 1886, wrote of Marx:

*The voice ought to be heard of a man whose whole theory is the result of a lifelong study of the economic history and condition of England, and whom that study led to the conclusion that, at least in Europe, England is the only country where the inevitable social revolution might be effected entirely by peaceful and legal means. He certainly never forgot to add that he hardly expected the English ruling classes to submit, without a "pro-slavery rebellion," to this peaceful and legal revolution.*¹⁹

In addition, Engels warned in his letter to Richard Fisher on March 8, 1895: "My view is that you have nothing to gain by advocating complete abstention from force."²⁰ It can be seen that the concepts of the "Violent Seizure of Power" and "Peaceful Taking of Power" should be used flexibly. Over the past twenty years, the CPC has provided a model of the flexible use of these two methods to secure victory in the Revolutionary Conquest of Power.

C. Revolutionary outcomes require the flexible use of "open struggle" and "covert struggle." The vast majority of the world's Communist parties are now legally established as parties of opposition to the bourgeois ruling parties of the countries concerned. With the advent of globalisation and of the information and network society, the density of human communications has been increased thousands of times. If the monopoly bourgeois regime does not engage in totalitarian politics and violent repression, and if the strategies of working-class political parties are correct, these parties will be able to expand their membership and influence more quickly and widely. But in fact, there has always been a need for two fronts in the struggle. As Mao wrote, "in addition to open work, there should also be secret work to back it up."²¹ Especially when capitalist states are eager to destroy the Communist Party organisation, secret work can allow communists effectively to preserve and accumulate their strength while they wait for the opportunity to seize power.

Communists may, for example, actively establish and expand profit-making enterprises in various forms, either open or concealed, so as to provide a reliable economic foundation for the development of the proletarian revolutionary movement. Since communists in Western society are stigmatised and marginalised, even vilified and demonised, they may decide to establish a political party that does not bear the name "Communist Party," but which is one in essence. Through concealing external forms, they may be able to realise the goal of the Revolutionary Conquest of Power in the short term. This resembles the model of working-class political parties such as the Republican Party of Labour and Justice, which has extensive influence in Belarus. In an open or covert manner, communists, through the founding of publishing houses, television stations, forums, newspapers, websites, and other media and through organisations and channels such as societies, foundations, schools, libraries, and youth associations cooperate to strengthen the public face of Marxism and scientific socialism, and to advance vigorously the ideological position of the Communist Party.

D. A revolutionary principle is the flexible use of "Independence" and "International Union." The transnational bourgeois spirit that governs the logic of private capital has ensured that the proletarian Revolutionary Conquest of Power has never been a narrow national movement, but an international cause inspired by the slogan, "Proletarians of

¹⁸ ↪ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 48, 423; Marx and Engels, *The Marx and Engels Anthology*, vol. 3, 611.

¹⁹ ↪ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 35, 35–36.

²⁰ ↪ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 50, 457.

²¹ ↪ Mao Zedong, *Anthology of Mao Zedong*, vol. 2 (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1993), 341.

All Lands, Unite!" Since 1864, successive international organisations have played an inestimably progressive role in enhancing the union of the world socialist forces. Although there have been problems, these have related only to specific forms of the union, and the basic principle and spirit of the international union of the proletariat cannot be denied. This union not only has historical value, but also value for the New Era.²² The one-sidedness of trying to deny completely any form of International Union and emphasise successful demonstration in isolation lies in the separation of "Independence" and "International Union." The reality is that "autonomy and independence are included in the concept of internationalism itself"; the two are unified. Even the Constitution adopted by China in 2017 emphasises that the state should carry out internationalist education among the people.²³ Consequently, we should not give up the proletarian internationalist spirit either in words or in actions.

Some kind of International Union is indispensable, as Marx reminded us: "Past experience has proved that ignoring the brotherly unity that should exist among workers in all countries...will punish them—cause their scattered efforts to suffer common failure."²⁴ Despite adverse circumstances, some degree of International Union is possible, since in today's world the Communist parties of all countries have explored a revolutionary road while taking their own characteristics into account. Hence, "Independence" has been greatly enhanced. This has laid the organisational foundations for a continuation of International Union, and created the ideological conditions for it to flourish. Considering the general trend, "the future of world socialism depends on the effective joint action of the international proletariat."²⁵ The Communist parties in most countries have achieved new forms of international unity, and expect more in future.²⁶

III. Revolution Is a "Reform Revolution" in the Sense of the Self-Improvement and Development of the Socialist System

A. Marx pointed out that "Socialism is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution."²⁷ We can speak of Reform Revolution in the sense of the continuous self-improvement and development of socialist productive relations and of the superstructure. Why do we need to carry out a Reform Revolution? In Marx's view, a socialist society that has just arisen out of capitalism inevitably carries a wide variety of traces and remnants of the old society in many of its aspects. It is necessary to get rid of the constraints and obstacles through which the existing systems and mechanisms in the fields of productive relations and the superstructure hinder the development of the productive forces, so as gradually to achieve integrity, transform the overall situation, and manage a systematic "Revolutionary Leap." In practice, socialism has not come into being directly in developed capitalist countries, but in a series of developing countries where levels of productivity have been relatively backward.

Acting in a setting where the commodity economy is not fully developed, the socialist countries should aim to do away with the traces and legacy of the old feudal society and, while developing the market economy, to overcome the traces and legacy of the old capitalist society. On this basis, we can show our strong institutional advantages over capitalism, and even defeat the capitalist system on a global scale. In the socialist countries, multiple burdens and problems

²² ↪ Liu Xingang and Cheng Enfu, "The Historical Value of the Comintern and the Contemporary Value of Its Spirit, Written on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the Comintern," *Research on World Socialism*, no. 12 (2019).

²³ ↪ Xiao Feng, "'International Union' or 'Successful Demonstration'—On the Prospects of the World Socialist Movement," *Contemporary World Socialist Issues*, no. 3 (2013); Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Complete Works*, vol. 39 (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1974), 84.

²⁴ ↪ Marx and Engels, *The Marx and Engels Anthology*, vol. 3, 14.

²⁵ ↪ Cheng Enfu, "The Future of World Socialism Depends on the Effective Joint Action of the International Proletariat," *Foreign Social Sciences*, no. 5, 2012. In this paper, six specific plans for the effective joint action of the international proletariat are put forward for the first time.

²⁶ ↪ Xuan Chuanshu and Yu Ming, "Commemoration and Reflection of the Foreign Left Wing on the Comintern," *Marxist Research*, no. 3 (2020).

²⁷ ↪ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, 127.

confront the Reform Revolution, which is taking longer than many people expected, and the goals and tasks of which are challenging and arduous. China's Reform Revolution began in the 1950s, a period that saw a range of important achievements but also some mistakes. The Reform and Opening Up that began in the late 1970s was, in the words of Xi, "the new great revolution led by the party under the new historical conditions."²⁸ As Deng stated, "Reform is China's second revolution."²⁹

In the New Era, the Reform Revolution, with its overall "Five in One" layout, with its "Four Comprehensives" strategic plan, and the main ideas of which are the "Five Development Concepts," "Four Greatnesses," and "National Governance," has come to be applied to the key areas involved in comprehensively deepening reform. The Reform Revolution is not only comprehensive and deep, but also has clear characteristics and objectives, confronts difficulties, and provides clear guidance.

B. The goal of the Reform Revolution is National Governance. The comprehensiveness and depth of the Reform Revolution lie in its overall plan to "first modernise China's governance system and governance capacity" through a focus on "improving and developing the socialist system with Chinese characteristics."³⁰ This master plan includes six specific reform objectives, intended to deepen the system of economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological civilisation and the system of party construction. At the same time, the plan highlights the thirteen significant advantages of China's national system and governance system. To guarantee the orderly progress of the Reform Revolution to ensure that it has rules to follow, and to promptly consolidate and develop its achievements, the Party Central Committee moved in timely fashion to put forward the corresponding guidelines for "comprehensively promoting the rule of law," which amount to a further extension of the Reform Revolution. As "an extensive and profound revolution in the field of National Governance," these guidelines for "comprehensively ruling the country according to law" further promote the legalisation, institutionalisation, standardisation, and operating procedures of the Reform Revolution.³¹

A certain strain in public opinion holds that the modernisation of China's National Governance system and governance capacity is aimed at keeping up with the Western capitalist countries represented by the United States, and contends that the governance of Western countries is thoroughly mature. This is the first of many serious mistakes, with serious fallacies contained in this position. The United States assigns key roles to its "separation of powers" national governance system and to the two-party system under which two bourgeois political factions monopolise the holding of offices. Under the two-party system, the two main bourgeois groups collude to prevent the emergence of third-party rivals and, in particular, to block the development of the Communist Party. Even social democratic parties that do not challenge the bourgeois order are denied a foothold. The result is that the federal government has for many years been beset by financial problems, and in recent times has failed disastrously to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. The administrative efficiency of the government is low, and social problems go unsolved because of constant wrangling and argument. Deception and fraud are the norm in politics and the media, while the government launches frequent military provocations, threats, and acts of aggression against foreign countries. Only if we truly recognise the chronic ailments that are innate to the governance of capitalist countries, whether the models are North American, northern European, or Indian, can we scientifically promote the modernisation of national governance systems. Only on the premise of

²⁸ ↪ Xi Jinping, "We Must Focus on Six Aspects of Our Work in Implementing the Spirit of the Eighteenth Party Congress in a Comprehensive Way (November 15, 2012)," Qiushi, no. 1, 2013.

²⁹ ↪ Deng Xiaoping, Selected Works, vol. 3 (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1993 ed.), 113.

³⁰ ↪ Xi Jinping, The Governance of China, vol. 1, 101.

³¹ ↪ Xi Jinping, The Governance of China, vol. 2, 124.

improving and developing the socialist system with Chinese characteristics can we create governance capabilities that are more civilised and advanced than those in the West.

C. The challenge addressed by the Reform Revolution is economic reform. Unlike the Revolutionary Conquest of Power, the Reform Revolution focuses consistently on reform of the economic system, using it as a mechanism to drive the coordinated promotion of reform in other fields. In this way, it clears obstacles and removes stumbling blocks to the liberation and development of the productive forces, and has thus become key to the success of China's economy since the Reform and Opening Up. Over the course of more than forty years of Reform Revolution, China's basic economic system during the primary stage of socialism has steadily been improved, the organic combination of socialism and the market economy has become closer, the idea of people-centred development has become deeply rooted in the hearts of the population, and the five new development concepts of innovation, coordination, greenness, openness, and sharing have achieved quick results. The goal of building a well-off society in an all-round way is close to being achieved. The new economic normal that stresses high-quality rather than high-speed development has achieved remarkable results. In the new situation, however, the United States regards China as its "prime competitor" and, using a wide variety of methods, attempts to exclude China from exchanges in economic and other fields, seeking to "decouple" China from the U.S.-dominated world economy.

In the New Era, further Reform and Opening Up is required as soon as possible to implement a new development pattern in which the domestic cycle forms the main body and the domestic and international cycles promote each other. Meanwhile, "public ownership as the main body, the fundamental economic system dominated by the state-owned economy, and the common development of various forms of ownership" are to be safeguarded.³² Many difficulties remain, and there is still a long way to go before we truly consolidate "the basic distribution system featuring distribution according to work as the main body, and with the coexistence of multiple modes of distribution," and until we reduce the gap in incomes, achieve common prosperity and happiness, resolve the new main social contradictions, and build a socialist power.

Within public opinion, there is a tendency that regards the goal and fundamental thrust of reform in the socialist market economic system as being to keep up with the Western capitalist market economic system represented by the United States. Adherents of this tendency also characterise the economic system in Western countries as fully mature. This is the second serious mistake. In reality, the capitalist market economy of the United States is oligopolistic in nature and is centred on monopolistic structures. This leads to frequent economic, financial, and fiscal crises that endanger the economies of other countries and the entire world economy. It has brought about a polarisation of wealth and income, resulting in acute antagonism between the super-rich 1 percent of the population and the working people who make up most of the remaining 99 percent. Further, the capitalist market economy of the United States has strengthened the monopoly hegemony of the U.S. dollar and enforced the observance of intellectual property rights, plundering other countries. Often, it has launched hegemonic trade wars, science and technology wars, and resource wars that have provided the economic foundation for the new U.S. imperialism and militarism. Only by truly recognising the chronic diseases that the market economic system of capitalist countries such as the United States, India, and the countries of northern Europe cannot overcome will we be able to improve and develop China's socialist market economic system. Only in this way can we scientifically promote the people-centred market economic system and an open system of equality and mutual benefit.

³² ↪ Zhou Xincheng maintains that "public ownership as the main body, together with the common development of various forms of ownership, constitutes the fundamental economic system during the primary stage of socialism" (Zhou Xincheng, "Unswervingly Adhere to the Basic Economic System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," Research on Political Economy, no. 1 [2020]).

D. The Reform Revolution is characterised by Self-Revolution. Xi has pointed out that to triumph in the new round of reform, it will be necessary “to chew hard bones, to fight more battles and to win more cheese,” going on to state: “To deepen reform in an all-round way, we must first be inward looking and dare to make self-revolution.”³³ After more than forty years of Reform Revolution, an accretion of interests, formed and accumulated over a prolonged period, has also surfaced. Socialist reformers, as real “revolutionaries,” must therefore have the courage and boldness to practice “self-revolution.” To prevent themselves from being transformed, consciously or unconsciously, into beneficiaries of established interests or agents of Western interests, they need to dare to subordinate their own interests to the overall interests of the working class and of the broad masses of the people. Meanwhile, reform, as a profound revolution that challenges vested interests, needs to dare to take responsibility and to move forward bravely in the face of possible risks, dangers, and costs. In the practice of governing the country, concentrated manifestations of the “self-revolution” of the reformers include “vigorously advancing the spirit of carrying the revolution forward to its completion”; strictly and comprehensively governing the party, the country, and the army; and pursuing the reform of Party and state institutions and work styles. As Xi has said, “the courage to pursue self-revolution and to strictly manage the Party is the most distinctive mark of our Party’s character.”³⁴ We must “use the government’s own revolution to drive the reform in important fields.”³⁵

There are also currents in public opinion that regard the system of administering ideological-style education in Western countries as fully mature, and according to which the goal of the education, ideology, organisation, and style of party and government cadres in China is to emulate the Western capitalist system of educating civil servants as practiced in the United States. This is the third serious mistake. The bourgeois system to which U.S. officials are subject systematically ignores ideological education for social ends and self-revolution. The results, among officials at all levels, include the popularity of the concepts of “Individualism First” and “Election [Victory] First.” The narrow interests of the party, the region, and the unit have come to be accepted as the criteria governing words and deeds, regardless of the fundamental interests of the working people. This has led to the prevalence of a bureaucratic style, the popularisation of rent-seeking, and outright corruption. Only by truly recognising the chronic diseases that cannot be overcome through the capitalist system of ideological education and official management, whether of the U.S., northern European, or Indian varieties, can we improve the system of educating cadres in China; install in them a correct ideology, organisation, and style; and guard their public reputation. Only in this way can we in China enable party and government cadres to promote the comprehensive reform of various undertakings through continuous self-revolution.

E. The forerunner of the Reform Revolution is theoretical construction. The epistemological revolution of ideas is always the forerunner of great revolutionary actions. We must be theoretical.

We need to draw a clear line between right and wrong, and to assemble the greatest possible consensus, if we are to continue to correctly understand and comprehensively promote the Reform Revolution. For example, in our interpretation of the fundamental nature of Reform Revolution, we must oppose the view that Reform and Opening Up is compatible with the Western system, and adhere to the unity of the “Socialist Way” and of Reform and Opening Up. What is the nature and general thrust of the Reform Revolution? This is a fundamental issue related to the future destiny of China’s reform and development in the new era. As Xi has pointed out, “China is a great power, and there must be no

³³ ↪ “Comprehensively Implement the Outline of the 13th Five-Year Plan, Strengthen Reform and Innovation and Create a New Situation for Development, People’s Daily, April 28, 2016.

³⁴ ↪ Xi Jinping, “Winning the Battle to Build a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects, and Winning the Great Victory of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era,” Report to the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2017), 26.

³⁵ ↪ “The Central Economic Work Conference Was Held in Beijing,” People’s Daily, December 12, 2014.

subversive errors on fundamental issues. Once something appears, it cannot be taken back or revised.”³⁶ Let us imagine that the Reform Revolution did not distinguish between the socialist road and system and the capitalist road and system, that it arbitrarily changed things that cannot and should not be changed, and that it went so far as to develop capitalist private ownership indefinitely for the so-called development of the productive forces. Gradually, over time, this would inevitably lead to a fundamental transformation of the entire socialist superstructure, thus hindering the sound and rapid improvement of productivity and the people’s livelihood. The Gorbachev-Yeltsin reforms in the Soviet Union, largely synchronised with China’s Reform Revolution, amounted in essence to a “change of direction” that denied socialism, and their failure was very obvious. In this regard, Xi warned in dialectical fashion: “Do not make Reform and Opening Up a dead end; to negate the socialist direction of Reform and Opening Up is also a dead end.”³⁷

A certain strain in public opinion holds that although the effects of China’s reform at this stage have been better than those in Russia, the final effects in Russia will surpass those in China, because Russia has established a Western-style capitalist economic and political system. This is the fourth serious mistake. In fact, after the coup against the socialist Soviet Union by anti-Communist and anti-socialist forces, national contradictions came to the surface, and the Soviet socialist power that had been on an equal footing with the imperialist United States was divided into more than a dozen weak countries. Russia became a third-rate country economically, reliant mainly on the sale of resources and armaments to maintain its national economy and the livelihood of its people. The former socialist countries of Eastern Europe have changed dramatically into capitalist states, and some of them have assisted the U.S.-led NATO in its efforts, through eastward military expansion and economic sanctions, to encircle Russia. Only if we recognise the objective facts and theoretical lesson—that the socialist countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe did not strengthen their countries or enrich their peoples through the “change” represented by economic privatisation and political Westernisation—can we eliminate the strong influence of a revived liberalism and social democracy. Only if we firmly establish people’s confidence in the road, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics can we grasp scientifically the correct thrust of the Reform Revolution, its policies and measures.

IV. The Revolution Is a Transitional Revolution in the Sense of a Transformation from the Primary Stage of Socialist Society to the Subsequent Stage and to Communist Society

A. The Reform Revolution that we are implementing is an undertaking for the long term, as Xi Jinping has pointed out: “Reform and Opening Up is not complete at the current time.”³⁸ In this regard, there may be misunderstandings and misinterpretations to the effect that the primary stage of socialism, as seen in the Reform Revolution, is an eternal state and is equivalent to the whole of socialist society. According to this view, the Reform Revolution advocates the immortalisation of the market economic system, the nonpublic economy and distribution according to capital, that is, the erroneous equation: “socialism = social justice + market economy.”³⁹ Indeed, the use of the present tense here suggests that the Reform Revolution runs through the whole primary stage of socialism. But although this historical

³⁶ ↪ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, vol. 1, 348.

³⁷ ↪ Xi Jinping, *Excerpts of the Expositions on Comprehensive Reform* (Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2014), 15.

³⁸ ↪ Xi, *Excerpts of the Expositions on Comprehensive Reform*, 4.

³⁹ ↪ “Wu Jinglian Answered a Reporter’s Question in this Fashion: ‘The Basic Feature of Socialism Is Social Justice and a Market Economy,’” *China Economic Times*, August 5, 1997.

process is drawn-out, it is by no means our ultimate goal, since socialist society is not a solidified form, a kind of static crystal, but a dynamic organism displaying constant change and movement.

In the future, we will make the transition to a new and higher social form and stage of development. This is the Transitional Revolution, in the sense that it involves a transformation of socialist society from its primary to its later stage, and from there to communist society. This is the ultimate meaning of the revolution, and it is also the significance of Xi's "complete promotion of the spirit of carrying the revolution through to its completion." Xi has emphasised many times: "The revolutionary ideal is higher than heaven. The realisation of communism is the highest ideal of our Communists."⁴⁰ This supreme ideal is "a historical process of gradually achieving phased goals."⁴¹

At one point, we divided the whole of socialist society into "primary stage, intermediate stage and advanced stage," by "taking the change of productive forces as the indirect or ultimate symbol and the change of production relations as the direct symbol."⁴² Each stage presents the inevitable logic of development from low to high at all levels, as for example in the property rights system, distribution system, and regulation system. Marxist theorists of the older generation have written many articles to support and advocate for the "Three-Stage Theory of Socialism." For example, Liu Guoguang, former vice president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, pointed out: "We must realize that the primary stage is long-term, but not infinite. To progress from the initial stage to the intermediate stage will take more than 100 years. Now that the intermediate stage is looming, we should make plans in advance. In the future, we will enter communism from the advanced stage."⁴³ Wei Xinghua of Renmin University of China and Wu Xuangong, former party secretaries of Xiamen University, have also expressed similar views on the primary stage, intermediate stage, and advanced stage of socialism.⁴⁴

Speaking in general terms, the Transitional Revolution has many unique aspects in the areas of productivity and production relations, economic foundation and superstructure, and social existence and social consciousness. Its overall role is to bring into being people's genuine and complete liberation, and, over time, to achieve "the full and free development of every individual."⁴⁵ As Marx put it, in these conditions "the real development of the abilities of the individual is under the control of the individuals themselves, as the communists desire."⁴⁶ Although the Transitional Revolution is a lengthy and tortuous process, the main characteristics of its final transition to communist society are clear.

B. The productivity characteristics of the Transitional Revolution entail the negation of the three constraints in the division of labour and the development of the "three great wealths." A high level of development of the productive forces is the absolutely necessary practical premise for realising the Transitional Revolution. For Marx, productivity is related to the division of labour. Therefore, by constantly liberating and developing the productive forces, and by promoting the development by leaps and bounds of "natural forces, the labour force and scientific and technological force" within the real productive forces, the "old division of labour," bound by the three constraints of "urban-rural

⁴⁰ ↪ Xi Jinping, "The Secretary of the County Party Committee of the Jiao Yulu Type" (Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2015), 5.

⁴¹ ↪ Xi Jinping, "Speech at the General Assembly Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of Marx's Birth," People's Daily, May 5, 2018.

⁴² ↪ Cheng Enfu, "New Theory on the Three Stages of Socialist Development," Jiangxi Social Science, no. 3 (1992).

⁴³ ↪ Liu Guoguang, "Some Basic Theories of Chinese Political Economy Research," Political Economy Research, no. 1 (2020).

⁴⁴ ↪ See Wei Xinghua, "Thirteen Theoretical Right and Wrong Issues on the Theoretical Economic System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," Economic Aspect, no. 1 (2016); Wu Xuangong, "Upholding and Improving the Basic Economic System in the Primary Stage of Socialism," Political Economy Review, no. 4 (2014).

⁴⁵ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 35, 588.

⁴⁶ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 5, 292.

differences, industrial and agricultural differences and brain-body differences," will disappear completely, and the "development of the production of three great wealths" will be realised.⁴⁷

First will be the development of natural wealth, along with improved working conditions. In the Transitional Revolution, with the unprecedented socialisation of production, "the united producers will adjust the relationship between economic development and nature in line with reason," will put nature under their common control, and will make full and rational use of natural wealth to the greatest extent while exercising the least force.⁴⁸ Second will be the development of labour wealth or social wealth in the form of living labour. In the Transitional Revolution, with the intellectualisation of production and the shortening of the working day, fixed and forced alienated labour will eventually be replaced by the voluntary and all-round development of free associated labour. In this way, labour will change from a means of livelihood to the "first need of life," and people's ability to perform labour will be developed creatively to the greatest extent. Third will be the development of labour wealth as the result of public labour. In the Transitional Revolution, with the full use of everyone's labour potential, cooperation, the unity of individual productive powers, promotes the productive power of society and the enhancement of social wealth.⁴⁹

C. The characteristics of the production relations of the Transitional Revolution: The "Elimination of Three Economic Privileges" and the "Establishing of Three Economic Fairnesses." To realise the Transitional Revolution, we not only need highly developed productive forces as the direct material basis, but also the adaptation of productive relations as the indirect economic basis. In Marxist theory, once all means of labour have been transferred to the workers, the material basis of class oppression will have been eliminated. Therefore, the characteristics of economic relations within the Transitional Revolution are that these relations proceed from the Elimination of the Three Major Economic Privileges and the establishment of the Three Major Economic Fairnesses. First, in the property rights system, the privilege of private ownership of the means of production will be eliminated, and the economic fairness of public ownership by the whole society will be established. Capitalist private ownership is the general source of all the crises and turmoil in modern society, and hence it is necessary to eliminate private ownership.⁵⁰ The purpose of expropriating the expropriators is to establish collective public ownership by the whole society, and to "transfer the means of production to the producers as their common possession."⁵¹

Second, in the distribution system, it is necessary to eliminate the privilege of distribution according to capital, and to establish economic equity of distribution according to demand by the whole society; the elimination of private ownership amounts to the elimination of the mode of distribution according to capital. At the lower stage of communist society, distribution will be according to work, while at the higher stage, distribution will be according to individuals' abilities and needs.⁵²

Third, and in the area of the regulation system, the market economy will be eliminated and economic fairness will be established on the basis of a planned system encompassing the whole of society.⁵³ The market economy cannot

⁴⁷ ↪ Cheng Enfu and Duan Xuehui, "Ideological Interpretation of the Communist Economic Form in Capital (I)," Economic Aspect, no. 4 (2017)

⁴⁸ ↪ Cheng and Duan, "Ideological Interpretation of the Communist Economic Form in Capital (I)".

⁴⁹ ↪ Marx, Collected Works, vol. 35, 338–40.

⁵⁰ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 6, 498.

⁵¹ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 27, 490.

⁵² ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 24, 87.

⁵³ ↪ Yu Hongjun believes that "Combined with the fatal problems of the contemporary capitalist system, we can fully foresee that the planned economic system will be implemented again in the future human society" (Yu Hongjun, "The Logic of Economic System Selection," Research on Political Economy, no. 1 (2020)).

fundamentally solve the anarchy of production that results from the basic contradictions of capitalism. Only by finally eliminating market regulation and establishing a planned regulation mechanism that includes the whole of society can we avoid the economic crises and the wide variety of disproportions and imbalances that are caused by the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, the overall “social anarchy of production” that now prevails will be replaced by “a social regulation of production...according to the needs of the community and of each individual.”⁵⁴

D. The political characteristics of the Transitional Revolution: The “Demise of the Three Political Subjects” and the “Realization of the Three Political Forms.” In the course of the Transitional Revolution, the highly developed productive forces gradually eliminate the system of private ownership and exploitation and the basis for class differences disappears. In this way, the state and the political parties that serve as tools of class rule also disappear. Consequently, the demise of the Three Political Subjects of class, state, and political party does not mean that the society ceases to need a political superstructure of public management, but that the Realisation of the Three Political Forms is required to manage the society. First, in order for the public form of political development to be realised, the public functions of the state will “lose their political character and be transformed into the simple administrative functions of watching over the true interests of society.”⁵⁵ Society will still need various authoritative organisations to manage people’s public affairs, but these organisations will gradually lose their class nature and will fully demonstrate their public character. From that point, state power will devolve to society and take the form mainly of the “administration of things.”⁵⁶ Second, the independent form of political development—the transformation from democracy in the form of the state to democracy in social life—will be realised. The future rule of the proletariat will be a new type of democratic rule. When all members of society can participate in and learn to manage social life independently, “people will be used to abiding by the minimum rules of public life without violence or obedience.”⁵⁷ Consequently, “man, at last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over Nature [and] his own master—free.”⁵⁸ Third is the joint form of realisation of political development, the Union of Free Citizens.⁵⁹ It is impossible for the future society to abolish the state immediately. It must pass through the stage of the Social Republic, a “form of transition from state to non-state,” with the Paris Commune as a typical example.⁶⁰ Then on this basis the highest political form of society will be attained.

E. The ideological characteristics of the Transitional Revolution: “Elimination of Three Narrow Prejudices” and “Establishing of Three Forms of Noble Consciousness.” Social consciousness is a mirror of social existence. In the course of the Transitional Revolution, social consciousness advances steadily from the Elimination of Three Narrow Prejudices to the Establishing of Three Forms of Noble Consciousness, and “people’s spiritual realm improves greatly.”⁶¹ As new communists, members of society as a whole come to possess a high degree of communist consciousness. First, the concept of selfishness is eliminated from the field of spiritual consciousness, and the concept of selflessness becomes established. In the view of Marx and Engels, Transitional Revolution in its development process involves a radical breakout from traditional thinking. The key “traditional concept” here is the capitalist concept of “selfishness,” with “private ownership” at its core and including various forms of fetishism, money worship, and hedonism. The Transitional

⁵⁴ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 24, 320.

⁵⁵ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 23, 425.

⁵⁶ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 24, 321.

⁵⁷ ↪ V.I. Lenin, Monographs on Marxism (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2009), 253.

⁵⁸ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 24, 325.

⁵⁹ ↪ V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 10, 26.

⁶⁰ ↪ V.I. Lenin, Complete Works, vol. 31 (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2017), 155.

⁶¹ ↪ Hu Jintao, Selected Works, vol. 3 (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2016), 2.

Revolution makes a thorough break with this, allowing human beings to “become selfless, with higher education and the technical level of intelligent communist workers.”⁶²

Second, a Transitional Revolution in the field of theoretical consciousness eliminates a superficial, irrational world outlook and allows a scientific world outlook to become established. In the context of the Transitional Revolution with its highly developed productive forces, together with the demise of class divisions and continuous improvement of the social system, people will “gradually abandon the bourgeois world outlook and embrace a proletarian and communist world outlook.”⁶³ Third, individualism will be eliminated from the field of moral consciousness, and collectivism will become established. People’s interests are the basis of their social morality, and a key element in Transitional Revolution is that individuals’ “private interest must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity.”⁶⁴ The Transitional Revolution will set in place a collectivist moral concept of wholeheartedly serving all humanity, and as a result, “a really human morality which stands above class antagonisms” will “become possible.”⁶⁵

Conclusion

In sum, the Triple Revolution Theory is an overall category that is successive in time, connected upward and downward in space, progressive in logic, and overlapping in its levels. An accurate, scientific, and comprehensive grasp of its triple dimensions will help us clarify all kinds of misreadings and even misinterpretations of the meaning of “revolution,” and will allow us to achieve a complete revolutionary view of Marxism, particularly in a Chinese context. On this basis, we will continue to take the working class and working people in general as the main body of the revolution, and will advance the spirit of the revolution to its completion. Showing boldness and determination, we will continue to promote the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and will move forward along the correct track of Marxism, such that a powerful revolutionary vision will open up before us.

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⁶² ↪ Communist Party of China, Selected Important Documents since the Founding of the Party (1921–1949), vol. 16 (Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2011), 488.

⁶³ ↪ Mao, Anthology of Mao Zedong, vol. 7, 225.

⁶⁴ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 4, 131.

⁶⁵ ↪ Marx and Engels, Collected Works, vol. 25, 88.

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