

## PEASANTRY AS A REVOLUTIONARY FORCE IN A PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION: A Possibility

R. S. MAHAT\*

MARX'S expectations were believed when capitalism in Europe refused to die. The industrially advanced European nations where he had pinned all hopes for his proletarian revolution failed him. Developed capitalism in Europe could not produce a single proletarian movement of his dream, not to speak of it leading to world-wide proletarian revolution. Ironically, the first Marxist state happened to be the U.S.S.R., a relatively backward and predominantly agricultural country. In the list of priority of the communist rulers in Russia, "socialism in one country" got preference over "permanent revolution." The question of promoting world-wide proletarian revolution was relegated into background. So we cannot take Marxism in the classical sense of the term and look into the contemporary society with reference to it. Even for Lenin, Marxism was not a dogma, it was a guide to thinking and examining social situations. Apparently, before analysing the contemporary world through the Marxian method, it would be useful to take into account certain developments in communist theory in the post-Marxian era. Here is a very humble attempt to focus attention on one of these developments.

The emergence of the U.S.S.R. as a communist state did not fit into the Marxian scheme of things. Lenin's search for explanation led him to develop the Theory of Imperialism which incorporates the necessity of class struggle in a backward society also. The Theory of Imperialism is an attempt to explain why the revolution did not take place in highly developed industrialized nations. Lenin found all features of capitalism transformed on an international level. For him, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. Imperialism was capitalism transferred into the global level. The existence of revolutionary forces within imperialism and its inevitable doom was as much an article of faith for Lenin as was the existence of contradictory forces within capitalism and its eventual doom was for Marx.

While explaining the contradictions existing in imperialism, Lenin innovates some dialectics to which some call "dialectics of backwardness".<sup>1</sup> He anticipates class war to be fought on the international

\* I express my grateful thanks to Prof. K. K. Das Gupta for his enlightened comments on the paper.

<sup>1</sup> See, Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 259.