

CLASS NOT PEOPLE

The concept of “people” comprises the entire population (citizens including their young) of a country or nation bringing about its exploiting and exploited classes – the ruling and the ruled – altogether on the same line of organization and action – a class-collaborationist confusion. As a matter of fact it conceals classes, blurs class consciousness, obliterates class relations – antagonisms and struggles, and hides class exploitation and class oppression. A “people” does not, and cannot, exploit or oppress another “people” anyway.

One of the basic principles of Marxism is *class struggle*. In a class society a class exploits a class. Under capitalism the *global collective capitalist class* exploits the *global collective working class*. In reality, capital exploits labour – dead labour exploits living labour. Capital is essentially a capitalist. The capitalists appear as capital’s functionaries and are obliged to appropriate surplus value as a global pool to be realized in the market as gross profit which they would be subsequently sharing out as rent, interest, industrial and commercial profits, philanthropy, subscriptions and budget taxes. No one can exploit any people as a whole, simply because a people encompass all antagonistic classes. People are a total concept. So, theorizing on the assumption that one or a group of nations exploits others – such as the alleged one that a global North exploits peoples in the global South – or the West the East – is evidently anti-Marxist and an baffling distortion of reality. Actually, it corresponds to the Leninist theory of imperialism in updated words.

The concept and condition of “people”, historically speaking, evolved from the primitive narrowest form of clan, the *gens* through broadened and federated *clans* into *tribes*, and federated *tribes* (through wars and exchanges) into *people* and the notion of *nation*.

As William Morris pointed out:

“Now the tribe in which a common ancestor (worshipped as a god) was always assumed, and generally a fact, tended to federate with other tribes who still felt that they belonged to a common stock, who thus formed an association called by our ancestors the *thiod*, or people, an association much looser, of course, than that of the gens or tribe, but like those, founded on an idea of common kindred.” (The Development of Modern Society, 1890, *Morris on History*, Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, p. 108)

In addition, as Lukács analyzed the question of class consciousness:

“Thus class consciousness has quite a different relation to history in pre-capitalist and capitalist periods. In the former case the classes could only be deduced from the immediately given historical reality *by the methods of historical materialism*. In capitalism they themselves constitute this immediately given historical reality. It is therefore no accident that (as Engels too has pointed out) this knowledge of history only became possible with the advent of capitalism. Not only – as Engels believed – because of the greater

simplicity of capitalism in contrast to the 'complex and concealed relations' of earlier ages. But primarily because only with capitalism does economic class interest emerge in all its starkness as the motor of history. In pre-capitalist periods man could never become conscious (not even by virtue of an 'imputed' consciousness) of the "true driving forces which stand behind the motives of human actions in history". They remained hidden behind motives and were in truth the blind forces of history. Ideological factors do not merely 'mask' economic interests; they are not merely the banners and slogans: they are the parts, the components of which the real struggle is made. Of course, if historical materialism is deployed to discover the *sociological meaning* of these struggles, economic interests will doubtless be revealed as the *decisive factors in any explanation*.

"But there is still an unbridgeable gulf between this and capitalism where economic factors are not concealed 'behind' consciousness but are present in consciousness itself (albeit unconsciously or repressed). With capitalism, with the abolition of the feudal estates and with the creation of a society with a *purely economic* articulation, class consciousness arrived at the point where it *could become conscious*. From then on social conflict was reflected in an ideological struggle for consciousness and for the veiling or the exposure of the class character of society. But the fact that this conflict became possible points forward to the dialectical contradictions and the internal dissolution of pure class society. In Hegel's words, "When philosophy paints its gloomy picture a form of life has grown old. It cannot be rejuvenated by the gloomy picture, but only understood. Only when dusk starts to fall does the owl of Minerva spread its wings and fly.""
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/lukacs3.htm>

However, while Hegel's owl of Minerva had flown out in darkness to return to it again, Marx's owl has flown out to arrive at a new magnificent dawn.

Therefore, today, for us socialists, the question is "*class – not people, not nation*". For today's *revolution* the task of the socialists – "the scientists of the working class"- "the theoretical representatives of the working class" (Marx) – is to firmly uphold the only revolutionary interest of the working class – *world socialism*. In the pre-capitalist formations revolutions meant merely replacement of one set of rulers and exploiters by another. The capitalist class captured state power by just seizing political power; they had no need to do more as society's relations of production and distribution had already predominantly been turned into capitalist. Thereafter, in capitalist jargon, all violent *coup d'états* and minority uprisings were and are being called 'revolution'. Today's working class will also first have to seize the state's political power state wise and worldwide. But this revolution, which has to be a peaceful and democratic revolution by the class-conscious majority of the population in the interest of the whole humanity, has to go beyond just seizing political power. The working class will also have to instantly dislodge the state's oppressive and bureaucratic organs, democratize the other useful ones, dispossess the capitalist class worldwide and usher the humanity into the new era of *emancipation* by replacing capitalist relations of production with socialist ones whereby the entire humanity will achieve harmony as a global species.