

MOZAMBIQUE AND NEPAL: REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCES ON THE CUSP OF SOCIALISM WHICH REMAINS UNBORN

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ABSTRACT

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The revolutionary experiences of Mozambique and Nepal present a stark case of revolutions on the verge of socialism which remains unborn. Owing to several factors, the communists and socialists at the helm of these states for several years now have faltered to embark on decisive socialist paths despite their firm hold of state power. For one, the FRELIMO (*Frenti de Libertacao de Mozambique*), a once self-pronounced Marxist-Leninist party has held state power since its victory in 1975 against Portuguese colonialism but has stumbled in the 1980s owing to purportedly contentious policies of state centralization of resources and a brutal civil war unleashed by the white supremacist regimes of the neighboring Zimbabwe and South Africa. The same reportedly hindered its march to socialism. In 1985, Frelimo finally shredded its Marxist-Leninist ideology and embraced the neo-liberal policies in the guise of development and modernity in exchange for loans and aid from multilateral financial agencies of the West. Nepal, on the other hand, is being led by an alliance of

communist and socialist parties. However, its march towards socialism is supposedly hampered by the country's economic backwardness, dependence on aid and labor wages from India and the Middle Eastern countries, ballooning debt from multilateral institutions, the predominance of the peasant class over the proletariat, and the inability of the ruling coalition to forge on a single road to socialist construction. This paper looks into the feasibility of socialism being attained in Nepal and Mozambique whose economies and productive forces are undeveloped, with their people in subsistence living and a meager awareness of socialist ideals among the masses. Can socialism be built upon these conditions or what conditions then, from the Marxist theory of history and class struggles will engender the construction of socialism in a backward country like Mozambique and Nepal? The paper argues the possibility of building socialism as shown by the Soviet and Chinese experience, provided that there is a strong proletarian party whose vision and ardor are consistent with the Marxist theory of history and class struggle.

INTRODUCTION

Since we are dealing here with a once self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist party and an amalgamation of socialist and communist parties which are at the helm of the states of Mozambique and Nepal, respectively— the paper must address at the very outset the Marxist-Leninist conception of class struggle embedded in Marx's theory of history concerning socialist construction.

Marx and Engels (1848), in the Communist Manifesto, declare, "History is the history of class struggles" (par.7). Yet, as the operating logic of history, how does this class struggle work and how this may propel social progress? Marxism as a whole has always been concerned with social progress by way of the unfettered development of the productive forces of society, e.g. technology and science, land, factories, machines, and so forth, and in conjunction with the emancipation of the working class under the capitalist relations of production. To free this class, the creator of all wealth under capitalism, it has to engage in class struggles against the capitalist class. Its emancipation as a class is a requisite for the unhindered development of the productive forces.

However, this operating logic of history is beyond simple. Marx (1859), in his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, articulates the concept of the mode of production divided into two contradictory but united aspects: forces of production and the relation of production. As discussed above, the forces of production refer to technology and science, machinery, land, factories, and so forth. The relation of production, on the other hand, is the abstract relationship, beyond the legal formalities of labor relations, defined by the fact that for human beings, to harness nature and survive in the process, must enter into definitive relations of production. Thus, the worker has to forge relations with the capitalist who holds control of the capital and the forces of production in general under the capitalist mode; so with the peasant with the owner of the land under feudalism and the slave with the old nobility who owns the slave himself. Under the pain of extinction, the worker has to sell his only commodity, the labor power to the capitalist. Otherwise, he will starve to death. And so as the peasant who must work in feudal enclaves, otherwise, he would die of hunger, whilst the slave has no choice but to follow the slave owner who exercises the power of life and death over the slave. Otherwise, he would have to wander in the woods.

Nonetheless, this relationship between those who toil (slaves, peasants, and workers) is expressed beyond the confines of slave communities, feudal enclaves, or enterprise-level factories under capitalism. Such must be expressed at the cultural and political levels. Lenin once said that politics is the most concentrated expression of economics. Such was based on Marx's (1859) theory on the existence of the superstructure in societies which corresponds to the economic base—the dominant relations of production in a certain social and economic specificity. Among the concrete components of the superstructure are the dominant machinery of culture (religion, family, school system, and mass media), civil society, and politics with its apparatuses of laws, armed groups, prisons, and others. The function of the superstructure is to justify the base with the people, impose and regulate order in a society to maintain the status quo, and deter anarchy. When the dominant economic relation of the society collapses or engages in change, the superstructure collapses as well, giving way to a new order and the reconstitution of the society as a whole.

But what is the economic basis of such a social disintegration or reconstitution? Marx and Engels maintain that its very basis is located at the core of the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production in the economic mode. It is an undeniable fact that the forces of production, in simple abstraction, would always develop ahead of the relations of production. The development of technology and the sciences is always exponential under the impetus for the need to improve production techniques, machinery performance, and overall enterprise and industry levels efficiency. In capitalism, the constant implosion of technology and the forces of production are dictated by the capitalists' unhindered competition in the market. Every capitalist desires

to improve his production efficiency otherwise he will be gobbled up in competition. Such is one law of capitalist development.

Marx (1859) posits that there would come a time, therefore, that the relations of production would become fetter to the supposed continuing development of the forces of production. In one instance, when the relationship between the serfs and the feudal lords would now impede the growth of agricultural technology and hence the optimum harvest from the land, such a relationship becomes fetter and the landlord has no choice but to expel the peasant from his land, driving the latter to destitution, whilst the former would embrace capitalist methods and relations in farming. This will drive the rise of the agrarian proletariat and the transformation of agriculture into a distinct capitalist industry. Meanwhile, as mercantilism and the manufacturing sector continue to grow and become dominant in the process, the superstructure of society must conform to capitalist frameworks and methods. The drive to change the superstructure to favor the emergent capitalist class would result in a crisis which Lenin would aptly describe as the “inability of the old ruling class to rule in the old way”.

At that point, class struggles would be now expressed in political terms and this explains the bourgeois revolutions which swept Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Such is the orthodox Marxist conception of class struggles which is always based on the primacy of the development of the forces of production, relegating to the secondary role of conscious individuals in making history. Rivera (2020) in his exposition of “Marx’s Theory of History: A Rereading of the Soviet and Chinese Experience” however, argues that, ...one can argue that a class struggle led by a progressive social class or a coalition of such classes may in fact hasten the development of the productive forces and alter existing production relations even before the theorized crisis point is reached between the production relations and productive forces. But even if such a class struggle succeeds in winning political power, it may be severely constrained to adopt and harness the unexhausted potentials of the existing mode of production (capitalist practices) before a successful shift to a new mode of production and economic structure (socialism) is assured. The concrete historical experiences of revolutionary upheavals that ushered into power a socialist-communist political party (Russia in 1917 and China in 1949) when the capitalist social formation was still relatively backward are instructive in this regard (p.98).

Rivera’s (2020) argument here has various implications: (1) progressive social classes, represented by a proletarian party as conceptualized by Lenin in his *State and Revolution* (1918) and *What is to be Done* (1902) could seize state power and hasten the development of productive forces if such is already at the helm of the society’s state power. This is instructive as far as Mozambique and Nepal are concerned; (2) given the undeveloped capitalism in both Russia and China in 1917 and 1946, respectively, the class forces in power—“may be severely constrained to adopt and harness the unexhausted potentials of the existing

mode of production (capitalist practices) before a successful shift to a new mode of production and economic structure (socialism) is assured” (Rivera 2020, p.98); (3) there is maybe a transitional period before going full speed to socialism given the undeveloped productive forces.

Citing Marx’s 1881 draft letters to Vera Zasulich, a Russian cadre of the October 1917 Revolution, Rivera (2020) continues, Marx advanced the following major propositions (Shanin 2018): First, Marx clarified that the transformation of feudal to capitalist relations he analyzed in *Capital* had its most “radical” form in Western Europe and notes that this process need not be the same in other social formations. Second, Marx showed openness to the possibility that the rural commune can serve as “a starting point of the economic system towards which modern society is tending . . .” Third, the rural commune and related forms of pre-capitalist formations now co-exist in the context of an expanding global capitalism that provides openings for the possible appropriation of the material and technological capitalist advances for the further development of the backward productive forces, especially if the revolution succeeds. As aptly summarized by Shanin, these propositions advanced by the “late Marx” as he analyzes the particularity of the Russian formation in the 1880s show a “future multiplicity of roads of societal transformation within the global framework of mutual and differential impact” (p. 99).

Within this framework, Rivera (2020) asserts further, After the revolutionary takeovers in Russia (1917) and China (1949) by socialist-led movements, Marx’s overall schema for successful transformation into a higher stage of social formation is most instructive. Much as they wanted to industrialize and socialize rapidly their backward economy, the Bolsheviks were forced as early as 1921 to reintroduce capitalist/market relations in trade and industry and especially in agriculture, through the New Economic Policy (NEP). However, after a few years, the party leadership repudiated the NEP in favor of a program of rapid industrialization and centralization of economic activities to hasten the desired transformation to a socialist society.

Facing equally difficult challenges of modernizing a largely backward peasant economy, the Chinese leadership after 1949 embarked on programs to rapidly industrialize and centralize the economy through such ambitious but costly policies such as the “Big Leap Forward”, and the “Cultural Revolution.” These projects not only sought to modernize the productive forces but also to start developing socialist values and identities even under conditions of pervasive material backwardness. Reacting to the excesses of these earlier policies, the post-Mao leadership under Deng Xiaoping, eventually pursued policies that sought to combine elements of the NEP, especially in agriculture while undertaking comprehensive industrialization policies that welcomed foreign investment and global trade under a strong state direction (p. 100).

In applying Marx's theory of history and class struggle, it is noteworthy to point out that the Soviet Union was able to build a robust industrial base, defeated the fascist Nazi Germany in WWII, and became a superpower from the 1950s, to 1970s, perhaps even surpassing the economic achievements of US and other capitalist nations. Such success owes to Lenin's NEP, harnessing the forces of production under a limited market economy, followed by Stalin's breakneck industrialization, collectivization, and mechanization of agriculture. This is not to downplay, however, Stalin's excesses in violence with his swift campaigns. Since the establishment of socialism was in a breakneck fashion, Stalin had to build a monstrous bureaucratic state machine through which his *commandist* policies circulated. And with his declaration of the end of class struggles in socialism at the height of the Soviet's economic and military might, non-communist elements sneaked through the Communist Party and state apparatuses. These elements institutionalized corruption, the black market, and bureaucratic malfeasances which led the economy to its feet, towards its sheer collapse in 1991.

China, on the other, was able to build its socialist economy and feed its one hundred million people (then) by way of Mao's concept of national democracy. Such necessitated the existence of mixed socialist and capitalist economic strategies whilst developing agriculture and basic industries. Shortly, Mao welcomed foreign investment and with his death, his successor Deng Xiao Ping opened up the Chinese economy to the West, leveraging on the latter's technology, by way of offering cheap labor and investment opportunities. Today, China is the second largest economy in the world, proclaiming its avowal to "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

The divergent trajectories of these two powerful socialist nations are instructive. Russia went full speed in socialist construction through breakneck industrialization and collectivization of agriculture, but it relied on a monstrous bureaucracy without democratizing farm-level communes, economic enterprises, and state apparatuses. It succeeded in building a strong socialist industrial-military complex but it has had to collapse on the weight of its mammoth bureaucracy which sabotaged the erstwhile economic, cultural, military, and political gains of socialism. China, on the one hand, experimented with the transition phase of national democracy, with socialist and market mechanisms standing side by side as it developed its productive forces. After the death of Mao, nonetheless, China gradually gravitated towards the capitalist road, and opened up its floodgates to foreign investment, whilst accumulating capital for the building of another military-industrial complex.

With the above exposition on the Marxist theory of history, class struggle, and socialism as applied in the actual practice of socialist construction— where do Mozambique and Nepal stand now?

MOZAMBIQUE: THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND THE SOCIALIST RHETORIC

The fight for independence of Mozambique which was a Portuguese colony since the 1530s was archetypal of other people's struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Motivated by Mozambique's gold reserve, fertile lands for raw materials, strategic location for control of trade in the South African region, and the abundant supply of slave labor—the Portuguese consolidated their control on the colony towards the 1800s when they began collecting tributes from traders and individual farmers, pushing further the racial and colonial divide between colonialism and the colonial people. Towards the late 1880s, the Portuguese were preoccupied with trading in the colony involving “ivory, gold, slaves, rubber, oilseeds and a broad range of European goods continued throughout the 19th century. However, European economic interest and influence in the region changed rapidly by mid-century in response to developments in both [Africa](#) and [Europe](#). African labor was needed on the sugar plantations and at South African ports and mines after [diamonds](#) (at [Kimberley](#) in the 1860s) and gold (at Witwatersrand in the 1880s) were discovered. Because of the need for labor, Europeans were determined to gain greater control over tracts of land and their inhabitants at the expense of African leadership. The [combined](#) struggle for access to mineral-bearing lands and the [labor force](#) to work them fueled the so-called “scramble” in [Southern Africa](#)”(Britannica, u.d., par.14).

With the migration of labor to South African mines and agricultural plantations, Portugal leased out Mozambique's land to chartered private companies which extracted sugar, copra, and cotton at the expense of the exploited Mozambican labor. Britannica (u.d.) avers, however, “that the Portuguese government eventually terminated the charters of the major [concession](#) companies, bringing all of Mozambique under direct Portuguese rule. Between the 1890s and the 1930s, Portuguese rule in Mozambique was characterized by the exploitation of African people and resources by private parties, whether they were foreign company shareholders or colonial [bureaucrats](#) and settlers. The most [egregious](#) colonial abuses—forced labor, forced crop [cultivation](#), high taxes, [low](#) wages, confiscation of the most promising lands—occurred regardless of which group of Europeans was in control” (par. 17).

It was through a background of massive colonial exploitation and oppression that protests, strikes, and even open revolts swept the colony after WWII. The decade 1950s was rattled by strikes of hungry workers from the ports up to the countryside prompted by the obligatory plantation of cotton as the demand for textile raw materials rose in Europe. Various peasants' and workers' organizations were formed such as the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), *União Nacional Democratica de Mocambique* (UDENAMO), and the *União Africana de Mocambique Independente* (UNAMI) were organized. As the colonial exaction of taxes, forced labor, and mandatory cultivation of cotton reached their sharpest

forms, these organizations shifted their agitations from mere peasant and trade union rights to civil and political rights and ultimately, for the colony's independence (Robinson, 2003).

Robinson (2003) provides further that on June 25, 19, 1962, the *Frente de Libertação de Mocambique* (Frelimo) was organized as a united front for various organizations, loosely united within an ambiguous radical platform but addressing issues of democratic and civil rights and independence. Frelimo quickly expanded to the cities but its urban cells were promptly suppressed by the colonial authorities. The front was, therefore, compelled to launch its guerrilla warfare in the countryside on September 25, 1964, with less than three hundred fighters through hit-and-run attacks and political mass mobilizations of the rural population.

Eventually, the guerrilla war gained traction and in nearly four years, it attracted thousands of fighters and liberated a sizeable portion of the northern parts of the country. In response, the Portuguese authorities launched "Operation Gordian Knot", aimed at exterminating the Frelimo's guerrilla bases. Such was, however, a failure as the Frelimo guerrillas suffered meager losses, whilst steadily expanding from the north towards the central and southern parts of the country (Robinson, 2003).

Nonetheless, before the burgeoning Frelimo forces could march en mass to the capital, Maputo City, ala Fidel Castro, and Che Guevarra in Cuba— Portugal's *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (Armed Forces Movement) on April 25, 1974, seized power in Lisbon. Eventually, the ruling military junta decided to end all Portuguese wars and grant independence to its colonies. In response, Frelimo formed a transitional government in Mozambique on September 25, 1974, which led to the declaration of independence on June 25, 1975.

What is telling about this Declaration of Independence is the observation of Robinson (2003) when he reports, Frelimo inherited an underdeveloped and unstable country. Ninety- five percent of Mozambique's 12 million citizens were illiterate and the country had only one black doctor and one black agronomist. The working class was overwhelmingly white, many of whom were suspected of still being hostile to the regime, and white workers operated the economically vital ports and railways. The African industrial working class numbered only 150,000 and were mostly low-skilled and disorganized workers. Mozambique's limited capitalist development and the racial division within the working class were factors that seriously limited the prospects for a successful socialist project. The major destabilizing factor that Frelimo faced upon independence was the mass exodus of Portuguese settlers. By the end of 1976, the settler community had shrunk from 250,000 to about 20,000, creating an acute shortage of technicians and professionals. Adding to this loss was the vandalism the leaving settlers targeted at goods and machinery they could not take with them. As a result of this exodus, businesses collapsed, tens of thousands of domestic servants were left unemployed, and the housing boom and tourist industries collapsed. Adding to Mozambique's economic crisis, South

Africa lowered the number of Mozambican migrant workers it would accept, cut levels of rail traffic through Mozambican ports, and supported a process of rapid containerization of goods which could only be handled at South Africa's more modern harbors (p.143-144).

Faced with this situation, Frelimo rushed with the nationalization of all the businesses and banks that were already bankrupt and abandoned by the Portuguese (Robinsons 2003). It seized the former agricultural estates of the Portuguese and tried to fuse these with individual peasants' farm lots to create communal farming where state financial support and technology were intended to be facilitated. However, all these were doomed from the very start since there was no available capital for machinery, technology, fuel, chemicals, infrastructure, and technical expertise. Besides, there was a marked resistance from the peasants against collectivization apart from the fact that largely, the success of Portuguese's capitalist farms depended on exploitative and forced labor from the Mozambicans. As a result, Frelimo's drive for socialist agriculture, and nationalization of industries and enterprises left by the Portuguese was a dismal failure. Instead, the black market and syndicates took over the distribution lines previously dominated by Portuguese wholesalers and retailers, driving high inflation and shortages of consumer goods supply to the countryside, triggering restiveness among the population as a result (Robinson 2020; Cahen 1993).

Frelimo's decision to support the UN sanctions against the neighboring Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) further harmed the fledging economy. In retaliation, the white supremacist rules in Rhodesia and South Africa helped organize the REMANO (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*), an anti-communist and pro-white supremacist rebel movement. With the frustrated and agitated peasants against Frelimo, REMANO wreaked havoc on the countryside, gaining considerable support from the dissatisfied peasantry, and sabotaging infrastructure, farmlands, and enterprises in the process. Whilst, REMANO's destructive campaigns were initially seen as the aggression of Rhodesia and South Africa, the sizable support it reaped from the disgruntled peasantry gradually turned these campaigns into a full-blown civil war in Mozambique (Robinson 2020; Cahen 1993).

Economically bankrupt in 1980 and with the growing dissatisfaction of the population which was in massive and debilitating poverty, coupled with a long-running destructive civil war, Frelimo finally shredded its socialist rhetoric and embraced the proposed structural adjustment program of the IMF. The dream of a socialist construction lasted only for five years which had been more of a nightmare. Frelimo has since then embarked on the neo-liberal development path, with REMANO as a perennial opposition party in various elections. Yet the fate of the people of Mozambique remains the same: massive inequality, debilitating poverty, and lack of social services with no end in sight. Frelimo dominates the political landscape whilst Remano is always in contention as an opposition in congress, provincial, and municipal levels of the state

apparatuses. The elites continue to fight it out for the political leadership of the country, sightless of the Mozambican people's unabated suffering.

Today, still under Frelimo's leadership, the country is once again at the receiving end of virulent rampages from fundamentalist Muslims who are wreaking havoc in the countryside, gradually developing into another civil war.

NEPAL: AFTER AN ARDUOUS STRUGGLE, SOCIALISM IS STILL NOWHERE IN SIGHT

Unlike Mozambique which has been subjected to colonial exploitation and oppression, Nepal had never been colonized like Japan and Thailand in all of Asia. Perhaps owing to the not-so-rich endowments of the land, being landlocked with hostile geography and few arable plains, Nepal had been dominated by the Shah Dynasty for centuries which allied with the British Empire. Nepal was reserved, however, by the British as a buffer zone for India and China. However, colonialism never established a formal foothold on this highly elevated, yet isolated land which is located between India and China.

Nepal's modern history provides that in the 18th century, [Prithvi Narayan Shah](#) unified the territory from various kingdoms and feudal lords. Such was the beginning of the long lineage of the Shah dynasty, until 1846 when [Jung Bahadur Rana](#), after long and intense factionalism in the throne moved to establish the Rana dynasty. The same lasted up to 1946 when the pro-democracy movement inspired by the Indian struggle for Independence made waves of protests against the dynasty. After intense struggles, the Rana dynasty was toppled and the Nepali Congress was established. Nonetheless, the titular head and successor of the Rana dynasty, King Mahendra boldly scrapped the Congress by harnessing his mass base and established the Panchayat system, side by side with the titular king. Politicians were incarcerated and the budding democracy movement was violently suppressed (Chaulagain 2021).

In the 1990s, however, the democratic movement surged again in Nepal and King Birenda, the last of the Rana lineage was forced to abdicate. In 2001 a multi-party system was established in Nepal. All these developments emerged as a Maoist communist rebellion was rampaging in the north of the country. A political truce with other political forces occurred in 2008, and the Maoist rebels agreed to participate in mainstream politics.

This brought forth all the socialist and communist parties in Nepal to an alliance, writing a Constitution in 2015 that harps on socialism, commitment to democratic practice, economic justice, end of exploitation, and all the egalitarian values that one could think of. The Constitution asserts that "Preliminary's Article 4: State of Nepal: "(1) Nepal is an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism-oriented, federal democratic republican State" (Constitution of Nepal, p.4). Yet, nothing has come out concretely of this constitutional provision.

With close to half of Nepal's productive working people are in India and the Middle East, eking out their living and sending remittances which are keeping the economy afloat, coupled with the capitalists' control of the country's vital industries and distribution lines, consequent upon the pouring of capitalization from capitalist nations and aids from multilateral agencies— Nepal has remained stuck up within the ambit of the global monopoly capitalism. Whilst the ruling coalition occasionally harps on socialist rhetoric, the dismal condition of the people remains the same (Islam, 2019).

GIVEN THE SOVIET AND CHINESE EXPERIENCE, WHAT HAPPENED THEN TO MOZAMBIQUE AND NEPAL?

During the implementation of his NEP, Lenin (1918) through his letter to the American workers, castigated the bourgeois press with these merciless words, Let the corrupt bourgeois press shout to the whole world about every mistake our revolution makes. We are not daunted by our mistakes. People have not become saints because the revolution has begun. The toiling classes who for centuries have been oppressed, downtrodden, and forcibly held in the vice of poverty, brutality, and ignorance cannot avoid mistakes when making a revolution. And, as I pointed out once before, the corpse of bourgeois society cannot be nailed in a coffin and buried. The corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young, and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund, and decaying. For every hundred mistakes we commit, and which the bourgeoisie and their lackeys (including our own Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries) shout about to the whole world, 10,000 great and heroic deeds are performed, greater and more heroic because they are simple and inconspicuous amidst the everyday life of a factory district or a remote village, performed by people who are not accustomed (and have no opportunity) to shout to the whole world about their successes.

But even if the contrary were true—although I know such an assumption is wrong—even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it would be in the eyes of world history*, because, *for the first time*, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, *are themselves* building a new life, *are by their own experience* solving the most difficult problems of socialist organization.

Every mistake committed in the course of such work, in the course of this most conscientious and earnest work of tens of millions of simple workers and peasants in reorganizing their whole lives, every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of “lawless” successes achieved by the exploiting minority—successes in swindling and duping the working people. Only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build a new life, and learn to do *without* capitalists; only

in this way will they hack a path for themselves—through thousands of obstacles—to victorious socialism (par. 35-38). Has the ruling communists and socialist coalition in Nepal been cowed at committing mistakes and thus failed to embark on a correct path to socialism? Has the Frelimo been likewise discouraged by its inability to mobilize the people against an aggression that morphed into a full-blown civil war pushed by Zimbabwe and South Africa? Were they disheartened by their inability to push for the sensible nationalization (socialization) of the forces of production and the bankrupt economy left by the Portuguese? We ask these questions for Lenin and Mao were far from being disheartened by the hardships and challenges they faced at the outset of building socialism in the Soviet and China, respectively. Nonetheless, it is an indubitable fact that indeed socialism was established in Russia and in fact, it became a world power from the 1950s to 1970s, whereas China today is the second largest economy despite the perpetuating hegemony of the world capitalist order.

This is not to discount at all the subsequent excesses of Stalin during his breakneck industrialization and militarization campaigns, his commandist leadership style, and the absence of democratization at the commune, enterprise-level up to the party and state apparatuses. The same had resulted in the creation of a monstrous bureaucracy wherein the capitalist roaders sneaked themselves through, only to sabotage socialism from within through sheer corruption and connections with the agents of global capitalism.

Mao, on the other hand, upon analyzing the trajectory of the Soviet, unleashed the sheer power of the militant mass movement through the Cultural Revolution which was deeply rooted in the Marxist theory of continuing revolution and anti-modern revisionism. The resurgence of the bourgeoisie and the agents of global finance capital was thus frustrated which paved the way for the continuing push for socialism in China. Mao's national democracy as a transitory stage from a backward feudal economy to build and enhance the productive forces was necessary for building socialism. Deng, Mao's successor, nonetheless opened up totally China's economy. Whilst there are debates if China is still a socialist country or not, such could be the subject of another discourse.

With the above-cited theoretical background and the practical experiences of the Soviets and China, it is maybe instructive to ask, where did Nepal's and Mozambique's ruling parties falter? A genuine revolutionary party could have persisted, as shown by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Yet Frelimo backtracked from socialism, whilst the ruling coalition of Nepal is hesitant in going forth. Are they communists and parties of the proletariat in the tradition of Bolshevism and Maoism?

To judge from afar is difficult. Therefore, one has to consult scholars who have specialized and are considered authorities on the Frelimo and Nepal communist movements. One of those is Cahen (1993), a French social scientist who traced the lineage of the leading personalities of Frelimo, including, the first Mozambique president, [Samora](#)

[Machel, Eduardo](#) [Mondlane, Joaquim](#) [Chissano, Armando Guebuza](#), [Roque Silva Samuel](#) and the current president, [Filipe Nyusi](#)— to the fledging elite which was generally accommodated by colonialism that enabled them to acquire better education and maintain high social status by collaborating with the Portuguese within the civil, and military structures and even the dominant church. Cahen (2020) asserts,

As the descendants of old slaving families, whether black or of mixed race, the Creole elite was substantial. And Luanda remained the capital throughout the 20th century. In Mozambique, by contrast, the major concentrations of Creoles were in the north of the country, in the Zambezi valley, in Zambezia, in the Island of Mocambique, and in the Island of Ibo. But the developments of the 20th century were to marginalize these elites socially and politically: the capital was moved from the Island of Mocambique to Maputo, and the two great cities that developed thereafter were not the ancient colonial centers of Tete, Quelimane, or Mocambique, but two places created out of nothing to serve the needs of the British hinterland — Maputo (Lourenco-Marques) and Beira, situated in the extreme south and the center-south. As a result, the urban African elite had nothing on which to depend, no tradition. It was to be a Creole formation of the 20th century, entirely subordinated by the dynamics of modern Portuguese colonialism (p. 49)

Concluding that the Frelimo movement was led by the Creole elite, Cahen (2020) further argues that the capture of Marxism by this elite was compelled by the need for a compelling narrative of an emergent Mozambique nation. He continues, What did this Marxism consist of? It is possible to identify five basic themes: a general discourse against exploitation directed equally at colonialism and capitalism and at the African social formation and 'domestic' mode of production (characterized as 'feudalism' and 'obscurantism'); the legitimation of the single party as the crucible for the forging of the nation; a bureaucratic vision of democratic centralism as a mode of internal as well as external operation and paradoxically extended to all the society; a unifying vision of the nation without ethnic divisions and without 'traditional' social relations in peasant society; and finally, vigorous developmentalism under the aegis of the state, ignoring the articulation of the various modes of production (capitalist and 'domestic'), in which the population was to be 'transformed', but not itself to act, and was to participate in the life of the single party, but not discuss its merits (p. 48).

Robinson (2003) affirms what Cahen has argued when he narrates, Mozambique's achievement of independence, under the leadership of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo), on 25 June 1975, was a pivotal moment in the country's history. After what is often implicitly regarded as a revolution against the Portuguese colonial government, Frelimo's project of 'scientific socialism' and 'popular democracy' was welcomed and celebrated in the writings of many left-wing observers in the West. However, this study will challenge the key assumption of much of the historiography of Mozambique: that the change in government

marked the beginning of Mozambique's transformation into a socialist state. It will be argued here that despite a long struggle against a repressive regime, there was no revolution in Mozambique. Furthermore, while Frelimo had initially aligned itself with socialist ideals, the pursuit of socialism had all but ended when Frelimo declared itself to be a 'Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party' at the time of its Third Congress in 1977. Frelimo's political vision had been tempered by the realities of the country's material conditions of underdevelopment and an unorganized, politically unenthusiastic worker population: the byproducts of Portuguese colonialism (p.131).

Where did this Mozambican elite originate during the period of colonialism? Sumich (2008) traces its origin to the "*assimilados* (assimilated) black numbering just around five thousand within the more than eight million people of Mozambique. Accordingly, they were extremely influential and to be *assimilado*, one had to fulfill certain legal criteria: to swear loyalty to the colonial state, speak only Portuguese at home, adopt 'European' habits, abandon 'heathen' beliefs, and have Portuguese official vouch for one's character. If one fulfilled these criteria then one was theoretically granted full legal equality with Portuguese settlers, although it could be rescinded for 'backsliding'" (p.7). Sumich (2008) continues, the coalition that formed the leadership of the Frelimo party at independence was based on southern *assimilados*, disaffected urbanites from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, and rural/mission-educated, aspiring elites from the far north. Assimilacao (assimilation), along with most other colonial practices, was directly contrary to what the new society was supposed to represent. The word *assimilado* began to have connotations of collaboration. Once, when I was arranging an interview with a man who had been an *assimilado* during the colonial period, I was warned by his niece not to use that word or 'he will throw you out of his house'. Nevertheless, as noted by Fry, socialism in Mozambique had many surprising similarities with *assimilados* (2000). If anything though, the Frelimo leadership were far more ambitious than the Portuguese ever dared imagine. Instead of restricting the new culture to a few favored sons of colonialism, they were going to transform the entire nation in their own image (p.8)

For the social character of Nepal's ruling socialist and communist coalition, Pokhrel (2023) is thorough and unforgiving in chastising them. He admonishes Nepal's ruling coalition in his article's very abstract, the paper analyses the social character in the politics of Nepali communists' pastries particularly of the Nepal Communist Party (Unified Marxist and Leninist) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) by applying Marxist perspective. It brings to light the essential causes and consequences of the rise and fall of the communist movement in Nepal. The paper argues that every communist party has adopted appropriate social policies in their inception, but in the course of their development, being deviated from their early stage and became fascinated with

consumerist capitalist culture in their practical life. There are various reasons for this deviation. First, communist parties have failed to analyze the character of Nepali society properly as they have changed their analyses very often. Second, the leaders have been found double-faced: they say one thing but do another as they are inherently guided by feudal psychology, comprador capitalist mentality, and behavior. Third, they have not been able to bring about socio-economic change as they have been engaged in the imbroglio of parliamentary politics. While trying to justify these issues, this paper incorporates the pieces of evidence from political documents and leaders' statements. The paper is presented inductively and the choice of methodology is qualitative (p.1).

Meanwhile, the Nepali Times newspaper has quoted various political scientists in the country in its article, "The End of Ideology in Nepal" (2022). The article says, "Political science professor Krishna Khanal agrees that leaders are willing to make temporary ideological associations to gain power: "Politics has become entirely transactional. Ironically, there are no communists in Nepal even with an abundance of Communist parties." We are experiencing an ideological collapse in Nepal's political parties," notes Krishna Khanal. "I prefer to see it as an abandonment of principles rather than a lack of it. Ideologies are low on the food chain of the party structure, while those at the top do not care for principles" (par.11-12).

Prasai (2023), on the other hand, argues that whilst Nepal's ruling coalition acknowledges the difficult road to socialism, it has remained oblivious of the concrete conditions and problems of Nepal which are namely, "the dominance of finance capitalism, the class question, the character of parliamentary left-wing parties, and the current global system and geopolitics" (par. 31). Chaulagain (2021) notes subsequently that whilst there is a vision for socialism in Nepal as enshrined in its constitution and the rhetoric of the ruling coalition, there are no concrete programs and even implementing provisions which would translate this vision and rhetoric into reality.

CONCLUSION: WHAT IS THE PARTY OF THE PROLETARIAT?

From the assertions and polemics of the above-cited authors, it is obvious that Frelimo traces its lineage to an elite Creole class in Mozambique which had been influential throughout colonialism by its attachment to the military, civil, and church bureaucracy of colonialism. It is not surprising, therefore, that amid the most difficult challenges on the road to socialism, it had to abandon the project, and the masses— finally shredding off its Marxist-Leninist and socialist rhetoric which had been used only in framing a narrative of an emergent nation.

Whilst the cited literature on Nepal presents a less clear affirmation of the class position of the ruling communist coalition, its direction, and concrete actions are contrary to the goals of socialism. It continues to wallow on liberal capitalism, without taking a single and decisive step to

push for socialism in the country. Mao (1950) once said, “Whoever sides with the revolutionary people is a revolutionary. Whoever sides with imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism is a counter-revolutionary. Whoever sides with the revolutionary people in words only but acts otherwise is a revolutionary in speech. Whoever sides with the revolutionary people in deed as well as in word is a revolutionary in the full sense” (par.12). The actions of both Frelimo and the Nepalese ruling coalition have not been revolutionary. Their token push to socialism was fettered by their class position and perhaps their hollow understanding of the requirements to go forth to socialism after the democratic struggle. They have abandoned the theory of class struggle as the motive force of history and the guide in building socialism (Islam, 2020).

Perhaps both Frelimo and the ruling coalition in Nepal do not, or refuse to understand the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat and a strong proletarian party as fundamental requirements in building socialism. Valila (2021) in his exposition of the Filipino communists’ strategy and tactics argues, again and from what we can infer, central to all this is the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the stage of building socialism and communism. Only through this dictatorship of the proletariat (a class dictatorship not over the people but over the bourgeois class), according to Lenin can the proletariat safeguard its gains in the democratic and socialist stages of the revolution. Being the vanguard and the most advanced detachment of the proletariat, the Communist Party as envisioned by Lenin would stand at the front, center, and rear of this dictatorship, marshaling all the economic resources available in building socialism while unleashing state power on the anticipated counter-revolution of the bourgeois class and its imperialist masters in the international arena.

Joseph Stalin appears to have defined what constitutes the Party of the proletariat from the Leninist perspective. According to him, the Party is the advanced and the most organized detachment of the working class, the highest form of class organization of the proletariat, the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the embodiment of the unity of will. The principal function of this Party, therefore, from the analysis of Stalin in the revolutionary-pre-socialist stage is to educate, organize, and mobilize the proletariat to capture the state power so it could fulfill the requirements of the 2-stage democratic and socialist revolution. To fulfill the requirements of the 2-stage revolution, Stalin summarized Lenin’s strategy and tactics as the science of the proletariat leadership in the class struggle. While his discussion centers on the Russian 1905 and 1917 experiences, Stalin was candid with the stages and the positive forces of the revolution, which are the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. He spoke of the tactics as an integral part of the strategic leadership of the proletariat, subordinated to the tasks and requirements of the strategy (p. 15). In Marxism, socialism is aimed at freeing the working class and promoting social progress. According to Marx and Lenin, the transition to socialism is only possible through the

practical and cultural proletarianization of the people. In both capitalist and pre-capitalist societies, like China in the past, only the working class has a true desire for socialism. To achieve this goal, a genuine proletarian party is needed to articulate the vision of socialism and lead the struggle for socialism in alliance with other classes, all in the name of social progress. Without the genuine party of the proletariat, any attempt at socialism is doomed for socialism, scientific socialism at that is always based on the law of class struggle in history. And the bourgeoisie could never build a party of the proletariat as shown by the Mozambique and Nepal experience. Marx was correct when he averred that the liberation of the proletariat is the task of the proletariat alone.

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