

# **Communist Party of Colombia (Red Faction): The Thesis of Bureaucratic Capitalism is a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Thesis**

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*Communist Party of Colombia (Red Faction)*

We consider that the document we share below can contribute to the development of the two-line struggle in the international communist movement on the important issue of the existence of bureaucratic capitalism in all countries oppressed by imperialism, and in the defence of this thesis as an important part of Maoism.

This document was drawn up by our Party several years ago to develop an internal struggle, in which a comrade questioned Chairman Gonzalo's universally valid contributions, especially the generalisation he made of bureaucratic capitalism. That is why the document starts from Chairman Gonzalo's definition of bureaucratic capitalism and from it analyses how this thesis is coherently sustained by Chairman Mao's work, representing a development of proletarian ideology. It is not, as the Communist Workers' Union points out "by its content, the

present theory of 'bureaucratic capitalism' is an old theory, contrary to Marxist political economy", but on the contrary, this thesis is a great development of Chairman Mao on Marxist political economy. Moreover, its synthesis and generalisation constitutes one of the universally valid contributions by Chairman Gonzalo to proletarian ideology.

### **The Thesis of Bureaucratic Capitalism**

Chairman Gonzalo made a synthesis of the characteristics of bureaucratic capitalism that Chairman Mao described, in this way:

*"Regarding bureaucratic capitalism, Chairman Gonzalo put forward for us that understanding it is key, substantial to understand Peruvian society. Taking Chairman Mao's theses, he teaches us that it has five characteristics: 1) that bureaucratic capitalism is the capitalism that imperialism develops in the backward countries, comprising capital from the big landlords, the big bankers and the magnates of the big bourgeoisie; 2) it exercises exploitation over the proletariat, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie and restricts the middle bourgeoisie; 3) it goes through a process by which bureaucratic capitalism combines with state power and becomes state monopoly capitalism, comprador and feudal, from which it follows that at the first moment it unfolds as non-state monopolist big capital, and at a second, when it is combined with state power, it unfolds as state monopoly capitalism; 4) it ripens the conditions for the democratic revolution when it reaches the peak of its development; and, 5) confiscating bureaucratic capitalism is key to reach the peak of the democratic revolution and decisive for the passing into the socialist revolution." (Democratic Revolution, 1988)*

We can see in each of the characteristics how Chairman Gonzalo bases himself on Chairman Mao, let's look at them one by one:

"1) that bureaucratic capitalism is the capitalism that imperialism develops in the backward countries, comprising capital from the big landlords, the big bankers and the magnates of the big bourgeoisie;"

"To serve the needs of its aggression, imperialism created the comprador system and bureaucrat-capital in China. Imperialist aggression stimulated China's social economy, brought about changes in it and created the opposites of imperialism – the national industry and national bourgeoisie of China, and especially the Chinese proletariat working in enterprises run directly by the imperialists, those run by bureaucrat-capital and those run by the national bourgeoisie. To serve the needs of its aggression, imperialism ruined the Chinese peasants by exploiting them through the exchange of unequal values and thereby created great masses of poor peasants, numbering hundreds of millions and comprising 70 per cent of China's rural population."<sup>1</sup> (Cast away illusions, prepare for struggle, 1949)

"... They talk about developing China's economy, but in fact they build up their own bureaucrat-capital, i.e., the capital of the big landlords, bankers and compradors ..." (On Coalition Government, 1945)

"This capital is popularly known in China as bureaucrat-capital. This capitalist class, known as the bureaucrat-capitalist class, is the big bourgeoisie of China." (The Present Situation and Our Tasks, 1947).

"2) it exercises exploitation over the proletariat, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie and restricts the middle bourgeoisie;"

"... This state-monopoly capitalism oppresses not only the workers and peasants but also the urban petty bourgeoisie, and it injures the middle bourgeoisie ..." (The Present Situation and Our Tasks, 1947)

*"... ruthlessly oppressing the peasants, the workers, the petty bourgeoisie and the non-monopoly bourgeoisie." (On Coalition Government, 1945)*

*"3) it goes through a process by which bureaucratic capitalism combines with state power and becomes state monopoly capitalism, comprador and feudal, from which it follows that at the first moment it unfolds as non-state monopolist big capital, and at a second, when it is combined with state power, it unfolds as state monopoly capitalism;"*

*"This monopoly capitalism, closely tied up with foreign imperialism, the domestic landlord class and the old-type rich peasants, has become comprador, feudal, state-monopoly capitalism." (The Present Situation and Our Tasks, 1947)*

*"4) it ripens the conditions for the democratic revolution when it reaches the peak of its development;"*

*"This state-monopoly capitalism reached the peak of its development during the War of Resistance and after the Japanese surrender; it has prepared ample material conditions for the new-democratic revolution. This capital is popularly known in China as bureaucrat-capital. This capitalist class, known as the bureaucrat-capitalist class, is the big bourgeoisie of China." (The Present Situation and Our Tasks, 1947)*

*"5) confiscating bureaucratic capitalism is key to reach the peak of the democratic revolution and decisive for the passing into the socialist revolution."*

*"3. China's modern industry, though the value of its output amounts to only about 10 per cent of the total value of output of the national economy, is extremely concentrated; the largest and most important part of the capital is concentrated in the hands of the imperialists and their lackeys, the Chinese bureaucrat-capitalists. The confiscation of this capital and its transfer to the people's republic led by the*

*proletariat will enable the people's republic to control the economic lifelines of the country and will enable the state-owned economy to become the leading sector of the entire national economy. This sector of the economy is socialist, not capitalist, in character. Whoever overlooks or belittles this point will commit Right opportunist mistakes."* (Report To Second Session Of Seventh Central Committee, 1949)

Finally we could add that Chairman Mao points out that bureaucratic capitalism is a monopolist capitalism, which controls the principal levers of the economy:

*"During their twenty-year rule, the four big families, Chiang, Soong, Kung and Chen, have piled up enormous fortunes valued at ten to twenty thousand million U.S. dollars and monopolized the economic lifelines of the whole country. This monopoly capital, combined with state power, has become state-monopoly capitalism. This monopoly capitalism, closely tied up with foreign imperialism, the domestic landlord class and the old-type rich peasants, has become comprador, feudal, state-monopoly capitalism..."*(The Present Situation and Our Tasks, 1947)

*"... the Chinese people will be fully emancipated, overthrowing once and for all both feudal oppression and oppression by bureaucrat-capital (Chinese monopoly capital)."*(Carry the Revolution Through to the End, 1948)

Chairman Mao puts forward the thesis of bureaucratic capitalism referring to Chinese society, but it is Chairman Gonzalo who generalises this concept to oppressed nations:

*"... Chairman Gonzalo is going to generalise that bureaucratic capitalism is not a process particular to China or Peru, but is due to the late conditions in which the imperialisms subjugate the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America and when these have not yet destroyed the subsisting feudalism and even less developed capitalism."* (Democratic

Revolution, 1988).

However, in documents by Mariátegui, the Communist International and Chairman Mao, we already find statements on the impossibility of the oppressed nations developing a classical capitalism in the epoch of imperialism;

*“Imperialism is not aware of any of these semi-colonial peoples, which it exploits as a market for its capital and goods and as a deposit of raw materials, a programme of nationalisation and industrialism” (JCM).*

And the CI at its 6th Conference as well as Stalin put forward (quoted by Chairman Mao):

*“Imperialism “first allies itself with the ruling strata of the previous social structure, with the feudal lords and the trading and money-lending bourgeoisie, against the majority of the people. Everywhere imperialism attempts to preserve and to perpetuate all those pre-capitalist forms of exploitation (especially in the villages) which serve as the basis for the existence of its reactionary allies” [...]“Imperialism, with all its financial and military might, is the force in China that supports, inspires, fosters and preserves the feudal survivals, together with their entire bureaucratic-militarist superstructure..”.*<sup>2</sup>

Chairman Mao also tells us:

*“But its attempt to establish a state under the rule of the national bourgeoisie is quite impracticable, because the present world situation is such that the two major forces, revolution and counter-revolution, are locked in final struggle. Each has hoisted a huge banner: one is the red banner of revolution held aloft by the Third International as the rallying point for all the oppressed classes of the world, the other is the white banner of counter-revolution held aloft by the League of Nations as the rallying point for all the*

*counter-revolutionaries of the world. The intermediate classes are bound to disintegrate quickly, some sections turning left to join the revolution, others turning right to join the counter-revolution; there is no room for them to remain "independent". Therefore the idea cherished by China's middle bourgeoisie of an "independent revolution in which it would play the primary role is a mere illusion."* (Class Analysis of Chinese Society, 1926)

And more explicitly in another document he states:

*"There are bourgeois republics in foreign lands, but China cannot have a bourgeois republic because she is a country suffering under imperialist oppression. The only way is through a people's republic led by the working class."* (On the People's Democratic Dictatorship, 1949)

And although he is referring to China, it is clear that the argument applies to all countries oppressed by imperialism. In the following quotes he makes it even clearer that it is about all oppressed nations:

*"True enough, this is the period of the final struggle of dying imperialism – imperialism is "moribund capitalism". [7]But just because it is dying, it is all the more dependent on colonies and semi-colonies for survival and will certainly not allow any colony or semi-colony to establish anything like a capitalist society under the dictatorship of its own bourgeoisie."* (On New Democracy, 1939).

Thus, we see that although Chairman Mao does not go so far as to generalise Bureaucratic Capitalism to all oppressed nations, he does clearly state that it is not possible in the present epoch of imperialism and world proletarian revolution for a capitalist society to be established in a colony or semi-colony, both because imperialism does not allow it and because the national bourgeoisie of these countries cannot carry it out because of its weakness and it is now the mission

of the proletariat.

In addition, as we know, Chairman Mao argued that in China, precisely because of its semi-feudal and semi-colonial character, a New Democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution must be carried out, which would give the land to the peasantry and liberate the nation from the foreign yoke. And later, when he introduced the concept of bureaucratic capitalism to explain the type of capitalism developing in China on that semi-feudal and semi-colonial basis, he persisted that it was the New Democratic Revolution that was the type of revolution that had to take place in China before the socialist revolution; Most importantly for the present discussion, Chairman Mao generalised the New Democratic Revolution to the Third World countries (and developed the Marxist theory of the state), as can be seen in this section of his *On New Democracy* (emphasis added):

*“This new-democratic republic will be different from the old European-American form of capitalist republic under bourgeois dictatorship, which is the old democratic form and already out of date.*

*On the other hand, it will also be different from the socialist republic of the Soviet type under the dictatorship of the proletariat which is already flourishing in the U.S.S.R., and which, moreover, will be established in all the capitalist countries and will undoubtedly become the dominant form of state and governmental structure in all the industrially advanced countries. However, for a certain historical period, this form is not suitable for the revolutions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. During this period, therefore, a third form of state must be adopted in the revolutions of all colonial and semi-colonial countries, namely, the new-democratic republic. This form suits a certain historical period and is therefore transitional; nevertheless, it is a form which is necessary and cannot be dispensed with.*

Thus the numerous types of state system in the world can be reduced to three basic kinds according to the class character of their political power: ( 1 ) republics under bourgeois dictatorship; ( 2 ) republics under the dictatorship of the proletariat; and ( 3 ) republics under the joint dictatorship of several revolutionary classes. The first kind comprises the old democratic states.

Today, after the outbreak of the second imperialist war, there is hardly a trace of democracy in many of the capitalist countries, which have come or are coming under the bloody militarist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Certain countries under the joint dictatorship of the landlords and the bourgeoisie can be grouped with this kind.

The second kind exists in the Soviet Union, and the conditions for its birth are ripening in capitalist countries. In the future, it will be the dominant form throughout the world for a certain period.

The third kind is the transitional form of state to be adopted in the revolutions of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Each of these revolutions will necessarily have specific characteristics of its own, but these will be minor variations on a general theme. So long as they are revolutions in colonial or semi-colonial countries, their state and governmental structure will of necessity be basically the same, i.e., a new-democratic state under the joint dictatorship of several anti-imperialist classes. In present-day China, the anti-Japanese united front represents the new-democratic form of state. It is anti-Japanese and anti-imperialist; it is also a united front, an alliance of several revolutionary classes. But unfortunately, despite the fact that the war has been going on for so long, the work of introducing democracy has hardly started in most of the country outside the democratic anti-Japanese base areas under the leadership of the Communist Party, and the Japanese imperialists have exploited this fundamental weakness to

*stride into our country. If nothing is done about it, our national future will be gravely imperilled."*

The above text leaves no doubt that Chairman Mao generalised the New Democratic Revolution as the type of revolution to be carried out in the colonies and semi-colonies of imperialism as a prelude to socialist revolution. That is why we consider the UOC's statement that it is wrong:

*"Those who pretend to ascribe as a matter of line, and precisely to Mao, the idea that under any circumstances, and regardless of the concrete analysis of reality, in all oppressed countries the revolution is of New Democracy, are completely wrong"* (Debate on bureaucratic capitalism, the position of the UOC mlm of Colombia).

Each country can and must indispensably be analysed on the basis of "concrete analysis of reality", but as we saw in the above quotation, what cannot be doubted is that for Chairman Mao in all countries oppressed by imperialism (colonies and semi-colonies) the revolution is a New Democratic revolution.

Chairman Mao has also pointed out that in the countries oppressed by imperialism there exists two types of bourgeoisie: the big bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, the latter with a dual character towards revolution; we will present here two extracts in which Chairman Mao sustains this idea and although the first is long we prefer to introduce it because it clearly explains why these two types of bourgeoisie exist, albeit referring to China, but as the reader will see, the arguments apply to all colonial and semi-colonial societies.

*"Being a bourgeoisie in a colonial and semi-colonial country and oppressed by imperialism, the Chinese national bourgeoisie retains a certain revolutionary quality at certain periods and to a certain degree – even in the era of imperialism – in its opposition to the foreign imperialists and the domestic*

*governments of bureaucrats and warlords (instances of opposition to the latter can be found in the periods of the Revolution of 1911 and the Northern Expedition), and it may ally itself with the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie against such enemies as it is ready to oppose. In this respect the Chinese bourgeoisie differs from the bourgeoisie of old tsarist Russia. Since tsarist Russia was a military-feudal imperialism which carried on aggression against other countries, the Russian bourgeoisie was entirely lacking in revolutionary quality. There, the task of the proletariat was to oppose the bourgeoisie, not to unite with it. But China's national bourgeoisie has a revolutionary quality at certain periods and to a certain degree, because China is a colonial and semi-colonial country which is a victim of aggression. Here, the task of the proletariat is to form a united front with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism and the bureaucrat and warlord governments without overlooking its revolutionary quality.*

*At the same time, however, being a bourgeois class in a colonial and semi-colonial country and so being extremely flabby economically and politically, the Chinese national bourgeoisie also has another quality, namely, a proneness to conciliation with the enemies of the revolution. Even when it takes part in the revolution, it is unwilling to break with imperialism completely and, moreover, it is closely associated with the exploitation of the rural areas through land rent; thus it is neither willing nor able to overthrow imperialism, and much less the feudal forces, in a thorough way. So neither of the two basic problems or tasks of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution can be solved or accomplished by the national bourgeoisie. As for China's big bourgeoisie, which is represented by the Kuomintang, all through the long period from 1927 to 1937 it nestled in the arms of the imperialists and formed an alliance with the feudal forces against the revolutionary people. In 1927 and for some time afterwards, the Chinese national bourgeoisie also followed the counter-*

*revolution. During the present anti-Japanese war, the section of the big bourgeoisie represented by Wang Ching-wei has capitulated to the enemy, which constitutes a fresh betrayal on the part of the big bourgeoisie. In this respect, then, the bourgeoisie in China differs from the earlier bourgeoisie of the European and American countries, and especially of France. When the bourgeoisie in those countries, and especially in France, was still in its revolutionary era, the bourgeois revolution was comparatively thorough, whereas the bourgeoisie in China lacks even this degree of thoroughness.*

*Possible participation in the revolution on the one hand and proneness to conciliation with the enemies of the revolution on the other – such is the dual character of the Chinese bourgeoisie, it faces both ways. Even the bourgeoisie in European and American history had shared this dual character. When confronted by a formidable enemy, they united with the workers and peasants against him, but when the workers and peasants awakened, they turned round to unite with the enemy against the workers and peasants. This is a general rule applicable to the bourgeoisie everywhere in the world, but the trait is more pronounced in the Chinese bourgeoisie. (On New Democracy, 1939)*

And this other quote:

*“In countries under imperialist oppression there are two kinds of bourgeoisie – the national bourgeoisie and the comprador-bourgeoisie. Do these two kinds of bourgeoisie exist in your countries? Probably yes.” (Some Experiences In Our Party’s History, 1956)*

In this way, what is put forward by the UOC is also not in line with what has been put forward by Chairman Mao:

*“The idea of elevating the concept of “bureaucratic capitalism” to the category of Marxist political economy has led many communists to the grave error of disregarding the*

*need for analysis of reality, and politically to spare capitalism in many countries and to unite with bourgeois sectors on the basis of having to find a 'national' bourgeoisie the hard way" (UOC).*

To be rigorous with what Chairman Mao said, we wouldn't need to look for a national bourgeoisie "the hard way", but on the contrary we will always find in the countries dominated by imperialism *"two types of bourgeoisie: the national bourgeoisie and the comprador bourgeoisie"*. And this has important political implications for the revolutionary united front as Chairman Mao also puts it:

*"It is through this kind of complex relationship with the Chinese bourgeoisie that the Chinese revolution and the Communist Party of China have progressed in their development. This is a special historical feature, a feature peculiar to the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries and not to be found in the revolutionary history of any capitalist country."* (Introducing *The Communist*, 1939).

On the other hand, it is not a question, as the UOC puts it, of "sparing" capitalism or not, but of historical materialism, that, as Chairman Mao said, "it is a Marxist law that socialism can only be reached through democracy" and that it is "pure chimera" to move to socialism from a semi-colonial and semi-feudal basis, without passing through a New Democratic State. Let us see how Chairman Mao puts it:

*"If any Communist or Communist sympathizer talks about socialism and communism but fails to fight for this objective, if he belittles this bourgeois-democratic revolution, relaxes or slows down ever so slightly and shows the least disloyalty and coolness or is reluctant to shed his blood or give his life for it, then wittingly or unwittingly, such a person is betraying socialism and communism to a greater or lesser extent and is certainly not a politically conscious and staunch fighter for communism. It is a law of Marxism that*

*socialism can be attained only via the stage of democracy. And in China the fight for democracy is a protracted one. It would be a sheer illusion to try to build a socialist society on the ruins of the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal order without a united new-democratic state, without the development of the state sector of the new-democratic economy, of the private capitalist and the co-operative sectors, and of a national, scientific and mass culture, i.e., a new-democratic culture, and without the liberation and the development of the individuality of hundreds of millions of people – in short, without a thoroughgoing bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type led by the Communist Party.*

*Some people fail to understand why, so far from fearing capitalism, Communists should advocate its development in certain given conditions. Our answer is simple. The substitution of a certain degree of capitalist development for the oppression of foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism is not only an advance but an unavoidable process.” (On Coalition Government, 1945).*

Finally it must be said that already the Chinese communists, in the midst of the two-line struggle in the ICM, had pointed out that the big bourgeoisie had two ways of enriching itself, through state and non-state monopoly, as can be seen in the following quotation:

*“The facts given above make it clear that state monopoly and private monopoly are in fact two mutually supporting forms used by the monopoly capitalists for the extraction of huge profits. The development of state-monopoly capital aggravates the inherent contradictions of the imperialist system and can never, as Togliatti and the other comrades assert, “limit and break up the power of the leading big monopoly groups” or change the contradictions inherent in imperialism.”(More on the differences between Comrade Togliatti and ourselves, 1963. By the editorial staff of Hongqi magazine (Red Flag of the CPCh).*

So, to sum up, we have what Chairman Mao has stated: 1) that in China there existed a type of capitalism called bureaucratic capitalism which he characterised, 2) that in the present epoch it is not possible for the oppressed nations and their bourgeoisies to create a capitalist nation, a dictatorship of the national bourgeoisie, 3) that the oppressed nations must pass through a first stage of democratic revolution of a new type before the second stage of socialist revolution, 4) that in all nations oppressed by imperialism there are two types of bourgeoisie, the big bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, the latter having a dual character in the face of revolution; and 5) that there exists two ways in which the monopoly bourgeoisie acts, through state monopoly or non-state monopoly.

And it is by sticking to Marxism, on the basis of these theses put forward by Chairman Mao, of convergent ideas put forward by Jose Carlos Mariátegui and with the study of both Peruvian society (in the midst of its transformation) and of the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian world revolution, that Chairman Gonzalo puts forward that bureaucratic capitalism is not only a Chinese phenomenon but that it is the late capitalism imposed by imperialism on the backward nations and that the two forms of monopoly capital: state and non-state, make up two factions of the big bourgeoisie: bureaucratic and comprador.

From the theoretical point of view it is logical that although Chairman Mao did not generalise bureaucratic capitalism for the Third World, the other generalisations he made such as the impossibility (in the epoch of imperialism and the World Proletarian Revolution) for the national bourgeoisie to take power in an oppressed nation and establish a bourgeois dictatorship, that every oppressed nation has two types of bourgeoisie and that all must go through a new democratic revolution, constitute the basis for Chairman Gonzalo to generalise that bureaucratic capitalism is the capitalism

imposed by imperialism on the oppressed nations. This logic, of course, must be confirmed in the facts in other societies in order to derive such a generalisation, and this is what Chairman Gonzalo has done in Peruvian society and has been confirmed for example by the comrades of India and those of Brazil in their own country. Although not all countries have been studied, as Chairman Mao said, it is not necessary to "dissect all the sparrows" to find the law. But equally, also following the teachings of Chairman Mao, we believe that all communists must confirm this thesis for themselves in the concrete study of their own countries and specify everything relating to their own revolution, a task still pending for the revolutionaries in Colombia.

Against this thesis of the existence of bureaucratic capitalism in the oppressed nations, the main arguments put forward are the increasing presence of capitalist relations in the countryside of the oppressed nations and the destruction of feudal relations of exploitation. We consider that Chairman Gonzalo has analysed these phenomena in the history of Peruvian society by showing that feudalism has been destroyed and bureaucratic capitalism has increasingly penetrated into the countryside, but at the same time, the land problem remains intact (and has even worsened), and on the basis of this, relations of serfdom and gamonalism persist in the countryside as well as in the city, evolving into semi-feudalism, precisely because this is a capitalism of big bourgeois and landlords at the service of imperialism, a bureaucratic capitalism.

Thus, starting with Chairman Mao and developed by Chairman Gonzalo, we come to see that it is not a contradiction to speak of semi-feudalism and capitalist relations, but that precisely in the oppressed nations bureaucratic capitalism is the type of capitalism tied to backward forms of property, exploitation and oppression (semi-feudalism) and at the service of big monopoly capital of the big bourgeoisie and

imperialism, which only allows a weak industrialisation, always tied to imperialist interest.

Chairman Gonzalo's profound study of Peruvian society enlightens us for the study and comprehension of our own society. It is he who, as part of the synthesis of Maoism as the third, new and higher stage of Marxism, rescues the important Marxist thesis of bureaucratic capitalism, develops it and explains it masterfully.

1In all cases the underlining is ours, *Communist Party of Colombia (Red Faction)*.

2 "Chairman Mao quotes in *The Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party of China* a passage from the theses "On the Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries" adopted by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International" and J.V. Stalin: "The Revolution in China and the Tasks of the Communist International", speech delivered on 24 May 1927 at the 8th Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International".