



Russian women in 1917 participating in a revolutionary demonstration.

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Answer to Theories of Despair

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A ruling class—such as the ancient slave-holding class, the feudal class, or the modern bourgeoisie—cannot emerge or gain ascendancy over society merely as a result of political conspiracy, cunning manipulation, deceit, or ruthless oppression. A ruling class can, in the final analysis, come into existence only as a result of the deep-rooted needs of the processes of production.

That alone should give Marxists pause in adopting the spurious theory which proclaims that a new ruling class dominates in the USSR.

Ruling classes and social evolution

Primitive communism gave way to chattel slavery because the latter was a superior mode of production, even though it was accompanied by the most ferocious oppression and exploitation. Likewise, the feudal system took form and developed, not because the feudal lords were more kindly disposed to the peasants nor because the landed gentry were endowed with superior moral and intellectual qualities. The chattel slave system was uprooted and destroyed not as a concession to