

# MARXISM LENINISM MAOISM

## *Study Notes*

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Front cover: Proclamation of the Paris Commune outside the Hotel de ville, 18th March 1871 (Engraving, *Le Monde illustre*, Paris, 1871) Back cover top: Lenin addressing workers, soldiers and sailors, from Armoured Car at the Finland Station enroute Petrograd on April 3, 1917. Gave a stirring call to Socialist revolution.

Back cover Bottom: Mao, reviewing Red Guards arrived from all parts of the country and assembled at Tien-An-Men square in 1966 to support GPCR. (*China Reconstructs*, 1976-December-Supplement)

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# Publisher's Note

The emergence of Marxism marked a turning point in the history of human civilization. All positive aspects, which were achieved in the course of development of human civilization till then, were appropriated and synthesized by Marx and Engels. And this resulted in the emergence of Marxism – the Proletarian world outlook.

It is the proletarian world outlook which declare that the task of philosophy is not only to interpret the world but to change it. So it explained the laws of development of nature and society, analysed how to change society, put forward the great importance of social practice and clearly indicated the very orientation of class-struggle which would ultimately lead to the establishment of classless society. The world proletariat was thus armed with the scientific world outlook, and a revolutionary orientation was imparted to the movement of the working class and other exploited classes.

The practice of Marxism throughout the world helped intensify the world proletarian movement and this science of revolutionary class struggle became a mighty social force. In the course of development of revolutionary class-struggle. This science has further developed in accordance with the ever-changing condition of the world from Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Naturally, since its inception Marxism has had to face all sorts of offensive measures unleashed by the ruling-exploiting classes and their states throughout the world. These ruling classes not only resort to violence to suppress the struggles guided by this revolutionary science, they also tried, in vain, to repudiate and distort it. Withstanding and countering all these offensive measures it has been developed through ups and downs. After the setback in the Socialist Republic of China there was a short spell of confusion and bewilderment within the international communist movement. But vindicating its vitality it reasserted itself. And since the 1980s it has been advancing with renewed vigour.

In the wake of collapse of Soviet Social Imperialism and revisionist regimes of East Europe, imperialism renewed its attack on Marxism and socialism. To counter this, wide vigorous & creative propagation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is needed. Keeping this in mind, New Vistas publication intends to publish books, release audio-visual material on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and its various aspects concerning revolutionary movements. We would be utilizing various resource centres like websites, archives, published and unpublished material, which are unavailable to the present generation. We would like to collect materials from various revolutionary movements worldwide. As a first venture, we are publishing “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism: study notes” prepared by CPI (ML) (PW) for education of its party cadre. In near future, we plan to publish a text book of Marxist Philosophy and outlines of Political Economy.

Hope, this will help those who want to understand this science and put this science into practice. Readers' comments, opinions and suggestions are invited, as those will help improve this book further.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Let's Study Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism should be the guide to our thinking and practice of Indian Revolution.

Study of MLM, however, is not meant only for the rank and file. It is absolutely essential that every one of us study it. Rank and file in all fields of work should study MLM. And the revolutionary organisation as a whole, should make specific efforts to train new entrants in MLM. All this is essential for us to enhance the theoretical level and strengthen its base.

We should study MLM in order to change our subjective understanding of the world around us, to correctly analyse Indian society and the world at large, and to grasp the basic path of the Indian New Democratic Revolution and its strategy and tactics. We should study it, so as to learn from the positive and negative experiences of World Revolution, to absorb the good in it, and to learn to thoroughly criticise revisionism and opportunism of all shades. In short, MLM is a must to mould our practice in the light of theory.

Therefore, come, let's study Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

# PART I

## HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM

Stalin thus defines Marxism: “Marxism is the science of the laws governing the development of nature and society, the science of the revolution of the oppressed and exploited masses, the science of the victory of socialism in all countries, the science of building a communist society.”<sup>1</sup>

This science of Marxism was first worked out by Marx, with the assistance of Engels more than 150 years ago, and then was greatly enriched and developed, first by Lenin and then by Mao Tse-tung. Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution.”<sup>2</sup> Maoism is an extension and development of Marxism-Leninism.

The component parts of Marxism are the philosophy of dialectical materialism and the discovery of the materialist conception of history historical materialism; political economy which discovered the laws of motion of capitalism with its inherent contradictions and the doctrine of surplus value which uncovered the source of exploitation; and the theory of scientific socialism based on the doctrine of the class struggle and the outlining of the principles governing the tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat.<sup>3</sup>

Leninism, while defending and developing Marxism in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution made many significant contributions. In particular, Leninism contributed: the discovery of the laws of motion of capitalism under imperialism and how they would inevitably lead the imperialist powers to war; the qualitative development of the theory and practice of proletarian revolution by resolving the questions of the leadership of the proletariat and of its alliances with other classes, particularly the peasantry, during the bourgeois democratic revolution, As well as the socialist revolution; a clear understanding regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as the first principles regarding socialist construction; the resolution and linking of the national and colonial questions and the linking of the national liberation movements to the World Socialist Revolution; the development of the organisational process, principles of the Leninist party – the party of the new type. Stalin defended and developed Leninism, particularly contributing to the principles and laws governing the period of socialist construction.

Maoism greatly developed all three component parts of Marxism. Maoism’s contributions include: the theory of contradictions, the development of the theory of knowledge through analysing the link between theory and practice and formulating the mass line of ‘from the masses, to the masses’; the theory of new democracy, the formulation of the path of revolution for the colonies and semi-colonies, the outlining of the friends and enemies of the revolution, and the formulation regarding the three magic weapons of the revolution – the party, people’s army and the united front; the theory of protracted people’s war and the development of the principles of military warfare; the development of the organisational principles of the proletarian party through the understanding of two-line struggle, rectification campaigns and criticism and self-criticism; the development of the political economy of socialism on the basis of the Soviet and Chinese experience and the dialectical understanding of the process of socialist construction as the correct handling of the contradictions in the process of transition to socialism; and finally and most importantly, the theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian class dictatorship to consolidate socialism, combat modern revisionism and prevent the restoration of capitalism, and its concrete expression in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism are thus not separate ideologies, but merely represent the constant growth and advancement of an integral ideology. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the universally applicable and scientific ideology of the proletariat. The great proletarian teachers and leaders of the proletariat have developed this body of correct ideas by synthesising the social practice of mankind in the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment.

Thus, in order to grasp MLM Thought in some depth, it is necessary to understand the dynamic process of its growth; it is necessary to understand the material conditions of human society during various periods of its development; and it is necessary, in particular, to see how the theory and practice of MLM advanced through innumerable class struggles – at the economic, political, and theoretical levels.

Let us now proceed to look at this.

# Chapter I

## Economic and Political Background to the Birth of Marxism

The birth of Marxism belongs to the period of the dramatic and revolutionary growth of capitalism in parts of North-Western Europe and North America which resulted in the conclusive victory of capitalism over the then predominant feudal system. This period, extending from the later part of the eighteenth century up to the mid-nineteenth century, saw one of the greatest transformations in human history and the establishment of the global domination of a few Western capitalist regimes, particularly the British. It not only led to the radical social and economic transformation of the capitalist countries, it also led to the capitulation and collapse of numerous age-old civilisations and empires of the world. India became a province administered by British governors, the Islamic states were thrown into crisis, Africa lay open to direct conquest, even the great Chinese Empire was forced in 1839-42 to open its frontiers to western exploitation. By 1848 nothing stood in the way of western conquest of any territory that western governments or businessmen might find it to their advantage to occupy, just as nothing but time stood in the way of the progress of western capitalist enterprise.

At the core of this immense transformation stood the two earthshaking revolutions of this period - the Industrial Revolution, centred in Britain, and the French Revolution of 1789, leading to numerous other bourgeois democratic revolutions. They represented the triumphant advance of the revolutionary modern bourgeoisie. Some ground for these revolutions had been laid in the numerous struggles waged by the nascent capitalist class in the preceding centuries – prominently, the sixteenth century Reformation (which according to Engels, was ‘the first act of bourgeois revolution in Europe’), and the mid-seventeenth century English Revolution. The social and economic forces, and the political and intellectual tools for the bourgeois transformation of this period had thus prepared and ripened over the years.

However, the revolutions and transformations of this period also simultaneously led to the emergence of the forces destined to counter and overcome the bourgeoisie. The triumphant new system itself gave birth to the struggling proletariat, and it was during this period itself that, at least in Europe, the forces and ideas conceiving the death of capitalism were taking birth. Though then extremely weak, the modern proletariat and its ideology – Marxism – were the products of the period of the greatest revolutionary transformation of the bourgeoisie. Revolutionary socialist and communist ideology was born as a reaction to the dual revolution of this period. By 1848 it had been classically formulated in the Communist Manifesto.

### The Industrial Revolution

The term ‘Industrial Revolution’ connotes the process by which, around the middle of the eighteenth century, for the first time in human history the shackles were taken off the productive power of human societies, which henceforth became capable of the constant, rapid and apparently limitless multiplication of men, goods and services. No previous society had been able to break through the ceiling which a preindustrial social structure, defective science and technology, and consequently periodic breakdown, famine and death, imposed on production. It is therefore that this sudden, qualitative and fundamental transformation which occurred basically in Britain, was referred to – first by the British and French socialists of the 1820s – as a revolution, the Industrial Revolution. It marked the transformation of society from the agricultural-mercantile basis of feudalism to the industrial basis of capitalism.

It brought about a tremendous expansion in the cotton textile, iron and coal industries, as also in the railways. This massive production was accompanied by a phenomenal growth of world trade, with Britain exporting supplied with raw materials from all parts of the world and in turn exporting its manufactured goods. A world market emerged and Britain became the 'workshop of the world'. The figures for cotton textiles which was the main industry of the Industrial Revolution are indicative of the pace of change. The quantity of raw cotton imported into Britain rose from 11 million lbs. in 1785 to 588 million lbs. in 1850; the output of cloth from 40 million to 2,025 million yards. And this rapid increase was in direct comparison to the almost total stagnation under centuries of feudalism.

The Industrial Revolution was accelerated by the application of numerous inventions for expanding production in industry. However, this revolution broke out in Britain not because of its scientific and technological superiority. In fact, in respect of scientific knowledge, other countries, particularly France, were much ahead of Britain. It was the material conditions (economic and political) in Britain that allowed for the complete and unfettered growth of capitalism and thus determined that this would be the country of the Industrial Revolution. Britain was a country which had in 1649 itself experienced a bourgeois democratic revolution, where the first king had been formally tried and executed, and where private profit and economic development had become accepted as the supreme objects of government policy. It had already found a revolutionary solution of the agrarian problem. Farming was already predominantly for the market; manufacture had long been diffused throughout the feudal countryside. Agriculture was already prepared to carry out its three fundamental functions in an era of industrialisation: to increase production and productivity, so as to feed a rapidly rising non-agricultural population; to provide a large and rising surplus of potential recruits for the towns and industries; and to provide a mechanism for the accumulation of capital to be used in the more modern sectors of the economy. These internal factors, combined with colonial expansion that provided a world market, made Britain the mother country of the Industrial Revolution.

Though the Industrial Revolution originated in, and was for many years restricted to Britain, its effects were world-wide. The USA and most of the Western European economies followed the lead of the pioneering British industrialist and became advanced capitalist societies. The colonies and the semi-colonies on the other hand, were forced to become appendages of Britain, and to some extent the other industrialising countries. India was deindustrialised with the smashing of its handloom industry. A country which had for centuries exported textiles to the West was forced to become an importer of British cottons. By 1820 it imported 11 million yards, and by 1840 this figure grew to 145 million yards. Latin America similarly was forced to absorb 56 million yards by 1820, which increased to 279 million yards in 1840.

This tremendous expansion of industry and trade converted the capitalist class from a middle class (the literal meaning of the word 'bourgeoisie is middle class), into a class of industrial millionaires – the modern industrial bourgeoisie. A class which so far had only modest means is compared to the feudal lords acquired riches unimaginable before the Industrial Revolution. Though the feudals continued to be the richest individuals in most countries, it was the bourgeoisie as a class, whose rapidly strengthening position in the economy, gave it the power to dictate terms within society. This class, which had since the sixteenth century, waged numerous major struggles at the philosophical, economic, political and military levels, began from this time onwards to achieve conclusive victory over the great feudal landowners - kings, popes, bishops and nobles. In many countries bourgeois republics were set up and even where these republics were overthrown and monarchy restored, the modern bourgeois class succeeded in maintaining a controlling position in the state and society.

## French Revolution

The period of revolutionary and often violent capture of state power by the bourgeoisie had started from the sixteenth century itself with the first bourgeois revolution in Holland towards the end of that century and then the English Revolution of 1649. Another significant revolution that of the USA in 1776. However it was the French Revolution of 1789 that had the most far reaching impact. If the economy of the nineteenth-century world was formed mainly under the influence of the British Industrial Revolution, its politics and ideology were formed mainly by the French. Britain provided the model for its railways and factories, the economic substance which opened the traditional economic and social structures of the world; but France made its revolutions and gave the ideas that largely governed European and even world politics. France provided the issues of liberal and radical-democratic politics for most of the world. France provided the concept and the first great example of nationalism. The ideology of the modern world first penetrated ancient civilisations through French influence.

The French Revolution occurred in the most powerful and populous state of Europe and was a mass social revolution that was immensely more radical than the other revolutions of the time. Further, of all contemporary revolutions it alone attempted to spread and universalise its ideals. Its armies set out to revolutionise the world; its ideas actually did so. The direct impact of its ideas was felt as far away as India, as also in the **Islamic** world. Its indirect influence is universal, for it provided the pattern for all subsequent revolutionary movements, its lessons being even included into modern socialism and communism.

The French Revolution started as an agitation for constitutional reforms by the bourgeoisie. This coincided with a severe economic and social crisis of 1788-1789 to convert it into a mass upsurge first of the urban poor and then of the revolutionary peasantry. The key event of the Revolution was the storming of the state prison - the Bastille - on July 14th, 1789 by the revolutionary masses of Paris. It was the signal for the spreading of the revolution to the provincial towns and the countryside. Within a space of three weeks a wave of uprisings throughout the countryside had smashed the social structure of French rural feudalism, as well as much of the state machine of royal France. Feudal privileges were soon officially removed, though it was only in the later more radical phase of the Revolution in 1793 that feudalism was finally abolished. In August 1789 was adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens which though against all noble privileges was not in favour of a democratic and egalitarian society. It provided for social distinctions on the 'grounds of common utility', and a natural right to private property was recognised. The earlier period of the Revolution up to 1791 was led by the moderate sections of the bourgeoisie which introduced massive reforms in the interests of the bourgeoisie under a system of constitutional monarchy. However when foreign intervention to try and restore the French king's powers led to war in 1792, the state passed into the hands of a much more radical section of the bourgeoisie - represented by the Jacobins. They abolished the monarchy and set up a republic which granted the people universal suffrage, the right of insurrection, and the right to work or maintenance. All remaining feudal privileges were taken away without compensation and slavery was abolished in the French colonies. Though the Jacobin Republic introduced many measures favouring the urban and rural poor, it however proved too radical for the bourgeoisie. When the difficulties of war alienated a section of the popular support for it the main leaders of the Republic like Robespierre and others were overthrown and executed in 1794. The army which was growing in power through the victories in the wars soon became the most powerful arm of the state. This led to the emergence and consolidation of the rule of Napoleon who was the army's most successful General. Under his leadership the French army achieved victory over almost the whole of Europe, except Russia and Britain. His rule continued up to his defeat in 1813-15.

One very important consequence of the French Revolution – whether direct or indirect – was the abolition of feudalism over almost the whole of Europe. Over most of Latin Europe (Spain and Italy), the Low Countries (Belgium and Holland), Switzerland and Western Germany the abolition of feudalism was the work of the French conquering armies, or of native liberals who co-operated with them or were inspired by them. In North-western Germany and the Illyrian Provinces like Croatia and Slovenia, French reforms began or continued the legal revolution against feudalism. In Prussia too the influence of the French Revolution was decisive for the emancipation of the peasants. Thus, the actual legal steps to secure bourgeois systems of landed property were taken mostly between 1789 and 1812. However their implementation was most effective in France and its adjoining areas. In other areas implementation was slowed down by the reactionaries after Napoleon's defeat and actually came into practice where liberalism representing the bourgeoisie was strong enough and where there existed an active body of middle class buyers to take over the lands.

### **The Bourgeois Democratic Revolutions**

The process of the world-wide victory of capitalism was naturally marked by a series of successful and unsuccessful attempts of the bourgeoisie to seize power. The period after the defeat of the Napoleonic armies from 1815, right up to 1848 was marked by a number of bourgeois revolutions, primarily centred in the Western world – Europe and the Americas. The first wave of revolutions occurred in 1820-24. In Europe the revolutions took place in Spain (1820), Naples (1820) and Greece (1821). The first two were suppressed, but the Greek Revolution, which started as a mass insurrection, continued for a decade as a struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. It united the Greek nation and its struggle became an inspiration for international liberalism the rallying point for the European left wing during the 1820s. The Spanish Revolution, though suppressed, led to the revival of the liberation movements in Latin America. It led by 1822 to the independence of Spanish America i.e. 'Great Colombia' (including present day Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador), Argentina, Chile and Peru. In 1821 Mexican independence was established, and in 1822 Brazil seceded from Portugal.

The second wave of revolutions (1829-34) affected Europe much more deeply. The crucial point in this wave was the overthrow in 1830 of the French Bourbon monarchy (established after Napoleon's defeat in 1815). Though the revolution was defeated and did not result in the setting up of a republic, it led to the establishment of a constitutional monarch, Louis Philippe, with the support of bankers and the financial aristocracy. The French uprising aroused the peoples in various other parts of Europe. Belgium won independence from the Dutch in 1830, Poland fought resolutely for two years before being suppressed militarily, agitations covered parts of Italy and Germany, liberalism won in Switzerland, and civil war between liberals and clerics broke out in Spain and Portugal. Britain too experienced the Catholic Emancipation of Ireland in 1829 and the French influenced electoral reform agitation leading up to the Reforms Act of 1832.

The net result of this revolutionary wave of 1830 was that it marked the conclusive defeat of aristocratic power by bourgeois power in Western Europe. The ruling class came to be that of the big bourgeoisie of bankers, big industrialists and sometimes top civil servants, who were on the one hand accepted by the aristocracy who agreed to promote bourgeois policies, and on the other hand harassed from the outside by the agitations of the lesser and unsatisfied businessmen, the petty-bourgeoisie and the early labour movements.

1830 was a crucial turning point. It marked the beginning of the decades of crisis in the development of the new society which led up to the earthshaking events of the 'Continental Revolution' wave of 1848. 1830 was also of crucial importance in another more long-term sense. It marked the emergence of the working-class as an independent and self-conscious force in politics in Britain and France.

## **Conditions of the Proletariat**

The Industrial Revolution which brought untold riches to the bourgeoisie only resulted in the most savage exploitation of the worker. The new inventions in machinery did not mean any relief or benefit for the worker. It only meant the lengthening of the working day and the wholesale use of women and children in the mills and factories. Children from the age of six onwards were forced to work fourteen to sixteen hours in the British spinning mills. Women were also employed in large numbers. In fact out of all the workers in the English cotton mills in 1834-47 about one-quarter were adult men, over half women and girls and the rest were boys below the age of eighteen. This large scale employment of women and children helped the capitalist to get cheaper labour, as well as better control the workers. At the same time the full force of the law was used to impose a brutal discipline on the workers. Harsh anti-union laws prevailed in all countries in the period of initial industrial growth. When these were relaxed to some extent, as in England in 1824 their place was taken by strict disciplinary laws like the British Master and Servant code of 1823. It punished the workers by prison the breaches of contract, but hardly had any provision against the employer except the rarely used minor fine.

The main method however of controlling the workers was by ensuring that the wage was so low that the worker would have to slog throughout the week in order to make a minimum income. Thus, according to the employers, "poverty was a guarantee of good behaviour". This poverty was ensured by direct wage-cutting and the competition of the machine. Thus the weekly wage of the handloom weaver of Bolton (in Britain) reduced from 33s. in 1795 to 14s. in 1815 to a net income of 4s. 11/2d. in 1829-34. In 1833, 10,000 of the 12,000 workers in the Glasgow cotton mills earned less than 11 s. a week. In 131 of the Manchester mills average weekly wages were less than 12s. a week. The wages and work conditions in the new factories of France and western Germany were, if anything, worse; and Belgium was, according to Marx, 'the paradise of the capitalists'.

## **Working Class Consciousness and Proletarian Organisations**

The living and working conditions of the industrial proletariat were that rebellion was not merely possible, but virtually compulsory. Nothing was more inevitable in the first half of the nineteenth century than the appearance of labour and socialist movements, and of mass social unrest. The labour movement provided an answer to the poor man's cry. It must however not be confused with the mere collective revulsion against intolerable hardship. What was new in the labour movement of the early nineteenth century was class consciousness and class ambition. The 'poor' no longer faced the 'rich'. A specific class, the labouring class, the workers, or faced another, the employers or capitalists. The French Revolution gave this new class confidence, the Industrial Revolution impressed on it the need for permanent mobilisation. A decent livelihood could not be achieved merely by the occasional protest. It required the eternal vigilance, organisation and activity of the 'movement' – the trade union, the mutual or cooperative society, the working-class institute, newspaper or agitation. Further the continuous process of social change that dominated the period encouraged the workers to think in terms of an entirely changed society, based on their experience and ideas as opposed to that of their oppressors. It would be cooperative and not competitive, collectivist and not individualist. It would be 'socialist'. And it would be not just the eternal dream of a free society, but a permanent, practicable alternative to the present system.

Working-class consciousness in this sense did not yet exist in 1789, or indeed during the French Revolution. Outside Britain and France it barely existed even in 1848. But in the two countries which personified the dual revolution, it came into existence between 1815 and 1848, and more especially around 1830.

Before this there had been struggles of the workers but they were mostly in the form of spontaneous outbursts that lacked a long-term perspective and consciousness. Examples of these

were the actions of the Luddite machine-breakers against British textiles in 1810-11. There had also been organisations of the workers. In fact trade unions in Britain were formed as early as 1752. But these pioneer unions were chiefly groupings of skilled workers. It was only around 1818 that attempts were first made in Britain to link all labouring men together in 'general trades unions', i.e. to break through the sectional and local isolation of particular groups of workers to the national, and even the universal solidarity of the labouring class. It was also the period when the first worker demonstrations and uprisings had to face the armed might of the state – in London in 1816, and the much larger struggle in Manchester in 1819 where ten workers were killed and several hundred injured. The movement for building a national union however picked up intense momentum between 1829 and 1834 under the leadership of Robert Owen, the utopian socialist. The national Association for the Protection of Labour was set up in 1830. It was followed by the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union of 1833-34 under the presidentship of Robert Owen. It had a membership of around 500,000. Attempts were also made to organise co-operatives of workers and convert the trade unions into national unions of co-operatives, but this did not meet with success.

In 1837, the great Chartist movement was launched, which according to Lenin, was 'the first broad, truly mass and politically organised proletarian revolutionary movement'. Its six point Charter demanded universal suffrage for men, equal electoral districts, annual Parliaments, payment of Parliamentary members, secret ballot, and no property qualifications for Members of Parliament. Its chief aim was to win political rights for the working class. It employed the means of mass petitions with over 5 million signatures, and of mass meetings and demonstrations, some with as many as 350,000 people. It had a regular weekly newspaper, the Northern Star. When the demands were rejected by the bourgeois Parliament, the workers began in many places to strike and go into insurrection. However the movement was severely suppressed and died out by 1850.

In other parts of the capitalist world the workers' organisation and movement did not take on such a widespread form. This was partly because of the brutal laws to control the workers in these countries, but mainly because the level of industrialisation had nowhere advanced as far as in Britain. In the USA trade unions grew in the 1820s and a centre was set up in the form of the National Trades Union between 1834 and 1837. In France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Germany and other European countries the workers were mainly organized in mutual benefit societies and co-operatives. Some of these were highly organised. An example was the community of Lyons (France) silk-workers, which played an important role in the insurrections of these workers in 1831 and again in 1834. An important role was also played by the underground revolutionary political circles of workers in France. Another similar struggle in 1844 was the uprising of the handloom linen-starvation due to the competition of British cotton goods. The struggle had an immense influence on the young Marx.

Despite the spread of working class consciousness and organisation, the proletariat in this period did not as yet pose a threat to the social order. Its struggles like the Lyons insurrections or the Chartist movement yet lacked the organisation and maturity to advance toward revolution. However the emergence of the proletariat as an independent class force, as a material social force, was an event of world historical significance. It represented the birth of the force destined to challenge and overcome the then all-conquering bourgeoisie. The coming into material existence of the proletariat also meant simultaneously the birth of the ideas representing this new revolutionary class. Many ideas and theories claiming to represent working class interests came into being. And among them was Marxism, the ideology which was in the coming years to prove to be the only true proletarian ideology; the ideology capable of integrating with the proletariat, of building its revolutionary organisations, and of guiding it to victory over the bourgeoisie.

# Chapter II

## Main Ideological Currents Leading up to Marxism

An analysis of the socio-economic and political conditions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century thus points to the inevitable birth then of proletarian ideology. However, in order to understand the specific content and form of Marxism it is necessary to understand the process of development of human ideas and thought in the most advanced countries at that time. Since it was capitalism that was the leading force in the development of human societies and since Western Europe was the seat of most of capitalist development it was but natural that Marxism based itself and drew upon all that was best in European thought. Let us therefore examine the state and progress of the principal streams of advanced European thought at that time.

### The Enlightenment

The intellectual and ideological background to the birth of Marxism was the progressive and often revolutionary movement which dominated the world of ideas during the eighteenth century at the time of the emergence of capitalism. It was linked to the struggle of the nascent bourgeoisie and the popular masses against feudal practices and institutions. This movement was called the Enlightenment.

The basic content of the Enlightenment ideology was rationalist and humanist, with a firm belief in the progress of man. It believed that human history was an ascent, rather than a decline or an up-down movement about a level trend. The Enlightenment drew its strength mainly from the growth of production and trade and the economic and scientific rationality believed to be associated with both. Its main ideologues saw that man's scientific knowledge and technical control over nature increased daily. They thus believed that human society and individual man could be perfected by the same application of reason and were destined to be so perfected by history. This core Enlightenment belief in the united progress of reason and freedom provided the basis for revolutionary bourgeois ideology, i.e., classical bourgeois liberalism. This core belief also continued into the first socialist thinkers in the nineteenth century.

The distinctive feature of the Enlightenment was the urge of the thinkers concerned to restructure all social relations on a basis of Reason, Eternal Justice, Equality and other principles, stemming, in their opinion, from Nature itself, from the inalienable "natural rights" of Man. The leading figures of the Enlightenment saw the dissemination of progressive ideas and knowledge and the enhancement of moral standards to be the basic means of transforming the life of society. As Engels put it, the ideals of the Enlightenment were in practice none other than the "idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie". Its greatest supporters and champions were the economically most progressive classes, those most directly involved in the advances of the time: the mercantile circles and economically enlightened landlords, financiers, scientifically-minded economic and social administrators, the educated middle class, manufacturers and entrepreneurs. Naturally the two chief centres of the Enlightenment were also those of the dual revolution – France and England.

A secular, rationalist and progressive individualism dominated 'enlightened' thought. To set the individual free from the shackles which fettered him was its chief object: from the ignorant traditionalism of the Middle Ages, which still threw their shadow across the world, from the superstition of the churches, from the irrationality which divide men into a hierarchy of higher and lower ranks according to birth. Liberty, equality and fraternity of all men were its slogans. In due course they became those of the French Revolution.

The Enlightenment in England, which followed its bourgeois revolution, was relatively moderate in its ideas and goals. Its leading figure, John Locke, as well as other representatives, propagated in both religion and politics a spirit of class compromise. In France however the Enlightenment preceded the Revolution and played a decisive part in the ideological preparation for it. The fathers of the French Enlightenment were Voltaire and Montesquieu and it was known for its militant anticlericalism and its unswerving opposition to the Roman Catholic religion and Church, which constituted the spiritual bastion of the feudal, absolutist order. The Enlightenment in America was led by the radical democratic wing who took part in the War of Independence (1775-1783) – Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and others. In Russia one of the trends of the Enlightenment included figures who were members of the first modern Russian revolutionary insurrectionary movement, that of the Decembrists (1825). Thus Enlightenment thought often played the revolutionary role of providing the philosophical and ideological basis for the bourgeois revolutions.

### **Bourgeois Liberalism**

Up to the French Revolution the most powerful and advanced formulation of the Enlightenment ideology of progress had been classical bourgeois liberalism. It was rigorously rationalist and secular; that is to say convinced on the one hand of the ability of men in principle to understand all and to solve all questions by the use of reason, and on the other hand of the tendency of irrational behaviour and institutions like organised non-rational religion to obscure rather than enlighten. Philosophically it tended towards materialism or empiricism. Its general assumptions regarding the world and man were marked by an intense individualism.

In brief, for classical liberalism the human world consisted of self contained individual atoms with certain built-in passions and drives, each seeking above all to maximise his satisfactions and minimise his factions, equal in this to all others, and ‘naturally’ recognising no limits or rights of interference with his urges. In other words, each man ‘naturally’ possessed of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as the American Declaration of Independence put it. In the course of pursuing this self-interest, each individual in this anarchy of equal competitors, found it advantageous or unavoidable to enter into certain relations with other individuals, and this complex of useful arrangements – which was often referred to as a social ‘contract’ – constituted society and social or political groups. Of course, social arrangements or associations meant some reduction of man’s ‘naturally’ unlimited liberty to do what he liked, one of the tasks of politics being to reduce such interference to the practicable minimum. Social aims were therefore the arithmetical sum of individual aims. Happiness was each individual’s supreme object; the greatest happiness of the greatest number, was the aim of society.

Though this in theory was the political outlook of liberalism, in actual practice the bourgeoisie did not go according to this pattern. This was because the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers and the pursuit of rational self-interest could also be interpreted to include rational interference by the state in the bourgeois rights of private property, enterprise and individual freedom. Thus in practice it was ensured that these rights of the bourgeoisie were safeguarded from any state interference or submission to the requirements of rationality. Thus England’s John Locke put private property as the most basic of ‘natural rights’; and the French Revolution’s Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was modified to bring the demand for free enterprise under the form of a general natural right to liberty.

### **Classical Political Economy**

The essence of the bourgeois liberal ideology was carried forward in the most thorough fashion in the works of the classical political economists. This new field of study naturally reached its heights

in the mother country of the Industrial Revolution - Britain. Its period started with the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, it reached its peak with David Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy* in 1817, and from 1830 onwards started the period of its decline or transformation. Adam Smith (1723-90) argued that the self-interested competitive activities of independent individuals, when left to operate as far as possible unchecked, produced not only a 'natural' social order, but also the most rapid possible increase in the 'wealth of nations', i.e. the comfort and well-being, and therefore the happiness, of all men. The basis of this natural order was the social division of labour. He therefore logically proved that the existence of a class of capitalists owning the means of production benefited all, including the class of labourers hiring themselves out to the capitalists. He thus also similarly proved that both Britain and Jamaica were best served by the one producing manufactured goods and the other raw sugar. Moreover, according to him, the economically very unequal society which resulted inevitably from the operations of human nature was not incompatible with the natural equality of all men or with justice. This was supposedly because even the poorest was ensured a better life than he would otherwise have had. Further, it was based on the most equal of all relationships, the exchange of equivalents in the market. Thus, in Adam Smith's view, progress was as natural as capitalism. Remove the artificial obstacles to it which the past had erected, and it must inevitably take place. And the progress of production went hand in hand with that of the arts, the sciences and civilisation in general.

This comforting view of the all-conquering nature of capitalism gained acceptance not merely because of what was then believed to be the unanswerable nature of its deductive reasoning. More than that its basis lay in the very visible progress of eighteenth century capitalism and European civilisation. However when there were marked difficulties in capitalist expansion from around 1810 to the 1840s the mood changed. Optimism changed to criticism and there started a period of critical enquiry, particularly into distribution as against production, which had been the main concentration of economists during Adam Smith's time.

The work of David Ricardo (1792-1823) belongs to this period. He was an economist who participated wholeheartedly in the practical issues affecting the capitalist class of the day. He thus was a champion of the cause of free trade and opposition to landlords, issues which he also supported by economic theory. However he also pointed out contradictions in the capitalist system which Smith had overlooked. One important such point was the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. More significant however was his basic general labour theory of value. It pointed out, for the first time, that labour was the source of all value and that the capitalists and landlords appropriated in the form of profit and rent respectively the surplus which the worker produced over and above what he received back as wages. Ricardo however did not lead his labour theory of value to its logical social conclusions. He did not clearly point out that the capitalist in fact exploited the worker and it was necessary to do away with capitalists to do away with exploitation. A group of Ricardian 'labour economists' however soon arose in Britain who made this analysis.

Such analysis and critique of capitalism would however not have gained much weight if the earlier period of continuous rapid capitalist expansion had continued. However the capitalist system had started facing crises, first the localised crises in particular manufacturing and financial sectors of the economy from 1793, and then the all encompassing periodic general crises of 1825-26, 1836-37, 1839-42, 1846-48, etc. Economists like Sismondi, Wade and others too had started locating the cause of the crises in the nature of the capitalist system itself. In such a situation it was therefore but natural that as contradictions sharpened, particularly after 1830, even Ricardian theories started being looked upon with suspicion by the bourgeoisie. In fact some bourgeois writers saw Ricardo as the source of inspiration for agitators and disrupters in society. While such direct and immediate inspiration from Ricardo's works may have not been that significant, he definitely provided the groundwork for a much more serious and enduring offensive on the basis of capitalism. It was his

labour theory of value and other contributions of the classical economists that Marx developed upon while making his critique of capital.

### **Socialist Theories**

Meanwhile as classical bourgeois liberalism started losing much of its Enlightenment confidence in the inevitability and desirability of progress, a new ideology, socialism, started reformulating the truths of the eighteenth century. Reason, science and progress were its firm foundation. The socialists of this period were thus no mere repetition of dreamers in a perfect society of common ownership that periodically appear throughout history. They did not long for the return of some idyllic pre-industrial society. Rather their distinguishing feature was that they all accepted the Industrial Revolution which created the very possibility of modern socialism. They attempted to take the industrial society forward to a more rational, more scientific stage.

The first active manifestation of socialism after the French Revolution was the conspiracy of Gracchus Babeuf. Babeuf and the Babouvists took their philosophy in the main from Rousseau and the utopianists of the Enlightenment. Their basic premise was the idea of equality. They thus aimed at the abolition of private property, equal distribution of wealth irrespective of the work done, no right to inheritance, no large cities, and that all would be compelled to do physical work and live in the same manner. The Babouvists planned to seize power through a conspiracy, and then the conspirators were supposed to rule on behalf of the masses, until the people were educated and able to rule through elected bodies. Babeuf's conspiracy was detected in 1796 and he was executed. His ideas were to some extent carried on by Louis Blarqui. The Babouvist programme was not expressed in specific class categories but merely talked in terms of rich and poor or people and tyrants. It however was one of the first attempts at an economic criticism of private property as the foundation of society.

Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825) is however normally recognised as the real founder of modern theoretical socialism, conceived not merely as an ideal but as the outcome of a historical process. He formulated the principle of a future 'organic' social community to which industrial concentration was leading. This future society would be one where production would be planned and measured by social needs, where private property would be subordinated to the general good and where inheritance would be abolished. The social hierarchy would no longer be hereditary; the highest positions would be held by wise men supervising the general development of society. The new industrial order would put an end to the misery of the proletariat, but the oppressed workers would not be the class to implement Saint-Simon's plans. According to him, the transformation would be carried out by manufacturers, bankers, scholars, and artists, once they had been convinced by the new doctrine. To bring about this change nothing more was needed than peaceful reforms such as the acquisition of parliamentary power by industrialists; Saint-Simon also appealed to the governing class to support his plan. The most important features of his doctrine may be as follows: the firm belief in the regularity of history and its inexorable march towards socialism; the ruinous consequences of anarchic competition and the necessity of state economic planning; the replacement of political government by economic administration; science as the instrument of social progress; and the internationalist approach to politico-economic problems. Some negative features were Saint Simon's idea that the state as it now exists can be used to bring about a socialist transformation; his appeal for co-operation between classes, the religious character he gave to his industrial order. In later years after his death Saint-Simonism became somewhat of a sect with his veers often stressing the religious aspects of his teachings. Its influence however continued through various prominent individuals. The socialist Louis Blanc was a disciple of Saint-Simon and through him Lassalle, the pioneer political organiser of the German working class. In the field of industry one of Saint-Simon's disciples built the Suez Canal whereas another became the manager of a

railway line. In fact of all the pre-Marxist socialist doctrines Saint-Simonism had the strongest effect in spreading socialist ideas among the educated classes in various parts of Europe.

Robert Owen (1771-1858) was the other influential socialist thinker of this period. His main theoretical work was *A New View of Society* (1813-14), through which he tried to convince manufacturers and the aristocracy of the need for a reform of the industrial and monetary system, wages and education, in the interest not only of the workers but of capitalists and the whole of society. In numerous subsequent pamphlets, periodicals, articles, memorandums and appeals to Parliament he continued to advocate his reformist ideas, exposing the horrors of industrialisation and urging the adoption of social and educational measures which would remedy abuses without hindering technical progress. He was one of the main forces behind legislation restricting the working hours for children. Due to his intense propaganda against religion and private property he came under severe attack in Britain. He therefore left for America where he unsuccessfully attempted to set up communist settlements. However when he returned to Britain he became the first outstanding organiser of the trade union and workers co-operative movement. In his later years Owen put his trust in communist settlements engaged in agriculture and industry, the nuclei of the future harmonious society. Here, he believed that thanks to good organisation and loyal co-operation, people would produce more willingly, in greater quantity, and at a cheaper rate than elsewhere. Although it originated in practical experience, Owen's doctrine, like that of the French socialists, centred round the conviction that socialism was a unique discovery, so manifestly right that it was bound to be accepted by all classes as soon as proclaimed. Owen thought that a radical economic reform in a socialist spirit could be effected by appealing to universal human interests and with the aid of the existing state power. Owen's doctrine initiated a new phase of the British workers' movement, in which it ceased to be merely an outburst of despair and became a systematic force. However, the British trade union movement is still marked by his outlook, which directly subordinates the political struggle to economic interests. The social democratic theories which treated workers' political parties as organs of the trade unions are a continuation of the same doctrine.

Charles Fourier (1772-1837), was the one who described the future socialist society in greater detail than any of the other socialists of his time. Fourier's doctrine was inspired by the phenomena of crisis, speculation, exploitation, and the misery of the workers. All this, he thought was due to a wrongful system of labour and exchange. Human needs passions were ineradicable, but they only led to unhappiness because society was badly organised; the problem was to order matters in such a way that they led to the general good instead of to antagonism. To achieve this Fourier drew up an elaborate system of society composed of basic units of 2000 persons each called phalanxes. Unlike Saint Simon and Owen, he did not see the remedy in the transformation of human nature but in a new social order where conflict of interests would be so organised as to lead to harmony. His disciples while giving up the more fantastic portions of Fourier's theory tried to modify his ideas in the direction of realism. Workers' consumer co-operatives were an outcome of his system, as were attempts to establish producer cooperatives in which the workers were shareholders.

Besides these principal figures there were many other socialists contributing to the immense outpouring of socialist literature of this period. Among them was Wilhelm Weitling (1808-71) a German emigrant worker who presented communism as a Christian ideal. He presented an intense critique of capitalism from a class viewpoint and unlike many of the prominent socialists, did not expect the government or the capitalists to recognise his ideal and bring it about of their own accord; he believed that the workers can rely only on themselves and on their own strength. Etienne Cabet (1788-1856) was another socialist who wrote extensively advocating a non-revolutionary communism as the teaching of Christ. He later emigrated to America to establish communist settlements there. Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65) was another prolific writer. Regarded as the

father of modern anarchism, he painted the picture of a future society operated by 'free mutualist associations'; a system which he called anarchy. A figure who was not much of a theoretician but was of immense practical significance in the principal revolutionary events of the time - both the 1848 Revolution and the Paris Commune - was Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-81). He continued Babouvist tradition of revolutionary conspiracy into the workers' movement and was a strong proponent and practitioner of armed insurrection. In a vague and broad sense he also accepted communism and the conception of dictatorship of the proletariat. Louis Blanc (1811-82) on the other hand was the successor of the Saint-Simonist tradition and is considered one of the chief precursors of the welfare state. He believed that it was possible, without violence or mass expropriation, to carry out peaceful economic reforms within a system of political and industrial democracy which would eliminate poverty and harmful competition and would gradually lead to social equality and to the socialisation of means of production.

This substantial body of socialist thought as can be seen emanated mainly from France, which was at that time the main centre for secret revolutionary groups and communist organisations. While socialists branched out in different directions, in essence this thought was a continuation of the Enlightenment spirit and ideas of rationalism and progress. However socialism was at the same time a break with the individualism, self-interest and competition of bourgeois liberalism. It was the ideology representing the initial hopes and aspirations of the infant proletariat.

### **German Classical Philosophy**

Whereas British classical political economy representing the revolutionary modern bourgeoisie and French socialist theory representing the infant proletariat had a clear-cut progressive and also revolutionary content, the position was quite ambiguous with regard to German classical philosophy - the other great and influential body of European thought at the turn of the nineteenth century. It occupied an ideological position between the progressive and the anti-progressive, or in social terms, between the industrial bourgeoisie and proletariat on one side, and the aristocratic, mercantile and feudal classes on the other. It represented the contradictions and complexities of the German middle classes, who while in some ways believing in progress, were at the same time not prepared to follow it to its logical liberal or socialist conclusions. This because they were too weak and too frightened (after the experience of the Jacobin radical phase of the French Revolution) to challenge the power of the princes whose officials they often were. Thus the views of this group combined the liberal with the anti-liberal, the progressive with the anti-progressive. Further, this essential complexity and contradictoriness allowed them to see more deeply into the nature of society than either liberal progressives or anti-progressives. It in a way forced them into dialectics.

The German middle class contained a disproportionately large number of civil servants and state-employed professors. This affected the views of this class which had very few classical liberals. A belief in the inevitability of progress and in the benefits of scientific and economic advance, combined with a belief in the virtues of an enlightened paternal or bureaucratic administration and a sense of responsibility among the upper sections was the common opinion. German moderate liberalism was best represented by middle class demands to be implemented by an enlightened state.

The fundamental atmosphere of German thought - whether in philosophy, science or the arts - differed markedly from the main tradition of the eighteenth century in Western Europe. Perhaps since its members had neither the power to overthrow their societies nor the economic resources to make an Industrial Revolution, they tended to concentrate on the construction of elaborate general systems of thought. The persistence of the intellectual atmosphere of the last age in which Germany had been economically, intellectually, and to some extent politically, predominant, largely accounts for it. Due to the decline in the period between the Reformation and the later eighteenth century the archaism of the German intellectual tradition had been largely preserved. And at a time

when the classical eighteenth century view was approaching its limits, this gave German thought some advantage, and helps to explain its increasing intellectual influence in the nineteenth century. The most impressive and influential expression of German thought was German classical philosophy created basically between 1760 and 1830. Its two great figures were Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831).

Kant first expounded his ideas in his *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781. Among his significant positive ideas are his insistence that independently of our consciousness and outside it there exists an objective world ('things in themselves'); the attempt to examine the Earth and Solar System in their emergence and development; his investigation of the sources and forms of knowledge; his identification of a number of contradictions intrinsic to knowledge and reality. Some potentially reactionary aspects of Kant's thinking are: his teaching regarding the fundamental impossibility of cognizing ('things in themselves'); the impossibility of surmounting the barrier separating phenomena, accessible to human knowledge, and their essence that is inaccessible to it; Kant's to reconcile materialism and idealism, scientific knowledge and religious faith.

Hegel elaborated a philosophical system, in which "the whole world, natural, historical, intellectual, is represented as a process, i.e., as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all the movement and development" (Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, p. 34). Hegel's system consists of three parts: Logic, Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of the Spirit. In the first part he considers the progress of thought in the divine mind up until the creation of Nature, in the second he examines the development of that thought within created Nature, and, thirdly, its return to itself in the human spirit. The essential core of this system, is provided by the ideas concerning the historical advance of man's knowledge and social consciousness, presented in the context of dialectics.

German classical philosophy was a thoroughly bourgeois phenomenon. All its leading figures hailed the French Revolution and remained loyal to it for a considerable time. The Enlightenment was the framework of Kant's thought and the starting point of Hegel's. The philosophy of both was deeply immersed in the idea of progress and Hegel's entire philosophy is one of evolution and necessary progress. Further, both studied the British political economists and were probably influenced to some extent by Adam Smith. Hegel even used in an abstract manner the tools of the classical liberal economists in his formulation of labour as a fundamental factor in humanity. All this firmly established German classical philosophy's bourgeois roots.

Nevertheless, from the very beginning it differed from classic liberalism in important respects. This was more apparent in the case of Hegel. In the first place German philosophy was deliberately idealist, rejecting the materialism or empiricism of the classical tradition. In the second place, Hegel, unlike the classical liberals, makes his starting point the collective and not the individual. Moreover, German thinkers not being central participants in the bourgeois-liberal advance, were much more aware of its limits and contradictions. While recognising the inevitability of bourgeois society's triumphant progress, they also raised the question of whether it may not in turn be superseded. In theory the transitoriness of the historically doomed society was built into their philosophy itself.

However in practice the philosophers tried to reconcile this revolutionary nature of their philosophical conclusions with reality in a conservative manner. This Hegel did through a process of idealisation of the Prussian state and a refusal to accept its transitoriness, as also an attempt to end history with the cognition of the Absolute Idea. However this lay in direct contradiction to the core substance of a philosophy which saw the historical process itself developing through the dialectic of contradictions. This contradiction could not obviously stand up to the years of ferment following 1830. Just as we saw a process of decline in classical political economy in this period, we can also see a period of disintegration in German classical philosophy. The 'Young Hegelians' refused to halt

where their teacher did and insisted on following their philosophy to its logical conclusions. They further showed their readiness to take the road of revolution abandoned by their predecessors. However the issues of revolution in the 1830-48 period were no longer simply the question of the seizure of power by bourgeois liberals. A new class – the proletariat – had emerged and started rewriting the agenda of history. Therefore the intellectual revolutionary to emerge from the disintegration of German philosophy was not some bourgeois radical but Karl Marx.

In fact 1830 which marked the revival of the major west-European revolutionary movement, also marked the beginning of the crisis of classical bourgeois ideology. Its most advanced fields – political economy and philosophy – were in a process of decline and disintegration. The changing material conditions of the bourgeoisie and the apparent obstacles to its triumphal advance prevented the contemporary bourgeois thinkers from carrying forward uninterruptedly the classical tradition of Smith and Ricardo or of Kant and Hegel. The great tradition of the intellectual development following from the Enlightenment however did not die. It was transformed into its opposite in the form of Marxism.

# Chapter III

## The Birth of Marxism

### Early Life of Marx and Engels

Karl Marx was born May 5th, 1818, in the city of Trier (Rhenish Prussia). His father was a lawyer, a Jew, who in 1824 adopted Protestantism. The family was well-to-do, cultured, but not revolutionary. Marx entered university, at Bonn in 1835 and later at Berlin in 1836, where he first took up law, but soon devoted most of his attention to history and philosophy. He completed his doctorate in 1841. In Berlin he belonged to the circle of "Left Hegelians" who sought to draw atheistic and revolutionary conclusions from Hegel's philosophy. Soon after leaving university, Marx plunged directly into the turbulent political life of that period. His very first article, written against the Prussian press censorship, resulted in the confiscation of the issue of the *German Yearbook* in which it was published. He however continued to write for Left Hegelian journals. In 1842, Marx was appointed as chief editor of a radical democratic newspaper in Cologne, the *Rheinische-Zeitung*. However his revolutionary writings were too much for the censor and he was soon forced to leave this post. During this time, apart from articles on the freedom of the Press, he wrote analyses of the debates in the provincial assembly, in which for the first time he devoted his attention to economic questions and the standard of living of the deprived classes. Adopting a radical democratic standpoint, he denounced the pseudoliberalism of the Prussian government and stood up for the oppressed peasantry. In 1843 he moved to Paris where he became the joint editor of a journal, *The German-French Yearbooks*. In Paris he was in close contact with various revolutionary groups. It was here that he developed the foundations of Marxist theory which he to some extent generalised in the only issue of his journal that came out in February 1844.

Frederick Engels was born on September 28th 1820, in Barmen, Rhenish Prussia. His father was a manufacturer. In 1838 Engels, without having completed his school studies, was forced by family circumstances to enter a commercial firm in Bremen as a clerk. Commercial affairs did not prevent Engels from pursuing his scientific and political education. He had come to hate autocracy and the tyranny of bureaucracy while still at school. As a result of practical contact with trade and industry he soon became interested in social questions. The study of philosophy led him further. In the course of private study he imbibed liberal-democratic ideas and was attracted to Left Hegelian radicalism. His first press articles written in 1839 attacked German bigotry and the hypocrisy of petty-bourgeois pietism. He also described industrial conditions and the oppression and poverty of the workers. In 1842, he moved to Manchester, then the centre of British industry, where he entered the service of a commercial firm of which his father was a shareholder. He spent much time observing the conditions of the British working class and studying political economy and socialism. It is here that he contacted the Chartist and Owenite movements and became a revolutionary. He wrote for various journals including the Chartist *Northern Star*, and participated extensively in the activities of the various revolutionary groups of that time. The same issue of *The German French Yearbooks* which contained Marx's first preliminary exposition of the materialist conception of history also contained Engel's essay entitled 'Outline of a Critique of Political Economy'. Though he was corresponding with Marx earlier too, it was during a visit to meet Marx in Paris in the summer of 1844, that they found complete agreement in all theoretical fields. This marked the beginning of the fruitful partnership of these two magnificent fighters for and with the working class.

As can be seen from the above, the early intellectual and practical experiences of Marx and Engels equipped them considerably to absorb all that was best in European society at their time.

Besides their grounding in classical German philosophy, they were within a short span exposed to and participated in the development of revolutionary theory and practice in the two main centres of France and England. Further, the period was one of the greatest revolutionary ferment throughout Europe – a period when both the bourgeoisie and proletariat often found revolution to break out. In order to trace how Marx and Engels established Marxism in these conditions let us begin at their starting point – the Left Hegelian group.

### **The Hegelian Left**

Almost immediately after the death of Hegel in 1831, some of his radically minded interpreters took up the task of breaking free from the political conservatism of the founder. To them it seemed evident that a philosophy which proclaimed the principle of universal negativity, treating each successive phase of history as the basis of its own destruction, could not consistently tolerate the endorsement of a particular historical situation, or recognise any kind of state, religion, or philosophy as irrefutable and final. This led by degrees to an attitude of radical criticism in politics, certain forms of which supplied the philosophical basis of communism.

This Left Hegelian or Young Hegelian movement was the philosophical expression of the republican, bourgeois-democratic opposition which criticised the feudal order of the Prussian state. Prussia's western provinces, the Rhineland and Westphalia, had been under French rule for the most part of two decades and had benefited from the Napoleonic reforms - abolition of feudal estates and privileges, and equality before the law. They were also the centre of early modern industrial centres like Cologne. After their annexation to Prussia in 1815 they were a natural centre of repeated conflict with the monarchical system. Both Marx and Engels being natives of the Rhineland they were naturally imbued from a young age with this spirit of anti-feudal radical opposition.

This opposition in the field of literature was led from the late thirties by a group of Hegelian radicals mainly centred in Berlin with whom Marx came into contact at the time when he was beginning to formulate his own ideas. One of the prominent figures with whom Marx collaborated was Bruno Bauer (1809-82), a former Protestant theologian, who wrote numerous anti-Christian pieces from a Left Hegelian atheistic viewpoint. While being a part of the Left Hegelian group Marx at this early stage itself had a differing viewpoint in his emphasis on the philosophy of praxis (of linking with the practical world). This emphasis appeared in his doctoral thesis of 1841.

At the same time in 1841 appeared two books which helped Marx in freeing himself from the boundaries of Left Hegelian thought. The first was *The European Triarchy* by Moses Hess (1812-75) who had composed a communist philosophy on the basis of a combination of socialist and Left Hegelian ideas. In this book Hess attempted to strip Hegelianism of its contemplative backward looking tendencies and transform it into a philosophy of action. Hess from 1841 became Marx's friend and collaborator and many of his ideas helped to form Marx's conception of scientific socialism. The other influential work of 1841 was *The Essence of Christianity* by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72) which presented a materialistic critique of religion expressed in Hegelian language. This and other works of Feuerbach played an important role in converting many Left Hegelians including Marx and Engels to materialism.

Marx's transformation thus coincided with a process of radicalisation and then break-up of the Hegelian Left. The radicalisation of Left Hegelian philosophy led to them raising anti-feudal demands like the abolition of privileged estates, public office open to all, freedom of speech and property – in short, a bourgeois egalitarian state. This brought upon them the repression of the Prussian state. At the same time as the censor's attacks on Marx's Cologne newspaper, the authorities in 1843 also suppressed an important Left Hegelian philosophical journal *The German-French Yearbooks* edited by Arnold Ruge. It was this journal that was attempted to be revived in Paris under the name of *The German-French Yearbooks* under the joint editorship of Marx, Ruge and Hess.

The process of the break-up of the Left Hegelian group had however already begun and differences between Marx and Ruge led to the journal's closure after one issue came out in February 1844.

### **Contact with Socialist and Revolutionary Thought**

From the time of leaving university in 1841 the key role in Marx's development was played by a deep involvement in revolutionary practice. During the period of his activity in Germany among bourgeois radicals itself Marx acquired some acquaintance with French socialist thought. However it was only after his shift to Paris that he got the opportunity to get deeply involved with both the French revolutionary and socialist-communist groups as well as the German emigrant communist organisations. Though he did not adopt any of the various socialist doctrines, Marx's study and interaction with the socialists helped to form his initial views regarding scientific socialism and the revolutionary role of the proletariat.

At the same time Engels was going through the process of becoming a revolutionary in the main centre of the working class, England. He developed through interaction and participation in activity with the revolutionary Chartists and the reformist Owenites, observation of the conditions of the British working class and a study of political economy and socialism.

### **Study of Political Economy**

The initial work in this respect was done by Engels who being in England was first exposed to the works of the great English classical economists. This study was reflected in his essay on political economy published in February 1844. He argued that the contradictions of capitalist economy could not be resolved on the basis of that economy; that periodical crises of overproduction were the inevitable consequence of free competition, etc. Private property led necessarily to antagonise between classes and an incurable conflict between private and public interests; it was also bound up with anarchy in production and the resultant crises. The abolition of private property was the only way to save humanity from crises, want, and exploitation. Planned production would do away with social inequality and the absurd situation in which poverty was caused by an excess of goods.

This was followed up by Marx who spent much of 1844 in Paris in studying the fathers of political economy like Adam Smith, Ricardo, Say, James Mill, Quesnay, as well the German philosophers and socialist writers. He was attempting a critique of political economy in which he attempted to provide a general philosophical analysis of basic concepts: capital, rent, labour, property, money, commodities, needs, and wages. This work which remained unfinished was published for the first time in 1932 as the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844. In it he tried to present socialism as a general world-view and not merely a programme of social reform, and to relate economic categories to a philosophical interpretation of man's position in nature.

### **Discovery of the Materialist Conception of History**

It was during this period that the historical meeting between Marx and Engels took place in Paris in August-September 1844. Though they had exchanged ideas through correspondence the meeting helped to establish a oneness of views and the beginning of a forty years collaboration in revolutionary activity.

This was also the period when Marx made the first of his most important discoveries, which revolutionised the whole conception of world history. Engels describes the process in the following words, "While I was in Manchester, it was tangibly brought home to me that the economic facts, which have so far played no role or only a contemptible one in the writing of history, are, at least in the modern world, a decisive historical force; that they form the basis of the origination of the present-day class antagonisms; that these class antagonisms; in the countries where they have become fully developed, thanks to large-scale industry, hence especially in England, are in their turn

the basis of the formation of political parties and of party struggles, and thus of all history. Marx had not only arrived at the same view, but had in the German-French Yearbooks (1844), generalised it to the effect that, speaking generally, it is not the state which conditions and regulates civil society, but civil society which conditions and regulates the state and, consequently, that policy and its history are to be explained from the economic relations and their development, and not vice versa.

... When, in the spring of 1845, we met again in Brussels, Marx had already fully developed his materialist theory of history in its main features from the above-mentioned basis and we now applied ourselves to the detailed elaboration of the newly-won mode of outlook in the most varied directions.” (Engels, *On the History of the Communist League*, Marx-Engels, Selected Works, p. 436).

Thus the discovery of the materialist conception of history in a sense laid the basis. Drawing from the sources of German classical philosophy, English classical political economy, and French revolutionary and socialist doctrines, the basic foundation of Marxism had been laid. Standing on this foundation it was now possible to elaborate the component parts of the world outlook of the modern proletariat.

### **Elaboration of Basic Principles of Marxism**

This was the task that Marx and Engels devoted a large part of their energies in the immediate following years. While taking an active part in intense revolutionary activity they worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary proletarian socialism or communism. The basic principles in all three component parts of Marxism – philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism – were laid out in the course of a study and a battle against wrong trends in all these spheres.

In the sphere of philosophy, they in 1844, in a joint book, written mainly by Marx, (*The Holy Family, or a Critique of Critical Criticism*) launched a severe attack on the contemplative idealism of Bruno Bauer of the Left Hegelian circle, which Marx and Engels were earlier a part of. It is an important document signalling Marx’s final break with Left Hegelian radicalism: for its proclamation of communism as the ideology of the working class movement is not presented as a supplement to the critique of Left Hegelianism, but as something opposed to it.

In 1845-46, Marx and Engels “resolved to work out in common the opposition of [their] view to the ideological view of German philosophy, in fact, to settle accounts with [their] erstwhile philosophical conscience.”(4) This resulted in a two volume work, *The German Ideology*, which first shaped the materialistic conception of history as the philosophical basis for the theory of scientific communism. It was primarily an attack on Feuerbach, Max Stirner (a Left Hegelian who stood for the absolute sovereignty of the Ego), and German ‘true socialism’. It was published, however, only after the October Revolution. And according to Engels, the exposition in this work proved “only how incomplete [their] knowledge of economic history still was at that time”<sup>6</sup>. Yet it served at that time the very important purpose of self-clarification of these two great working class teachers.

Another short document written by Marx at that time (1845), and only published after his death, served a similar purpose. It was his eleven *Theses on Feuerbach*, which according to Engels, was “invaluable as the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook.”<sup>6</sup> It briefly and sharply pointed out the principal defect of Feuerbach’s and other materialism, as its contemplative nature and its failure to understand that man’s activity is revolutionary. In fact one common string running through Marx and Engels’ philosophical writings of this period was that they demanded of the philosopher, not contemplation, but a struggle for a better order of society. This was best expressed in Marx’s oft quoted eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.”<sup>7</sup>

In the sphere of political economy, Engels, in February 1844 itself brought out his *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*. The next year he published *The Condition of the Working Class in England*,

where he became the first one to proclaim that the proletariat was not only a suffering class, but a fighting class which would help itself, and that socialism would become a force only when it became the aim of the political struggle of the working class. After his contact with Engels, Marx too decided to study political economy which resulted in the already mentioned unfinished *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. And in 1847 he gave a series of lectures to workers in Brussels, which was later published as a pamphlet, 'Wage-Labour and Capital'. This gave a popular outline of the economic relations forming the material basis for the class struggle in capitalist society.

It was however in the sphere of socialist theory and practice, that Engels, in this period, put in the most intense efforts. While participating energetically in the activities of the secret revolutionary groups, they made all efforts to win over the maximum possible forces to the side of proletarian revolutionary socialism. To do this they had to fight the numerous reactionary and petty bourgeois trends which were confusing and misleading the genuine elements in these organisations. Thus the second volume of their earlier mentioned work, *The German Ideology*, was an exposure of the reactionary, petty bourgeois, German 'True' socialism. However, the more major battle was against Proudhon's bourgeois socialism which was very influential among the French socialists and revolutionaries at that time. In 1846, Proudhon published his most important work, *The Philosophy of Poverty*, which as Marx himself said, "produced a great sensation." Marx replied in a sharp polemic which tore to shreds the Proudhonist system. He called his reply *The Poverty of Philosophy*. He criticised Proudhon's ignorance of economics, misuse of Hegelian concepts, moralistic conception of socialism, and a reactionary petty-bourgeois Utopia. This marked the beginning of a 20 year long battle with Proudhon and Proudhonists who continued to maintain a strong presence within the international socialist workers movement.

### **Revolutionary Activity**

All the above theoretical work was done in the midst of continuous revolutionary activity. Marx in Paris took an active part in the meetings of socialist organisations and especially the League of the Just, while Engels, who had returned to Germany spread the word of communism in speeches and writings and endeavoured to weld scattered socialist groups into a single organisation. In February 1845 Marx was deported from Paris at the instance of the Prussian government and had to move to Brussels, where Engels joined him in the spring. In summer they visited England, where they made contact with the Chartists and took steps to establish a centre of co-operation of the revolutionary movement of different countries. Returning to Brussels, they continued to work for the unification of revolutionary associations. This was a period of intense revolutionary ferment throughout Europe. The revival of the bourgeois revolutionary movement from 1830 was, by the 1840s, having its impact throughout Europe. It was becoming more and more clear that the old feudal aristocracy who still commanded large parts of Europe would no longer be able to rule in the of way and would have to concede power wholly or partially to the industrial classes. The pressure for the abolition of serfdom and for bourgeois rights was growing everywhere. This crisis of the old system which was all encompassing, then combined with a crisis of the new capitalist system – the severe periodic economic crisis of 1846-48. Harvests failed, food prices rose, and entire populations, such as those of Ireland, starved. Industrial depression multiplied unemployment, and the masses of the urban labouring poor were deprived of even their tiny incomes at the very moment when their cost of living rocketed. The situation varied somewhat from country to country, but taking Western and Central Europe as a whole, the situation was explosive.

Parallel with the unrest among the working class and urban poor was the process of radicalising of the young communist movement, The Communist League which had been formed in 1847 had united various revolutionary groups consisting chiefly of exiled workers and intellectuals - French, German, Swiss, Italian, Russian, etc., – in London, Paris, and Brussels. The League soon came under

the guidance of Marx and Engels and they were asked to prepare the programme of the new organisation. This programme written during the period of tremendous revolutionary anticipation leading up to the 1848 Revolution was the first revolutionary programme of the modern proletariat. I brought together in one document, 'The Communist Manifesto', the basic principles of Marxism, which even after 150 years stand firm, altogether impervious to the attacks of capitalist enemies.

### **The Communist Manifesto**

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* published around 24th February 1848, was a document of unparalleled historical importance. It was intended to be immediately published in English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish, though it was also published in Polish and Swedish before the year was completed. It has since been translated and published in innumerable languages around the globe.

The Manifesto was not only a programmatic document, analysing society and outlining the programmatic tasks of the proletariat. It laid down very basis of scientific socialism and the approach to all other types of socialism. It also gave the approach to other opposition parties of that time. With regard to the Manifesto, Lenin puts it like this, "With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat - the creator of a new, communist society" (Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, p. 11).

Thus the Communist Manifesto contained the basic conclusions of Marxism in all its three component parts – philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism. With its appearance, we can say that Marx's theory of society and his precepts for action had attained completion in the form of a well-defined and permanent outline. His later works did not modify what he had written in any essential respect, but enriched it with specific analyses and transformed what were sometimes no more than statements, slogans, or heads of argument into a massive theoretical structure. Marx and Engels themselves saw little cause to revise subsequent editions of the document as far as its theoretical bases were concerned. They had this to say in their joint preface to the 1872 German edition, "However much the state of things may have altered during the last twenty-five years, the general principles laid down in this Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct today as ever."

This statement remains as true even today. But in order to grasp this truth let us follow the destiny of Marx's doctrine during the various periods of the last 150 years of world history.

For this purpose history can be divided into the following six main periods:

1. From the Revolution of 1848 to the Paris Commune (1871);
2. From the Paris Commune to the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905;
3. From the Russian 1905 revolution to the Great October Socialist Revolution (1917);
4. From the Great October Socialist Revolution to the Chinese People's Revolution (1949);
5. From the Chinese People's Revolution to the death of Mao and loss of China, the last Socialist Base (1976);
6. Since the loss of China, the last Socialist Base.

# Chapter IV

## The First Period: 1848 – 1871

The period starts with what Marx called ‘the Continental Revolution’ of 1848, which covered practically the whole European continent with a wave of insurrectionary upheavals; it concludes with the defeat of the Paris Commune, the first dictatorship of the proletariat. The intervening years too experienced numerous wars and revolutionary struggles. It was thus what Lenin once referred to as ‘a period of storms and revolutions’. This was however also a period of continuous and sustained growth of industrial capitalism, which by the end of this period had become a genuine world economy.

### Economic Boom

The period from the depression of 1846-48 up to the early 1870s was a period of continuous boom for capitalism, except for a short depression around 1857. Between 1850 and 1870 world coal output multiplied two and a half times and world iron output by four times. Total steam power which was one of the best indicators of economic expansion, multiplied by four and a half times rising from 4 million HP to about 18.5 million HP. As a characteristic of all capitalistic development, the growth was highly uneven. It converted many of the lesser industrialised areas of Europe into advanced industrial economies with large industry. A classical example was Germany. In 1850 its installed steam power at 40,000 HP was less than 10% of the British, but by 1870, it was 900,000 HP, almost the same as the British. It also left one of the earlier industrialised countries, France, far behind. Similar changes relative positions of the other main capitalist countries took place. The United States emerged as a major industrial power and Japan, after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 embarked on the path of speedy capitalist growth.

This period also saw a lowering of tariff barriers and a tremendous increase in world trade by 260%. This was under a wave of economic liberalism, with a world-wide movement to remove all institutional barriers to free enterprise, free trade and free movement of factors of production. However this period also marks the end of liberal free enterprise capitalism. By the end of this period the development of free competition had reached its apex and particularly with the intense economic crisis of 1873, started the period of monopolies and cartels.

### Marx’s Analysis of Capitalism

As free competition capitalism was advancing towards its limits, Marx spent a considerable of his time in these years to an in-depth analysis of capitalism and the elaboration of his critique of political economy begun in the 1844 Manuscripts. Always searching for new data and sources to refine his work, the critique remained incomplete. It was only published in 1939-41 as ‘Outline of a Critique of Political Economy’ (Grundrisse). It, among other things, contains Marx’s most important study of the problems of method in the social sciences. It contains the sketch and the plan of work for Capital.

Another important economic work of Marx which was published at this time was Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy (1859). It represented, according to Engels, the “first coherent exposition of the Marxian theory of value, including the doctrine of money.” The Preface to this work is one of Marx’s most-quoted texts, as it contains the most concise and general formulations of the materialist conception of history—Marx’s monumental work of this period was however Capital, whose aim as he himself said was to “lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society.” Its

first volume, published in 1867, revealed the sources of exploitation by analysing the basic phenomena of the capitalist economy: commodities, exchange- and use-value, surplus value, capital wages and accumulation. Marx intended to finish the second and third volumes of Capital in a short time. The second was to analyse the circulation of capital and the market, while the third was to deal with the sharing of profit among different groups of exploiters, the origin of the average rate of profit, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and the transformation of surplus profit into ground rent. Parts of these volumes were written before the first was published, but although Marx continued working on them till 1878 they were not completed at the time of his death. The manuscripts, arranged and edited by Engels, were published in 1885 and 1894, while 'Theories of Surplus Value' was published by Kautsky as the fourth volume of Capital in 1905-10.

### **The 1848 Revolution**

The 1848 Revolution which had tremendous historic impact, was launched at almost the same time as the publication of 'The Communist Manifesto'. In France, the king was overthrown and the republic proclaimed under the pressure of the workers on 24th February. By 2<sup>nd</sup> March revolution had covered south-west Germany, by 4th March Cologne, by 6th March Bavaria, by 11th March Berlin, by 13th March Vienna and almost immediately Hungary, by 18th March Milan and therefore Italy. Within a matter of weeks no government was left standing in an area of Europe which is today covered by more than ten countries. The common factor in all the revolutions were that they were social revolutions of the labouring poor. In the cities it was the workers who composed the overwhelming majority of those who participated and died in the demonstrations and barricade-fighting. Wherever there was rural participation, as in south-west Germany, Italy and other places, it was the poor peasantry who came out in insurrection and to divide the great estates. This overwhelming participation of the poor however had the effect of frightening the moderate liberal sections and even some of the radical sections of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie, afraid of being swept away in the social wave and losing even their bourgeois rights, decided quickly in most places to betray the revolution and make a compromise with feudal reaction. This led to the rapid failure of all the revolutions. With the exception of France, all the old rulers were restored to power; and the revolutionaries scattered into exile.

The turning point came in June 1848, when the revolutionary workers of Paris were forced into insurrection which was brutally crushed. The June insurrection, was, as Marx put it "the first great battle ... between the two classes that split modern society." For five days the unarmed workers fought the combined armed forces of the united bourgeoisie. 1500 died in the street fighting (as against only 370 in the February Revolution). The class hatred of the bourgeoisie was such that even after the suppression, 3000 more were massacred, and 12,000 were arrested and mostly sent to Algerian labour camps. After the workers were defeated, the sections of the bourgeoisie who participated in the revolution were one by one pushed out of power. On 2nd December 1851, Louis Bonaparte, a nephew of the earlier Napoleon seized dictatorial power, and in 1852 got himself proclaimed as Emperor, Napoleon III in which position he continued until his defeat in the Franco Prussian war of 1870-71.

The defeat of the French workers led to the bourgeoisie throughout Europe jumping into the arms of the reactionaries. The Austrian Emperor's army took over Prague, with moderate bourgeois help, in June 1848, and then Vienna in October, after a battle that cost over 4000 lives. This was followed by the king of Prussia taking over Berlin and then other parts of Germany. This left parts of Italy and Hungary which were taken over in August 1849. All the reforms introduced by the revolutions were reversed. The only exception was the abolition of serfdom in the vast Austrian Habsburg Empire. This meant the abolition of serfdom throughout most of Europe, except Russia and Rumania where the abolition was accomplished in the 1860s.

## **Marx and Engels during the 1848 Revolution**

After the February Revolution in Paris the Belgian government adopted repressive measures against the emigrant revolutionaries; Marx was expelled from Brussels and returned to Paris, where he worked for the German revolutionary cause on behalf of the Communist League. After the Vienna and Berlin revolutions in March many German emigres moved from France to Germany. Marx and Engels established themselves in Cologne, where communist propaganda was most active, and from June onwards published a newspaper, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, with a programme entitled *Demands of the Communist Party of Germany*. These aims were not communistic as such, but radical democratic and republican: they included the confiscation of large estates, free universal education, a progressive income tax, and the nationalisation of railways. The paper, of which Marx was chief editor, condemned the irresolute attitude of the bourgeoisie and advocated a united Germany under a republican constitution with direct and universal suffrage; it championed the oppressed national minorities, especially the Poles, and called for war with Russia as the mainstay of reaction in Europe.

The victory of reaction in Europe and the collapse of the revolution in Germany led to the closure of the paper in May 1849. Marx was expelled from Prussia and returned to Paris where a new revolutionary upsurge was still expected. However in the face of repression by the French government he was forced to shift to London in August, where he spent the rest of his life in exile. Engels settled in Manchester where he spent twenty years. Upon their entry into England, Marx and Engels set about reviving the Communist League. They drafted and distributed an address of the central committee which called for the setting up of an independent proletarian party independent of the petty bourgeois democrats (the republican bourgeoisie). It called for aiming at 'permanent revolution' which would enable the proletariat to eventually seize power. The Communist League however did not last long and was wound up in 1852.

Marx's work during this period helped establish the founding principles of the proletariat's revolutionary tactics. His series of articles written during this period was published as *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*. This along with his brilliant work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* written in 1851-52 was "Marx's first attempt to explain a section of contemporary history by means of his materialist conception". On the basis of the practical experience of the mass revolutionary struggle, Marx developed the analysis and tactic of the proletariat. The confusing twists and turns in the events as they took place were clearly explained in class terms. He clearly showed how the proletariat was the real driving and decisive force in the revolutions which had put the bourgeoisie in power. He then showed how the bourgeoisie while turning against the workers had actually betrayed the revolution and proved incapable of rule. He exposed the 'parliamentary cretinism' of the petty bourgeois democrats who were caught up in the illusions of their parliamentary speeches they ignored the realities of the class struggle. Of particular importance was Marx's exposure of the true nature of the bourgeois state as an organ of capitalist class rule and his first use of the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Finally, Marx's analysis of the role of the peasantry is crucial. While analysing how the adventurer Louis Bonaparte utilised the peasantry as his chief social support to establish his dictatorship, he pointed to the need of the peasantry being won over as an ally of the revolution. This all important formulation was further more clearly developed when Marx wrote to Engels in the context of Engel's 1850 book *The Peasant War in Germany* regarding the historic German peasant uprising of 1525. Marx points out that the future of the proletarian revolution in Germany would depend on whether it won the support of the peasantry, what he called a second edition of the Peasant War.

## **Other Revolutions in this Period**

The 1848 European Revolution had global impact and even inspired an insurrection in Pernambuco in Brazil in the same year and a Colombian revolution in the early 1850s. The Spanish revolution of 1854-56 too can be seen in the same light. It too was however crushed after the bourgeoisie and the army officers who had first started the uprising later betrayed it to leave the workers to be isolated and defeated.

This period saw major struggles in the colonies and semi-colonies. The major ones were the Taiping peasant Revolution of China (1851-64), the First Indian War of Independence (1857-58), and the great Algerian uprising (1871). The Taiping Revolution was the largest such struggle and it covered 17 provinces where it attempted to establish a new society on the basis of ideas of Utopian agricultural socialism. It was finally crushed by an alliance of the Ching imperial troops with the Americans, British and French. The other struggles too were crushed by the colonialists, aided by local betrayers.

This was also the age of wars where after the relative calm since the Napoleonic wars (since 1815), the major capitalist powers again waged repeated war. In Europe there was the Crimean War (1854-56) between Russia on one side and Britain, France and Turkey on the other resulting in 600,000 deaths, France, Savoy and the Italians against Austria (1858-59), Prussia and Austria against Denmark (1864), Prussia and Italy against Austria (1866), Prussia and the German states against France (1870-71). The major wars in the Americas were the American Civil War (1861-66) between the industrialised North and the agrarian South of the United States resulting in 630,000 deaths, and the war between Paraguay on one side and Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil on the other (1864-70) resulting in 330,000 deaths. The main cause for these wars was the process of capitalist expansion and the direct and indirect conflicts arising out of it. In many cases they completed the tasks of the unfinished bourgeois revolutions. In the American Civil War the unfinished task of independence from Britain was completed by the integration of the South states (which had continued to remain closely linked with the British Empire) into the new major industrial economy of the United States. The national tasks unfulfilled in the 1848 Revolution were completed in the European wars. The modern capitalist nation-states of Germany and Italy were thus established, Rumania came into existence at the end of the 1850s, and the Hungarian nation achieved autonomy within the Austrian Empire in 1867. Poland and Ireland however could not come into existence despite national movements, and insurrections in 1863 and 1867 respectively.

Marx and Engels wrote extensively on all the above events. Marx in particular contributed regularly from 1852 to 1862 to the *New York Tribune* where he analysed various events in Europe and Asia. Some of these articles were brought together in books. These articles laid class forces in the wars and revolutionary events and raised appropriate demands from the standpoint of the proletariat. Thus was further developed the theory of the tactics of the proletariat.

## **Formation of the International Workingmen's Association**

There were strong internationalist trends within the workers movement, particularly in Britain and France, which contributed to the establishment of the International Workingmen's Association or the First International. The formation itself took place in the context of a rising wave of proletarian and bourgeois national revolutionary struggles, after a long period of reaction that had followed the failure of the 1848 Revolution. Particularly in the wake of the 1857 Depression there was a strong strike movement of 1860-62 in England and other countries, which gave a boost to the trade unions and other workers organisations.

Organisational links were built up at joint demonstrations by British and French workers in 1863 to protest the suppression of the Polish insurrection by Russia and to demand independence for Poland. Talks at this time of the formation of an international led to the English worker

representatives sending a formal 'Address' to the French workers regarding this. The reply of the French workers was presented at the meeting on 28th September 1864 which resulted in the formation of the International Workingmen's Association. This meeting, which was attended by German, Italian and Polish emigres besides the British and French, decided to have its headquarters in London, with the English labour journal, the *Bee-hive*, as its official organ. Marx who was present at the meeting was elected to its council and made corresponding Secretary for Germany. It was he who drew up the Inaugural Address and Provisional Rules, the first programme and constitution of the First International.

The Address analysed briefly the economic and political situation and laid down that political action to conquer political power was the great duty of the working class. The Rules laid down that the working class can act as a class only by establishing a distinct political party opposed to all the old parties formed by the possessing classes. These documents contain the first development of the organisational principles of the working class party.

### **Fight against Wrong trends in the First International**

On the basis of the above principles and the growing struggles of the working class the International spread to various countries. In the first few years sections were formed in various towns in France, Belgium, and Switzerland, besides Britain. In the wave of strikes after 1867 new sections were created in Spain, Italy, Holland, and Austria while in Germany a social democratic party was formed by Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel, along with the Lassallists. This party, though it did not formally join the International was nevertheless close to Marx on the main issues. Thus the International grew rapidly in strength in the 1860s.

However a constant struggle had to be waged against various wrong trends contrary to the basic principles. As Marx himself once wrote, "The International was founded in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a real organisation of the working class for struggle.....The history of the International was a continual struggle of the General Council against the sects and against amateur experimen which sought to assert themselves within the International against the real movement of the working class" (Quoted in Foster William Z. *History of the Three Internationals*, p.45).

A principal example of such trends was Anarchism. One of its principal leaders was Bakunin, who saw his programme as an extension and development of Proudhon's anarchist system. His main principles were: (a) the propagation of atheism; (b) the destruction of the state; (c) the rejection of all political action, as the state can be destroyed insurrection. Bakuninists thus clashed with Marxism on three very important questions: (a) the political struggle of the working class, since they counterposed it to the insurrection; (b) the proletarian dictatorship since they predicted that the fall of capitalism would automatically destroy the state which would be replaced by a "free federation of persons, communes, districts, nations"; (c) the proletarian party, since they were opposed to any authority even in the realm of political organisation. The Bakuninist trend maintained a strong presence in the First International and many of the Congresses of the International were marked by intense debates between them and the Marxists. It finally led to the split in the International in the Hague Congress in 1872. The Bakuninists and other similar Anarchist trends could maintain some relevance in this period of numerous wars and revolutions because of the illusions they created an immediate proletarian revolution. However from the 1870s onwards they declined organisationally and in mass influence and being a practical failure, disintegrated into various irrelevant sects.

Another struggle waged by Marxism in this period was against the Blanquist trend led by Blanqui, the important French worker leader who participated prominently both in the 1848 Revolution as well as the Paris Commune. This trend though agreeing with many Marxist principles relied mostly on conspiratorial methods. Through continuous struggle against its wrong

understanding many of Blanquism's best were won over to the side of Marxism. Blanquism too died as an active political force after the Paris Commune.

A very important struggle however from the point of view of the future was against the opportunist trend of Lassalleism. It proposed a system of government-subsidised co-operatives, which would gradually replace capitalism. It wanted universal suffrage because that according to Lassalle would ensure 90% parliament seats for the worker who would then ensure subsidisation of his co-operatives. He even started opportunist links with the then German Chancellor, Bismarck, with the hope of getting his subsidies, for which Marx characterised him as a betrayer. The most dangerous aspect of Lassalleist opportunism was his total opposition to trade union struggles and strikes, which he theorised on the basis of his so-called 'iron law of wages'. According to this the workers were unbreakably bound to the barest subsistence levels and any wage raises won by trade unions were supposed to be automatically cancelled out by increases in prices and living costs. Marx energetically opposed this petty bourgeois theory through a theoretical exposition of the relation between *Wages, Price and Profit*, which was the text of his report to the General Council of the First International in September 1865. While thoroughly exposing the false Lassalleist positions propounded by John Weston, a General Council member, he proposed that, "Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' [the working class] ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, abolition of the wages system!"

### **The Paris Commune and the First International**

The First International was at the peak of its popular appeal at the time of the Franco-German war and the Paris Commune. Rising on a wave of strike struggles it had fostered a wide industrial and trade union movement led by its members and supporters. It regularly provided direction on political questions. When the Franco-German war broke out in July 1870 the General Council immediately brought out a document drafted by Marx which is an initial example of Marxist tactics in war. He called for international solidarity of workers putting the blame on the rulers of both France and Germany. While it was for Germany a defensive war because of the attack of the reactionary dictator Napoleon III, he warned the German workers of the danger of it becoming a war of conquest, and of the German government allying with the reactionary Russian Tsar. Among both German and French workers a spirit of internationalism prevailed and Liebknecht and Bebel voted in parliament against war credits and were jailed for it.

Napoleon III fell, as predicted by Marx, within six weeks, and a Republic was proclaimed. Marx immediately brought out another Address of the International, where he called for resolute opposition to the German war of conquest. He called on German workers and workers everywhere to press for honourable peace with France and recognition of the Republic. He analysed the French Republic as consisting of big bourgeois royalist and republican petty bourgeois sections, with the section representing the finance aristocracy and big bourgeoisie in the commanding position. He however opposed any attempt by the working class to overthrow the new government as an act of 'desperate folly' because the enemy was then at the doors of Paris.

However contrary to Marx's proposal, the Bakuninists made various unsuccessful attempts at carrying out an uprising in different French cities. Blanqui too made preparations for insurrection. As the German siege of Paris continued, control moved into the hand of the National Guard composed mainly of workers. The Republican Thiers government then made an agreement to hand-over Paris to the Germans. When they tried to implement this by disarming the National Guard the masses of Paris revolted and established the Paris Commune from 18th March, 1871. The leadership of the Commune was in the hands of the Blanquists, though Blanqui himself was arrested the night before the uprising. Mass elections which were soon held formed a Council of 92 members which had a majority of Blanquists, a large group of Proudhonists and eighteen Marxists. Though Marx

had been opposed to insurrection declared militant support to it as soon as it began. The Commune however could not stand up to the vast range of forces against it. All governments united to crush the Commune and the German government even quickly released its French prisoners-of-war to speed up the war effort to seize Paris. The Commune was finally conquered after five days of fierce fighting in which over one thousand army-men and innumerable Communards were killed. The cold-blooded massacre after the take-over was however much greater. Over 30,000 Communards were shot down and over 45,000 arrested, of whom many were executed, sentenced to prison or exile. The slaughter thus far exceeded even the killings after the June 1848 insurrection and proved what atrocities the bourgeoisie was capable of if the proletariat dared to seize power.

Though the Paris Commune was extremely short-lived it had tremendous historic significance which was brought out by Marx's work, *The Civil War in France* written during the Commune but published just two days after its fall. Among its major political decisions were the separation of Church and State, abolishing of subsidies to the church, doing away with the standing army in favour of a people's militia, election and control of all judges and magistrates, fixing an upper limit for the salaries for all functionaries and making them strictly responsible to the electorate, etc. Among the socio-economic measures were free and general education, abolition of night work in bakeries, cancellation of employer fines in workshops, closing of pawnshops, seizure of closed workshops which were to be run by workers' co-operatives, relief to the unemployed, rationed dwellings and assistance to debtors. The Commune also committed certain mistakes which proved to be lessons to future generations of the working class.

Most important lessons stressed by the experience of the Commune were – contrary to the assertions of the Anarchists – the absolute need for a strong, clear-sighted and disciplined proletarian art for the success of the revolution, and the need to smash the bourgeois bureaucratic-military state machine in order to build the workers' as the state. It also provided the first basic form of the new society as well first experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was as Lenin said, "the greatest example of the greatest proletarian movement of the nineteenth century."

Marx's analysis of the Commune again helped to clear the confusion among the revolutionary forces in the aftermath of reaction immediately following the fall of the Commune. It helped the international proletariat to draw the correct lessons to inspire and direct the struggles ahead. As it had done throughout this period (1848-71), it again proved that it was the only correct working class ideology. At the beginning of this period Marxism by no means dominated and it was just one of the extremely numerous factions or trends of socialism. The stormy events of this period and the clarity of analysis provided regarding them by Marxism, had however proved that all forms of non-class socialism and non-class politics were sheer nonsense. They were thus relegated to the background and it was Marxism that provided the leadership. It was under Marxism's leadership also that working class organisations and struggles grew during this period. Marxism advanced from its influence among revolutionary groups to fuse its links with the working class masses. Independent proletarian parties – the First International and the German Social-Democratic Party – were formed for the first time under Marxist leadership. Marxism now led a massive proletarian movement which had begun to challenge the bourgeoisie.

# Chapter V

## The Second Period: 1871-1905

### Political Background

“The second period (1872-1904) was distinguished from the first by its peaceful character, by the absence of revolutions. The West had finished with bourgeois revolutions. The East had not yet grown ripe for them.”<sup>9</sup> “Generally, the period was one of relative stability in foreign relations, the longest and most complete ever known to world capitalism, the major capitalist powers had concluded, with the Franco-German war of 1870-71, the long series of national wars that wrecked capitalism during the previous decades, and they had not yet embarked upon the big imperialist wars that were to come. By force and violence, they had established their national boundaries, frontiers which with few major changes in Europe, were to last for about 35 years, or until the outbreak of the imperialist Russo-Japanese War,...By the same token, during these years prior to 1905 the respective capitalist powers enjoyed a relative internal stability, there being an almost complete absence of revolutionary insurrectional movements which had marked the foundation period of European and American capitalism from 1789 to 1871.”<sup>10</sup>

Lenin describes this period as follows, “The West entered a phase of ‘peaceful’ preparation for the era of future change. Socialist parties, proletarian, were formed everywhere and learned to make use of bourgeois parliamentarism and to create their own daily press, their educational institutions, their trade unions and their co-operative societies. The Marxist doctrine gained complete victory and spread widely. The process of the selection and gathering of the forces of the proletariat and of the preparation of the proletariat for the impending battles made slow but steady progress.

“The dialectics of history were such that the victory of Marxism in the field of theory obliged its enemies to disguise themselves as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten to the core, tried to revitalise itself in the form of socialist opportunism. The period of the preparation of forces for great battles the opportunists interpreted as renunciation of these battles. They explained improvements in the slaves’ conditions to serve the struggle against wage slavery as the sale by the slaves of their right to liberty for a few pennies. They cravenly preached ‘social peace’ (i.e., peace with the system of slave-ownership), the renunciation of the class struggle, and so forth. They had very many adherents among socialist members of parliament, various officials of the workers’ movement, and the ‘sympathiser’ intellectuals.”<sup>11</sup>

### Economic Background

The roots of this opportunism were however in the economic situation, with the creation of a labour aristocracy, whose upper stratum and labour leaders it was possible to bribe through the super-profits earned by industry in its colonies. Passing from its period of free competition, capitalism had now entered its monopoly phase and was changing into imperialism.

As Lenin later was to bring out in great detail, the last quarter of the nineteenth century, from the Depression of 1873, was marked by the development of many great industrial and financial cartels, syndicates, and trusts in all the leading capitalist countries. While new countries like Japan and Russia were speedily industrialising, the process of concentration and centralisation of capital and the growth of finance capital was marching ahead at a new pace in the older capitalist countries. The United States (which by 1900 had outstripped England in industrial development) and Germany were the leaders in this process. When concentration itself could not solve the problem created by the Depression of a drop in profitability, the monopolists resorted to the export of capital to areas

where super profits were to be obtained. In this Britain was the leader and accounted for almost half the world's overseas investments. This was also because Britain controlled the largest number of colonies where it could easily place its capital. As the other capitalist countries too realised the absolute necessity of colonies for their own growth, a wild scramble started to grab those undeveloped parts of the world which had not been colonised. Thus in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Africa and Polynesia were taken over almost completely by the marauding states of the advanced capitalist countries. From 1884 to 1900, England grabbed 3.7 million square miles of territory with a population of 57 million; France got 3.6 million square miles with 36.5 million people, Germany one million square miles with 17 million people, Belgium 900,000 square miles with 30 million people, and Portugal 800,000 with 9 million people. This process of capitalism entering the stage of imperialism was however marked by extreme unevenness in the development. This change in the relation of forces was bound to sharpen the conflicts between the various imperialist powers. In this period the Spanish-American war of 1898 where the United States took over Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines and the Anglo war of 1899 where Britain put down the Dutch origin settlers of South Africa, were the initial conflicts leading up to the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 which was the first major imperialist conflict that broke the 35 year long interval of peace on the European continent.

The other significant aspect of the rise of imperialism was the consolidation of a labour aristocracy with an increase in the disparity in wages between the skilled and unskilled workers in the principal capitalist countries. This was also accomplished by the decline of out-migration and the increase of in-migration from poorer countries to work in the poorer paid sectors. The last quarter of the nineteenth century, a period of intense industrial expansion and increasing exploitation of labour, was a time of slowly rising real wages in the major capitalist lands. In the pattern of English employers generally, the capitalists used a portion of the super-profits wrung from the colonies to favour the skilled workers at home, with the objective of thus weakening the militancy and solidarity of the working class as a whole. Thus whereas in Germany the real wages of the working class (generally at poverty levels) went up from point 100 in 1887 to 105 in 1909, those of the labour aristocracy increased to 113 in the same period. Similar conditions obtained in other capitalist countries. They had profound effects upon policy, the right opportunist Social-Democrats basing their revisionist theories and class collaboration policies relied upon the relatively more prosperous labour aristocracy, at the cost of the broad labour movement.

### **Fight against Opportunism in the German Party**

One of the first instances of such opportunism was in the drafting of the Gotha programme. This was a draft programme meant for discussion and adoption on May 25, 1875, at Gotha, the site of the Unity Congress of the Marxist and Lassallean parties. Engels said that "almost every word in this programme..could be criticised.""- Marx sharply criticised this draft in a note to his Marxist comrades in the German party which was sent to them before the Congress. In it he condemned its faulty economics, its wrong attitude regarding the state, its surrender to Lassalle's conception of 'the iron law of wages,' its adoption of the futile panacea of state aid for co-operatives, its failure to make a definite demand for the eight-hour day, and its underplay of internationalism. Opportunist trends in the German party were however already so strong that though this strong critique reached the then Marxists led by Liebknecht before the Congress, only a few minor changes were made. Few comrades were even shown the document. It was suppressed for 16 years and only published finally by Engels in 1891 when a new party programme was to be drafted. This publication is the now famous 'Critique of the Gotha Programme'.

A few months after the Gotha critique, Engels brought out another critique (*Anti-Dubring*). This contained a polemical presentation of the Marxist position on philosophy, natural science and the

social sciences. It was an exposure of the essentially bourgeois views of a certain Professor Duhring who after joining the Social Democrat Party was attempting to rewrite the entire party programme in a bourgeois direction. This critique, which was published in the party's organ in 1877, however met with a storm of criticism from the opportunists in the official circles of the party. Later, in 1880, Engels extracted three of the chapters from this book in the form of a pamphlet, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, which presents in a very clear and easy style, the basic ideas of scientific socialism.

This was a period of intense theoretical work by Marx and Engels. In 1875-76 Engels worked on the book *Dialectics of Nature*, which demonstrated how the then latest discoveries in the natural sciences also confirmed that the same dialectical laws which operate in human society operate also in nature. This work however remained unfinished and was only published in 1927. Its Chapter IX *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, gives a classical exposition of the Marxist view of human nature and its development. In 1884 published Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Written at a time when bourgeois ideas were becoming rife in the German Social-Democratic Party, it was aimed at winning the workers away from reformist illusions to a scientific and revolutionary conception of history, past and present. In 1888, Engels brought out his book on Feuerbach (Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy). This showed how the advance was made from Hegelian idealist dialectics to materialist dialectics, and from mechanical to dialectical materialism.

### **Spread of Marxism**

During this period Marx was busy working to complete the further volumes of Capital. This however remained incomplete right up to his death on March 14, 1883. On this day, as Engels said, "the greatest living thinker ceased to think." "The death of Marx however did not stop the onward march of Marxism. By the time of his death he was a name beloved and revered by millions of revolutionary fellow-workers. On the other hand he was also a man most hated and slandered by the governments and bourgeoisie of his time. No amount of slander however could stop the advance of a doctrine whose historical time had come.

By 1883 proletarian socialist parties had been established in Germany (1869), Holland (1870), Denmark (1871), Bohemia (1872), United States (1876), France (1879), Spain (1879), England-group (1880), and Russia-group (1883). This process continued even after Marx's death with parties being set up in Norway (1887) and Austria, Switzerland, and Sweden in 1889. Most of these got together to form the Second International in 1889. This led to further spread of socialist thought and parties were formed in Australia and Finland (1890), Poland and Italy (1892), Bulgaria, Hungary and Chile (1894), Argentina (1896), Japan (1901), Serbia (1903) and Canada (1904). Thus Marxism which emerged victorious as a theory at the beginning of this period (1872), had by the end of this period (1904), spread its organisations throughout the capitalist world.

### **Opportunism in the Second International**

However as Marxism spread organisationally, its principal enemy emerged from within the socialist parties themselves. As pointed out earlier, opportunism and revisionism became the principal threat to the proletarian movement in this period. And as this threat grew its main centre was to become the Second International itself.

The basic orientation at the time of the formation of the Second International in 1889, was Marxist. Yet the right trend succeeded in seeing that no formal international centre of the organisation was set up. This continued for twelve years, thus allowing rightist trends in the member parties to continue unchecked. Engels, till his death on August 5, 1895, tried to fill in this gap by maintaining a regular correspondence, giving guidance to parties in various corners of the globe. Despite his age, he, till the last led the fight of the left elements against various opportunist

deviations. At the same time he also completed the monumental task of editing and publishing the unfinished second and third volumes of Marx's Capital.

The opportunist trends which were getting entrenched in the various national parties at that time had their base in the growing labour aristocracy and the large number of petty bourgeois intellectuals who sought to make careers by leading the political organisations of the workers. Particularly in countries like Great Britain, which became the leading imperialist power, and which therefore had the best ability to bribe the upper sections of the workers and create a labour aristocracy, these trends were the strongest. Fabianism, was one such opportunist reformist ideology, which through the Fabian League, established in 1884, extended its influence on trade union bureaucrats. It preached a vague form of evolutionary socialism, and attacked every principle of revolutionary Marxism. Similar opportunist trends, though not that developed, also existed in the United States and France. In Germany however the relatively weaker capitalist system and underground conditions of the party till 1890 restricted the growth of opportunism till much later. The German party therefore provided the left leadership consisting of Bebel, Kautsky and others, that Engels relied upon, and which was the principal leadership to the Second International.

But these left elements themselves (or orthodox Marxists as they were then called) were actually centrists, who in the later period, when the class struggle sharpened, also moved away from revolutionary Marxism. Thus, even at this time, though they basically upheld Marxist positions, they were unable to effectively combat the new forms of opportunism that consolidated themselves after the death of Engels. The principal form of such opportunism that raised its head within the International was Bernstein's attempt to 'revise' Marxism.

### **Fight against Bernsteinian revisionism**

Bernstein, first placed his revisionist views in October 1898, in a letter to the German Social Democratic Party convention, and later followed it up in 1899 with a book *Evolutionary Socialism*. This system of opportunism was directly a product of the rise of imperialism in general and of German imperialism in particular. On the basis of characteristic features of the early imperialist period, Bernstein arrived at the conclusion that Marxism was all wrong. In his book he challenged the Marxist theory of surplus value, repudiated the theories of the class struggle and of the materialist conception of history, and especially attacked the theory of the relative and absolute impoverishment of the working class. He supported bourgeois patriotism, and ridiculed the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat', declaring that a revolution was both unnecessary and impossible. For this he especially made use of an *Introduction to Marx's Class Struggles in France*, written by Engels in 1895, which had been distorted to appear as if Engels, in later times, was not in favour of revolutionary means of struggle. Thus Bernstein even attempted to use Engels' authority for his class collaborationist theory. He preached a 'gradualist' approach to 'socialism', and proposed that the 'flexible institutions' of capitalism needed 'only to be further developed' – unlike the rigid institutions of feudalism which had had to be destroyed by violence.

Though this theory was presented in its most developed form in the German party (which was the leading party of the International at that time), yet there were leading members in various important parties who in essence preached and practised the same revisionism, either wholly or in parts. Thus in Germany itself there was Vollmar, in France-Jaures, in Russia-Martov, in England-MacDonald, and in the United States-Gompers. They were fought against by the comrades then taking a revolutionary line – Bebel, Kautsky and Rosa Luxembourg in Germany, Guesde in France, Plekhanov and Lenin in Russia, Hyndman in England, and De Leon in the United States. The struggle which was waged independently, to varying degrees, in the various national parties, was then centralised in the Amsterdam Congress of the International. After an intense struggle in which the German party took the lead to defend the Marxist line, the Congress passed a resolution which

repudiated “to the fullest extent possible the efforts of the revisionists who have for their object the modification of our tried and victorious policy based on the class war, and the substitution, for the conquest of political power by an unceasing attack on the bourgeoisie, of a policy of concession to the established order of society.

“The consequence of such revisionist tactics would be to turn a party striving for the most speedy transformation possible of bourgeois society into socialist society - a party therefore revolutionary in the best sense of the word - into a party satisfied with the reform of bourgeois society.”<sup>14</sup>

This resolution was passed by a vote of 25 to 5, with 12 abstentions. Another cleverly worded resolution which used class struggle phraseology, while failing to specifically condemn revisionism, narrowly escaped being passed because of a tie vote of 21 to 21. This narrow escape, as well as the large number of abstentions on the main resolution, were thus ominous indicators of the depth of opportunism at the highest level in the International. Though Bernsteinism had temporarily been beaten back, it was clear in 1904 itself that the Second International did not have the strength to achieve final victory over revisionism.

### **Lenin's Early Years**

The theoretical and organisational centre for this struggle was however being built by Marxism at another place- Russia. Though Lenin at that time was not a very noted figure in the International, he had already started becoming the key figure in the rapid growth of the proletarian socialist movement in Russia. Through a series of struggles against wrong trends in the Russian revolutionary movement, the foundations of the Leninist party were being laid. Though these struggles were then primarily centred on the problems of the Russian revolution, they had immense significance for the international revolutionary struggle and the struggle against revisionism. It was the turn of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, and Marxism was, in the hands of Lenin, developing its theoretical and practical weapons in the changing conditions of the new era - Leninism was taking birth.

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) was born on April 22, 1870, in the city of Simbirsk in Russia. His father, by birth a peasant, had become a school teacher, and his mother was also of modest origin. His elder brother Alexander, one of the most active organisers of Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), a terrorist organisation, was hanged by the tsar's government in 1887. The same year Lenin joined the Kazan university, because he as the brother of an executed revolutionary, was barred from the universities in St. Petersburg and Moscow. In Kazan he joined a Marxist circle, and took part in the revolutionary student movement, for which he was soon arrested and expelled from the university. He later moved to Samara where a Marxist circle was formed with Lenin as the central figure. On the basis of self-study he finally got a degree in law from St. Petersburg, but he never practised the profession. From 1893 Lenin concentrated his activities in St. Petersburg, where by 1895 he had united all the Marxist workers' circles into a single League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. This was the first body that began to unite Socialism with the working class movement. Lenin thus prepared the way for the founding of a revolutionary Marxist Lenin's party.

### **Fight against Narodism**

From the very beginning Lenin launched a struggle against all alien trends that were attempting to lead the revolutionary movement astray. His first major work, brought out in 1894, was an exposure of the Narodism of the eighteen nineties - *What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight Against the Social-Democrats*. Though Plekhanov had earlier itself dealt the chief blow to this petty bourgeois form of socialism, yet Lenin's work served to completely expose it before the sections of

revolutionary youth who still sympathised with it. In it, Lenin for the first time advanced the idea of a revolutionary alliance of the workers and peasants as the principal means of overthrowing tsardom, the landlords and the bourgeoisie. He also outlined the main tasks of the Russian Marxists. Along with the struggle against Narodism, Lenin also led the struggle against the 'legal Marxists' who were basically bourgeois intellectuals in Marxist garb. Lenin's intensive revolutionary activities in this period however led to him being arrested for a long period in St. Petersburg and then banished to Siberia for three years from 1897.

While in Siberia, Lenin continued his attack on the Narodniks, with his important scientific work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. This gave a detailed exposition of the advance of capitalist relations and completed the ideological destruction of Narodism, which repeatedly asserted that capitalism was an accident which would not develop in Russia. From exile he also wrote his well-known pamphlet, *The Task., of the Russian Social-Democrats* which summed up the experience of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, and presented the political programme and tactics of the Russian Social-Democrats.

### **Fight against Economism**

The most significant battle of this period however was that waged by Lenin against 'Economism', a brand of opportunism very closely related to Bernsteinian revisionism. It first arose in Russia in the form of a manifesto, issued in 1899, which opposed revolutionary Marxism, and insisted that the idea of an independent political party of the proletariat and of independent political demands by the working class be renounced. Lenin immediately, along with other Marxist political exiles in Siberia, issued a protest against this manifesto which was circulated among Marxist organisations throughout the country. As soon as Lenin returned from exile, he continued a vigorous struggle against Economism, which he saw as a principal obstacle in the path of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, and the building of its revolutionary party. In this battle an important weapon was *Iskra*, the first newspaper of the revolutionary Marxists on an all-Russian scale. From December 1900 onwards this newspaper was brought out from abroad by Lenin, as an instrument to unite and link together the separate Marxist organisations into a single party. This plan for building the party was elaborated by him in an important article in *Iskra* in May 1901, entitled *Where to Begin*. However within the Party itself, the Economists, centred around the *Rabochaya Mysl* (Workers' Thought) and *Rabochaya Dyelo* (Workers' Cause), were trying to justify on theoretical grounds the lack of organisational cohesion and ideological confusion. Before a united political party could be created, the Economists had to be defeated. Thus Lenin, through the columns of *Iskra* and especially in his great work *What Is To Be Done?* - published in March 1902 - launched a severe attack against the opportunist philosophy of the Economists. He exposed the Economists' attempt to restrict the working class to the economic struggle, their bowing to spontaneity and tailism, their opportunist belittling of theory, and showed how they were not an accidental phenomenon in Russia, but followers of the revisionist Bernstein and allies of the other opportunists in the West European Social-Democratic parties. The sharp polemic of this classic work ideologically demolished Economism and by the time of the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, in July 1903, the majority of party members regarded it an insult to be called an 'Economist'. This work also represented a significant advance in Marxist theory, which proved later to be the foundation of the ideology of the Bolshevik Party.

### **Fight against Menshevism**

However almost as soon as the Economists (old opportunists) were beaten, their place was taken by the Mensheviks (new opportunists). This new opportunist trend arose from within the *Iskra* editorial board itself under the leadership of Martov and consolidated itself during the party's

Second Congress. At the Congress this trend consisting of Axelrod, Trotsky and others rallied around Martov's formulation of party rules which envisaged a party membership consisting of anyone agreeing with the programme and aiding the party financially, irrespective of whether he did any party work or not. This was thus a conception of an extremely loose and amorphous party, in other words, a party incapable of leading the class struggle. The Mensheviks trend got their name from 'menshinstvo' (meaning minority), as they were in a minority at the time of the election to the party posts for the Central Committee and the Central Organ's Editorial Board. The Bolsheviks (from the word 'bolshinstvo' meaning majority), led by Lenin, were then in a majority. However soon after the Congress, the Mensheviks, not with their minority position, started splitting activities. In the words of Martov, they "broke into revolt, against Leninism". They won over Plekhanov and two Central Committee members, and thus gained control of both the *Iskra* Editorial Board and the C.C. They then launched a campaign through *Iskra* and by other means which was aimed at dragging the party back from the Second Congress decisions into the old mess of organisational disunity and confusion.

In order to hit back, Lenin, in May 1904, brought out his famous book, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*. In this book, Lenin made a detailed analysis of the intra-party struggle both during and after the Congress, and on that basis expounded the main organisational principles which later came to form the organisational foundations of the Bolshevik party. It represented a major advance in Marxist theory regarding the building of the revolutionary proletarian party.

Through the circulation of this book the majority of the local organisations of the party rallied to the side of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, but the Mensheviks continued ahead with their plans to split the party. With the loss of the party organ, *Iskra* and the C.C. into the hands of element who were bent on destroying the decisions of the Second Party [Congress](#), it became absolutely necessary for the Bolsheviks to set up bodies that would uphold the Congress direction. Lenin therefore in August 1904 called a Bolshevik conference. Soon a Bureau of Committees of the Majority was set up to undertake practical preparations for the Third Party Congress; and by January 4, 1905, the first issue of a separate Bolshevik journal *Forward* came out. The split in the party was complete.

Thus by the time of the 1905 Russian Revolution, the main enemies of Marxism came from within the proletarian parties themselves Marxism had, through its scientific theory and roots in practice, conclusively beaten all alien and competing socialist ideologies. Therefore its enemies now came in the garb of revising Marxism. Bernsteinian revisionism, Economism and Menshevism were formidable examples of such enemies spawned by imperialism. However at the same time, Marxism had, in the hands of Lenin, forged the necessary weapons to deal with these enemies. In resolute struggle against opportunism, Lenin had laid down the ideological basis and organisational principles for the consolidation of the proletarian party and for its fight against revisionism. In the coming period of wars and revolutionary upheavals, they would provide the foundation on which the proletariat would fight the bourgeoisie both inside and outside the party and continue the advance of the Marxist ideology.

# Chapter VI

## The Third Period : 1905 – 1917

### Background

This third period was once again a period of ‘storms and revolutions. The period starts at a time “when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian bourgeois revolution [of 1905] was followed by the Turkish, the Persian and the Chinese bourgeois revolutions.”<sup>15</sup> These Asian revolutions also served to doubly reassert the correctness of the Marxist principles of class struggle established during the earlier revolutions in Europe. As Lenin then said in 1913, “After the experience both of Europe and Asia, whoever now speaks of non-class politics and of non-class socialism deserves to be simply put in a cage and exhibited alongside of some Australian kangaroo.”<sup>16</sup>

This was also the period of the dawn of imperialism, when the imperialist powers entered into a series of regional wars to capture and expand markets. The first such war was the Russo-Japanese imperialist war for the re-division of Northern China (Manchuria) in 1904-05. This was followed by the Spanish Moroccan war of 1909, the Italo-Turkish war in 1911 over Tripoli, and the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 involving Turkey, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. The participants in the Balkan wars were actually the satellites of the great European imperialist powers, who were then preparing themselves for the devastating World War I (1914-18), for the re-division of the world. During this tumultuous period Marxism fought all forms of opportunism and continued its advance. With its strong scientific foundations laid by Marx and Engels, it was the best equipped to provide the answers to the innumerable questions thrown up by the complexities of the class struggle of this time: While waging the class battles and solving the problems of the new era of imperialism, Marxism advanced to the new stage of Leninism. And under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, the proletariat, in this period, seized power through the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 and established its dictatorship over a country covering one-sixth of the globe.

The Russo-Japanese war, which started on February 8, 1904, ended in defeat for the tsar, and a humiliating peace treaty on August 1905. The Bolshevik’s approach during the war was that the defeat of the tsarist government in this predatory war would be useful, as it would weaken tsardom and strengthen the revolution. The economic crisis of 1900-03 had already aggravated the hardships of the toiling masses, the war intensified them still further. The war defeats added fuel to the hatred of the masses for tsardom. They reacted with the great revolution of 1905.

### The Russian Bourgeois Revolution of 1905

This historic movement started with a big Bolshevik-led strike of the oil workers of Baku in December 1904. This was the ‘signal’ for a wave of strikes and revolutionary actions throughout Russia. In particular, the revolutionary storm broke with the ‘Bloody Sunday’ massacre of a demonstration of unarmed workers on January 22, 1905. The tsar’s attempt to crush the workers in blood only invoked a still more fierce response from the toiling masses. The whole of 1905 was a period of a rising wave of militant political strikes by workers, seizure of land and landlord’s grain by peasants, and even a revolt by the sailor of the battleship ‘Potemkin’. Twice the tsar, in a bid to divert the struggle, offered first a ‘consultative’ and then a ‘legislative’ Duma. The Bolsheviks rejected both Dumas whereas the Mensheviks saw fit to participate. The high tide of the revolution was between October and December 1905. During this period, the proletariat, for the first time in world history, set up the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies – which were assemblies of delegates from all

mills and factories. These, the Bolsheviks regarded as the embryo of revolutionary power, which came the prototype of the Soviet power set up in 1917. Starting with an all-Russia political strike in October, the revolutionary struggles went on rising until the Bolshevik-led armed uprisings, in December, in Moscow, and various other cities and nationalities throughout the country. These were brutally crushed and after that the tide of the revolution started to recede. The revolution was however not yet crushed and the workers and revolutionary peasants retreated slowly, putting up a fight. Over a million workers took part in strikes in 1906, and 740,000 in 1907. The peasant movement embraced about half of the districts of tsarist Russia in the first half of 1906, and about one-fifth in the second half of the year. The crest of the revolution had however passed. On June 3, 1907, the tsar effected a coup, dissolved the Duma he had created, and withdrew even the limited rights he had been forced to grant during the revolution. A period of intense repression under the tsarist Premier, Stolypin, called the Stolypin reaction, set in. It was to last till the next wave of strikes and political struggles in 1912.

### **Two Tactics - the political preparation of the party**

The anti-tsarist revolutionary struggles and the struggles against the opportunism of the Mensheviks, led to an immense development in the Marxist understanding of the strategy and tactics of revolution. In April 1905, in the midst of the revolution, two congresses of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks respectively, met. Though formally there was only one party, in reality there were two. These two congresses came out with two diametrically opposite sets of strategy and tactics for the revolution then in progress.

The Mensheviks understood the struggles, simply as a bourgeois revolution of the old style. Thus, according to them, the leadership was to be in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the working class was to support the bourgeoisie in overthrowing the tsarist autocracy, but was not to engage in revolutionary activities which would frighten the bourgeoisie into the arms of feudal ultra-reaction, the peasantry was a non-revolutionary class which could not be allied with, and a State Duma was to be the centre of the 'revolutionary forces' in the country.

"The Bolsheviks took as their course the extension of the revolution, the overthrow of tsardom by armed uprising, the hegemony of the working class, the isolation of the Constitutional-Democratic [liberal] bourgeoisie, an alliance with the peasantry, the formation of a provisional revolutionary government consisting of representatives of the workers and peasants, the victorious completion of the revolution."<sup>17</sup>

Two months after the Congress, in July 1905, Lenin, in his historic *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, while criticising the tactics of the Mensheviks gave a brilliant substantiation of the Bolshevik tactics. This work by laying the basic political line of the Russian Revolution gave the orientation for the political preparation of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin's revolutionary line, based fundamentally upon principles laid down long before by Marx, represented in the conditions of modern Imperialism anew programme. It was basically opposed to the general theories and policies prevalent throughout the Second International, of which the Menshevik programme was typically representative. Thus Lenin's battle against the Mensheviks was simultaneously a battle against international opportunism and revisionism, by then quite entrenched in the Second International.

The Revolution developed a host of urgent lessons for the international movement. It made clear many vital questions - the application of the armed insurrection under modern conditions, the methods and results of the mass political strike, the relation between the bourgeois and the socialist revolutions, the role of Soviets as the base of the future society, the indispensability of a solid, disciplined proletarian party, the treacherous role of the Mensheviks, the Anarchists, and the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Though it was essential that these lessons be carried to the workers of all countries, besides Lenin, only a few left wing leaders like Rosa Luxemburg attempted to propagate them. The majority right opportunist leadership of the Second International in fact tried their best to prevent the spread of these ideas. They tried to belittle the importance of the workers taking up arms by either supporting Plekhanov's statement, "They should not have taken to arms", or by writing it off as a condition peculiar to Russia's backward and undemocratic conditions. As regards the weapon of the political mass strike, they felt all the more threatened because the mass strikes in Russia had immediately inspired a mass strike in Vienna and all over the Austrian Empire. The German party in particular faced serious dissensions where the trade union convention immediately passed a resolution denouncing the mass strike as anarchist. It was only under the pressure of Rosa Luxemburg and others on the Left that the party finally passed a weak and compromising resolution in favour of the mass political strike.

### **Revolutions in the East**

The revolutionary struggles led by the Bolsheviks were deeply influenced and became a source of inspiration for the oppressed peoples of the Middle and Far East, as the national liberation revolutions in China, Persia and Turkey were soon to make clear.

Persian revolutionaries were the first to be influenced by the victory of Japan, a constitutional monarchy, over Russia as well as the advance of the Russian revolutionaries. The temporary weakening of one of their oppressors, the Tsar, also helped their struggle in 1906 to win an elected assembly and constitution. However in the face of the joint suppression of two imperialist powers – Britain and Russia – the revolutionary period only lasted till 1911.

The Turkish revolution of 1908 was also inspired by the Russian Revolution and was a seizure of power by an organisation known as Young Turks who planned to unite the Turkish nation on a modern bourgeois liberal pattern of constitutional monarchy. This too failed in achieving its objectives and the regime suffered severe losses after siding with Germany in the World War. This aided the abolition of the empire after the war and the actual fulfilment of the aims of the 1908 Young Turk constitution through the completion of the Turkish Revolution under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk in 1918.

In China the revolution took place, in 1911, under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen's Three principles. "Here too the impact of the revolution in Russia is was unmistakable.

### **Second International on Colonialism and War**

With the consolidation of imperialism and the growing war danger, the question of the correct approach to colonialism and war were of central importance to the international revolutionary proletarian movement. On these questions strong revisionist trends existed in the Second International. At the 1907 Congress of the International, the Congress commission in fact even adopted a resolution approving of colonial policy, which was outvoted by the Congress by a narrow margin of only 127 to 108. It had stated: "The Congress declares that the usefulness or the necessity of the colonies in general – and particularly to the working class – is greatly exaggerated. It does not, however, reject colonial policy in principle and for all time, for under a socialist regime it may work in the interests of civilisation."

On the question of war, the International 'left' leader, Bebel, proposed vague and ambiguous resolution which did not give any specific direction or course of action. It was only an amendment introduced by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, calling for utilising the imperialist war 'to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule', that gave this ambiguous resolution a clear revolutionary character. The amendment paragraphs stated:

“If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working class and of its parliamentary representatives in the country involved, supported by the consolidating activity of the International [Socialist] Bureau, to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war by means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the accentuation of the class struggle and of the general political situation.

“Should war break out none the less, it is their duty to intervene in favour of its speedy termination and to do all in their power to utilise the economic and political crisis caused by the war to rouse the peoples and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule.”<sup>18</sup>

In the debates on the war question the revisionist chieftains could not counter the arguments of the revolutionaries. They thus were forced to agree to the Lenin-Luxembourg amendment paragraphs which became the basis of anti-war resolutions even at the 1910 Congress and 1912 Conference of the Second International. However, as later events proved, these revisionists and the so-called centrists, like Kautsky and Bebel, had absolutely no intention of implementing a revolutionary understanding either on the question of colonial policy or on the question of imperialist war.

### **Fight against Revisionist Theories**

In the intervening period before the War, Marxism faced another attack from a section of the Party intelligentsia within the Russian party. These intellectuals unnerved by the retreat of the revolution in the Stolypin reaction period, embarked on an attempt to ‘improve’ Marxism. Four books attacking dialectical materialism appeared in the name of authors all claiming to be Marxists. Lenin replied to them in his famous book, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, written in 1908, and published in 1909. While primarily exposing the reactionary philosophy of the modern idealists, it also proved useful in providing “an acquaintance with the philosophy of Marxism, dialectical materialism, as well as with the philosophical conclusions from the recent discoveries in natural science.”<sup>19</sup> It fortified the theoretical foundations of the Bolshevik party. It raised Marxist philosophy to a higher level in the light of new scientific discoveries.

Another debate in 1909-10, which was indicative of the extent of the hold of revisionism on the Second International, concerned Marx’s theory of the absolute impoverishment of the working class. This theory was challenged in a book by Legien, head of the German trade union movement and secretary of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres. It was representative of the view of the trade union bureaucracy and labour aristocracy who had been much corrupted by imperialism. This view was countered by Karl Kautsky, ‘orthodox’ Marxist, and recognised since Engels’ death as the International’s leading theoretician. His reply - in the book ‘Road to Power’ - was an example of the manner of all centrists, to whom, according to Lenin, the reactionary word was everything and the revolutionary deed nothing. Thus while Kautsky made a proper statement of Marxist principles, he leaned totally to the right in his practical measures. In a period when the danger of right revisionism was the greatest, he ignored this and warned repeatedly against the danger of leftists throwing the party into premature and disastrous conflict with the forces of German reaction. Thus with both Kautsky and Legien basically on the right the apparent conflict was much of a sham. It would not be long before the World War and the October Revolution would strip Kautsky of all centrist sham and stand him up as true revisionist renegade.

### **War I and Social-Chauvinism**

From the period of the rise of imperialism the sharpening contradictions had heightened the preparations for war. Due to uneven development Britain was seriously challenged by the other industrial powers, particularly the United States and Germany. The United States had become the leading industrial power but due to its concentration on the American continent was not then that immediate a threat to Britain. German goods were however constantly pushing out British goods

from various world markets. Further it being a European power it proved more of a direct threat to Britain. Thus when from the turn of the century the arms race speeded up the main contenders were Britain and Germany. While overall military expenditure galloped ahead, that of the navy, then the most high tech wing of the armed forces and the most essential for the control of trade routes, multiplied exponentially. British annual navy expenditure which had remained at 11 million pounds between 1860 and 1885 jumped by over four times by 1913-14; Germany which spent 90 million marks in the mid-90s reached 400 million marks before the war.

The hostile blocs too were well formed. The Triple Alliance of Germany, the Austro-Hungarian empire and Italy had been formed in 1882 itself opposing at that time France and Russia. As the German-British contradiction sharpened; Britain joined up with France and Russia to form the Triple Entente in 1907. These were the basic belligerent force though there were some changes in the alliances just before and during the war. Italy switched sides, Bulgaria and Turkey sided with the Alliance, while the United States and Japan joined the Entente. Each of the main imperialist powers had their eye on some colonies, markets or raw material sources and were waiting for an opportunity to strike.

In the middle of 1914 the imperialist powers got the excuse for war that they had been searching for. The Austrian Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the Habsburg throne, was assassinated by a Serb nationalist on June 28, 1914. Immediately the Austro-German Alliance made this the reason for declaring war on the territories they had been eyeing Austria attacked Serbia on July 28, Russia replied by mobilising its armed forces, Germany immediately declared war on Russia on August 1, France joined the war on August 3 and Britain on August 4.

The World War provided the opportunity for the Second International Parties to implement the resolutions they had been passing all these years and convert the war into a fight for socialism. But in this crisis, the thin veneer of internationalism in the opportunist-controlled Second International dissolved into a swamp of bourgeois nationalism. The German Social-Democratic Party, the leading party of the Second International, led the way. In the party caucus meeting before the parliamentary vote on war credits, the overwhelming majority, led by the trade union bureaucrats, supported the war - in fact they had already on August 2nd worked out a no-strike agreement with the employers. Only a handful led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg opposed; Kautsky, the opportunist, voted to abstain. For the revolutionary proletariat, the Second International ceased to exist from August 4, 1914, the date that the German Social-Democrats betrayed all pious anti-war resolutions and voted unanimously in parliament for the war credits; they voted to support the imperialist war. They were immediately followed by the majority of the socialists in France, Britain, Belgium and other countries. The Second International broke up into separate social-chauvinist parties which warred against each other.

### **Bolshevik Position on the War**

It was thus left to Lenin and the Bolsheviks to uphold and develop the correct Marxist position regarding the World War. Almost within a month of the start of the war, on September 6, 1914, Lenin brought out his theses on the war, *The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War*. In this he clearly stated that, "The European and world war has the clearly defined character of a bourgeois, imperialist and dynastic war. A struggle for markets and for freedom to loot foreign countries, a striving to suppress the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and democracy in the individual countries, a desire to deceive, disunite, and slaughter the proletarians of all countries by setting the wage slaves of one nation against those of another so as to benefit the bourgeoisie - these are the only real content and significance of the war."<sup>20</sup> He also simultaneously condemned the social-chauvinists of the various member parties of the International who had sided with their imperialist bourgeoisies in the war.

On November 1, 1914, the Central Committee of the RSDLP, under the guidance of Lenin, issued a manifesto on the war, giving the call for 'turning the imperialist war into civil war', and called for the formation of the Third International in place of the Second International which had suffered disgraceful bankruptcy. Lenin simultaneously made all efforts to give direction to the leftist anti-war elements of International Social-Democracy who had started from 1915 rallying around what came to be known as the Zimmerwald conferences. For this he had to do immense theoretical work to clear the mound of confusion that the revisionist Second International leaders had created on the subject.

His first work was a pamphlet, *Socialism and War (The Attitude of the R.S.D.L.P. Towards the War)*, which he prepared along with Zinoviev for circulation among the delegates of the First Zimmerwald Conference in September, 1915. This pamphlet while presenting the principles of socialism in relation to the War, also clearly outlined the tasks of the revolutionary social-democrats in Russia as well as at the international level. In it he launched a biting attack against 'Kautskyism' and their distortions of the teachings of Marx and Engels regarding war.

### **Analysis of Imperialism**

In 1916, Lenin produced his great book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which was a major contribution to Marxist theory, which enabled the world proletariat to grasp the economic essence of imperialism. This was absolutely necessary, particularly at that time, because, as Lenin himself put it, "Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance appreciated, not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problems of the Communist movement and of the impending social revolution."<sup>21</sup> This work also exposed Kautskyism and Kautsky's anti-Marxist theories presented in his 1915 book, *National State, Imperialist State and Union of States* where he had argued that it was possible to foresee the world economic system passing into a phase of 'ultra-imperialism' in which the great powers and the great international cartels would stabilise the partition of the world and thus eliminate the risk of war. This argument, similar to some analyses of present day globalisation has been proved drastically wrong by the events of the twentieth century. However at that time considering Kautsky's stature as Marxism's most recognised theorist, Lenin's work was absolutely necessary to refute these ideas.

### **Marxism and the National Question**

Meanwhile in Russia there had been a new rise of the revolution between 1912 and 1914. Ably combining illegal work with legal work, the Party was able to gain leadership of all forms of the legal movement and turn the legally existing organisations into bases revolutionary work.

During this period the revolutionary movement in the border region<sup>0</sup> of Russia demanded a clear program on the national question. The R.S.D.L.P. had in the 1903 Congress itself, on the insistence of Lenin, included in its programme, a clause on recognising the right of nation<sup>0</sup> to self-determination. The theoretical understanding behind this clear cut stand and its practical implementation in Russia were laid out during this period in three articles on the question: 1) Stalin's article *Marxism and the National Question*, written in January, 1913. 2) Lenin's article *Critical Remarks on the National Question* in October-December 1913. 3) Lenin's article *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, February-May 1914. These works, represented a significant theoretical development on the question, from the times of Marx and Engels. They were further developed in 1916, by Lenin, when he, in his pamphlet, *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination (Theses)*, gave a detailed theoretical presentation to the light of a clear-cut understanding of imperialism.

## **February Bourgeois Revolution in Russia**

With the outbreak of war, the revolutionary situation further ripened. The Bolsheviks did extensive propaganda among the workers against the war and for the overthrow of tsardom. Nuclei were also formed in the army and the navy, at the front and in the rear, and leaflets distributed calling for a fight against the war. At the front, after the Party's intensive agitation for fraternisation between the warring armies' soldiers, there were increasing instances of refusal of army units to take the offensive in 1915 and 1916. The bourgeoisie and landlords were making fortunes out of the war, but the workers and peasants were suffering increasing hardships. Millions had died directly of wounds or due to epidemics caused by war conditions. In January and February 1917, the situation became particularly acute. Hatred and anger against the tsarist government spread. Even the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie, were wary of the tsar, whose advisers like Rasputin were working for a separate peace with Germany. They too, with the backing of the British and French governments, planned to replace the tsar through a palace coup. However the people acted first.

From January 1917 a strong revolutionary strike movement started in Moscow, Petrograd, Baku and other industrial centres. The Bolsheviks organised big street demonstrations in favour of a general strike. As the strike movement gained momentum, on March 8, International Women's Day, the working women of Petrograd were called out by the Bolsheviks to demonstrate against starvation, war and tsardom. The workers supported the working women with strikes and by March 11, the strikes and demonstrations had taken on the character of an armed uprising. The Bureau of the Central Committee on March 11, issued a call for continuation of the armed uprising to overthrow the tsar and establish a provisional revolutionary government. On March 12, 60,000 soldiers came over to the side of the revolution, fought the police and helped the workers overthrow the tsar. As the news spread, workers and soldiers everywhere began to depose the tsarist officials. The February bourgeois-democratic revolution had won.

As soon as Tsardom was overthrown, on the initiative of the Bolsheviks, there arose Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. However, while the Bolsheviks were directly leading the struggle of the masses in the streets, the compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, were seizing the seats in the Soviets, and building up a majority there. Thus they headed the Soviets in Petrograd Moscow and a number of other cities. Meanwhile the liberal bourgeois members of the Duma did a backdoor deal with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and formed a Provisional Government. The result was an interlocking of two dictatorships: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, represented by the Provisional Government, and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, represented by the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The result was dual power.

## **Onwards to the Socialist Revolution**

Immediately after the bourgeois revolution Lenin whiled still in Switzerland, wrote his famous *Letters from Afar*, where he analysed this dual power. He called the Soviets the embryo of the workers' government, which had to go ahead and win victory in the second stage of the revolution – the socialist revolution. Their allies in this would be the broad semi-proletarian and small peasant masses and the proletariat of all countries.

On April 16, 1917, Lenin arrived in Petrograd after a long period of exile, and the very next day presented his famous April Theses before a meeting of Bolsheviks. He called for opposing the Provisional Government and working for a Bolshevik majority in the Soviets and transferring state power to the Soviets. He presented the programme for ensuring peace, land, and bread. Lastly, he called for a new party Congress with a new party name, the Communist Party, and for building a new International, the Third International. The Mensheviks immediately attacked Lenin's Theses and gave a warning that 'the revolution is in danger'. However within three weeks, the first openly held All-Russia Conference (Seventh Conference) of the Bolshevik Party, approved Lenin's report

based on the same Theses. It gave the slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets!' It also approved a very important resolution, moved by Stalin, declaring the right of nations to self-determination, including secession.

In the following months, the Bolsheviks worked energetically according to the Conference line, convincing the masses of workers, soldiers and peasants of the correctness of their position. The Sixth Party Congress was also held in August 1917 after a gap of ten years. Due to the danger of attack from the Provisional Government, the Congress had to be held in secret in Petrograd, without the presence of Lenin. Stalin presented the main political reports, which called for the preparation for armed uprising. The Congress also adopted new Party Rules which provided that all Party organisations shall be built on the principles of Democratic Centralism. It also admitted the group led by Trotsky into the Party.

Soon after the Congress, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, Gen. Kornilov, organised a revolt of the army in order to crush the Bolsheviks and the Soviets. However the soldiers of many divisions were convinced by the Bolsheviks not to obey orders and the revolt failed. After the failure of this revolt the masses realised that the Bolsheviks and the Soviets were the only guarantee for achieving peace, land, and bread, which were their urgent demands. Rapid Bolshevisation of the Soviets took place, the tide of the revolution was rising, and the Party started preparing for armed uprising.

### **State and Revolution**

In this period, Lenin, for security reasons, was forced to stay in Finland, away from the main arena of battle. During this period, he completed his book, *The State and Revolution*, which defended and developed the teachings of Marx and Engels on the question of the state. While particularly exposing the distortions on this question by opportunists like Kautsky, Lenin's work then had tremendous theoretical and practical significance at the international level. This was because, as Lenin saw clearly at that time itself, the Russian February bourgeois revolution could "only be understood as a link in a chain of socialist proletarian revolutions being caused by the imperialist war. The question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state, therefore, [was] acquiring not only practical political importance, but also the significance of a most urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do before long to free themselves from capitalist tyranny."<sup>22</sup>

As the revolutionary tide rose Lenin again landed in Petrograd on October 20, 1917. Within three days of his arrival, a historic Central Committee meeting decided to launch the armed uprising within a few days. Immediately representatives were sent to all parts of the country and particularly to the army units. On becoming aware of the plan for the uprising, the Kerensky government started an attack on the Bolsheviks, on November 6, 1917, the eve of the holding of the Second All Russia Congress of Soviets. The Red Guards and revolutionary units of the army retaliated and by November 7, 1917, state power had passed into the hands of the Soviets.

Immediately the next day the Congress of Soviets passed the Decree on Peace and the Decree on Land. It formed the first Soviet government – the Council of People's Commissars - of which Lenin was elected the first Chairman. The Great October Socialist Revolution had established the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thus Marxist theory, during this short period (1905-1917), had seen tremendous development in all fields; it had advanced to the stage of Marxism-Leninism, and had, under its guidance, established the first revolutionary proletarian state.

# Chapter VII

## The Fourth Period: 1917 - 1949

### Period of Historic Advances

This period presented a variety of challenges to Marxism-Leninism. Almost throughout this period it had to literally wage war against the armies of the bourgeoisie. Imperialism tried repeatedly to crush by military force of the first land of socialism. It also tried to divert and destroy the movement through its various agents within the Communist Parties. However despite all the attempts of this powerful enemy, Marxism-Leninism made historic advances in this period. It commenced the process of socialist construction in a relatively backward capitalist country; it adopted the correct tactics in an imperialist world war and utilised the war to the advantage of the proletariat; it guided the upsurge of national liberation struggles in the colonies and semi-colonies and developed the correct strategy and tactics suitable for these countries; and it achieved victory in numerous countries and thus established the socialist camp among one-third of humanity. These victories in practice could only become possible because Marxist-Leninist theory did not stagnate. Despite the early death of Lenin, Marxism-Leninism continued, in the hands of the great proletarian teachers, Stalin and Mao, to develop the theory to provide answers to all new questions. Further, it was in this period that the foundations were laid for the future development of Marxism-Leninism to a new stage.

This same period for the world of capitalism was one of continuous and severe crisis. At the start of this period it was still embroiled in a devastating inter-imperialist war; before the end of this period another still more devastating world war had shaken its foundations; and between the wars it had faced its most serious economic crisis and had given to humanity the scourge of fascism. For capitalism, it was, as one author has called it 'The Age of Catastrophe'.

### Fight against the 'Left Communists'

At the beginning of this period, though an historic victory had been won in Russia, the crucial task of stabilising and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat remained. When the capture of state power was accomplished, the World War I was still on in full swing, and Russia was still a party to the war. Its whole economy was in shambles industries had closed, unemployment was rampant and there were tremendous shortages of food, clothing and essential commodities.

The first requirement was peace in order that the new Soviet Republic may get some respite to consolidate its forces. Britain, France and the United States refused to agree to the armistice proposed by the Soviet Decree on Peace. Therefore separate peace talks with Germany were started and on December 5, 1917, an armistice was signed and negotiations continued to secure a peace treaty. All those opposed to the revolution, including the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, frantically opposed the peace negotiations as they hoped for the fall of Soviet power in war with Germany. Within the Central Committee too there existed a trend led by Trotsky which wanted continuation of the war on the plea of aiding the revolution in Germany. He formed a bloc of 'Left Communists', along with Bukharin and others to oppose the leadership of Lenin. In fact, Trotsky, in his capacity as of the negotiating delegation, broke off the peace negotiations, and the war restarted. A few days before the C.C., under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, took the decision to accept the German terms for peace and signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty on February 23, 1918. The differences on this question were so intense that Lenin was forced within two weeks to call the Seventh Congress of the Party in March 1918-within just seven months of the earlier Congress-in

order to decide the question of peace The Congress voted in favour of the Brest-Litovsk Peace by 30 vote against 12 with 4 abstentions. The Peace was a classic example of the Leninist tactics of how to retreat in good order in the face of an obviously superior enemy.

In these first few months besides securing peace with Germany, the Soviet government had smashed the bourgeois state machinery, seized all key industries, and passed on 400 million acres of land to the peasants. Having completed the 'expropriation of the expropriators', the Bolsheviks had now to move to the new stage of socialist construction The tasks of this stage were outlined by Lenin, in April 1918, in his 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'. He called for strict and universal accounting, control of the whole of production and distribution, raising labour productivity and developing Socialist emulation. In May 1918, Lenin wrote an article on " 'Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", in which he exposed the left phraseology of the 'Left Communists' with regard to the Peace as well as to the tasks of socialist construction. He explained how the 'defence of the socialist fatherland' was totally consistent with the interests of the international proletariat.

### **War Communism**

The respite from the Brest Peace however did not last long. In the second half of 1918 the imperialists of Britain, France, Japan and America started military intervention directly, and indirectly, through aid to domestic reactionaries. They financed the various counter-revolutionary White armies, and even sent British, French, American, Japanese, Polish, Serb, Greek and Rumanian troops on to Russian soil. In order to face this all-round attack, the Party had to mobilise the whole country to fight the enemy. The Soviet government introduced a policy of 'War Communism'. It took over control of middle and small industries, in addition to large-scale industry; it introduced a state monopoly of the grain trade and prohibited private trading in grain; it established the surplus-appropriation system, under which all surplus produce of the peasants had to be handed over to the state at fixed prices; and finally it introduced universal labour service for all classes, making physical labour compulsory for the bourgeoisie, thus releasing workers required for more important responsibilities at the front. This policy of 'War Communism' was however of a temporary nature to fulfill the needs of war. It helped mobilise the whole people for the war and thus resulted in the defeat of all the foreign interventionists and domestic reactionaries by the end of 1920 and the preservation of the independence and freedom of the new Soviet Republic. The other factor that helped preserve Soviet power was the revolutionary wave that was then sweeping Europe. The impact was such that the imperialists knew that pushing their own soldiers and sailors to war against the Red Army would most probably result in a mutiny.

### **World-wide Revolutionary Crisis**

This period at the end of the World War I was a time of extreme revolutionary ferment throughout the world. The success of the October Revolution had impact in numerous countries, even where Marxism yet had little or no influence. 'Soviets' were formed by tobacco workers in Cuba where few knew then even where Russia was. In Spain the years 1917-19 came to be known as 'the Bolshevik biennium' though the local left then was mostly anarchist. Revolutionary student movements broke out in Peking in 1919; and in Cordoba (Argentina) in 1918, which soon spread across Latin America and generated local revolutionary Marxist leaders and parties. The revolution in Mexico entered its most radical phase in 1917 and immediately built a relationship with revolutionary Russia. The October Revolution also immediately had its impact on the Sarekat Islam, the Indonesian national liberation movement's main mass organisation.

Europe, the main arena of the War, was in the deepest revolutionary crisis. The war had resulted in the overthrow of four feudal autocrats and the break-up of their four great empires - the Russian,

Germans Austro-Hungarian (Habsburg), and Turkish (Ottoman). The state structures were in shambles and the masses were in the mood for revolt. The mass protests started even before the completion of the war. In January 1918, a wave of mass political strikes and anti-war demonstrations swept through central Europe, starting in Vienna, spreading via Budapest and the Czech regions to Germany, and culminating in the revolt of the Austro-Hungarian navy's sailors in the Adriatic Sea. In September Bulgarian soldiers revolted, proclaimed a Republic and marched on their capital Sofia, before being disarmed with German help. By October the Habsburg monarchy collapsed after losses in battles against Italy. This set off a massive national upsurge which finally led to the formation of numerous new states from the remains of the old empires: Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

In Germany and Hungary however the crisis led to revolution. In November 1918 the German sailors mutinied and this immediately spread a wave of revolt throughout Germany. Soviets were immediately established in Berlin and other cities. These were however crushed in January 1919 after two weeks of street fighting against the reactionary military which had been reorganised by the Social-Democrat government which had succeeded the Kaiser. It was during this period on January 15<sup>th</sup> that Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered by the German White guards. Later a Soviet Republic was formed in Bavaria in April 1919 but this too was crushed.

In Hungary the Communists led a coalition with the Social-Democrats and took control of the government in March 1919. They were however thrown out within five months by military pressure from Allied governments. The struggles of the workers continued for at least four more years but both these revolutions finally ended in failure.

In both cases, though there had been mistakes due to the inexperience of the revolutionaries, the main reason for the failure was the betrayal by the Social-Democrats. In Germany in particular the right Social-Democrats were ministers in government who led the attack on the revolution while the centrists like Kautsky provided round-the-corner assistance. The Communists on the other hand were not strong enough to mobilise and lead the working class in the face of the many difficulties of the time. In Hungary the Communists made the mistake of merging into one party with the Social-Democrat revisionists which affected their ability to lead. Further, though they controlled state power they did try to win over the peasantry by the distribution of land. Also they did not follow the Soviet example of establishing peace with the Allies at cost.

### **Ideological and Political Foundations of the Third International**

The ideologue of the Social-Democrat betrayers was Kautsky, who, in 1918, launched a systematic attack on the Soviet government through a booklet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. His vicious attack on the Bolsheviks, for suppressing the counter revolution, was presented as a question of dictatorship versus democracy, and has since become the catchphrase for the imperialist bourgeois propaganda attack on socialism. Lenin, immediately, in October 1918, gave a fitting reply through his classic *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. While establishing a complete defence of the absolute necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the infinite superiority of proletarian democracy over bourgeois democracy, Lenin further developed on the Marxist understanding of the State which he had presented in his earlier *The State and Revolution*.

Through such exposure of the revisionist and renegade leadership of the Second International, the revolutionary elements in the old parties were won over and Communist parties were formed in many capitalist countries. These forces were convened together in March 1919 for the First Congress of the Third International - the Communist International. It called the Second International, which had reconvened just a few weeks earlier, 'a tool of the bourgeoisie' and "adopted a Manifesto to the proletariat of all countries, calling upon them to wage a determined

struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the triumph of Soviets all over the world.”“ It also immediately set up an Executive Committee of the Communist International (E.C.C.I.).

Due to tremendous preparatory work put in and the world-wide enthusiasm generated by the success of the October Revolution, the Second Congress of the Communist International held in July 1920 was a major success with a wide representation from 21 countries. In particular, Lenin made major contributions to Marxist theory in connection with this Congress. He prepared what he intended as a handbook of Communist party strategy and tactics, which was distributed among the delegates of the Congress. It was called “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, and concentrated on correcting the ‘leftist’ errors then prevalent in many parties who had joined the International. Lenin also prepared the *Theses on the National and Colonial Question* adopted at the Congress. It was a landmark document which laid the Marxist-Leninist theoretical foundations for understanding and leading the national liberation struggles then gathering momentum in all the colonies and semi-colonies. Besides, Lenin outlined the basic tasks of the Communist International and the theses on the Agrarian Question adopted at this Congress. The Congress also adopted theses on the role of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution, on the trade union movement, on Communist Parties and parliament, and the Statutes and Conditions of admission of the Communist International. Besides these theoretical formulations, the International, through its Executive Committee started playing a prominent role in guiding the parties and movements in the various member countries. In particular, it tried to make the utmost of the post-war revolutionary situation in the capitalist countries which continued till 1923. However primarily due to the betrayal of the Second International Social-Democrats, as also the ideological and organisational weaknesses of the Communist Parties in these countries, revolution could not be successfully completed in any other capitalist country.

### **The NEP and the Trotskyite Opposition**

From 1921 there was another turn in the situation in Russia. After completing victory in the war against the foreign and domestic reactionaries, the task had to shift to the peaceful work of economic restoration. For this a policy shift was made from War Communism to the New Economic Policy (NEP). According to this, the compulsory surplus appropriation from the peasants was discontinued, private trade restarted and private manufacturers were allowed to start small businesses. This was necessary because the measures had gone too ahead and were being resented by certain sections of the mass base of the party – particularly the peasantry. However the Trotskyites strongly opposed the NEP as nothing but a retreat. Lenin, at the Tenth Congress of the Party, in March 1921, countered the Trotskyites and convinced the Congress of the policy change which was then adopted. He further gave a theoretical substantiation of the correctness of the NEP in his *Report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party* presented before the Third Congress of the Communist International in July 1921. The NEP continued till end 1925, when the Fourteenth Party Congress took the decision of moving to the next phase of socialist construction, that of socialist industrialisation.

During this period, Lenin fell seriously ill towards the end of 1922 and remained relatively inactive till his death on January 21, 1924. Taking advantage of Lenin’s absence due to illness, the Trotskyites and various opposition groupings within the Party got together to issue a declaration of the Forty-Six Oppositionists. Their platform was a demand for freedom of factions and groups within the Communist Party. They circulated their declaration and a letter from Trotsky throughout the Party and gave a challenge for a discussion. A discussion was held throughout the Party but the Oppositionists viewpoint was thrown out by all except some cells in the universities and offices. The Thirteenth Party Conference held in January 1924, summed up the discussion and condemned the

Opposition as a petty-bourgeois deviation from Marxism. The whole discussion was guided and led by Stalin who had by then taken up the prime leadership and responsibility of the Party.

### **Stalin's Early Years**

Joseph Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili (Stalin), was born on December 21<sup>st</sup> 1879, in Gori, Georgia. His father, a shoemaker, as well as his mother, came from families of peasant serfs. Stalin's parents, poor and illiterate, came from the toiling masses. He spent five years at the Gori ecclesiastical school, from where he was recommended as the 'best student' for entrance to the Tiflis Theological Seminary, the most important institution of higher learning in Georgia, as well as a centre of opposition to Tsarism. At the age of 15 he first came in contact with secret Marxist circles, and at the age of eighteen joined the first Socialist organisation in Georgia. In 1899, he was expelled from the Seminary and from then he became a professional revolutionary. He soon led major struggles and built a strong political organisation among the workers. He was arrested in 1902 and banished to Siberia in 1903 for three years. He however escaped within a few months and again involved himself in the activities of the RSDLP. He took a clear position against the Menshevik leadership of the Party in Georgia. He attended the December 1905 Bolshevik Congress where he met Lenin for the first time. It was at this time he wrote his booklet *Anarchism or Socialism*. He was arrested again in 1908, and 1912 and banished to Siberia, but each time escaped and returned to activity. During a major part of his time out of exile he played the role of editor of *Pravda*. Finally when he was arrested in 1913 he was sent to the remotest parts of Siberia from where he could only return after the February 1917 Revolution.

### **Foundations of Leninism**

Immediately following Lenin's death, Stalin took up the very important task of centralising the principal contributions made by Lenin to Marxism. This was absolutely necessary to fight the various trends, alien to Marxism, that were springing up. It was also necessary to lay down the "basic points of departure necessary for the successful study of Leninism."<sup>24</sup> This he did through his lectures on 'The Foundations of Leninism' which was published in May 1924. This is where he made his famous definition of Leninism, traced its historical roots and outlined its principal features as regards method, theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat, peasant question, national question, strategy and tactics, party, and style of work. These lectures then intended primarily for the 250,000 new party members recruited in the Lenin enrolment following Lenin's death, has since remained a valuable primer for communists studying Marxism-Leninism throughout the world.

### **Socialist Industrialisation and Collectivisation of Agriculture**

At the end of the period of the NEP, when the decision for the next phase had to be taken, there was again a major debate at the Fourteenth Congress of the Party held in December 1925. Zinoviev and Kamenev, had formed a 'New Opposition' which proposed an agrarian oriented economic plan for Russia as opposed to the socialist industrialisation plan of the C.C. which focused on heavy industry. This would have meant making Russia dependent upon, and thus an appendage of, the imperialist countries. The Congress thus firmly stood by the C.C. plan. Following this direction rapid progress was made in the sphere of industry with production rapidly crossing pre-war levels.

This was followed by the December 1927 Fifteenth Congress decision to start the Five Year Plans which gave another boost to the process of socialist construction. However the major political decision of this Congress was the resolution to advance towards the fullest development of the collectivisation of agriculture. The slogan given was, "rely firmly on the poor peasantry, strengthen the alliance with the middle peasantry, and wage a resolute struggle against the kulaks."<sup>25</sup> This

inspired a rapid advance in the formation of mass collective farms. Its success opened the way for the decisions of the Sixteenth Congress in June 1930. As Stalin said, this was “the congress of the sweeping offensive of Socialism along the whole front, of the elimination of the kulaks as a class, and of the realisation of solid collectivization.”<sup>26</sup> The implementation of these decisions was complete and thorough and by the time of the Seventeenth Congress in 1934 – a Congress of Victors – the tasks of collectivisation in agriculture and socialist industrialisation had basically been achieved. The figures given by Stalin at the Eighteen Congress in 1939 – just before World War II – showed that collective farms covered 93.5% of the peasant households and 99.4% of the cultivated area. Similarly socialist industry covered 99.97% of total output. Under socialism the Soviet Union had transformed its economy on a scale unimaginable under capitalism. During this same period the capitalist world had faced a devastating economic crisis called the Great Depression. Thus, just before the World War II, the Soviet industrial sector was producing over 9 times the output just before the World War I. On the other hand the principal capitalist countries – United States, Britain and Germany – had just managed to cross their pre-war outputs by 13% to 32% and France had still to recover to its levels of 25 years ago.

### **Errors of Stalin**

Though these successes were due to a basically correct Marxist-Leninist approach towards socialist construction, towards the end of this period certain wrong trends appeared in the understanding of the CPSU (B) and Stalin. This was particularly regarding the existence and role of classes and class struggle under socialism. While this was accepted in the early period, after major successes were achieved the aspect of class struggle was not recognised. Thus the Constitution of the USSR adopted in November 1936 proceeded “from the fact that there [were] no longer any antagonistic classes in society.”<sup>27</sup> Further while presenting the Report to the Eighteen Congress of the Party in March 1939, Stalin insisted, that “The feature that distinguishes Soviet society today from any capitalist society is that it no longer contains antagonistic, hostile classes; that the exploiting classes have been eliminated,..... Soviet society, liberated from the yoke of exploitation, knows no such antagonisms, is free of class conflicts, and presents a picture of friendly collaboration between workers, peasants and intellectuals.”<sup>28</sup> This was an incorrect position which went against the Marxist-Leninist understanding of continuation of the class struggle throughout the period of socialism.

In fact throughout this period the Party had to continue to wage the class struggle against various factions and groupings representative of the bourgeois and kulak viewpoints. Thus after a long struggle against the Trotskyite opposition, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Party in 1927. The struggle with the Bukharin-Rykov clique continued until it was discovered that they were playing the role of agents of foreign espionage agencies. They were brought to trial and sentenced to death in 1937.

### **Crisis of Capitalism**

For most of the period between the wars the world capitalist economy seemed to be in a state of collapse. World industrial production in the twenty-five years from 1913 to 1938 rose by only eighty per cent as compared to double this rate in the earlier twenty five years. The situation in world trade was worse where the total for 1948 was almost the same as for 1913; and this was compared to a doubling of trade between the early 1890s and 1913. The period started with the spectacular collapse of the monetary system in one of the largest capitalist countries – Germany – with its currency in 1923 falling to one million millionth of its 1913 value. It reached a so-called boom (which was correctly analysed by Stalin as merely a relative stabilisation) in 1924-29 when unemployment

averaged between 10 to 12 per cent for Britain, Germany and Sweden and 17-18 per cent for Denmark and Norway – extraordinarily high as compared to the pre-1914 years.

However the worst phase was what was called the Great Depression of 1929-33, from which capitalism never really recovered even up to the Second World War. It was a crisis affecting practically the whole globe, from the most industrialised to the most backward. During the first two years – 1929-31 – the US and Germany, the foremost manufacturers, saw industrial production fall by one third. For 1932-33, the worst year, unemployment figures for the most advanced countries ranged from 22-23% for Britain to 44% for Germany. The price of tea and wheat fell by two thirds, and the price of raw silk by three quarters. Even the price of rice crashed. Some of the countries badly affected by these price failures were Argentina, Australia, the Balkan countries, Bolivia, Brazil, British Malaya, Canada Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Ecuador, Finland, Hungary, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Indies (present Indonesia), New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. In short, practically the whole globe was in the grip of the crisis.

As economic hardships increased, contradictions sharpened and many countries faced renewed waves of social and political unrest. Chile overthrew its military dictator in 1931, Brazil ended its oligarchic ‘old Republic’ in 1930, Cuba threw out a corrupt President, Peru failed in an attempt at revolution during 1930-32, Colombia changed over from Conservative rule to the reformist Liberals; in Egypt and India there was an expansion in the independence struggles; in West Africa and the Caribbean too mass social unrest made its first appearance. Thus throughout the colonies and semi-colonies the Depression period saw struggles and a shift towards the left. In the imperialist countries, the ruling classes tried desperately to contain the social consequences of the crisis. It was by then apparent that the free market economics of the pre-war period did not offer any solution. Some like Sweden with its social-democratic reforms, and the US with Roosevelt’s New Deal introduced welfare economics for the first time. They were however exceptions. The more attractive solution for the ruling class was to move to the right or to fascism. Italy by then was already fascist; Japan shifted from a liberal to a national-militarist regime in 1930-31; Germany brought the Nazis to power in 1933. Many other imperialist countries saw a shift to the right and a retreat of the social democratic left. A fascist Germany rapidly built up its industrial and war machine and drastically cut unemployment it seemed to have more and more, an increased attraction for sections of the imperialist ruling classes.

### **Rise of Fascism and Threat of World War**

The rise of Fascism was thus basically a response of the ruling classes: to the October Revolution and the victory of Socialism, to the most profound economic crisis in the history of capitalism, and to the revolutionisation of the toiling masses that was taking place throughout the world under the influence of the above two. The 1935 Third International resolution thus pointed out that, “the ruling bourgeoisie [was increasingly seeking salvation in fascism, in the establishment of the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, the most chauvinist and the most imperialist elements of finance capital, with the aim putting into effect extraordinary measures for despoiling the toilers, preparing a predatory; imperialist war, of attacking the USSR, enslaving and dividing up China, and, on the basis of all this, preventing revolution.”<sup>29</sup> Fascism also provided certain more direct and immediate benefits to the members of the big bourgeoisie: the elimination of the labour unions, the introduction of fascist discipline at the workplace, increasing accrual of wealth-between 1929 and 1941 while the income share of the top 5% in the USA fell by 20%, the similar top section fascist Germany increased its share by 15%.

As major industrial nations set up fascist governments, they aggressively initiated local wars in preparation for a new world war for the redivision of the world. The milestones on the road to world war were the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931; the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935;

the German and Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39; the German invasion of Austria in early 1938; the German crippling of Czechoslovakia later the same year; the German occupation of what remained of Czechoslovakia in March 1939; the Italian occupation of Albania; and the German demands on Poland which actually led to the outbreak of war. Throughout this period the other imperialist powers like Britain, France and the USA were adopting a policy of appeasement towards the fascist aggressors and attempting to use them to destroy the Soviet Republic. It was in such dangerous conditions that the international proletariat had to draw up its tactics.

### **Third International's Perspective on War and Fascism**

During the twenties the Third International continued to unite many more forces, particularly from the colonies and semi-colonies. It also attempted to help the movements there, particularly China (which we will refer to later). In 1928 it held its Sixth Congress which adopted the Programme and Statutes of the International and Theses on the International Situation and on the Revolutionary Movements in colonial and semi-colonial countries. It then itself warned of the danger of a new world war-and drew up the tactics to be followed. These tactics basically followed the understanding of turning the war into civil war.

The Seventh Congress of the International was held in 1935 right in the midst of feverish preparations for war. In particular, Fascism had grown in strength and aggressiveness, and, with it coming to power in Germany, the threat of an attack on the Soviet Union was very near. "Defeating the Soviet Union by provoking fascist Germany against it; satiating the hunger of fascist Germany for colonies by enabling it to defeat the Soviet Union and turning it into its own colony; destroying World Socialist Revolution by defeating the Soviet Union and thus clearing the path for the continued existence of imperialism all over the world; this was the strategy of the imperialists at that time."<sup>30</sup> In this context, the International, under the leadership of Stalin and Dimitrov, realised that the tactical plan of the Sixth Congress would not suffice to face the new situation. Therefore, a new set of tactics was drawn up directed towards building the broadest possible unity of forces. As Dimitrov said in his concluding speech at the Congress, "Ours has been a Congress of a new tactical orientation for the Comintern."<sup>31</sup> The tactics were directed towards the defence of the Soviet Union, the defeat of Fascism and the instigators of war, the victory of the national liberation struggles and the establishment of Soviet power in as many countries as possible. In order to achieve these aims it drew up detailed United Front tactics to unite as many possible in this battle. In the capitalist countries anti-fascist workers' fronts and anti-fascist people's fronts for peace were to be formed along with the Social-Democrats and other anti-fascist parties. In the colonies and semi-colonies, the task was to form anti-imperialist people's fronts including the national bourgeoisie. The final aim of the communists in participating in all these fronts was to achieve the victory of revolution in their own country and the world-wide defeat of capitalism.

### **World War II and the Tactics of the International Proletariat**

Following from these broad tasks, the Soviet Union government, under Stalin, employed the correct tactics in the concrete situation World War II. When the non-fascist imperialist states were inciting Germany to attack the Soviet Union, Stalin entered into a no-war pact with Germany in August 1939, forcing the first part of the War to be war between the imperialist powers. This facilitated the tactics of 'turning the war into civil war' during the first two years of the war. However, when Germany attacked the socialist base, the Soviet Union, in June 1941, the character of the war changed to that of an anti-fascist people's war and the tactics as envisaged earlier by the Third International became applicable. Some of the parties, employing the correct tactics and making use of the severe revolutionary crisis, could achieve revolution. Thus, utilising these tactics,

the international proletariat not only succeeded in protecting its Socialist Base, but by 1949, could breach the imperialist chain at several places, break out of the imperialist world system and build a Socialist Camp covering one third of humanity. Thus “History has proved that the strategy and tactics charted out by the Third International, during the period of Second World War and the second phase of general crisis are basically correct.”<sup>32</sup>

However there were also serious failures, due to incomplete education by the Third International leadership on the correct approach in implementing these tactics, and the strong remnants of the Second International reformist approach in many of the European parties and the parties formed by them - like the Communist Party of India. The CPGB spent most of its time in the people’s war period trying to increase production; the USA Communist Party secretary, Browder went to the extent of asserting that it was the ‘greatest honour’ to be called a strike-breaker; the French CP refused to try to maintain any difference between communists and other reactionaries in the united front and declared that “for us there are only Frenchmen fighting Hitler and his agents.”<sup>33</sup> Such an approach led to these parties becoming tails of the ruling classes in the united fronts that they participated in. It also led to the development of rightist tendencies which in the following period would result in the leaderships of almost all these parties taking the path of revisionism.

The Third International while not being able to combat these revisionist tendencies, had also lost its effectiveness in providing guidance in the vastly differing conditions faced by the various member parties. Except for the regular publication of its periodicals, Comintern activity had greatly reduced from 1940 and even the customary May Day and October Revolution Manifestos were discontinued between May 1940 and May 1942. It was finally decided to dissolve the Comintern. Since a Congress could not be convened in the conditions of war the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) sent out a resolution recommending the dissolution of the International to all its sections. The resolution was sent out on 15th May 1943 and after receiving approval from most of the sections, including all the important sections, the Comintern was dissolved on 10th June 1943.

The resolution stated among other things that, “The deep differences of the historic paths of development of various countries, the differences in their character and even contradictions in their social orders, the differences in the level and tempo of their economic and political development, the differences, finally, in the degree of consciousness and organisation of the workers, conditioned the different problems facing the working class of the various countries.

“The whole development of events in the last quarter of a century, and the experience accumulated by the Communist International convincingly showed that the organisational form of uniting the workers chosen by the first congress of the Communist International answered the conditions of the first stages of the working-class movement but has been outgrown by the growth of this movement and by the complications of its problems in separate countries, and has even become a drag on the further strengthening of the national working-class parties.”<sup>34</sup> Marx’s dissolution of the First International was also cited as an example for dissolving a form of organisation which no longer corresponded to the demands confronting it.

All the major communist parties ratified the resolution. “The Chinese CP central committee expressed its full agreement; the Comintern had fulfilled its historical mission in protecting Marxism from distortion in helping progressive forces to unite, in supporting the Soviet Union and fighting fascism, and it had done all in its power to bring about co-operation between the KNIT and the CCP; in its organisational form it had now outlived itself. The CCP had received much help from Comintern in its revolutionary struggle, but the Chinese communists had now for a long time been free to decide independently on its policy and put it into effect.”<sup>35</sup>

As soon as the Comintern was dissolved the journal *Communist International* ceased publication. Shortly afterwards a new periodical in Russian and other languages, appeared, entitled *The War and*

*the Working Class* (after the war its title was changed to *New Times*). Soon after the completion of the war, the Information Bureau of Communist and Workers' Parties (Cominform) was set up through a founding conference in September 1947. This too was soon dissolved in 1956.

### **Mao's Early Years**

During this period a major centre for the development of Marxism was the advancing class struggles of the Chinese Revolution. For 28 years, the Communist Party of China had led the Chinese Revolution through many ups and downs, and a protracted war and had finally succeeded in seizing state power in the most populous country in the world in October 1949. Its Chairman, Mao Tse-tung had, through a struggle against numerous deviations, developed Marxist theory in diverse spheres. He had charted out the path for the advancing revolutions in the colonies and semi-colonies. Though till then he had not played such a prominent role at the international level, his contributions to Marxism-Leninism would be the invaluable weapons in the hands of the international proletariat in the years to come.

Mao Tse-tung was born on 26th December, 1893, in a peasant family in Shaoshan village of Hunan province. He had his primary education in a private school, and then in the higher primary school of Xiangxiang county and in the middle school at Changsha, the provincial capital. After the 1911 bourgeois Revolution he served for half a year in the insurgent New Army. He joined the Hunan Fourth Provincial Normal School in 1913 and completed his school education by 1918. His early thinking was varyingly influenced by classical philosophical writings from Confucius to neo-Hegelianism. From his childhood Mao had a fervent love for his country and a boundless urge for revolutionary truth.

In April 1918, he set up the New Peoples Society in Changsha with the aim of finding out new ways to transform China. By the time of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 Mao already came in touch with Marxism and began embracing it. In July 1919 he started a magazine called Xiangxiang Review in Hunan to spread revolutionary ideas and the following year he organised a Cultural Reading Society to study and propagate revolutionary ideology. In 1920 he started communist groups in Changsha. As one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao attended the First National Congress of the CPC as one of its 12 delegates in July 1921. He became the Secretary of the Hunan Regional Party Committee and led the worker's movement in Changsha and Anyuan. In June 1923, the Third National Congress of the CPC; attended by Mao, decided to promote an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal national front in co-operation with the Kuomintang Party led by Sun Yat-Sen and directed its members to join the Kuomintang Party as individuals. The First and Second National Congresses of the Kuomintang held in 1924 and 1926 elected Mao as an alternate member of its Central Executive Committee. He worked as Head of the Central Propaganda department of the Kuomintang, edited the Political Weekly and directed the Sixth class at the Peasant Movement Institute.

### **Path of Revolution in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies**

From 1924 till the beginning of 1926 the Chinese Revolution had advanced rapidly with the proletariat and peasantry in great ferment. In 1925 the May 30th anti-imperialist people's movement had involved all sections of the masses. The country was on the verge of a decisive battle between revolution and counter-revolution. However, two deviations then plagued the CPC. The dominant Right opportunist clique led by the then party General Secretary, Chen Tu-hsiu, "maintained that the bourgeois-democratic revolution must be led by the bourgeoisie, that its objective was to set up a bourgeois republic and that the bourgeoisie was the only democratic force with which the working class should unite itself. ... On the other hand, the 'Left' opportunists, represented by Chang Kuo-tao, saw only the working-class movement; they also ignored the peasantry."<sup>36</sup>

While fighting these two deviations, Mao made his first major contributions to the development of Marxist theory. In March 1926, he brought out his famous *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society* and in March 1927, he presented his *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*. In these works, while basing himself on the correct Marxist-Leninist standpoint and method and on the Leninist theses on the national revolution in the colonies, Mao developed the fundamental ideas of the New Democratic Revolution. He answered the questions of who were the friends and enemies of the Chinese revolution, who was the leading force and who were the reliable and vacillating allies. He also pointed the path along which the masses were to be mobilised, a revolutionary government established and the peasant armed forces organised. This was Mao's clear perspective for the direction the revolutionary forces should take during the Northern Expedition – a critical stage of the First Revolutionary Civil War in China. However, though these ideas were forged in the crucible of the advancing Chinese revolution, they held tremendous significance for the storm of revolutions then rising in the countries oppressed by imperialism. The Third International at that time also paid considerable attention to the questions facing the revolutions in these countries, particular China. Stalin too, while correcting the wrong directions being proposed by Zinoviev, Trotsky and others, gave broadly correct directions to Chinese revolution. He too however could not develop, specifically a sufficiently, the Marxist tools of New Democratic Revolution and Protracted People's War necessary to understand and lead the revolutions in the colonies and semi-colonies. Thus the International could not rectify in time the various incorrect Right and 'Left' lines that at various times dominated the Chinese Party until Mao's leadership was established in 1935.

### **Establishment of Red Bases and Fight against various 'Left' Lines**

The Right line of Chen Tu-hsiu dominated throughout the period of the First Revolutionary Civil War and was one of the main reasons for the failure of the revolution during this period. In August 1927, at the start of the next period- the Second Revolutionary Civil War Period Chen Tu-hsiu was removed as General Secretary after a firm criticism of his Right capitulationism. However the correct criticism of the Right line gave way almost immediately to the domination of a 'Left' line in the Central Committee. This line erroneously appraised the Chinese revolution as being on a 'continuous upsurge', and therefore called for armed uprisings in many cities. This led to heavy losses and the abandonment of this line by April 1928. The Sixth Congress of the CPC held in June 1928 rectified this first 'Left' line and adopted a basically correct understanding, repudiating both the Right and 'Left' [positions](#). It was while implementing this understanding, and while building up the Red Army after the failures of the Northern Expedition and the city uprisings, that Mao made his further contributions to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory. He wrote *Why is it that Red Political Power can exist in China?* in October 1928, and *The Struggle in the Chingkang Mountains* in November 1928. These historical works provided the theoretical basis for the historical process of building and developing the Red Army then under way. They also laid the initial foundations for the development of the Marxist-Leninist understanding regarding the Path of Protracted People's War – the path for the revolutions in the colonies and semi-colonies. Implementing this understanding Mao led the systematic building up of revolutionary base areas in large areas. Soviets were built and a Provisional Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic established.

However 'left' ideas again started gaining ascendancy and from 1930 took over the leadership of the party. Two 'Left' lines led by Li Li-san in 1930 and Wang Ming in 1931-34 dominated the party and caused incalculable harm. Chiang Kai-shek meanwhile organised repeated campaigns of encirclement and suppression against the Red base areas. In order to break through Chiang Kai-shek's encirclement and win new victories it was decided from October 1934, to undertake the world-shaking strategic shift, known as the Long March. It was during the Long March, at the Tsunyi Plenum of the CPC, in January 1935, that leadership of the party moved into the hands of

Mao and his policies. It was then decided to continue the Long March in the northward direction to be able to better co-ordinate the nation-wide anti-Japanese movement which had been growing continuously since the Japanese attack and occupation of North-eastern China in 1931.

### **Tactics for the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance**

Thus immediately after the completion of the Long March, Mao concentrated on the adoption and implementation of a new tactical orientation in order to end the Civil War and unite the maximum forces a War of Resistance against Japan. His presentation *On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism* was a major development of Marxist-Leninist United Front tactics. This was later further developed in his May 1937 Report on *The Tasks of the Chinese Communist Party in the Period of Resistance to Japan*. Giving a brilliant exposition of the stage of development of China's internal and external contradictions, explained the change in the Principal contradiction caused by Japan's aggression and therefore the change in the United Front tactics necessary to face the new situation. It was a classical example of the use and development of Marxist philosophy to solve the problems of revolution.

### **Mao's Other Contributions to Marxism-Leninism in this Period**

Around the same time, Mao made outstanding contributions to Marxist theory of cognition and dialectics through his philosophical essays, 'On Practice' and 'On Contradiction'. They were written as an attack on subjectivism and dogmatism then rife in the Chinese Party, but served also to present and develop universal Marxist philosophy concepts in a simple manner for the international proletariat.

This is also the time when Mao wrote *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War*, a systematic Marxist-Leninist presentation of military science and its application to China's revolutionary war. This, combined with his later works (in May 1938) *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War against Japan* and *On Protracted War*, raised Marxist-Leninist military science to a new, plane. They not only gave the direction for the victorious Chinese Red Army but laid the theoretical foundations for waging wars of national liberation throughout the world.

The other major development of Marxist science of this period was Mao's comprehensive presentation of the theory of New Democracy. This is contained particularly in his works *On New Democracy*, 'The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party' and 'Introducing The Communist' during the years 1939-40. While firmly establishing the ideological basis of New Democracy and outlining the revolutionary motive forces and tasks, Mao also brought to the forefront the necessity of developing the three magic weapons – United Front, People's Army and Communist Party – for the successful completion of revolution.

### **Victory of the Chinese People's Revolution**

Armed with these ideological weapons, the Chinese people won victory, first in the War of Resistance against Japan and then against the reactionaries led by Chiang Kai-shek. From a fighting force of just over twenty thousand at the end of the Long March, the Red Army grew to a strength of one million towards the end of the anti-Japanese war in 1945. At that time, at the Seventh Congress of the CPC in April 1945, Mao in his Report *On Coalition Government*, presenting a detailed summing up of the anti-Japanese war and an analysis of the current international and domestic situation, gave a specific programme for the formation of a coalition government with the Kuomintang even after the victory over the Japanese forces. However after the victory over the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek, because of the support of U.S. imperialism and the superior strength of his military forces, refused to agree to the formation of a coalition government on any reasonable terms. At that time even "Stalin wanted to prevent China from making revolution, saying that [the CPC] should not have a civil war and should co-operate with Chiang Kai-shek, otherwise the

Chinese nation would perish.”“ Nevertheless the CPC under Mao went ahead and fought what came to be known as the Third Revolutionary Civil War. Using the Marxist tools forged by Mao, the CPC, within a period of four years, won nation-wide victory over the U.S. backed Kuomintang.

As China gained victory, Marxist-Leninists and the proletariat throughout the world were filled with joy and pride at the formation of a seemingly invincible socialist camp encompassing one-third of humanity. Mao, however gave an idea of the challenges ahead and dangers of the coming period. In 1949, on the occasion of the twenty-eighth anniversary of the founding of the CPC, in his speech *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship*, he said, “Twenty-eight years of our Party are a long period, in which we have accomplished only one thing—we have won basic victory in the revolutionary war. This calls for celebration, because it is the people’s victory, because it is a victory in a country as large as China. But we still have much work to do; to use the analogy of a journey, our past work is only the first step in along march of ten thousand li.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Establishment of the Socialist Camp**

The end of the Second World War saw the world of Imperialism engulfed in one more serious revolutionary crisis. The War which massacred an estimated fifty-four million lives had also destroyed the economies of all the leading imperialist countries except the USA. The old colonial powers were in no position to hold on to their colonies. An upsurge of national liberation struggles thus saw the collapse of all the empires of the imperialist world. As it became clear that direct rule would not be possible for the imperialist ruler the old colonial system of England, France and the Netherlands quickly gave in. The Japanese empire collapsed in 1945 itself with defeat in the war. The countries which immediately went through the process of decolonisation and were given formal independence were Syria and Lebanon in 1945, India and Pakistan in 1947, Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) in 1948. Meanwhile popular movements and armed struggles for national liberation continued through out the colonies.

Meanwhile a large number of countries directly crossed over in the camp of socialism. Due to the correct tactics adopted during the war and the valour of the Soviet Red Army and the communist resistance almost the whole of East Europe became people’s democracies led by communist parties. Besides these revolutionary seizure of power by communist parties took place in Asia in North Vietnam, North Korea and China. Though Yugoslavia almost immediately opted out in 1948 the remaining countries formed a powerful socialist camp united under the leadership of the Soviet Union and covering one-third of humanity

# Chapter VIII

## The Fifth Period: 1949 - 1976

### Second Stage of General Crisis

The Second Stage of the General Crisis of Capitalism began with the Second World War and continued to deepen for about a decade after the War due to massive devastation of the economies of the major imperialist powers—Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan – during the War. Further, as pointed out by Stalin, the disintegration of the single, all-embracing world market was the most important economic sequel of the Second World War. The sphere of exploitation of the world's resources by the major capitalist countries had actually contracted and the General Crisis continued to deepen further due to decolonisation and the inability of the imperialists to exploit and loot the Third World at their will and pleasure were yet to recover from ruins of the War and get out of their deep revolutionary crisis.

The revolutionary upsurge of anti-imperialist, anti-colonial struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America continued. A popular movement in Persia (Iran), brought Dr. Muhammad Mussadiq to power who immediately in 1951 nationalised the western oil companies. This brought about his overthrow by a coup in 1953 organised by the Anglo-American secret services – the first of the coups used by the imperialists which soon became an important weapon of control of governments by imperialism in the period of neocolonialism. In 1952 a 'Free Officers' coup brought Nasser to power though Britain and France tried unsuccessfully to overthrow him with the help of Israel in the Suez war of 1956. Iraq set up its own government in 1958.

Many of the national liberation movements in the 50s had to engage in guerrilla warfare to achieve their aims. It was during this period that the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian people under the leadership of the communist party were waging their armed struggle against the French. Similarly the Algerian people had to fight a bitter armed liberation struggle from 1954 to 1962 before the French were finally forced to leave. Armed guerrilla struggle was also waged in Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus against the British. However it was the Cuban Revolution of 1st January, 1959 which overthrew the corrupt US puppet dictator Batista and challenged the world superpower directly. Militarily the Cuban armed struggle was not so large or long drawn out (1956-58) but being so close to the United States it was taken by their ruling classes as a direct challenge to their hegemony. The struggle's main leaders, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, were not communists, and the Cuban Communist Party was even for some time opposed to them, but it was their opposition to the US that convinced them to declare themselves as communists over a year after the success of the revolution. The success of the Cuban Revolution had an impact throughout the world and particularly in Latin America as it proved that it was possible to challenge the imperialist power who lorded over the whole American continent and had become the world's first superpower.

The Korean war of this period was another struggle symbolising the crisis and desperation of US imperialism. The US imperialists deployed the full strength of their armed forces to attempt to crush the communist revolution there and take over the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as enter north-east China. After four years of war (1950-53) in which three to four million were estimated to have been killed and where fifty thousand US soldiers died, the communist revolution in the North remained undefeated. The South however remained in the hands of a regime propped up by the US. The war was crucial as it was the first post-World War II war to prove that the new super power despite its tremendous economic and military strength was a paper tiger in the face of a

people's struggle. Communist China played a crucial role by sending the Chinese People's Volunteers to help the Korean people to beat back the US army.

### **Chinese Path of Revolution**

Immediately after the establishment of the Chinese Peoples' Republic, Mao visited the USSR for two months, during which, after detailed discussions with Stalin, various treaties of historic significance were signed. It was also during this period that the communist movement recognised the significance of the Chinese path of revolution, for the colonies and semi-colonies. In the 27 January, 1950, editorial of *For a Lasting Peace. For a People's Democracy*, the organ of the Cominform, it was stated, "The path taken by the Chinese people... is the path that should be taken by the people of many colonial and dependent countries in their struggle for national independence and people's democracy.

"The experience of the victorious national-liberation struggle of the Chinese people teaches that the working class must unite with all classes, parties, groups and organisations willing to fight the imperialists and their hirelings and to form a broad, nation-wide united front, headed by the working class and its vanguard – the communist party,....

"A decisive condition for the victorious outcome of the national liberation struggle is the formation, when the necessary internal conditions allow for it, of people's liberation armies under the leadership of the communist party."<sup>39</sup>

Thus, the universal applicability of Marxist-Leninist theory developed by Mao – i.e. Maoism – was recognised, and began to become the guideline for genuine revolutionaries throughout the world, particularly in the colonies and semi-colonies. At the same time China started the historic task of putting a backward semi-feudal, semi-colonial society on the road to socialism. Under Mao's guidance, the policy of 'three years for preparation and ten years for planned economic construction', was adopted and significant successes were achieved in the initial period.

### **Expansion of the World Economy**

By the mid-1950s all the major imperialist powers overcame the problem of shortages and stabilised themselves with the help of the American imperialists. After reaching the pre-war levels by the mid-1950s, their economies began to expand rapidly for the next decade and-a-half finally plunging into a prolonged world economic crisis from the early 1970s. The output of manufactures quadrupled between the early 1950s and the early 1970s and world trade in manufactures grew tenfold. The total energy consumption also shot up, where as in the case of the US it actually tripled between 1950 and 1973. Some major causes for this long post-war expansion were; the rebuilding of the war-ravaged economies of West Europe and Japan, major wars in Korea and Indo-China along with the emergence of peace-time permanent economies, new Third World markets, new industries, and major state intervention in the economy. The nature of the expansion however was such as to sharply increase the disparity between the rich and poor countries. The expansion however reached its saturation point by the early 1970s; the US economy in fact started going into recession from the late 60s itself with a sharp fall in the rate of profit; the gold-dollar based Bretton Woods international financial system collapsed in 1971, commodity prices boomed in 1972-73 and finally the oil prices were drastically raised in 1973 throwing the economy of world imperialism into severe crisis. The shock was so great that the so-called 'developed market economies' in just one year dropped 10% in industrial production and 13% in international trade. They were thrown into a lengthy spell of stagnation from which they have yet to show signs of recovering. The lengthy years of post war expansion were however more than matched in the earlier period by the socialist countries. In fact in the fifties the Soviet Union's economy grew at a rate of 5.7% which was far higher than any Western country. Even the other socialist economy grew at a rapid pace. However

this rate started falling after the process of restoration of capitalism started. The USSR rate of growth then fell to 5.2% in the 1960s and 3.7% in the first half of the 1970s.

### **Modern Revisionism and Collapse of the Socialist Camp**

In 1953, after the death of Stalin, a revisionist clique led by Khrushchev performed a coup, and took over the controls of the CPSU, then the leading party of the international proletariat. They threw out or kill the revolutionaries in the party, started the process of restoration of capitalism in the first land of socialism and proceeded to develop ties with the imperialist camp, particularly U.S. imperialism. By 1956, after securing firm control over the CPSU, they, at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, started spreading their revisionist poison among other communist parties. They simultaneously attacked the so-called Stalin personality cult and introduced their revisionist theory of the three peacefuls – peaceful transition, peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition.

The majority of the leaderships of the communist parties of the world backed the revisionist Khrushchevite line. Many prominent leaders and parties, had already started taking the revisionist line in their own countries. Browder in the USA had already put forward theories of the collaboration between socialism and capitalism and moved out of the international communist movement; Thorez, the former Third International leader from France, who became enamoured with the bourgeoisie following the period in the anti-fascist front, had in the post-war years taken national chauvinist positions towards the peoples of the French colonies and become a lackey of the French imperialist bourgeoisie; Togliatti of Italy, another major Third International leader, had wanted to 'reform' and 'restructure' capitalism into socialism through 'structural reforms' through the bourgeois parliament; the Communist Party of India leadership had already changed their tactical line to recognise the peaceful path. Thus these revisionist forces, who had not been sufficiently criticised and defeated in the earlier period, quite happily jumped on to the Khrushchevite bandwagon. Where however such parties tried in any serious manner to implement 'peaceful transition' through the electoral system and where such efforts sufficiently threatened the social order, they were eliminated through military coups and savage repression, as in Brazil (1964), Indonesia (1965); and Chile (1973). Among the newly formed People's Democracies, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, led by Tito, had already, from 1948, started on the revisionist road and broken off from the socialist camp. Most of the remaining leaderships aligned with Khrushchev. Within the socialist camp it was only the CPC and the Albanian Party of Labour who identified and recognised Khrushchevite revisionism and made a valiant and determined defence of Marxism-Leninism.

### **The Great Debate**

The CPC, under Mao's guidance was in the vanguard of this struggle. Within two months of the 20th CPSU Congress the CPC published an article 'On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', which upheld Stalin as an outstanding Marxist-Leninist. This was followed by another article in December 1956, *More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, which insisted that the socialist camp should clearly demarcate who are its friends and enemies. This was combined with a seven year long attempt to struggle with and defeat the Khrushchevite revisionist line within party forums, particularly at the meetings of 60 fraternal parties in 1957 and of 81 fraternal parties in 1960, and at meetings with the CPSU leadership. This struggle, which came out in the open in 1963 and continued through 1964, came to be known as the Great Debate. It was not only a principled and comprehensive struggle against modern revisionism and the rallying point for all proletarian revolutionary forces throughout the world. It was also a scientific development of Marxism-Leninism, which gave the international communist movement its revolutionary general line for that period. It was through the Great Debate that Mao advanced the

science of Marxism-Leninism by providing the answers to the most significant questions before the international proletariat – the fundamental contradictions in the world, who are friends and enemies, the aims of the movement, and the path for achieving the victory of World Socialist Revolution. These formulations were mainly contained in the famous June 14th Letter of the CPC to the CPSU giving its proposal regarding a general line for the international communist movement. Subsequent to the letter of June 14th, 1963, the CPC brought out nine comments outlining and elaborating the revolutionary position on various issues – neo-colonialism, war and peace, peaceful existence, Yugoslavia, Khrushchev’s revisionism and the historical lessons to be drawn therefrom. It was through the Great Debate that Maoism gained further acceptance as the guiding ideology of the revolutionary sections of the international proletariat.

### **Two-Line Struggle against Capitalist Roaders**

During the period of the rise of modern revisionism in the CPSU, certain revisionist trends started gaining prominence even in the CPC, at the highest levels. This reached its peak at the Eighth Congress of the CPC in September, 1956, where the revisionist understanding of the then General Secretary, Liu Shao-chi, dominated. Thus the Political Report presented by Liu Shao-chi, hailed the revisionist Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, as having “decided on many important policies and principles for further development of the cause of socialism and repudiated the cult of the individual which had had grave consequences inside the Party.”<sup>40</sup> Further, the resolution adopted on the Political Report asserted “that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in our country has been basically resolved,” and that “the major contradiction in our country ... in essence, is between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces of society.”<sup>41</sup>

This was the ‘theory of productive forces’ which held that during social transformation, class struggle goes into the background and rapid development of productive forces through the state machinery becomes primary. Mao consistently opposed this line and clearly laid down that class struggle is the key link for the development of socialist society. Thus the struggle against the capitalist roaders inside the CPC and particularly the bourgeois headquarters led by Liu Shao-chi on the one hand, and the struggle against Khrushchev’s revisionism in the International Communist Movement on the other, proceeded simultaneously and formed part of an overall struggle against modern revisionism.

Following the domination of the revisionist line at the 8th Congress, Mao mobilised the masses against the rightists through a rectification and socialist, education campaign- the hundred flowers campaign. In his work, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* in 1957, he strongly stressed, “Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces, and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet.”<sup>42</sup> In the above mentioned work, Mao also made a significant further development of Marxist theory with regards to the understanding of contradictions within society, the different types of contradictions and the different methods of handling these contradictions. In particular it was a major contribution to the Marxist understanding regarding socialist construction. It saw socialist construction not merely as a set of economic targets to be fulfilled, but as a dialectical process of development through the resolution of contradictions.

## **Political Economy of Socialism**

At this time Mao initiated a deep study of economic theory to find the answers to the questions of socialist economic construction. In a sense he was continuing the work left unfinished by Stalin. In the last years of his life, Stalin had initiated the writing of a text book of Political Economy, with the particular aim of explaining the character and functioning of the economic laws under socialism. He had given the broad theoretical framework for it in his important work, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, and had targeted it to be completed in 1953. It had however remained unfinished and it was only after his death that the book was published, in the mid-fifties, during the Khrushchevite period. Since this book was of central importance to the understanding to the process of socialist construction then underway in China and also crucial to the fight against modern revisionism and the capitalist roaders, Mao recommended the study of Stalin's work as well as the Soviet political economy textbook.

This major process of study and debate and Mao's intense personal involvement in it led to a further-development in the understanding regarding the political economy of socialism. This was centralised in Mao's writings linking the experience of Soviet and Chinese socialist construction and the concepts in the Soviet books. They were later brought but as a book, *Critique of Soviet Economics*. This book bridged the major gap in Marxist theory with regards to the understanding of the objective laws of socialism. It corrected some of the erroneous conceptions of Stalin regarding the role of the superstructure, of politics; of the masses, of his mistrust of the peasantry, and concerning the need to find a way to make the transition from collective to public ownership. It presented the whole development of socialism as a dialectical process, as a process of development of contradictions, as a process of classes and class struggle. This conceptual leap in the understanding of socialist construction had a tremendous impact on the formulation and implementation of socialist plans and policies in China. It also, during the Cultural Revolution, led to the formulation of a textbook on the *Political Economy of Socialism*, which in a systematic manner, formulated and incorporated the developments of Mao in the science of Marxist political economy.

## **The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution**

During the Great Debate, the CPC, in its comment *On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and its Historical Lessons for the World*, had listed Mao's theories and policies for preventing the restoration of capitalism. However within the CPC itself there was strong resistance from the highest levels, led by Liu Shao-chi, to the implementation of these theories and the concrete programme being proposed by Mao. Thus though the socialist cultural revolution was officially accepted at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee in 1962, the implementation was half-hearted and went in a direction counter to the line given by Mao. Finally the CC under the direction of Mao, issued a circular on 16th May, 1966, dissolved the 'Group of Five', under whose charge the Cultural Revolution was being sabotaged, and set up a new 'Cultural Revolution Group' directly under the Politburo Standing Committee. This action led to the actual initiation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which according to the Eleventh Plenum of the CC in August 1966, was "a new stage in the development of the socialist revolution in our country, a deeper and more extensive stage."<sup>43</sup> As Mao has said, "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is in essence a great political revolution under socialist conditions by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes. It is the continuation of the long struggle against the Kuomintang reactionaries waged by the CPC and the broad revolutionary masses under its leadership. It is continuation of the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie."<sup>44</sup> Mao's conception of the Cultural Revolution inspired the hundreds of millions of revolutionary working people of China, who were mobilised in class struggle to safeguard the revolution. This struggle was directed against the bourgeois headquarters in the party and state machinery and succeeded in removing many of them, like Liu

Shao-chi, from their positions of power. But the main achievement of the Cultural Revolution was that it showed the world proletariat the path for building socialism and preventing the restoration of capitalism.

### **Establishment of Maoism as New Stage of Marxism-Leninism**

The Cultural Revolution – a great leap in Marxist theory and practice – was a major source of inspiration too for revolutionaries throughout the world. During the Great Debate many revolutionary forces had gathered around the revolutionary line of the CPC led by Mao, but it was mainly during the Cultural Revolution that these forces throughout the world came to accept that it was Maoism that could provide the answers to the problems of World Socialist Revolution. This was embodied in the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the CPC in 1969, which made the assertion that “Mao Thought is Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to world-wide victory.” It was during this period that revolutionary parties, on the ideological basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, were established in almost all countries of the world.

Mao’s analysis of the international situation also began being proved in practice. On the one hand, the Soviet Union, after the restoration of capitalism, had moved on to establishing imperialist relations of exploitation and oppression in various parts of the world. It became a super power competing with the USA for world hegemony. At the same time imperialism, from 1973, entered a period of severe intensification of its general crisis. On the other hand, as Mao had unequivocally stated, the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, became increasingly the storm centres of world revolution. Numerous national liberation movements in these countries took to the path of armed struggle under the influence of Maoism. Communist revolutionaries too, for long paralysed by the revisionist trends in the international communist movement, took to the path of protracted people’s war. This was all in consonance with Mao’s understanding that ‘countries want independent nations want freedom, people want revolution.’

Thus the development of Marxism-Leninism to a new stage – Maoism – was an event of tremendous significance in world history. It prevented the annihilation of the international communist movement from one of the most serious attacks of the bourgeoisie – the modern revisionists. It provided the path for the proletariat and oppressed people of the world. It also provided the international proletariat with theoretical and practical weapons to fight against the restoration capitalism and thus even face the situation when all its socialist bases the world were lost.

### **Revival of Revolutionary Movements**

The late 60s – the period of the GPCR and the establishment of Maoism as a new stage of Marxism-Leninism – was a period of revolutionary ferment in many parts of the world. The revolutionary war in Indo-China was dealing severe blows to the tremendous military might of the US imperialists. Simultaneously revolutionaries breaking away from the hold of the modern revisionists launched armed struggles under the guidance of Maoism in many parts of the Third World during this period – the ongoing armed struggles in the Philippines and India are a continuation since then. National liberation struggles waging guerrilla war were also raging in various parts as well as armed struggles under Guevarist ideology in parts of Latin America.

The influence of the Indo-China war and these movements in the Third World as well as the GPCR was one of the major factors for the vast out-break of students and anti-war movements throughout the capitalist world at the end of the sixties. The Paris student revolt of May 1968 was the most significant but only one of a wave of student revolt ranging from the USA and Mexico to Italy and even to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. It also had its impact on student movements in various parts of the Third World.

At the same time the anti-Vietnam war protests started picking up in the USA and other parts of the world with massive peace movements against war and the nuclear arms race in major cities of Europe. The US imperialists were effectively isolated as not even one of their allies agreed to send troops to fight in Vietnam. The effect of these movements were so great that when the US sent in aeroplanes and arms to aid Israel in the Yom Kippur war of 1973 not a single of the West European imperialist powers except Portugal – then in the last year of the pre-war fascist, Salazar – were even ready to give landing and refuelling facilities to the Americans.

Following the students movement there was also a major growth of struggles of the industrial working class in the West European countries particularly Italy and France, though largely on economic demands. The long period of economic expansion had raised the productivity of labour but had reduced the share of the working class in total income. Huge waves of strikes with major wage demands often paralysed entire economies of the imperialist countries.

The mid-70s saw the final overthrow of many long standing colonial regimes after long guerrilla wars. Thus the US and their puppets were thrown out of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in 1975. In Africa the republics of Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Congo, and Benin were formed in this period, particularly after the breakdown of the Portuguese colonial empire, after the overthrow of Salazar in a coup in April 1974. However most of these countries were taken over by puppets or satellites of the new imperialism – Soviet social imperialism. A prominent exception was Cambodia (Kampuchea), where genuine communist revolutionaries – the Khmer Rouge – remained independent until invaded in 1978 by Vietnam on the behest of the Soviet imperialists.

### **Some 'Left' Ideological Currents in this Period**

In the period after the attack on Stalin by Khrushchev at the 20th CPSU Congress in 1956 there was some confusion in various communist parties of the West which gave rise to new theories trying to reinterpret Marxism. Groups by the name of New Left arose first in France in the late fifties and later in Britain and other countries. In Britain their literature mainly appeared in the *New Review* and the *University and Left Review*, which later merged into the *New Left Review*. Lacking a clear and common orientation, the common characteristic of this New Left trend was a criticism of Stalin without clearly identifying with either the Soviet or Chinese positions in the Great Debate. This broad categorisation of views however gained in popularity after the growth in Latin American movements attempting to follow the model of the Cuban Revolution and further in the wake the world-wide upsurge of student movements in the late 60s.

The peculiarities of the Cuban Revolution gave rise to theories upholding it as the example suited to Latin American conditions. An attempt was made on the basis of the Cuban experience to even revise some basic Marxist-Leninist formulations. This was done by the Revolution's leaders – Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, but also quite considerably by Regis Debray, a Frenchman who tried to formulate a theory of revolution for Latin America.

One of the central points of Marxism rejected by these formulations was the need for a proletarian vanguard party to successfully complete the revolution. As mentioned earlier the leaders of the Cuban Revolution were not members of the Cuban Communist Party; and it was only two and a half years after seizure of power that Castro formed Partido de la Revolution Socialista (PRS) which included the old Communist Party. Thus, according to Debray, Castro held the view that “there is no revolution without a vanguard; that this vanguard is necessarily the Marxist-Leninist party; and that those who want to make the revolution have the right and duty to constitute themselves a vanguard, independently of these parties.”<sup>45</sup>

This conception was further theorised by Debray to the sphere of the relation of the people's army and the party. He felt that the subordination of the military to the political was inappropriate for Latin America where the Communist Parties had not been able to take root and develop in the

same way as in Russia and China. He theorised that the 'staggering novelty' of the Cuban Revolution was that it introduced the guerrilla force as the party in embryo. He believed the people's army to be the nucleus of the party and not vice versa. The guerrilla force was to be the political vanguard's initial form and from its development a real party could rise. Central to this process was the concept of the guerrilla 'foco' (focus) where the guerrilla squad was the central focus of all forms of organisation and elevated above all else. Debray contrasted with the Vietnamese experience says that unlike there where the military pyramid of the liberation forces was built from the base up, in Latin America it would be built from the apex down. Many of the concepts propagated by Guevara and theorised by Debray ran counter to the basic Marxist understanding of revolution. They were based on an understanding that dedicated, well organised and militarised heroes can make history and belittled the role of the masses in the revolution. In contrast to Mao's principle that the guerrillas relation with the masses is like fish with water, Debray formulated three golden rules 'constant vigilance, constant mistrust, constant mobility.' Further the analysis concentrated only on the military aspect without attempting to understand the political context of the class forces at the time of the Cuban Revolution or later in Latin America. It thus could not arrive at the correct conclusions regarding the central issue of the friends and enemies of the revolution, the question of the united front and the leadership of the revolution. In the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution many guerrilla struggles along Guevarist lines were attempted in other Latin American countries but most met with failure. Guevara himself died while fighting in one such guerrilla war in Bolivia. One of the most prominent of these movements which continues to this day is the armed struggle led by the Armed Forces of the Colombian Revolution (FARC). The theories of Guevara and Debray which neglected the leading role of the working class, also gained prominence during the upsurge of students' movements in the late sixties as they seemed to prove the importance of non-class categories and the revolutionary potential of the students and youth as compared to the working class and the peasantry.

Another group of theorists who in this period gained some prominence while attempting to revise basic Marxist theory were the 'dependency' theorists in the field of political economy. Prominent among them were Andre Gunder Frank, Emmanuel Aligerhi and Samir Amin. They saw the source of exploitation not in production but in distribution and in what they defined as 'unequal exchange'; they abandoned the categories of imperialism and colonies and semi-colonies and instead talked of the 'centre' and 'periphery' of world capitalism; they did not accept that imperialism tended to preserve pre-capitalist relations in the colonial countries but instead analysed that capitalist relations had developed in the 'dependent' capitalisms of the periphery.

### **Deng Revisionism and the Loss of All Socialist Bases**

After the death of Mao in 1976, the capitalist roaders who had remained in the party staged a coup under the leadership of the arch revisionist Deng Tsiao-ping and took over the control of the party under the nominal leadership of Hua Kuo-feng, a so-called centrist. As Mao had often taught, with political control going over to the hands of the revisionists the socialist base had gone out of the hands of the proletariat. At the same time the leadership of the Albanian Party of Labour switched over to an opportunist line attacking Maoism and projecting Mao as a petty bourgeois revolutionary. Though the Khmer Rouge continued to hold power in Kampuchea they were waging a constant struggle against the internal and external enemies of the Revolution and were yet to emerge from the economic ravages of war and consolidate their rule when they were defeated by the Soviet backed Vietnamese Army. Thus there was no country anywhere in the world where the proletariat had consolidated its hold on state power and could play the role of a socialist base for the international proletariat.

In China, though the Cultural Revolution had gained great victories, there had yet been much more to be done. In fact the revisionist victory was in a way a confirmation of the words of Mao in August 1967, “The present Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is only the first; there will inevitably be many more in the future. The issue of who will win in the revolution can only be settled over a long historical period. If things are not properly handled, it is possible for a capitalist restoration to place at any time in the future.”<sup>46</sup>

Thus this fifth period (1949-76) was a period when the subjective forces of World Socialist Revolution faced unprecedented losses. The international proletariat which had established a mighty socialist camp at the start of this period, had to face the loss of its last socialist base – China – by the end of this period. Though the imperialist system from 1974 was again in the throes of a new and extremely deep economic crisis, the subjective forces of the international proletariat had been substantially weakened and were therefore unable to take sufficient advantage of the imperialist crisis.

However this period had produced a major ideological victory. In the face of the most dangerous attack in its history – the attack of the forces of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration – Marxism had proved its dynamism by further developing itself in the course of this struggle. Thus though there had been loss of socialist bases, ideologically Marxism had managed to effectively counter the attempts to destroy it. Even in a seemingly hopeless situation it had proved that it had the capability to provide the ideological answers. While providing these answers in the Great Debate and the GPCR Marxism had advanced to a new stage – Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It was as MLM that it was to continue to be the guiding science and ideology of the international proletariat.

# Chapter IX

## The Sixth Period: 1976 Onwards

### Crisis of Imperialism

This period has been one of a severe intensification of the General Crisis of Capitalism. The world economic crisis since 1973 is the most protracted in world history and it has not been merely limited to the sphere of production and trade, but has also affected the financial system, service sector, debt settlements, foreign exchange, etc., and also intensified the contradictions in the social and political sphere. Even the setback of the socialist bases has not mitigated the crisis capitalism.

The growth rate between 1960-73 and 1973-89 fell for the US from 4% to 2.6%, for Western Europe from 4.7% to 2.2% and for Japan from 9.6% to 3.9%. Unemployment in Western Europe rose from average of 1.5% in the 1960s to 4.2% in the 1970s. Even at the peak a temporary boom in the late 1980s it averaged 9.2% in the Europe Community and in 1993 it had reached 11%. Thus a long period of recession gripped all the main imperialist powers.

As for Soviet social imperialism, it saw a continuous fall; its GNP growth rate which had been higher than the imperialists in the 50s and had started falling back since the 60s continued its fall from 3.7% in the first half of the 70s to 2.6% in the second half to just 2% in the first half of the 80s. East Europe saw a similar trend. The situation after the collapse of the revisionist regimes was even more devastating. Production actually started contracting. Poland lost over 21% of GDP in 1988-92, Czechoslovakia almost 20%, Romania and Bulgaria 30% or more. Russia's GDP fell by 17% in 1990-91, by 19% in 1991-92 and by 11 % in 1992-93. Thus the integration of the Soviet bloc in the world imperialist market only aggravated the problems of the system. Only China, of the ex-socialist systems, managed to provide some market particularly for finance capital desperate for destinations to invest in - \$ 242 billion went into China by 1998. But this was hardly sufficient to mitigate the crisis of imperialism. The Third World throughout this period was sinking into deeper and deeper debt crisis constantly threatening the fragile stability of the world financial system. Total debt of the oppressed countries amounting to \$130 billion in 1973 rose to \$ 1.9 trillion in 1995. The Latin American countries, with debts of hundreds of billions, and sub-Saharan Africa, all with debts far higher than the annual GNP, were in constant crisis throughout this period, many a time threatening to throw the largest imperialist banks into bankruptcy. South Asia continued in endemic poverty and also moved into the debt trap. East Asia – the so-called Asian tigers – were also thrown into severe crisis in the late nineties with the failures of their financial systems and most of their economies contracting.

There has thus been an excellent revolutionary situation with the sharpening of all the fundamental contradictions and the further weakening of imperialism. In particular the colonies and semi-colonies have continued to be the storm centres of world revolution. At the beginning of this period guerrilla struggles continued in Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Eritria and other countries. The People's War started in Peru in 1980 under communist revolutionary leadership. The Shah of Iran was overthrown and an anti-American Islamic Republic came into existence. National liberation war broke out in Afghanistan after the installation of a Soviet puppet regime in 1978 and occupation by the Soviet social imperialist army in 1979. The heroic struggle of the Afghan people dealt a serious deathblow to the Soviet regime and proved to be, a major factor in the final collapse of the USSR. The epochal significance of the struggles of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies has been that it has forever changed the nature of the relations between imperialism and the oppressed nations. Both the Vietnam and Afghan wars proved that even a superpower could not occupy even a

small and weak country. His truth was brought out even more starkly in the 90s in the numerous spots where UN peacekeeping forces tried to intervene. Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had been occupied and controlled without serious problem by the collapsing Habsburg empire before the First World War, in the 90s required the mobilisation of a multinational armed force equivalent to that necessary for a full scale war. Somaliland, which had been controlled for numerous years without major difficulty by British and Italian colonialists, had in the 90s become the Somalia where thousands of American and other troops were forced to ignominiously retreat when attacked by the people. Even the large scale and continuous bombing of Iraq and Yugoslavia without the commitment of ground troops is the recognition by imperialism that no country, nation or people would in this period be prepared to accept an occupation army.

Ever since the collapse of the bureaucratic regimes in East Europe and the various republics of the former Soviet Union, there had been a continuous revolutionary crisis there too. Even in the Western imperialist countries the worsening of the crisis has led to the intensification of the contradiction between labour and capital and repeated waves of strike struggles by the industrial working class. The revolutionary forces however have not been organisationally strong enough to utilise the excellent world-wide revolutionary situation to advance the World Socialist Revolution.

### **Reorganisation of Revolutionary Forces**

In the years immediately after the death of Mao, there was a considerable amount of confusion in the international communist movement, with the Deng revisionists, through Hua Kuo-feng, attempting to project themselves as upholders of Maoism. In particular they falsely peddled the revisionist Three World Theory as Mao's general line for the international proletariat. Many revolutionary sections accepted these positions and it was only after the very openly revisionist History Resolution of the CPC in 1981 and the Twelfth Congress in 1982 that most revolutionary forces throughout the world started coming out openly against Deng revisionism. However some sections continued to follow the Dengist revisionist line and abandoned Mao's revolutionary teachings. Certain other sections allied themselves with the opportunist attack by the Albanian Party of Labour on Maoism. However these parties later either disintegrated or openly revealed their revisionist nature. Those that resolutely opposed Deng revisionism and upheld Maoism in practice could however make considerable advances. Today these forces form the core of the revolutionary international proletariat. They are leading armed struggles in Peru, Philippines, Turkey, India, Nepal.

### **Some Anti-Marxist Ideological Trends**

The loss of all socialist bases led to a concerted ideological attack on Marxism. However of these the most dangerous were the trends that emerged from within the ICM and people's movements. In the guise of providing the answers to the setbacks to socialism there appeared trends that attempted to revise the basic Marxist formulations regarding the nature of the socialist state and the organisational principles of the Leninist party. They attempted to substitute the dictatorship of the proletariat by the bourgeois concept of proletarian democracy; they rejected the party principles of democratic centralism as the cause of bureaucracy and the restoration of capitalism. An extreme example of such anti-Marxist trends was the debate raised by the liquidationist Venu within the Revolutionary Movement (RIM). However there were many other examples where Trotskyite and Anarchist understanding was attempted to be smuggled into the proletarian movement.

An anti-Marxist ideology which gained popularity in the 90s, though not originating from within the ICM, nevertheless created considerable confusion through its intervention in people's movements in various parts of the world. This ideology went by the name of 'postmodernism'. Its central thesis was to announce the end of the 'Modern' age and with it the end of the beliefs of the Enlightenment (see Chapter II) that humanity constantly progressed through the advancement of

reason and freedom. It also simultaneously rejected the ideologies rooted in the Enlightenment – bourgeois liberalism and socialism. It rejects universal values like rationality, equality or general human emancipation as ‘totalising’ concepts and contrasts them to an emphasis on ‘different’ identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, on various particular and separate oppressions and struggles. The emphasis on differences is continued as a refusal to accept the possibility of building common social consciousness, such as class consciousness, because the individual’s identities are so different and variable. It rejects what it calls ‘grand narratives’ including the Marxist materialist conception of history, on the grounds that it reduces the complexity of human experience to a simplistic, monolithic, world-view, giving undue weightage to economics, the mode of production and class. In contrast it concentrates its focus on language, culture and ‘discourse’ on the grounds that language is all we can know about the world and we have access to no other reality. Thus the link running through all the postmodernist themes is an emphasis on the fragmented nature of the world and of human knowledge and a staunch opposition to any politics of emancipation attempting to liberate the whole of society, e.g. socialism, communism.

The material roots of the postmodernist thinking can be traced to the segmented, consumerist and seemingly continuously changing and shifting nature of contemporary global capitalism. Postmodernism simultaneously attempts to link itself to the various sectional movements growing in this period. However it principally is an example of the various defeatist philosophies that have attempted to grow in prominence in the wake of the collapse of all socialist bases. While countering it at the philosophical and ideological levels, it is also simultaneously necessary to clearly and forcefully propagate the Marxist perspective within the fighting sections in the movements where postmodernism attempts to create its defeatist confusions – the environment, women’s, caste, race, and other movements.

### **Advance to Final Victory guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism**

The principal source of their growth in strength is the correctness of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The train of main historical events in the last twenty odd years has confirmed most of the assessments of Maoism. In particular the collapse of the Soviet Union and its retreat from super power status in the face of people’s struggles and the serious weakening of the American super power in the face of the struggles of oppressed peoples of the world, have accorded to the assessment by Mao that these imperialists were only paper tigers who would be taught a lesson by the people.

Similarly Maoism has remained the best tool in the hands of the international proletariat and oppressed peoples to formulate and implement the programme for revolution in their own respective countries. It has also had a major influence over the armed struggles for national liberation being waged in various corners of the globe. Though in this period there has not been any major or significant developments in Marxist science and theory, MLM continues to be adaptable to the changing conditions in the world. It yet provides the only scientific and correct theory for the international proletariat.

The international communist movement is going through the process of victory-defeat-victory on the road to ultimate victory in the World Socialist Revolution. For those who would get despondent due to the ups and downs of this process it would help to remember the words of the article *Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons* written in January 1967, during the Cultural Revolution, “Even the bourgeois revolution, which replaced one exploiting class by another, had to undergo repeated reversals and witness many struggles – revolution, then restoration and then the overthrow of restoration. It took many European countries hundreds of years to complete their bourgeois revolutions from the start of the ideological preparations to the final conquest of state power. Since the proletarian revolution is a revolution aimed at completely ending all systems of exploitation, it is

still less permissible to imagine that the exploiting classes will meekly allow the proletariat to deprive them of all their privileges without seeking to restore their rule.” 47

Temporary defeats are therefore but to be expected on the long and tortuous path of the World Socialist Revolution. The history of 150 years of the development of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism has however conclusively proved that it is the historical destiny of this doctrine alone to lead and guide the international proletariat to final victory.

# **P A R T II**

## **THE COMPONENT PARTS OF MARXISM - LENINISM - MAOISM**

In Part II we take up separately the various component parts of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. This will help us to understand various aspects of MLM in greater depth. It will also help us to grasp MLM in the continuity and the process of development of its various parts.

# Chapter X

## Philosophy

We have seen in the foregoing pages how the working class had emerged as a class-for-itself by the mid 19th century – as a consolidated fighting force and a new motive force of history. The bourgeoisie, that had been until then a motive force for social development, began to be transformed into an obsolete force that is doomed to disappear from the centre stage of history.

Marx and Engels recognised that the proletariat has to emerge as the most revolutionary social class and a motive force for social development. Besides, they also recognised that the proletariat in the course of liberating itself from wage slavery, will also liberate the entire society from all class exploitation and oppression and advance towards a classless society.

The division of society into two great classes; the continuous deterioration of the living conditions of the working classes; the ever increasing impoverishment of the masses; the recurrent crises in capitalist production - all these shattered the illusion that capitalism and its product, liberal bourgeois ideology, are the summation of the human achievements. The gigantic task of overthrowing capitalism and advancing towards a classless society has been thrust upon the shoulders of the working class by history. Marx and Engels recognised the necessity for the working class to have its own world outlook if it has to become conscious of its historic task and fulfill it.

The proletariat is a class that has no private property and that can break its chain of wage slavery only through the abolition of private property. However, other class ideology had a dominant influence over the working class and the working class movement at that time. Which ever class has control over the means of production in society will also be in a position to dictate the intellectual life. The ruling class ideology that arises on the basis of private property and serves the interests of the private property will only serve as intellectual chains of slavery and can never contribute to working class liberation. Marx and Engels recognised that the working class can overthrow capitalism only by developing its own new ideology that represents its class interests, i.e., which works for the abolition of private property. The development of a new, scientific world outlook that can represent the interests of the working class, come to the fore as the immediate historic necessity for the working class movement at that juncture. Marx and Engels carried out this historic task most ably and Marxist philosophy emerged in that course. Marxist philosophy is the world outlook of the proletariat; it is the world outlook of the advanced detachment of the working class, the communist party. The basis for the proletarian party's theoretical understanding in any sphere is Marxist philosophy. Marxist philosophy is known as dialectical and historical materialism.

Marxism is the revolutionary theory of the working class. Its basis is dialectical and historical materialism. Hence the aim of Marxist philosophy is to transform this world in a revolutionary way. As Marx had stated: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that in the given concrete historical conditions of that time, German classical philosophy had reached the peak of its development. Dialectics became manifest in the most revolutionary manner in classical German philosophy, particularly in the Hegelian philosophy. The uninterrupted dialectical unity and dialectical motion and development in nature, society and human thought were reflected in Hegelian dialectics. But, being an objective idealist, Hegel thought that this dialectical unity and development are reflection of the dialectical unity and development of the absolute idea. Thus the dialectical laws that are a reflection in human consciousness of the objective processes that are taking place in the real world were turned "upside down" by Hegel, Marx and

Engels made them stand “upright” on their feet. And in this process, they reconstructed dialectics totally on materialist basis.

Feuerbach rejected both Hegelian idealism as well as his dialectics. Marx and Engels not only reconstructed dialectics with a materialistic outlook, but also made materialism scientific by making the scientific knowledge as the basis of it. Hence Marxist philosophical materialism and materialist dialectic are different from all earlier philosophies. Marxist philosophical materialism had liberated materialism once for all from the speculations of philosophers. Rooted firmly in sciences, it has developed into the most consistent and scientific materialist outlook.

### **Philosophical Materialism**

“The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being ...spirit to nature – which is primary, spirit or nature. The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature, and therefore, in the last analysis, assumed world creation in some form or another... comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism.”<sup>2</sup> – Engels.

“Idealism considers spirit (consciousness, concepts, the subject) as the source of all that exists on earth, and matter (nature and society, the object) as secondary and subordinate. Materialism recognises the independent existence of matter as detached from spirit and considers spirit as secondary and subordinate.”<sup>3</sup> – Mao.

Marx and Engels founded Marxist philosophy firmly in the camp of materialism. “Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, which is always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views .... of agnosticism, criticism and positivism in their various forms, regarding such a philosophy as a ‘reactionary’ concession to idealism”<sup>4</sup>. While rejecting idealism, Marx and Engels also rejected the ‘old’ materialism of Feuerbach and others, because 1) it was ‘predominantly mechanical’; 2) it was non-historical, non-dialectical and did not apply the standpoint of development consistently and comprehensively; 3) it regarded the ‘human essence’ abstractly and not as the ensemble of all ‘social relations’ and it therefore did not understand the importance of ‘revolutionary, practical activity.’ Thus the ‘new’ materialism – Marxist materialism – was a materialism rid of all these defects; it was dialectical materialism.

They defined matter as material reality existing objectively and that it gets reflected in human consciousness. The way in which matter was defined by Marxist philosophical materialism resolved fundamental question in philosophy with a consistent materialist outlook. Marx and Engels affirmed that matter is the most general category expressing the universal essence of all concrete forms and parts of matter. Hence with the growth of knowledge regarding matter, the concept of matter gave even broader but does not become obsolete.

Marx and Engels also proved most scientifically the second aspect in the fundamental question in philosophy, viz, can human consciousness properly reflect objective reality? Marxist theory of knowledge totally rejects agnosticism and skepticism. Engels explain that the world will remain as a “thing-in-itself” as presumed by Kant but transform into “thing-for-us”. He clarified that some things which are not known at a given time may be known after sometime but there can never be anything which remains forever as “thing-in-itself”.

Marxist theory of knowledge affirms that man is capable of knowing anything in this world. Marxist theory of knowledge asserts that social practice is the source of knowledge. It also states that social practice is the measure of truth. It completely rejects rationalist and empiricist trends.

## **Dialectics**

Hegelian idealist dialectics was reconstructed into the most consistent and scientific materialist dialectics in Marxist philosophy. Not believing in the permanence of anything in this world, the materialist dialectics proclaimed that capitalism is bound to be negated and that human society will inevitably advance towards communism. No wonder, Marxist dialectics has remained a threat to bourgeoisie even today.

“According to Marx, dialectics is ‘the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought.’”<sup>5</sup>

“(The general nature of dialectics [is]..the science of inter-connections, in contrast to metaphysics.)”

“It is, therefore, from the history of nature and human society that the laws of dialectics are abstracted. For they are nothing but the most general laws of these two aspects of historical development, as well as of thought itself. And indeed they can be reduced in the main to three:

The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa;

The law of the interpenetration of opposites;

The law of the negation of the negation.”<sup>6</sup> – Engels

This act of Marx of discovering the rational kernel of Hegel’s dialectics changed it radically from being a philosophy of the status quo into a philosophy of revolution. In the words of Marx, “In its mystified form, dialectics became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.”

## **The Materialist Conception of History**

Marx and Engels gave to philosophy the revolutionary task of changing the world. As society is the immediate field of activity of the working class, the revolutionary transformation of the society naturally finds primacy of place in Marxist philosophy. The materialists prior to Marx and Engels, including Feuerbach, failed to adopt a consistent materialist outlook towards social phenomenon. On the hand, they applied dialectical materialism to the history of society and developed historical materialism. The basis for the materialist conception of history of Marx is that social being determines the social consciousness. Marx discovered the dialectical laws of motion of social development on this basis of most consistent materialist outlook with regard to society.

Historical materialism asserts that, the basis for is the production of necessities of life and that is on this basis the superstructure is built. In Marx’s view the relation between the base and superstructure is not one sided. Marxism fully recognises that while the mode of production is the determining element, it also recognises the influence of superstructure on the base and interaction between them.

Marx himself summarise as follows:

“In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is

not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or – what is but a legal expression for the same thing – with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual, is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we can not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.”<sup>26</sup> During later years however there was a tendency among followers of Marxism to overstress the economic aspect and thus arrive at a distorted understanding in practice. Engels therefore clarified, “According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure..... also exercise their influence on the course of the historical struggle, and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*.”<sup>27</sup>

The theory of class struggle of Marx emerged out of this materialist conception of history. He also recognised that the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production in class society manifests itself as a class contradiction and it is this class struggle which serves as the driving force of society. Hence described the history of class society as a history of a class struggle.

As historical materialism is an inseparable, living organic part of Marxist philosophy, it has evolved into a comprehensive, consistent and scientific outlook.

Marxist philosophy is not a product of a philosophical urge to create a great philosophical system. It has evolved in the course of fighting the ruling class ideology that stood as an obstacle to the immediate political struggle of the proletariat. That is why Marx and Engels had not prepared – dialectical and historical materialism as a text book. It was founded and developed in the course of resolving the problems and challenges faced by the working class movement in the diverse social, economic, political and historical contexts. It means Marxist philosophy had taken birth and developed only as a science of revolutionary practice. Marx and Engels showed utmost interest in applying their dialectical and historical materialism to formulate various tactics to be adopted by the working class in diverse conditions. From Communist League to Second International they used Marxist philosophy as an ideological weapon to fight the wrong trends in the international working class movements particularly against anarchism. The tactics which they formulated for the working class movement from time to time with this scientific world outlook have been vindicated by history. Particularly, Paris Commune has incontrovertibly proved that the Marxist understanding regarding party, state, proletarian dictatorship and such other aspects is fully correct. Thus Marxism

stood the test of time by basing itself on social practice. Hence Marxist philosophy found worldwide acceptance as the scientific world outlook of the proletariat.

### **Lenin's Contribution to the Development of Marxist Philosophy**

Marx and Engels gave leadership to the international working class movement at a time when bourgeoisie was still a progressive class. On the other hand Lenin led the international communist movement when capitalism was in the stage of imperialism. With the help of Marxist philosophy that emerged as creative science of revolutionary practice Lenin analysed the particularities of the economic political and social conditions of his time. Kautsky and other opportunist leaders of Second International tried to transform Marxism into a dogma. For instance they tried to apply assessments and tactics formulated by Marx and Engels which were suitable to the concrete conditions of their time to imperialist stage in a dogmatic manner. Lenin creatively analysed the historical, political, social and economic conditions of his time from a dialectical and historical materialistic perspective. He also affirmed that Marx and Engels too had adopted the same method and to consider assessments and tactics formulated by them to suit the then existing concrete conditions as universally applicable ones irrespective of the historical conditions would amount to a rejection of the essence of Marxist philosophy as a creative science of revolutionary practice.

In the ideological and political struggle carried out by Lenin against left and right opportunists in Russia as well as international communist movement, Marxist philosophy served as the sharpest theoretical weapon. In the course of the development of the working class movement Lenin further deepened the Marxist theoretical understanding regarding party, state, dictatorship of proletariat etc., (these aspects will be dealt in the later chapters) thereby enriching Marxist theory as whole.

Lenin elaborated all aspects of Marxist philosophy and particularly his contribution to theory of knowledge and historical materialism have enriched them further.

In particular, his criticism on empirio-criticism which came to the fore as a revisionist trend in philosophy is of fundamental importance. From then on until today it has served as Marxist critique of the modern bourgeois philosophical trends. He considered the attack on Marxism in the name of "New" philosophical trends based on modern scientific discoveries as a manifestation of the class struggle in the philosophical front. He proved that all the "New" philosophical theories were no different from the old subjective idealism of Berkeley and Hume. Lenin thus defeated most ably this attack on Marxism in the philosophical front. In this process he creatively developed Marxist philosophy.

His creative contribution to Marxist philosophical materialism is of utmost importance. The empiricists argued that the concept of the matter itself had become obsolete as a result of the latest discoveries in modern science. Lenin realised that the attack on the category of matter – very basis of Marxist philosophical materialism – was not at all the revision of Marxism in the light of new scientific advances, but actually an attack on the very foundations of Marxist philosophy. He incontrovertibly proved that the latest discoveries in modern science had only further vindicated the Marxist definition of matter. He also showed that it was physics, which confined definition of matter to one of its specific forms, that was in crisis but not Marxism.

"It is absolutely unpardonable to confuse, as the Machists do, any particular theory of the structure of matter with the epistemological category, to confuse the problem of the new properties of new aspects of matter (electrons, for example) with the old problem of the theory of knowledge, with the problem of the sources of our knowledge, the existence of objective truth, etc." (p. 129)

"The new physics," Lenin wrote, "having found new kinds of matter and new forms of its motion, raised the old philosophical questions because of the collapse of the old physical concepts." (p. 279)

“In its philosophical aspects, the essence of the ‘crisis in modern physics’ is that the old physics regarded its theories as ‘real knowledge of the materialist world,’ i.e., a reflection of the objective reality. The new trend in physics regards theories only as symbols, signs, and marks for practice, i.e., it denies the existence of an objective reality independent of our mind and reflected by it..... the materialist theory of knowledge, instinctively accepted by the earlier physics, has been replaced by an idealist and agnostic theory of knowledge, which, against the wishes of the idealists and agnostics, has been taken advantage of by fideism..... The modern physics consists in the latter’s departure from the direct, resolute and irrevocable recognition of the objective value of its theories.” (pp. 256-57)

“‘Matter disappears’ means that the limit within which we have hitherto known matter disappears and that our knowledge is penetrating deeper; properties of matter are likewise disappearing which formally seemed absolute, immutable, and primary (impenetrability, inertia, mass, etc.) and which are now revealed to be relative and characteristic only of certain states of matter.” (p.260)

“The teachings of the science on the structure of the matter, on the chemical composition of food, on the atom and the electron, may and constantly do become obsolete” (p.185)

“The electron is as inexhaustible as the atom, nature is infinite.” (p. 262) This idea of Lenin in effect became the fundamental notion of present day physics, especially the physics of elementary particles.

“The concept matter..... epistemologically implies nothing but objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it.” (p. 261)

“Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensations; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation.” (p.146) With this understanding he defined matter as follows:

“Matter is a philosophical category denoting the objective reality which is given to man by his sensations, and which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations while existing independently of them.” (p. 130)

The above definition has not only defined the most general category of matter in a most scientific manner but also irrefutably solved the fundamental question of philosophy from the materialist stand point.

Lenin laid bare the real essence of the “New”, “Third line” in philosophy and exposed its fideistic face. This exposition is still relevant today.

“Recent philosophy is as partisan as was philosophy two thousand years ago. The contending parties are essentially – although this is concealed by a pseudo-erudite quackery – of new terms or by a weak-minded non-partisanship-materialism and idealism. The latter is nearly a subtle, refined form of fideism.” (p. 358)

“Marx and Engels were partisan in philosophy from start to the finish, they were able to detect the deviations from materialism and concessions to idealism and fideism in every one of the ‘recent’ trends.” (p. 339)

“The genius of Marx and Engels lies precisely in the fact that during a very long period, nearly half a century, they developed materialism, further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy.... and showed how to apply..... this same materialism in the sphere of the social sciences, mercilessly brushing aside as rubbish all nonsense, pretentious hotchpotch, the innumerable attempts to ‘discover’ a ‘new’ line in philosophy, to invent a ‘new’ trend and so forth.” (p. 336)

“The ‘realists’, etc., including the ‘positivists’, the Machists etc., are all a wretched mush; they are a contemptible middle party in philosophy, who confuse the materialist and idealist trends on every question. The attempt to escape from these two basic trends in philosophy is nothing but ‘conciliatory quackery’.” (p. 340)

“The objective class role of empirio-criticism consists entirely in rendering faithful service to fideists in their struggle against materialism in general and historical materialism in particular.” (p. 358)

Lenin clearly exposed the real essence of the reconciliation of religion with modern science and called it as “cultural fideism”.

“Contemporary fideism does not at all reject science; all it rejects is the ‘exaggerated claims’ of science, to wit, its claim to objective truth.” (p. 125)

“Modern, cultural fideism . . . . does not think of demanding anything more than the declaration that the concepts of natural science are working hypotheses.’ We will, sirs, surrender science to you scientists provided you surrender epistemology, philosophy to us – such is the condition for the cohabitation of the theologians and professors in the ‘advanced’ capitalist countries.” (p. 280)

Lenin developed Marxist theory of reflection in a creative way. He explained on the basis of modern scientific discoveries that matter has the property of being reflected and consciousness is the highest form of reflection of matter in the brain.

The theory of reflection of matter developed by Lenin, the definition he gave to matter further strengthened the foundations of Marxist philosophical materialism, making them impregnable to any attacks from any form of idealism.

The revolutionary dialectics was further carried ahead by Lenin who particularly made a deep study of contradictions. He “called contradiction ‘the salt of dialectics’ and stated that the division of the One and the knowledge of its contradictory parts is the essence of dialectics.”<sup>10</sup> He further asserted, “In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This embodies the essence of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development.”<sup>11</sup> These ‘explanations and development’ was done some twenty years later by Mao.

Lenin elaborated and explained the essence of historical materialism and enriched it by analysing the concrete historical phenomena with brilliance.

“Marx deepened and developed philosophical materialism to the full, and extended the cognition of nature to include the cognition of *human society*. His *historical materialism* was a great achievement in scientific thinking. The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views on history and politics were replaced by a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social life another and higher system develops - how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism.

“Just as man’s knowledge reflects nature (i.e., developing matter), which exist independently of him, so man’s *social knowledge* (i.e., his various use and doctrines-philosophical, religious, political and so forth) reflects the *economic system* of society. Political institutions are a superstructure on the economic foundation.” (Marx, Engels, Marxism, p. 64)

He explained the organic relationship between dialectical materialism and historical materialism in this way, “materialism in general recognises objectively real being (matter) as independent of the social consciousness of humanity. In both cases consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best an approximately true (adequate, perfectly exact) reflection of it. From these Marxist philosophy, which is cast from a single piece of steel, you can not eliminate one basic premise, one essential part, without departing from objective truth, without falling a prey to bourgeois-reactionary falsehood.” (p. 326)

### **Mao’s Contribution to the Development of Marxist Philosophy**

Mao too like Lenin, adopted the method of creatively applying Marxist Philosophy to the analysis of the concrete historical, economic, political and social conditions and in this course he elaborated all aspects of Marxist philosophy. The manner in which he took the scientific world

outlook to the proletariat of the oppressed masses in a backward semi-feudal, semi-colonial country comprising the peasantry as the major component, stands as a model even today. He continued the legacy of Lenin, waged consistent struggle against all types of revisionism and dogmatic interpretations of Marxism, and analysed the concrete conditions of China with the scientific world outlook of the proletariat. He thereby developed the general line and theory of New Democratic Revolution for the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Like Lenin, Mao also made fundamental contribution to the development of Marxist philosophy. His works such as *On Contradiction*, *On Practice*, *Where do the correct ideas come from*, *On the handling of contradictions among the people* in particular have contributed greatly to the development of Marxist philosophy.

Mao's analysis of contradictions is a fundamental contribution to the Marxist philosophy. The method he adopted for studying various contradictions, the relations between the contradictions, and the various aspects of the contradiction is the most scientific. He developed dialectics, as described by Lenin, as a science of study of opposing aspects of contradictions. On the whole dialectical motion and development were reflected in the analysis of contradiction by Mao.

Mao made a phenomenal leap in the understanding of contradictions. He summarised his discoveries in the following manner,

“The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought ..... According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end; this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics; this is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity, and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, it goes on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. In studying the particularity and relativity of contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions and to the distinction between the principal aspect and the non-principal aspect of a contradiction; in studying the universality of contradiction and the struggle of opposites in contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the different forms of struggle.”<sup>12</sup> “...forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterised by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.”<sup>13</sup>

Mao continued always to develop the theory of contradictions practice. Particularly during the period of socialist construction, Mao gave further clarity on the nature and handling of social contradiction particularly regarding contradictions among the people. He stressed that despite the victory of the revolution it was wrong to think contradictions no longer existed in Chinese society.

He stated, “We are confronted with two types of social contradictions – those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people two are totally different in nature...”

“The contradictions between ourselves and the enemy are antagonistic contradictions. Within the ranks of the people, the contradictions among the working people are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploited and the exploiting classes have a non-antagonistic as well as an antagonistic aspect.”“ Mao further gave a detailed exposition the methods of handling the contradictions among the people in a socialist society.

During the Cultural Revolution too Mao placed constant stress on the correct handling of contradictions as he saw this as the only guarantee for the success of socialism. Thus it was warned at the Ninth CPC Congress in 1969, “We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people, handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place.”<sup>15</sup>

He enriched the Marxist theory of knowledge in the course of elaborating the relations of production and knowledge. He vividly explained the dialectical relations between the perceptual and conceptual stages of knowledge. He elaborated the process of development of knowledge through two stages on the basis of practice.

It was however Mao who elaborated and refined the Marxist theory of knowledge particularly with regard to the relation between knowledge and practice, between knowing and doing. He detailed the process of cognition from lower to higher levels and its transformation of real through practice.

“Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.”<sup>24</sup>

Bourgeois intellectuals distort Marxism alleging that it is nothing but economic determinism. But Marx and Engels had very clearly explained the dialectical relations between base and superstructure. Mao clearly pointed out in his analysis of contradictions the dialectical relations between these and also the decisive role that superstructure play in some situations.

“The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position.

“But this situation is not static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly.. .....

“Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of the production theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role.”<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the period of socialist construction and particularly during the Cultural Revolution, Mao always tried to maintain the correct dialectical balance in approach between economic base and superstructure, economics and politics. He tried to correct Stalin’s incorrect approach of totally neglecting the superstructure and concentrating only on technology, by emphasising the linking of planning with politics-in-command, by looking not only at production relations, but also at the superstructure, at politics, at the role of people. This was the essence of the slogan, ‘Grasp Revolution, Promote Production.’

Thus the Report of the Ninth CPC Congress in 1969 said, “‘Grasp revolution, promote production’ – this principle is absolutely correct. It correctly explains the relationship between revolution and production, between consciousness and matter, between the superstructure and the economic basis, and between the relations of production and the productive forces ... Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. If we fail to make revolution in the superstructure, fail to arouse the broad masses of the workers and peasants, fail to criticize the revisionist line, fail to expose the handful of renegades, enemy agents, capitalist-roaders in power and counter-revolutionaries, and fail to consolidate the leadership of the proletariat, how can we further consolidate the socialist economic base and further develop the socialist productive forces? This is not to replace production by revolution, but to use revolution to command production, promote it and lead it forward.”<sup>29</sup>

This, therefore, was, under Mao’s guidance, the correct dialectical application of the materialist conception of history.

# Chapter XI

## Political Economy

Absorbing all the rational aspects of the German classical philosophy, English classical political economy and French revolutionary and socialist doctrines Marx discovered the Materialist Conception of History. According to this revolutionary conception of history. The development of civil society is to be explained on the basis of the economic relations and their development. Thus political economy was developed and it became an instrument to reveal the relation between people instead of that between things (i.e. the exchange of one commodity for another) as was explained by the bourgeois economists. Engels clearly explained this: “Economics deals not with things but with relations between persons, and in the last resort between classes.”<sup>32</sup>

### Contribution of Marx and Engels

The political economy as developed by Marx repudiating the bourgeois economics was aptly exposed by Lenin. “It is the ultimate aim; ... analysis of the commodity.”<sup>33</sup>

“It is the ultimate aim of this work, to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society’ (that is to say, capitalist, bourgeois society), says Marx in the preface to *Capital*. An investigation of the relations of production in a given, historically defined society, in their genesis, development, and decline – such is the content of Marx’s economic doctrine. In capitalist society it is the production of commodities that dominates, and Marx’s analysis therefore begins with an analysis of the commodity.” 32 – Lenin.

“Where the bourgeois economists saw a relation between things (the exchange of one commodity for another) Marx revealed a relation between people. The exchange of commodities expresses the tie between individual producers through the market. Money signifies that this tie is becoming closer, and closer, inseparably binding the entire economic life of the individual producers into one whole. Capital signifies a further development of this tie: human labour power becomes a commodity. The wage-worker sells his labour power to the owner of the land, factories and instruments of labour. The worker spends one part of the day covering the cost of maintaining himself and his family (wages), while the other part of the day the worker toils without remuneration, creating for the capitalist surplus value, the source of profit, the source of the wealth of the capitalist class.

“The doctrine of surplus value is the corner-stone of Marx’s economic theory.”<sup>33</sup>

This discovery of surplus value, which according to Engels, was the second important discovery of Marx, provided the exposition of the nature of exploitation of the working class and laid bare the source of antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It explained this antagonism as the principal manifestation of the fundamental contradiction of capitalist society; the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership.

Marx explained capitalist crises also as another manifestation of this fundamental contradiction of capitalism. Impelled by the pursuit of profit to throw more and more goods on to the market, the capitalists endeavour to maintain their rate of profit by reducing expenditure on wages, whether by cutting wage rates or employing fewer workers. But by so doing they reduce the purchasing power of those who, together with their families, make up the bulk of the population; and so they restrict the market for their goods. This restriction of the market comes into collision with the extension of production and resolves itself by means of a crisis. “Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit

vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution...

“In these crises, the contradiction between socialised production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is, for the time being, stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation. All the laws of production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. The mode of production is in rebellion against the mode of exchange, the productive forces are in rebellion against the mode of production which they have outgrown.”<sup>34</sup> Thus these repeated crises of capitalism can only be solved by resolving the fundamental contradiction of capitalism. The force who can resolve this contradiction—the proletariat however has been created by capitalism itself. The process through which the proletariat resolves this contradiction is explained by Marx in the following oft-quoted passage from *Capital*:

“As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus Marx presents the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation – the essence of the law of motion of capitalism.

### **Contribution of Lenin**

After the death of Marx and Engels the political economy was further developed by Lenin. Marx and Engels revealed the various aspects of capitalism when it was at the stage of free-competition. They exposed the fundamental contradiction of capitalism and pointed out its tendencies and future direction. But it was not possible for them to analyse imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism which was yet to be unfolded. Lenin further developed the Marxist political economy and analysed the economic and political essences of imperialism.

“The old phase of capitalism came to a close towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, when Marx and Engels were already dead. It is understandable

the Marx and Engels could only guess at the new conditions for the development of capitalism that arose as a result of the new phase of capitalism which succeeded the old phase, as a result of the imperialist, monopoly phase development, when the smooth evolution of capitalism was succeeded by spasmodic, cataclysmic development of capitalism, when the unevenness of development and the contradictions of capitalism became particularly pronounced, and when the struggle for markets and fields of capital export, in the circumstances of the extreme unevenness of development, made periodical imperialist wars for periodic re-divisions of the world and of spheres of influence inevitable.

“Lenin – on the basis of the fundamental principles in *Capital*, ... made a substantiated Marxist analysis of imperialism as the last phase of capitalism, and exposed its ulcers and the conditions of its inevitable doom.”<sup>36</sup> – Stalin.

Lenin’s analysis of imperialism in his work ‘Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism’ can be summarised as follows:

“Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.”<sup>37</sup>

“Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves all along the line.

Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the fundamental characteristic of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition,... At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist over it and alongside of it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.”<sup>38</sup> “... it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely, as moribund capitalism.”<sup>39</sup>

“Monopolies; oligarchy, the striving for domination instead of striving for liberty, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations – all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism.”<sup>40</sup>

“... uneven development sums up, as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a world-wide scale. And proves that imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under such an economic system.”<sup>41</sup>

“Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat.”<sup>42</sup> This analysis of imperialism made by Lenin at the time of the World War I and the October Revolution remains completely valid to this day.

### **Contribution of Mao**

In the course of advancement of class struggle in a country like China Mao further developed Marxist political economy. He analysed the law of motion of semi-feudal semi-colonial economy of China, and explained characteristic future of the monopoly capitalism- comprador in nature. This variety of capitalism described by Mao as comprador bureaucrat capitalism, is new contribution to political economy. It is linked with both feudalism and imperialism. Mao expounded this semi-feudal, semi-colonial relation of production in his celebrated article *On New Democracy* and called upon the people to smash this relation of production to accomplish peoples’ democratic revolution.

In the period following World War II imperialism changed some of its methods of exploitation and control and transferred power to the representatives of monopoly capitalist and feudal classes – comprador in character. This resulted in emergence of comprador bureaucrat capitalism in these countries.. This was analysed by the CPC under Mao's leadership:

“After World War II the imperialists have certainly not given up colonialism, but have merely adopted a new form, neo-colonialism: important characteristic of such neo-colonialism is that the imperialists have been forced to change their old style of direct colonial rule in some areas [in almost all areas today] and to adopt a new style of colonial rule and exploitation by relying on the agents they have selected and trained. The imperialists headed by the United States enslave control the colonial countries and countries which have already declared their independence by organising military blocs, setting up military bases, establishing ‘federations’ or ‘communities’, and fostering puppet regimes. By means of economic ‘aid’ or other forms, they retain these countries as markets for their goods, sources of raw material and outlets for their export of capital, plunder the riches and suck the blood of the people of these countries. Moreover, they use the United Nations as an important tool for interfering in the internal affairs of such countries and for subjecting them to military, economic and cultural aggression. When they are unable to continue their rule over these countries by ‘peaceful’ means, they engineer military *coups d’etat*, carry out subversion or even resort to direct armed intervention and aggression.

“This neo-colonialism is a more pernicious and sinister form colonialism.”<sup>43</sup>

When revisionists captured the CPSU and restored capitalism in the Soviet Union, the CPC under the guidance of Mao, basing itself on the fundamental principles laid down in Lenin's work, made an analysis of the Soviet economy and society and its ruling class. It identified it as social imperialism-socialism in name, imperialism in essence. It showed that state monopoly capitalism was the economic basis of social imperialism and that its ‘new international relations’ were nothing but another name for neo-colonialism.

### **Economic Laws of Socialism**

Though Marx and Engels, particularly in their works, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and *Anti-Duhring*, gave some views on the nature of the functioning of the socialist economy, they however did not attempt to analyse the economic laws of socialism. As Mao has said, “to know the laws it is necessary to go through a process. The vanguard is no exception.”<sup>44</sup>

Lenin, in the period after the victory of the October Revolution, formulated some guidelines for socialist construction. However he too did not live long enough to ‘go through a process’, and devote attention to the question of the objective laws of motion of socialism.

It was thus left to Stalin to attempt to discover the economic laws of socialism. In his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* he formulated the basic economic law of socialism in the following manner:

“The essential features and requirements of the basic economic law of socialism might be formulated roughly in this way: the securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques.”<sup>45</sup>

Mao pointed out that Stalin's understanding totally neglected the superstructure. This error was corrected in the formulation of the basic economic law as formulated by Mao given in the Shanghai Textbook drawn up during the Cultural Revolution.

“The objective aim of social production and the means to realise it express the basic direction of development of social production and embody the requirements of the economic laws of society...The aim of socialist production is to satisfy the ever-increasing needs of the state and the people. This aim is attained by means of propelling the development of technology and production

through revolution. Therefore, to sum up briefly, the major characteristics and requirements of the fundamental economic law of socialism are: to opportunely adjust and transform the relations of production and the superstructure; to steadily raise the level of technology; to develop socialist production with greater, faster, better, and more economical results; to satisfy the ever-increasing needs of the state and the people, and create the material conditions for the ultimate elimination of classes and the realisation of communism.”<sup>46</sup> Thus through a process of social practice Mao further developed it.

Another objective economic law of socialism is the law of balanced (proportionate) development of the national economy, or the law of planned development. This law demands that the various mutually dependent branches of production and enterprises maintain proper proportions among themselves and supply what they produce to others to satisfy each other’s needs. Otherwise, social production will be obstructed or even disrupted.

Stalin explains its basis and applicability in the following manner:

“The law of balanced development of the national economy arose in contradistinction to the law of competition and anarchy of production under capitalism. It arose from the socialisation of the means of production, after the law of competition and anarchy of production had lost its validity. It became operative because a socialist economy can be conducted only on the basis of the economic law of balanced development of the national economy. That means that the law of balanced development of the national economy makes it possible for our planning bodies to plan social production correctly. But possibility must not be confused *with* actuality. They are two different things. In order to turn the possibility into actuality, it is necessary to study this economic law, to master it, to learn to apply it with full understanding, and to compile such plans as fully reflect the requirements of this law.”<sup>47</sup>

The law of value which operates under capitalism also operates to certain extent under socialism. This is because socialist production is, to a certain extent, both direct social production and also commodity production. “Wherever commodities and commodity production exist, there the law of value must also exist.”<sup>48</sup>

“The substance of the law of value is:

- (1) the value of commodities is determined by the socially necessary labour time expended on their production;
- (2) commodity exchange must be based on the principle of equivalent values.

“What the law of value embodies is bourgeois right, the basic content of which in socialist society is not that much different from what it was in the old society. But under different social economic systems, the law of value will assume different forms and exert different effects on production...”

“As far as the whole of socialist production is concerned, planning is primary and price is secondary. That is to say, in the allocation of social labour among various production sectors, what and how much to produce are regulated by the state plan, which reflects the requirements of the fundamental economic law of socialism and the law of planned development of the national economy. The state plan plays a primary and decisive role. The law of value is still useful, but it plays only a secondary and supportive role.”<sup>49</sup>

These then are the objective economic laws of socialism and their elation and relative importance in the social processes and operation of socialist society.

Lastly, what is the objective historical tendency of the development socialist society? “The theory of socialist political economy advanced Marxism-Leninism-Maoism scientifically analyses the laws of motion of the formation and development of socialist relations of production. It also reveals the historical necessity of socialist society developing into communist society...

“...In socialist society, public ownership of the means of production has been established, the labouring people have become masters of society and enterprises, and Marxism has become the guiding thought of society. In these respects, socialist society possesses elements of communism. However, socialist society is merely the first stage of communist society. ....”

“The historical task of the proletariat in the socialist period is to persevere in exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in all spheres and at all stages of development of the revolution, thoroughly defeat the bourgeoisie, abolish all classes and class distinctions generally, abolish all the relations of production on which they rest, abolish all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, revolutionise all the ideas that result from these social relations, and propel socialist society toward a higher and more mature communist society. Therefore, socialist society constitutes the necessary preparation for communist society, and communist society is, in turn, an objective trend of development of socialist society.”<sup>50</sup>

# Chapter XII

## Socialism

### 1. SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

#### Theory of Class Struggle

“When feudalism was overthrown, and ‘free’ capitalist society appeared on God’s earth, it at once became apparent that this freedom meant a new system of oppression and exploitation of the working people. Various socialist doctrines immediately began to arise as a reflection of and protest against this oppression.”<sup>51</sup> This socialism, was, “in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand, of the anarchy existing in production.”<sup>52</sup> But it “was utopian socialism. It criticised capitalist society, it condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it indulged in fancies of better order and endeavoured to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation.”<sup>53</sup> “To make a science of socialism, it had first to be placed upon a real basis.”<sup>54</sup>

This real basis was provided by Marx’s doctrine of the class struggle. Developing on the description of classes and class-struggle given by bourgeois economists and historians, Marx proved:

“1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.”<sup>55</sup>

“From that time forward socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes – the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism id of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions the means of ending the conflict.”<sup>56</sup> Socialism became a science.

#### Socialism in One Country

In his *Principles of Communism*, Engels replied as follows to the question whether the proletarian revolution is possible in one country alone:

“No. Large-scale industry, already by creating the world market, has so linked up all the peoples of the earth, and especially the civilised peoples, that each people is dependent on what happens to another. Further, in all civilised countries large-scale industry has so levelled social development that in all these countries the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have become the two decisive classes of society and the struggle between them the main struggle of the day. The communist revolution will therefore be not merely national one; it will be a revolution taking place simultaneously in all civilised countries, that is, at least in England, America, France and Germany. In each of these countries it will develop more quickly or more slowly according to whether the country has a more developed industry, more wealth, and a more considerable mass of productive forces.”<sup>61</sup>

This understanding was modified to some extent in later years when Marx and Engels referred to the possibility of victory of the revolution first in one or a few countries and even the necessity of ‘the victorious proletariat’ having to fight ‘defensive wars’<sup>62</sup> against the bourgeoisie of other countries. However the general view was that victory in one country was not possible.

It was only under the new conditions of imperialism that Lenin made a clear reevaluation of the earlier understanding. "The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois."<sup>63</sup>

Stalin summarised the Leninist understanding in this way: "Formerly, the victory of the revolution in one country was considered impossible, on the assumption that it would require the combined action of the proletarians of all or at least a majority of the advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. Now this point of view no longer fits in with the facts. Now we must proceed from the possibility of such a victory; for the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development within imperialism of catastrophic contradictions leading to inevitable wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries of the world – all this leads, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries....."

"After consolidating its power and leading the peasantry in its wake the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build a socialist society."<sup>64</sup>

Thus it was asserted that it was possible for the proletariat to make revolution, consolidate its power, and build socialism in a single country. "But," Stalin goes on, "does this mean that it will thereby achieve the complete and final victory of socialism, i.e., does it mean that with the forces of only one country it can finally consolidate socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention and, consequently, also against restoration? No, it does not. For this the victory of the revolution in at least several countries is needed."<sup>64</sup>

Further, it was assessed, revolution in the era of imperialism would not necessarily break out first in the most advanced countries; "the chain of the imperialist front must, as a rule, break where the links are weaker and, at all events, not necessarily where capitalism is more developed, where there is such and such a percentage of proletarians and such and such a percentage of peasants, and so on."<sup>65</sup>

This was the actual process of history and the proletariat was successful in some of the relatively more backward countries of the world. Thus this was also where the principles of socialist construction had to be worked out in practice .

## **2. THE SOCIALIST STATE**

### **The Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

The conception of the proletariat organised as a ruling class with its State, was given at the time of the 'Communist Manifesto' itself. Marx and Engels then said,

"..the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy."

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly is possible."<sup>66</sup>

Marx, while analysing the class struggles in France of 1848-50, clarified that the essence of the proletarian state was the dictatorship of the proletariat. In his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' he asserted, "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>67</sup> He also pointed out that the dictatorship of the proletariat was an essential aspect of his doctrine of the class

struggle, which differentiated it from the understanding of classes and class-struggle given by bourgeois scholars.

It was on the basis of this understanding given by Marx, that Lenin gave his famous definition of a Marxist:

“Those who recognise only the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested.”<sup>68</sup>

This definition of a Marxist starts basically from the Marxist understanding of the state;

“According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another;”<sup>69</sup> – Lenin.

It is a “special apparatus for the systematic application of force and the subjugation of people by force ... a special category of people who are separated out to rule others and who, for the sake and purpose of rule, systematically and permanently have at their disposal a certain apparatus of coercion, an apparatus of violence, such as is represented ... by the armed detachments of troops the prisons and the other means of subjugating the will of others by force.”<sup>70</sup>

Thus every form of class society is a dictatorship of the ruling class. The so-called democracy of the capitalists is actually “a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie masked by parliamentary form.”<sup>71</sup> It follows that all attempts to use the apparatus of the bourgeois state, which serves to protect bourgeois rights, for the purpose of abolishing those rights, are doomed to failure.

Based on this understanding Lenin further developed the understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The starting point in this understanding is that the dictatorship of the proletariat is above all the instrument of the proletarian revolution. “The revolution can defeat the bourgeoisie, can overthrow its power, even without the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory and to push forward to the final victory of socialism unless, at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principal mainstay.”<sup>72</sup> Thus the proletarian dictatorship is absolutely essential to complete the three main tasks that face the revolution immediately after victory: breaking the resistance of the old ruling classes, commencing socialist construction, and arming the revolution against the external imperialist enemy.

The second fundamental aspect of the Leninist understanding of the dictatorship is as the rule of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. From this arise two conclusions:

First, “Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is proletarian democracy, the democracy of the exploited majority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority.

“Second conclusion: The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot arise as the result of the peaceful development of the bourgeois society and of bourgeois democracy; it can arise only as the result of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine, the bourgeois army, the bourgeois bureaucratic apparatus, the bourgeois police.”<sup>73</sup> This second conclusion was acknowledged by Marx and Engels as a lesson of the Paris Commune, whose experience proved that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes”<sup>74</sup>, it had to smash it. But it was Lenin who time and again reminded that “the proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a new one.”<sup>75</sup>

The third fundamental aspect of the Leninist understanding is regarding soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx too had dealt with this question of the form of

the proletarian state. He analysed the Paris Commune with its characteristics as a democratic elected organ, without any special salaries or privileges; as a working not parliamentary body, both executive and legislature at the same time. However it was Lenin who answered this question through adoption of the Soviet form thrown up first by the 1905 Russian Revolution. The soviets were all-embracing mass organisations of the workers, peasants and soldiers, as well as the most powerful organs of the revolutionary struggle of the masses. Their union into one common state organisation constituted soviet power. By its very structure soviet power facilitated the task of the proletariat leading the other sections of the oppressed masses, of freeing the armed forces from bourgeois control and of setting up a state organisation which could smash the bourgeois state machine. Besides the soviet form of proletarian state power also had all the positive features of the Paris commune. Thus, “the Paris Commune was the embryo of this form; Soviet power is its development and culmination.”<sup>76</sup>

### **The People’s Democratic Dictatorship**

Basing himself on the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat, Mao elaborated the theory regarding the form of the state in the revolutions in the colonial countries. On the basis of the theory of New Democracy, he formulated the understanding of the new- democratic republic.

“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 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 and 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.”<sup>77</sup>

This state was finally established in the form of the People’s Democratic Dictatorship. On the eve of victory of the Chinese revolution, Mao explained the essence of the people’s democratic dictatorship in the following manner:

“Who are the people? At the present stage in China, they are the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie... These classes, led by the working class and the Communist Party, unite to form their own state and elect their own government; they enforce their dictatorship over the running dogs of imperialism – the landlord class and bureaucrat-bourgeoisie, as well as the representatives of those classes, the Kuomintang reactionaries and their accomplices – suppress them, allow them only to behave themselves and not to be unruly in word or

deed, if they speak or act in an unruly way, they will be promptly stopped and punished. Democracy is practised within the ranks of the people, who enjoy the rights of freedom of speech, assembly, association and so on. The right to vote belongs only to the people, not to the reactionaries. The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the people's democratic dictatorship."<sup>78</sup>

Regarding the relationship between the various classes among the people, Mao elaborated as follows,

"The people's democratic dictatorship, led by the proletariat and based on the worker-peasant alliance, requires that our Party conscientiously unite the entire working class, the entire peasantry and the broad masses of revolutionary intellectuals; these are the leading and basic forces of the dictatorship. Without this unity, the dictatorship cannot be consolidated. It is also required that our Party unite with as many as possible of the representatives of the urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie who can co-operate with us and with their intellectuals and political groups, so that, during the revolutionary period, we can isolate the counter-revolutionary forces and completely overthrow both the counter-revolutionary and imperialist forces in China and so that, after the victory of the revolution, we can speedily restore develop production, cope with foreign imperialism, steadily transform China from an agricultural into an industrial country and build China into a great socialist state."<sup>79</sup>

### **3. SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION**

#### **The Russian Experience**

Around the time of the October Revolution there were two types of pseudo-Marxist views with regard to the building of socialism.

One was the view represented by the Mensheviks and others that since capitalism had not advanced sufficiently and concentrated the means of production, particularly in agriculture, the proletariat should not capture power, but wait till capitalism had created the conditions for the simultaneous socialisation of all the means of production.

The other view represented by the 'Left' Communists and others was that power should be captured and all the means of production immediately socialised even by means of expropriating the small and medium producers.

Lenin, in a struggle against these two trends, drew up the correct path for socialist construction. Stalin, in 1952, summarised it as follows:

"Lenin's answer may be briefly summed up as follows:

a) Favourable conditions for the assumption of power should not be missed – the proletariat should assume power without waiting until capitalism succeeded in ruining the millions of small and medium individual producers.

b) The means of production in industry should be expropriated and converted into public property;

c) As to the small and medium individual producers, they should be gradually united in producers' co-operatives, i.e., in large agricultural enterprises, collective farms;

d) Industry should be developed to the utmost and the collective farms should be placed on the modern technical basis of large-scale production, not expropriating them, but on the contrary generously supplying them with first-class tractors and other machines;

e) In order to ensure an economic bond between town and country, between industry and agriculture, commodity production (exchange through purchase and sale) should be preserved for a certain period, it being the form of economic tie with the town which is alone acceptable to the

peasants, and Soviet trade – state, co-operative, and collective-farm – should be developed to the full and the capitalists of all types and descriptions ousted from trading activity.

“The history of socialist construction in our country has shown that this path of development, mapped out by Lenin, has fully justified itself.”<sup>80</sup>

Though the first two steps, the seizure of power and the ‘expropriation of the expropriators’, was completed in the first few months itself, the process of socialist construction could not be taken up immediately because of the extremely difficult conditions of all-sided enemy attack faced by the first proletarian state. It had to go through a process of emergency measures called ‘War Communism’ during the civil war, up to 1920. After victory in the civil war, there was a period of economic restoration, during which concessions were given to certain sections under the New Economic Policy (NEP). Thus this period from the revolution up to 1925 was mainly a period of consolidation and preparation.

The *History of the CPSU (B)* describes the political essence of this period as follows:

“In October 1917 the working class had vanquished capitalism politically, by establishing its own political dictatorship. Since then the Soviet Government had been taking every measure to shatter the economic power of capitalism and to create conditions for the building of a Socialist economic system. These measures were: the expropriation of the capitalists and landlords; the conversion of the land, factories, mills, railways and the banks into public property; the adoption of the New Economic Policy; the building up of a state-owned Socialist industry; and the application of Lenin’s co-operative plan. Now the main task was to proceed to build a new, Socialist economic system all over the country and thus smash capitalism economically as well.”<sup>81</sup>

**Socialist Industrialisation:** The Soviet Union was at that time still a relatively backward agrarian country with two-thirds of the total production coming from agriculture and only one-third from industry. Further being the first socialist state, the question of being economically independent of imperialism was of central importance. Therefore the path of socialist construction had to firstly concentrate on socialist industrialisation. In Stalin’s words, “The conversion of our country from an agrarian into an industrial country able to produce the machinery it needs by its own efforts—that is the essence, the basis of our general line.”<sup>82</sup> Thus the main focus was on heavy industry which would produce machines for other industries and for agriculture.

This policy was a major success and built a strong industrial base independent of imperialism. It also enabled the defence of the socialist base in the World War II. Also industry expanded at a pace several times faster than the most advanced imperialist countries thus proving the immense superiority of the socialist system.

However, “due to special emphasis on priority development of heavy industry, agriculture was neglected in the plans.”<sup>83</sup> Thus just before the World War II, industrial production was 908.8% of the industrial production just before the World War I. However the corresponding figure for grain production was only 118.6%. This showed a retarded growth of agriculture as compared to industry. Similarly, “between 1925 and 1958 production of the means of production in the Soviet Union increased 103 times, while consumer goods increased 15.6 times.”<sup>83</sup> Mao, in his *Critique of Soviet Economics*, criticised this emphasis and called for concurrent promotion of industry and agriculture as well as light and heavy industry.

**Collectivisation of Agriculture:** The preliminary step in this process was taken in the restoration period itself with the initiation of cooperatives among small and medium peasants. However due to the resistance of the kulaks (rich farmers) there was not much advancement in this process. Further the kulaks had taken a position of active opposition and sabotage of the socialist construction process. “They refused en masse to sell to the Soviet state their grain surpluses, of which they had considerable hoards. They resorted to terrorism against the collective farmers, against Party workers and government officials in the countryside, and burned down collective farms

and state granaries”<sup>80</sup> In 1927, due to this sabotage, the marketed share of the harvest was only 37% of the pre-war figure. Thus the Party, in that year took the decision to launch an offensive to break the resistance of the kulaks. Relying on the poor peasants and allying with the middle peasants, the Party was able to achieve success in grain-purchasing and take ahead the collectivisation process. However the major advance came from the end of 1929.

It is described in the *History of the CPSU(B)* in the following manner:

“Prior to 1929, the Soviet Government had pursued a policy of restricting the kulaks. .... The effect of this policy was to arrest the growth of the kulak class, some sections of which, unable to withstand the pressure of these restrictions, were forced out of business and ruined. But this policy did not destroy the economic foundations of the kulaks as a class, nor did it tend to eliminate them. This policy was essential up to a certain time, that is, as long as the collective farms and state farms were still weak and unable to replace the kulaks in the production of grain.”

“At the end of 1929, with the growth of the collective farms and the state farms, the Soviet Government turned sharply from this *policy* to the policy of eliminating the kulaks, of destroying them as a class. It repealed the laws on the renting of land and the hiring of labour, thus depriving the kulaks both of land and of hired labourers. It lifted the ban on the expropriation of the kulaks. It permitted the peasants to confiscate cattle, machines and other farm property from the kulaks for the benefit of the collective farms. The kulaks were expropriated. They were expropriated just as the capitalists had been expropriated in the sphere of industry in 1918, with this difference, however, that the kulaks’ means of production did not pass into the hands of the state, but into the hands of the peasants united in the collective farms.”

“This was a profound revolution,....”

“This revolution, at one *blow*, solved three fundamental problems of Socialist construction:

- a) It eliminated the most numerous class of exploiters in our country, the kulak class, the mainstay of capitalist restoration;
- b) It transferred the most numerous labouring class in our country, peasant class, from the path of individual farming, which breeds capitalism, to the path of co-operative, collective, Socialist farming;
- c) It furnished the Soviet regime with a Socialist base in agriculture – most extensive and vitally necessary, yet least developed, branch of national economy.”<sup>85</sup>

This step-by-step plan was adopted for the implementation of this policy. Depending on the conditions in various regions different rates of collectivisation were established and the targeted year for completion of the collectivisation was fixed. The production of tractors, harvesters and other agricultural machinery was increased manifold. State loans and collective farms were doubled in the first year itself. The process of collectivisation despite some errors, advanced rapidly towards success.

**Victory of Socialism and Preliminary Conditions for Transition to Communism:** With the victory of the collectivisation movement, the Party announced the victory of socialism. In January 1933, Stalin announced that, “The victory of Socialism in all branches of the national economy abolished the exploitation of man by man.”<sup>86</sup> In January 1934, the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress Report declared that, “the socialist form of social economic structure – now holds undivided sway and is the sole commanding force in the whole national economy.”<sup>87</sup> The absence of any antagonistic classes was later repeatedly stressed while presenting the Constitution in 1936 and in later Political Reports.

In his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, Stalin further asserted that, the antithesis between town and country, and between mental and physical labour, that Marx and Engels had talked about, had been abolished, and that, the antagonism of interests between them had disappeared.

What remained however was the need to eliminate the essential distinction between agriculture and industry – i.e., to abolish “the fact that whereas in industry we have public ownership of the means of production and the product of industry, in agriculture we have not public, but group, collective-farm ownership”<sup>88</sup>; and the need to eliminate the essential distinction between mental and physical labour – i.e., to raise “the cultural and technical level of the workers to that of the technical personnel”.<sup>88</sup>

In the same work he made the important formulation as to the basic condition necessary for advancing towards communism:

“In order to pave the way for a real, and not declaratory transition to communism, at least three basic preliminary conditions have to be satisfied.

1. It is necessary, in the first place, definitely to ensure... a continuous expansion of all social production, with a relatively higher rate of expansion of the production of means of production. The relatively higher rate of expansion of production of means of production is necessary not only because it has to provide the equipment both for its own plants and for all the other branches of the national economy, but also because reproduction on an extended scale becomes altogether impossible without it.

2. It is necessary, in the second place, by means of gradual transitions carried out to the advantage of the collective farms, and, hence, of all society, to raise collective-farm property to the level of public property, and, also by means of gradual transitions, to replace commodity circulation by a system of products-exchange, under which the central government, or some other social-economic centre, might control the whole product of social production in the interests of society. ...

3. It is necessary, in the third place, to ensure such a cultural advancement of society as will secure for all members of society the all-round development of their physical and mental abilities, so that the members of society may be in a position to receive an education sufficient to enable them to be active agents of social development, and in a position freely to choose their occupations and not be tied all their lives, owing to the existing division of labour, to some one occupation. ...

“These are the basic conditions required to pave the way for transition to communism.”<sup>89</sup>

**Errors in Russian Experience:** The Russian experience in socialist construction was of central importance to the international proletariat, and particularly to all countries where the proletariat seized power. Mao made an analysis of the Russian experience and pointed out certain errors in the practice, as well as in Stalin’s formulations.

Mao pointed out the following principal errors in the Russian experience:

1) Not giving due importance to the contradiction between the production relations and productive forces. Mao pointed out that even “Stalin said that the socialist society’s production relations completely conformed to the development of the production forces; he negated contradictions.”<sup>90</sup> Though Stalin corrected this understanding before his death, it was reflected in the prolonged coexistence of two types of ownership. Thus Mao showed that “prolonged coexistence of ownership by the whole people with ownership by the collectives is bound to become less and less adaptable to the development of the productive forces ... The contradiction between the productive forces and the production relations unfolds without interruption.”<sup>91</sup> Mao also felt that though he recognised this problem, “Essentially, Stalin did not discover a way to make the transition from collective to public ownership.”<sup>92</sup>

2) Not giving importance to the mass-line during socialist construction. Mao pointed out that in the earlier period mass-line was adopted, but “afterward, when they [Stalin and the Party] had realised some gains this way, they became less reliant on the masses.”<sup>93</sup> Stalin emphasised only technology, technical cadre. He wanted nothing but technology, nothing but cadre; no politics, no masses.”<sup>94</sup>

3) Neglecting the class struggle. “When discussing the socialist economy, Stalin said the post-revolutionary reform was a peaceful reform proceeding from the top to the bottom levels. He did not undertake the class struggle from the bottom to the top, but introduced peaceful land reform in Eastern Europe and North Korea, without struggling against the landowners or the rightists, only proceeding from the top to the bottom and struggling against the capitalists. We proceed from the top to the bottom, but we also add the class struggle from the bottom to the top, settling the roots and linking together.” 90

4) Imbalance in the relation between heavy industry on one side and light industry and agriculture on the other. Also failing to find the principal contradiction within heavy industry.

5) “Mistrust of the peasants.”92

Besides drawing these lessons from Stalin and the Russian experience, Mao learnt from the Chinese experience. He thus made immense progress in the Marxist theory of socialist construction.

### **The Chinese Experience**

The implementation of the new democratic economic programme started even before nationwide victory of the revolution. Thus in his report *The Present Situation and Our Tasks*, of December 1947, when the People’s Liberation Army had gone on the offensive, Mao outlined the economic tasks for that period. “Confiscate the land of the feudal class and turn it over to the peasants. Confiscate monopoly capital, headed by Chiang Kai-shek, T. V. Soong, H. H. Kung and Chen Li-fu, and turn it over to the new-democratic state, Protect the industry and commerce of the national bourgeoisie. These are the three major economic policies of the new-democratic revolution.”95 These policies were immediately taken up for implementation in the vast areas of Northern China which were under revolutionary control and the agrarian reform was completed there by mid-1950. Subsequently the agrarian reform programme was completed in the remainder of the country.

General Line and Step-by-Step Collectivisation: In 1951, the party adopted what came to be known as the general line for socialist construction. It was formulated as follows:

“The general line of the Chinese Communist Party for the period of transition from capitalism to socialism is basically to accomplish the industrialisation of China together with the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce. This transition period will cover roughly eighteen years, that is, the three years of rehabilitation plus the span of three five-year plans.”96

In accordance with this general line, a ‘step-by-step’ plan was drawn up for the socialist transformation of agriculture. “The first step was to call on the peasants, in accordance with the principles of voluntary participation and mutual benefit, to organise agricultural producers’ mutual-aid teams, which had only certain rudiments of socialism and comprised only a few to a dozen or so households each. The second step has been to call on the peasants, likewise in accordance with the principles of voluntary participation and mutual benefit, to organise small agricultural producers’ co-operatives on the basis of these mutual-aid teams, co-operatives which are semi-socialist in nature and are characterized by the pooling of land as shares and by unified management. Then the third step will be to call on the peasants, in accordance with the same principles, to combine further on the basis of these small semi-socialist co-operatives and organise large fully socialist agricultural producers cooperatives.”97

The first step of mutual-aid teams had started in the revolutionary bases before the nationwide victory itself. The second step towards elementary co-operatives took place in the years 1953-55. The third step of transition to advanced co-operatives came about in 1956. There was a literal upsurge of socialist transformation in the countryside. Simultaneously, in the early months of 1956, a related movement rapidly completed the transfer to by the whole people of China’s industry and commerce far ahead of schedule.

Mao's Development of Dialectical Approach to Socialist Construction: The general line was basically reliant on the Soviet model of socialist construction. The emphasis on industry and particularly on heavy industry was the central direction of the First Five Year Plan of 1953-57. Further there was a tendency to uncritically adopt all Soviet policies. With the rise of modern revisionism in the CPSU, the revisionist tendencies in the CPC were immediately strengthened and in 1956 a campaign was started from within the party to 'oppose rash advances' – i.e., to stall the process of socialisation. At the same time the revisionist theory of productive forces gained ascendancy within the party, with the prime representative being the party general secretary, Liu Shao-chi. The representatives of this trend too upheld the Khrushchevites, negated the class struggle and concentrated attention towards building modern productive forces, primarily through heavy industry.

Realising the revisionist danger Mao immediately launched a struggle to defeat these trends which at that time controlled the party. His first step in this struggle was his speech of April 1956, 'On the Ten Major Relationships'. In this speech, Mao for the first time made a clear-cut critique of the Soviet pattern of socialist economic construction. While referring to the relationship between heavy industry on the one hand and light industry and agriculture on the other, Mao stressed that "We have done better than the Soviet Union and a number of East European countries. ...Their lopsided stress on heavy industry to the neglect of agriculture and light industry results in a shortage of goods on the market and an unstable currency."<sup>98</sup> Similarly he criticised the Soviet policy of 'squeezing the peasants too hard'. He also attacked the dogmatists within the CPC who "copy everything indiscriminately and transplant mechanically" while "learning from the experience of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries."<sup>99</sup> He also criticised those who were following the example of Khrushchev in indiscriminately criticising Stalin. He upheld Stalin as a great Marxist with 70% achievements. Thus through this extensive critique of the Soviet revisionists and the mistakes in Soviet socialist construction, Mao led the struggle against the then dominant revisionist line of productive forces within the CPC.

However the biggest contribution of Mao's speech was its major advancement of the understanding of the process of socialist construction and socialist planning. By presenting the problems of socialist construction as ten major relationships, Mao brought dialectics and contradictions to the centre of the process of building socialist society. He showed how socialist construction involved not merely the mechanical implementation of targets of production and distribution, but a dialectical understanding of the main contradictions in the process, and the mobilising of all the positive forces to achieve socialism. Thus he said, "It is to focus on one basic policy that these ten problems are being raised, the basic policy of mobilising all positive factors, internal and external, to serve the cause of socialism."<sup>100</sup> "These ten relationships are all contradictions. The world consists of contradictions. Without contradictions the world would cease to exist. Our task is to handle these contradictions correctly."

Mao followed it up the next year with his work 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People'. In it he continued the development of the dialectical understanding of the process of socialist construction. Primarily he also placed the class struggle at the very core of the process. He asserted that the "class struggle is by no means over... the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet."<sup>102</sup> This marked the beginning of a nation-wide

Rectification Movement, the Anti-Rightist Movement.

## **Great Leap Forward and the Birth of People's Communes:**

With the progress of the rectification movement, the rightists in the party were thrown on the defensive. This led, in 1958, to a rectification of the erroneous "productive forces theory" which had dominated the Eighth Party Congress in 1956. The prime mover of this theory, Liu Shao-chi, was forced to admit at the Second Session of the Eighth Party Congress in May 1958, that,

"The experience of the rectification campaign and the anti-rightist struggle once again shows that throughout the transition period, that is, before completion of the building of a socialist society, the main contradiction inside our country is and remains that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the socialist road and the capitalist road...

"The spring of 1958 witnessed the beginning of a leap forward on every front in our socialist construction. Industry, agriculture and all other fields of activity are registering greater and more rapid growth."<sup>103</sup>

Aside from rapid growth however, the Great Leap Forward was a major change in the priorities of the earlier plans and general line. The industrial policy of "walking on two legs" was introduced. Through implementation of this policy it was tried to change the soviet model of over dependence on big industrial projects and to bring about a dialectical balance between heavy and light industries encouraging simultaneous development of agriculture, heavy and light industry.. It aimed at reducing the gap between town and countryside, between worker and peasant, and between worker and peasant on the one hand and the intellectual and manager on the other hand. It aimed at not merely an economic revolution but a technological, political, social and cultural revolution to transform the city and countryside.

In 1958 started the building of the people's communes. "They were formed by the amalgamation of neighbouring co-operatives in order to undertake large-scale projects such as flood control, water conservancy, afforestation, fisheries, and transport. In addition, many communes set up their own factories for making tractors, chemical fertilisers, and other means of production."<sup>104</sup> The movement to set up people's communes grew very rapidly. The CC of the CPC announced in its famous Wuhan Resolution of December, 1958 that "Within a few months starting in the summer of 1958, all of the more than 740,000 agricultural producers' co-operatives in the country, in response to the enthusiastic demand of the mass of peasants, reorganised themselves into over 26,000 people's communes. Over 120 million households, or more than 99 percent of all China's peasant households of various nationalities, have joined the people's communes."<sup>105</sup> Summing up the political essence, the CC went on to say:

"The people's commune is the basic unit of the socialist social structure of our country, combining industry, agriculture, trade, education, and military affairs; at the same time it is the basic organisation of the socialist state power. Marxist-Leninist theory and the initial experience of the people's communes in our country enable us to foresee now that the people's communes will quicken the tempo of our socialist construction and constitute the best form for realising, in our country, the following two transitions.

"Firstly, the transition from collective ownership to ownership by the whole people in the countryside; and,

"Secondly, the transition from socialist to communist society. It can also be foreseen that in the future communist society, the people's commune will remain the basic unit of our social structure."<sup>105</sup>

Thus the commune movement represented a tremendous advance which basically completed the process of collectivisation of agriculture. However the expectation of the commune taking ahead the process of the transition to full public ownership and communism, could not be fulfilled to that extent. Also attempts at setting up urban communes could not be consolidated.

In the earliest period of the commune movement during the Great Leap, there were certain 'left' errors. Thus in February 1959, Mao's speech at Cheng-chow, pointed out, "After the communes were set up in the autumn of 1958, for a while there blew up a 'communist wind'. It consisted mainly of three elements: the first was the levelling of the poor and the rich brigades, the second was that capital accumulation by the commune was too great and the commune's demand for labour without compensation was too great and the third was the 'communisation' of all kinds 'property'." 10<sup>6</sup> These errors were soon corrected. The production brigade (former advanced co-operative), was kept as the basic accounting unit, and in 1962, this was brought to an even lower level, that of the production team. Though the perspective remained always of raising the level of ownership and accounting to higher levels, as a process of greater socialisation and transition towards communism, this did not achieve success. The basic accounting and ownership unit continued till 1976, to remain at this lowest level – the production team.

**Struggle against the Capitalist Roaders:** Though the 'left' errors were soon corrected, the hold of the capitalist roaders, led by Liu Shao-chi, remained strong within the party's higher levels. The two-line struggle was represented in direct and indirect ways. In July 1959, Peng Teh-huai, then Defence Minister, launched a direct attack on the Great Leap Forward, criticising what he called its "petty-bourgeois fanaticism" and desire "to enter into communism at one step" 107 Mao repulsed these attacks and defended the politics of the Great Leap. However, though Peng was defeated, the other capitalist roaders continued their attacks through indirect means.

One method was through veiled defence of Peng and attacks on Mao in the media. This was through articles and also through plays and cultural performances intending to show how Peng was an upright comrade who had been victimised.

The other method was to stall or divert the implementation of key policies decided at the highest levels. A principal example was sabotage of the programme of socialist education and the decision to launch a Cultural Revolution, taken by the Tenth Plenum of the CC in 1962. Though this was formally agreed to by the capitalist roaders, they ensured through their control within the party structure, to ensure that there was no mass mobilisation. They "sought to orient the Cultural Revolution in the direction of academic and ideological debate rather than class struggle"<sup>108</sup>

Mao, throughout this period (1959-60), fought the battle at various levels. He realised on the basis of the Russian experience, the very real danger of the restoration of capitalism. He; therefore, on the basis of a major study of the politics and economics of Khrushchevite revisionism, drew the theoretical lessons of this experience for the education of the Chinese and the international proletariat. Through a *Critique of Soviet Economics* and an analysis of *Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and Historical Lessons for the World*, he tried to inculcate in the party cadre the theoretical foundations for a fight against revisionism and restoration.

However he mainly tried to draw the masses into the struggle to fend and develop socialism and prevent restoration of capitalism. Besides his earlier mentioned programme for socialist education, he also gave slogans for socialist emulation of the Tachai and Tach'ing experiences as model experiences in building socialism. But when all attempts to mobilise the masses were diverted by the party bureaucracy, Mao succeeded after tremendous efforts in unleashing the energies of the masses through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. It was the culmination in practice of Mao's development of the Marxist principles of socialist construction.

## 4. THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

### Capitalist Restoration in the Soviet Union: Historical Lessons

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was the answer of Marxism to the obstacles and sabotage of the process of socialist construction created by the Khrushchevites and the capitalist roaders. While drawing the historical lessons from Khrushchev's phoney communism, the CPC under Mao, had stressed certain 'theories and policies' on the question of prevention of the restoration of capitalism. Among other points, the CPC had emphasised the following:

“apply the Marxist-Leninist law of the unity of opposites to the study of socialist society”;

“socialist revolution on the economic front (in the ownership of the means of production) is insufficient by itself and cannot be consolidated. There must be a thorough socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts ... During the historical period of socialism it is necessary to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat and carry the socialist revolution through to the end if the restoration of capitalism is to be prevented, socialist construction carried forward and the conditions created for the transition to communism”;

“in both socialist revolution and socialist construction it is necessary to adhere to the mass line, boldly to arouse the masses and to unfold mass movements on a large scale”;

“whether in socialist revolution or in socialist construction, ...the proletariat and its vanguard must ...rely on the truly dependable forces that firmly take the socialist road, win over all allies that can be won over, and unite with the masses of the people, who constitute 95 per cent of the population, in a common struggle against the enemies of socialism.”;

“it is necessary to conduct extensive socialist education movements repeatedly in the cities and the countryside. In these continuous movements for educating the people we must be good at organising the revolutionary class forces, ....it is necessary to wage a sharp, tit-for-tat struggle against the anti-socialist, capitalist and feudal forces.”<sup>109</sup>

### The Cultural Revolution: A Form Found Anew

These 'theories and policies' formed the theoretical basis of the great struggles of the Cultural Revolution. As Mao further analysed the experiences of socialist construction both in the Soviet Union and in China, it became clear that the capitalist roaders within the party itself were the most dangerous source of the restoration of capitalism. It was also clear that ideological struggle confined within the party would not settle the issue unless taken to the masses. The questions of who were the friends and enemies of the revolution were clear; the question was of the form, the method.

The Ninth Party Congress of 1969 described this question in the following manner:

“As Chairman Mao pointed out in his talk in February 1967: ‘In the past we have waged struggles in rural areas, in factories, in the cultural field, and we carried out the socialist education movement. But all this failed to solve the problem, because we did not find a form, a method, to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly, in an all-round way, and from below.’

“Now we have found this form – it is the great proletarian cultural revolution. It is only by arousing the masses in their hundreds of millions to air their views freely, write big-character posters, and hold great debates, that the renegades, enemy agents, and capitalist-roaders in power, who have wormed their way into the Party, can be exposed and their plots to restore capitalism smashed.”<sup>110</sup>

### The Targets of the Revolution

Thus from the very beginning, Mao directed the struggle against the capitalist roader headquarters within the party. Thus ‘the signal for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’ was given by Yao Wen-yuan's article, which Mao had to get published from Shanghai, because the party

authorities in Peking would not allow its publication as it was critical of those in control. As the movement started building up Mao gave clear direction through the CC circular of May 16th 1966, which he personally initiated. The direction was clearly against the bourgeoisie within the party. It stated:

“There are a number of these representatives of the bourgeoisie in Central Committee and in the Party, government and other departments at the central as well as the provincial, municipal, and autonomous-region level.

“Those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into Party, the government, the army, and various cultural circles are a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists. Once conditions are ripe, they will seize political power and turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Some of them we have already seen through, others we have not. Some are still trusted by us and are being trained as our successors, persons like Khrushchev, for example, who are still nestling beside us. Party committees at all levels must pay full attention to this matter.”<sup>111</sup>

This was repeated again in the Eleventh Plenum ‘Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’:

“The main target of the present movement is those within the party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road.”<sup>112</sup>

### **Mass Line in the Revolution**

The other important aspect of the Cultural Revolution was the advancement and practical implementation of Mao’s mass line. It was aimed, not merely at eliminating the elements hostile to socialism, but to enable the working class to ‘exercise leadership in everything’, to ‘place politics in command of administration’, and to ensure that everyone serving as an official should ‘remain one of the common people’. In order to achieve these aims it was necessary to launch an all-out offensive against bourgeois ideology in such a way that the masses would be actively involved.

Thus, the Eleventh Plenum resolution instructed,

“In the great proletarian Cultural Revolution, the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves, and any method of doing things on their behalf must not be used.

“Trust the masses, rely on them and respect their initiative. Cast out fear. Don’t be afraid of disorder. .... Let the masses educate themselves in this great revolution and learn to distinguish right and wrong and between correct and incorrect ways of doing things.”<sup>113</sup>

As the masses entered in full strength in the revolution they even created a new organisational form- the revolutionary committee. It was based on the ‘three-in-one’ combination: that is, its members, who were elected, subject to recall, and directly responsible to the people, were drawn from the Party, the People’s Liberation Army, and the mass organisations. They sprung up at all levels, from the factory or commune to the organs of provincial and regional government, and their function was to provide the link through which the masses could participate directly in the running of the country.

Mao said, “This great Cultural Revolution, using the great democratic methods of the proletarian dictatorship, has mobilised the masses from below. At the same time, it puts into practice the grand alliance of the proletarian revolutionaries, the three-way alliance between the revolutionary masses, the PLA, and the revolutionary cadres.”<sup>114</sup>

This three-in-one organ of power enabled proletarian political power to strike deep roots among the masses. Direct participation by the revolutionary masses in the running of the country and the enforcement of revolutionary supervision from below over the organs of political power at various levels played a very important role in ensuring that leading groups at all levels adhered to the mass line. Thus this strengthening of dictatorship of the proletariat, was also the most extensive and deepest exercise in proletarian democracy yet achieved in the world.

## Historical Relevance of the Cultural Revolution

Under the initial sweep of the Cultural Revolution, the bourgeois headquarters within the Party was effectively smashed, and most of the leading capitalist roaders like Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping and their supporters were stripped off their party posts and forced to do self-criticism before the masses. It was a great victory which not only inspired the Chinese masses, but also created a wave of revolutionary enthusiasm among communist revolutionaries throughout the world. After the setback of Khrushchevite modern revisionism, Maoism had proved the vitality of Marxism and its ability to find the answers to the challenges being faced by the international proletariat. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had shown that Marxism had an answer to the enemy, i.e., capitalist restoration. This advance in Marxism, led to the consolidation of numerous revolutionary groups and parties throughout the world on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and launching of revolutionary struggles under their leadership.

However Mao warned, "The present Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is only the first; there will inevitably be many more in the future. The issue of who will win in the revolution can only be settled a long historical period. If things are not properly handled, it is possible for a capitalist [restoration to](#) take place at any time in the future."<sup>115</sup>

Further he reminded the Ninth Party Congress in 1969, "We have won a great victory. But the defeated class will continue to struggle. Its members are still about and it still exists, therefore we cannot speak of the final victory, not for decades. We must not lose our vigilance. From Leninist point of view, the final victory in one socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad masses at home, but also depends on the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man on this earth so that all mankind will be emancipated. Consequently, it is wrong to talk about the final victory of the revolution in our country light-heartedly; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to facts."<sup>115</sup>

Mao's words proved true within a short time. First in 1971 Lin Piao, then vice-chairman, conspired to seize power through assassinating Mao and staging a military coup. This was foiled through the alertness of the revolutionaries in the party. Later however, arch revisionists like Teng were rehabilitated back to high positions within the party and state apparatus during the later years of the Cultural Revolution. It was these renegades who engineered the coup to take over the party and lead it on the path of capitalist restoration immediately after the death of Mao. It was they who sabotaged and then formally announced the end of the Cultural Revolution.

This coup and capitalist restoration however cannot repudiate the validity of the truth of the Cultural Revolution. Rather it, in a way, confirms Mao's theses on the nature of socialist society and the need to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Cultural Revolution is a scientific tool developed in the struggle against capitalist restoration and in the theoretical struggle to develop Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Its scientific validity has been established in the crucible of the practice of the Chinese Revolution. Its efficacy as a weapon to mobilise the vast masses in the struggle against the danger of capitalist restoration in a socialist country has also been proved. However, as Mao himself pointed out, no weapon can provide a guarantee of final victory. Thus, the fact that the capitalist roaders have achieved a temporary victory does not in any way diminish the objective truth of the necessity and effectivity of this weapon in the fight for socialist construction and the defence of socialism.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is one of the foremost contributions of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the arsenal of the international proletariat. It represents the implementation in practice of Mao's greatest contribution to Marxism-the theory of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat to consolidate socialism, combat modern revisionism and prevent the restoration of capitalism. Its significance for the international proletariat is immeasurable in today's world where all the socialist bases have been lost due to the machinations of the bourgeoisie within

the communist party itself. Therefore the time has come to revise Lenin's definition of a Marxist. Today,

“Those who recognise only the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat are not yet Marxists..... only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat to the recognition of the continuous revolution in the superstructure keeping the aim of the consummation of the world revolution and building communist society as early as possible.”<sup>116</sup>

# Chapter XIII

## Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat

### 1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

#### Marx's theoretical basis

Lenin thus explained the basis of Marx's tactics of class struggle: "Only an objective consideration of the sum total of reciprocal relations of all the classes of a given society without exception, and, consequently, a consideration of the objective stage of development of that society and of the reciprocal relations between it and other societies, can serve as a basis for correct tactics of the advanced class. At the same time, all classes and all countries are regarded not statically, but dynamically, i.e., not in a state of immobility, but in motion (the laws of which derive from the economic conditions of existence of each class). Motion, in its turn, is regarded not only from the standpoint of the past, but also from the standpoint of the future, and, moreover, not in accordance with the vulgar conception of the 'evolutionists', who see only slow changes, but dialectically."<sup>117</sup>

Further tactics must be based on the ebbs and flows of the movement. Thus, "At each stage of development, at each moment, the tactics of the proletariat must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand utilising the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called 'peaceful' development in order to develop the class consciousness, strength and fighting capacity of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, conducting all this work of utilisation towards the 'final aim' of the movement of this class and towards the creation in it of the ability to accomplish the practical solution of great tasks in the great days in which 'twenty years are embodied'"<sup>117</sup>, i.e., in periods of revolutionary crisis.

Finally, "The Communist Manifesto set forth the fundamental Marxist principle on the tactics of the political struggle: 'The Communists fight the attainment of the immediate aims, for the attainment of momentary interests of the working class ; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement.'"<sup>117</sup>

#### Leninist Tactical Principles

During the period of the domination of the Second International, "there were fragmentary and detached ideas about tactics and strategy, but no tactics or strategy as such.

Only in the subsequent period, the period of direct action by the proletariat, the period of proletarian revolution, when the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie became a question of immediate practical action; when the question of the reserves of the proletariat (strategy) became one of the most burning questions; when all forms of struggle and of organisation, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (tactics), had quite clearly manifested themselves – only in this period could an integral strategy and elaborated tactics for the struggle of the proletariat be worked out. It was precisely, in this period that Lenin brought out into the light of day the brilliant ideas of Marx and Engels on tactic and strategy that had been suppressed by the opportunists of the Second International. But Lenin did not confine himself to restoring particular tactical propositions of Marx and Engels. He developed them further and supplemented them with new ideas and propositions, combining them all into a system of rules and guiding principles for the leadership of the class struggle of the proletariat. Lenin's pamphlets, such as *What Is To Be Done?*, *Two Tactics*, *Imperialism*, *The State Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *'Left-Wing' Communism*, undoubtedly constitute priceless contributions to the general treasury of Marxism, to its

revolutionary arsenal. The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.”<sup>118</sup> – Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

Stalin systematically defined and formulated Lenin’s teachings. He explained,

“Strategy is the determination of the direction of the main blow of proletariat at a given stage of the revolution, the elaboration of a corresponding plan for the disposition of the revolutionary forces (main and secondary reserves), the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution.”<sup>118</sup>

“Tactics are the determination of the line of conduct of the proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow or ebb of the movement, of the rise or decline of the revolution, the fight to carry out this line by means of replacing old forms of struggle and organisation by new ones, old slogans by new ones, by combining these forms, etc.

“Tactics deal with the forms of struggle and the forms of organisation of the proletariat, with their changes and combinations. During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times, depending on the flow or ebb, the rise or decline, of the revolution.”<sup>119</sup>

Lenin had summed up the experiences of the proletariat in the Russian Revolution and drawn lessons of international significance to the proletariat in his work, *‘Left-Wing’ Communism*, which he prepared, in particular, for the Comintern. Stalin summarised the tactical principles in it as follows:

a) the principle that the nationally peculiar and nationally specific features in each separate country must unfailingly be taken into account by the Comintern when drawing up guiding directives for the working-class movement of the country concerned;

b) the principle that the Communist Party of each country must unfailingly avail itself of even the smallest opportunity of gaining a mass ally for the proletariat, even if a temporary, vacillating, unstable and unreliable ally;

c) the principle that unfailing regard must be paid to the truth that propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for the political education of the vast masses, that what is required for that is the political experience of the masses themselves.”<sup>120</sup>

### **The Three Magic Weapons**

Mao scientifically applied and developed Marxist-Leninist principles in concrete class struggles of the Chinese Revolution. He applied dialectics to the development of the forms of organization and forms of struggle of the revolution and advanced the theory of the dialectical relationship between them in the course of the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries. He summed it up in a most simple and significant manner in his theory of the three magic weapons of the New Democratic Revolution – Party, People’s Army and the united front. He expressed their relationship in the following manner:

“the united front and armed struggle are the two basic weapons for defeating the enemy. The united front is a united front for carrying on armed struggle. And the Party is the heroic warrior wielding the two weapons, the united front and the armed struggle, to storm and shatter the enemy’s positions. That is how the three are related to each other.” Mao also developed the tactical and organisational principles governing each of the three magic weapons. He drew up the laws governing the strategy and tactics of the armed struggle and qualitatively developed the Marxist science of war. He summed up the laws governing the united front and took Marxist understanding regarding this too to a new level. He also made significant contributions to the understanding of Party building.

## **2. BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND PROLETARIAN-SOCIALIST REVOLUTION**

The Marxist theory of class struggle distinguishes between the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution. They are distinguished by the different tasks or aims which are undertaken in each.

The task of the bourgeois revolution is, in the economic sphere, the abolition of feudalism or the remnants of feudalism and the establishment of conditions for the free development of capitalism; and in the political sphere, the abolition of all remnants of absolutism and autocracy and the establishment of parliamentary democracy with equal bourgeois rights for all citizens. In view of this political task, the bourgeois revolution is often called the bourgeois-democratic revolution, or simply the democratic revolution.

The task of the proletarian revolution is, in the economic sphere, to abolish capitalist ownership and establish public socialist ownership of the means of production; and in the political sphere, to establish proletarian democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat. In view of this task it is the socialist revolution.

Marx taught that the proletarian revolutionaries' task of advancing to the socialist revolution was inseparable from the task of carrying through the bourgeois-democratic revolution. For the socialist revolution could not be victorious except on condition that the fight was waged for democracy and against feudalism and absolutism. Therefore it was asserted in the 'Communist Manifesto', that the Communists (in Germany) would "fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie."<sup>57</sup> This support for the bourgeoisie was however not intended to allow capitalism to continue for a long period of time. Thus the Communists, would, while fighting along with the bourgeoisie, "never cease for a single instant, to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes, ... the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin."<sup>57</sup>

Lenin further developed the theory of proletarian revolution on the basis of an analysis of the conditions of imperialism. The main conclusions of Lenin's theory of proletarian revolution were summarised by Stalin as follows:

"..the first conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis within the capitalist countries and growth of the elements of an explosion on the internal, proletarian front in the 'metropolises.'

"..the second conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the elements of revolt against imperialism on the external, colonial front.

"..the third conclusion: that under imperialist wars cannot be averted, and that a coalition between the proletarian revolution- in Europe and the colonial revolution in the East in a united world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism is inevitable.

"The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link;"<sup>58</sup>

Thus Lenin brought out the link and basic unity between the proletarian revolutions in the imperialist countries and the ant-imperialist national liberation revolutionary struggles in the colonial countries.

Mao, basing himself on Lenin's theory of proletarian revolution, clarified it further through the theory of New Democracy. Referring to the conditions after the outbreak of World War I and the October Socialist Revolution, he explained that,

“In this era, any revolution in a colony or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism, i.e., against the international bourgeoisie or international capitalism, no longer comes within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within the new category, it is no longer part of the old bourgeois, or capitalist, world revolution, but is part of the new world revolution, the proletarian-socialist world revolution. Such revolutionary colonies and semi-colonies can no longer be regarded as allies of the counter-revolutionary front of world capitalism; they have become allies of the revolutionary front of world socialism.”<sup>59</sup> On this basis he elaborated the politics, economy and culture of New Democracy.

Later, on the basis of an analysis of the conditions in the period following the World War II, Mao further advanced the Leninist thesis of revolution breaking out at the weakest link in the imperialist chain. Thus in the famous June 14th 1963 CPC letter to the CPSU regarding the general line of the international communist movement, it was asserted,

“The various types of contradictions in the contemporary world are concentrated in the vast areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America; these are the most vulnerable areas under imperialist rule and the storm centres of world revolution dealing direct blows at imperialism.”<sup>60</sup>

Thus Mao not only showed how the anti-imperialist revolutions of the colonial countries were an integral part of the World Socialist Revolution, he also pointed that they would deal the decisive blows in this revolution.

### **3. TACTICS IN THE ABOVE THREE STAGES OF REVOLUTION**

The basic principles of strategy and tactics stated by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao had evolved in the course of the advancement of world revolution. Starting with the bourgeois democratic revolutions until the mid 19th century followed by the Paris Commune and Russian and Chinese revolutions, the Marxist understanding regarding the strategy and tactics, party, UF, forms of struggles, attitude towards nationality question, stand point on war etc., have undergone significant changes, they enriched with every advance made in the world revolution and through creative application of Marxist theory to the concrete conditions of a particular revolution. More specifically, the three stages mentioned above the Bourgeois Revolution, the Socialist and New Democratic Revolutions – had given birth to specific strategy and tactics in the countries where the respective revolutions occurred.

Marx and Engels, living under conditions of developing capitalism that saw the unfolding of the bourgeois democratic revolutions in Europe, recognised that the proletariat was the new, rising, revolutionary force, that it was still too weak to takeover the leadership of the revolution. The tactics of the proletariat then was to advance with the revolutionary section of the bourgeoisie to overthrow feudal reaction, and then continue the fight against the bourgeoisie for establishing the working class state.

Marx and Engels clearly spelt out their approach towards the various classes and class organisations of the period. Thus in the Communist Manifesto they declared their readiness to ally and support those sections of the bourgeoisie who were ready to fight the feudal reactionaries and the conservative bourgeoisie. Similarly, in their ‘Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League’, in 1850, they clearly laid down their tactical approach to their allies – the petty bourgeois democrats:

“The relation of the revolutionary workers’ party to the petty bourgeois democrats is this: it marches together with them against the faction which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes them in everything whereby they seek to consolidate their position in their own interests....

“...While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task

to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one.”<sup>123</sup>

Simultaneously, however Marx saw the weakness and unreliability of the bourgeoisie. He “declared that the cause of the failure of the Revolution of 1848 was that the bourgeoisie had preferred peace with slavery to the mere prospect of a fight for freedom.”<sup>124</sup> As the proletariat started growing in strength, the bourgeois started fearing revolution from the proletariat more than its desire to overthrow the feudal reactionaries. Thus, in 1870, Engels pointed out, in the case of Germany, the bourgeoisie had started allying with reactionaries like the monarchy, the big feudal nobility, the Junkers and even the priests. “And the more the proletariat developed, the more it felt as a class and acted as a class, the more faint-hearted did the bourgeois become.”<sup>125</sup> Thus the revolutionary potential of the bourgeoisie started reducing rapidly and with it the possibility of it providing consistent leadership in any revolutionary upheaval. Also the proletariat could not merely play the role of supporter in the bourgeois democratic revolution.

### **The Worker-Peasant Alliance**

Engels went on to point out that the proletariat had to seek its allies. He pointed to the petty bourgeois artisans and shopkeepers as unreliable allies, who nevertheless, had “very good elements among them, who join the workers of their own accord.”<sup>125</sup> The lumpen proletariat, which some worker leaders used, Engels rejected as “the worst of all the possible allies.”<sup>125</sup>

He pointed out that the small peasants were reliable allies of the proletariat because their class interests and salvation lay only with the proletariat. Further the farm labourers were the “most numerous and most natural allies” of the proletariat; it was a most urgent task “to galvanise and draw into the movement this class.”<sup>125</sup>

This idea of a worker-peasant alliance had earlier emerged from Marx, in 1856, in a letter to Engels. It was again reasserted in 1895 by Engels in his *Introduction to Marx's Class Struggles in France*, when he pointed out that no lasting victory was possible for the Socialists in Germany and France unless they won over the peasantry.

It was however Lenin who developed to the fullest this understanding of the worker-peasant alliance and brilliantly put it into practice during the course of the Russian Revolution. He explained in a clearcut manner that it was the peasantry primarily who due to their material conditions were bound to be the natural allies of the proletariat in the revolution. Stalin summarises the Leninist understanding as follows:

“The question is as follows: Are the revolutionary potentialities latent in the peasantry by virtue of certain conditions of its existence already exhausted, or not; and if not, is there any hope, any basis, for utilising these potentialities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the peasantry, the exploited majority of it, from the reserve of the bourgeoisie which it was during the bourgeois revolutions in the West and still is even now, into a reserve of the proletariat, into its ally?

“Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, i.e., it recognises the existence of revolutionary capacities in the ranks of the majority of the peasantry, and the possibility of using these in the interests of the proletarian dictatorship. ...

“Hence the practical conclusion that the toiling masses of the peasantry must be supported in their struggle against bondage and exploitation, in their struggle for deliverance from oppression and

poverty...What we have in mind here is support for a movement or struggle of the peasantry which directly or indirectly, facilitates the emancipation movement of the proletariat, which, in one way or another, brings grist to the mill of the proletarian revolution, and which helps to transform the peasantry into a reserve and ally of the working class.” 126

### **Leadership of the Proletariat**

“The bourgeois revolution in the West (Britain, France, Germany, Austria) took a different road. There, hegemony in the revolution belonged not to the proletariat, which by reason of its weakness did not and could not represent an independent political force, but to the liberal bourgeoisie. There the peasantry obtained its emancipation from feudal regimes, not at the hands of the proletariat, which was numerically weak and unorganised, but at the hands of the bourgeoisie ... There the peasantry acted as the reserve of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>127</sup>

However as the class struggle advanced the proletariat in many countries became an independent political force. Simultaneously, the liberal bourgeoisie lost its revolutionary spirit. In this context the question of the leadership of the proletariat over the democratic revolution came to the fore. However the reformist and revisionist leaders of the Second International refused to accept this reality and continued to opportunistically accept as dogma, the leadership of the bourgeoisie over the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

However during the Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905, in his famous work, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin pointed out,

“The outcome of the revolution depends on whether the working class will play the part of a subsidiary to the bourgeoisie, a subsidiary that is powerful in the force of its onslaught against the autocracy but impotent politically, or whether it will play the part of leader of the people’s revolution.”<sup>128</sup>

Further in his draft resolutions for the Fifth Party Congress in 1907, he insisted,

“Only the proletariat can bring the democratic revolution to its consummation, the condition being that the proletariat, as the only thoroughly revolutionary class in modern society, leads the mass of the peasantry and imparts political consciousness to its struggle against landed proprietorship and the feudal state.”

Thus, Lenin pointed out in an unequivocal manner, that the hegemony of the proletariat over the democratic revolution, with the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the proletariat, was the basis – the condition – for the success of the revolution.

He also spelt out the relationship of the proletariat with all the other principal classes during the course of the democratic and proletarian revolution. These alliances have been summarised by Stalin, in the form of the fundamental slogans. Thus the fundamental slogan for the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution was,

“‘Together with the whole of the peasantry, against the tsar and the landlords, while neutralising the bourgeoisie, for the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.’”<sup>130</sup>

Thus in this stage, the whole of the peasantry, including the rich peasantry, were to be considered as allies in the battle against the feudal lords. The bourgeoisie, the former leader of the revolution, was however to be neutralised by winning over the leadership of the other sections of the toiling masses-primarily the peasantry-from under its hegemony.

However in the next stage of the proletarian revolution the class alignments changed. The rich peasant, being a rural bourgeois, was an enemy of socialism. Also the vacillations of the middle peasantry had to be neutralised in this battle. Thus the fundamental slogan representing the relationship of the various classes to the proletariat and to the revolution was,

“‘Together with the poor peasantry, against capitalism in town anti country, while neutralising the middle peasantry, for the power of the proletariat.’”<sup>130</sup>

Thus in the battle for socialism it was the masses of the poor peasantry who were the staunch allies of the proletariat, as their material conditions were such that they could easily see that their interests best lay with the proletarian revolution.

## **LENIN'S THESIS ON THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION**

In the context of the upsurge of the national liberation struggles in the early part of the twentieth century, and particularly the formation of new Communist Parties in the colonies and semi-colonies, the question of the tactics of the proletariat in the anti-imperialist struggles came to the forefront. Lenin laid the theoretical basis for this, in his Theses on the National and Colonial Question presented before the Second Congress of the Comintern, in 1920. Taking into account the peculiar conditions in these countries, Lenin proposed an alliance with the national bourgeoisies of these countries in the fight against imperialism for national liberation. Thus his Theses stated, "the Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it and must in all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if in its most rudimentary form;"<sup>131</sup>

The essence of this understanding was also the basis of the Comintern's Fourth Congress call, in 1922, for an anti-imperialist united front. It stated, "in the colonial East the slogan that must be emphasized at the present time is that of the anti-imperialist united front. The expediency of this slogan follows from the prospect of a prolonged and protracted struggle with world imperialism which demands the mobilisation of all revolutionary elements."<sup>132</sup> However it also stressed "The workers' movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must first of all win for itself the position of an independent revolutionary factor in the anti-imperialist front as a whole. Only when its importance as an independent factor is recognised and its political independence secured, are temporary agreements with bourgeois democracy permissible and necessary."<sup>132</sup>

Thus Lenin laid the basis for the formation of united fronts to achieve national liberation from imperialism in the colonies and semi-colonies. This understanding was the basis for the formation of the united front of the Chinese Communist Party with the Kuomintang in 1923.

## **ENRICHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LENINIST THESIS ON UNITED FRONT BY MAO**

Mao applied the Leninist Thesis to the concrete conditions of China. In 1926, he presented his brilliant class analysis of Chinese Society. It was a model of a correct analysis of the situation faced by most colonial and semi-colonial countries. It correctly differentiated the various categories within the peasantry and the attitude of each towards the revolution. It also differentiated the comprador and non-comprador sections of the bourgeoisie and determined the attitude of the proletariat towards each of them. It answered the question of the enemies, and the reliable and vacillating allies of the revolution. It said,

"To sum up, it can be seen that our enemies are all those in league with imperialism - the warlords, the bureaucrats, the comprador class, the big landlord class and the reactionary section of the intelligentsia attached to them. The leading force in our revolution is the industrial proletariat. Our closest friends are the entire semi-proletariat and petty bourgeoisie. As for the vacillating middle bourgeoisie, their right-wing may become our enemy and their left-wing may become our friend, but we must be constantly on our guard and not let them create confusion within our ranks."<sup>133</sup>

This correct analysis was however not accepted by the leadership of the CPC. Also due to errors in estimation of the Comintern and Stalin, the CPC was dominated by various 'left' who committed various errors in their approach to the classes in the united front. It was only in 1935, after Mao's

leadership was again established over the party, that a correct approach was again adapted to the united front. In that period however due to the particular situation of the Japanese aggression a call was given for forming an anti-Japanese united front which even included certain sections of the comprador and landlords who were ready to fight Japanese imperialism.

During this period of the anti-Japanese united front, in 1939, Mao made a comprehensive summing up of the experience of the united front of various types and formulated the laws governing the united front:

“In the last eighteen years, the united front of the Chinese proletariat with the bourgeoisie and other classes has developed under three different sets of circumstances or through three different stages: the First Great Revolution from 1924 to 1927, the War of Agrarian Revolution from 1927 to 1937, and the present War of Resistance Against Japan. The history of the three stages has confirmed the following laws:

“(1) The Chinese national bourgeoisie will take part in the struggle against imperialism and the feudal warlords at certain times and to certain extent, because foreign oppression is the greatest oppression to which China is subjected. Therefore, at such times, the proletariat should form a united front with the national bourgeoisie and maintain it as far as possible. (2) In other historical circumstances, the Chinese national bourgeoisie will vacillate and defect because of its economic and political flabbiness. Therefore the composition of China’s revolutionary united front will not remain constant at all times, but is liable to change. At one time the national bourgeoisie may take part in it, at another it may not. (3) The Chinese big bourgeoisie, which is comprador in character, is a class which directly serves imperialism and is fostered by it. Hence the comprador Chinese big bourgeoisie has always been a target of the revolution. However, different groups within this big bourgeoisie are backed by different imperialist powers, so that when contradictions among these powers become sharper and when the edge of the revolution is mainly directed against a particular power, the big bourgeois groups dependent upon the other powers may join the struggle against that particular such times, in order to weaken the enemy and add to its own reserves, the Chinese proletariat may form a united front with the groups and should maintain it as far as possible, provided it is advantageous to the revolution. (4) The comprador big bourgeoisie continues to be most reactionary even when it joins the united front alongside the proletariat in struggling against the common enemy. It stubbornly opposes any ideological, political and organizational development of the proletariat and the proletarian party, tries to impose restrictions on them and employs disruptive tactics such as deception blandishments, ‘corrosion’ and savage attacks against them; moreover, it does all this to prepare for capitulating to the enemy and splitting the united front. (5) The peasantry is the firm ally of the proletariat. (6) The urban petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally.”<sup>134</sup>

These laws thus in a very precise manner give the theoretical and practical foundation of the united front. Though Mao presented them then as the laws of the Chinese united front, they have universal significance for the revolutions of all the colonies and the semi-colonies. After the victory in the Anti-Japanese War and the Civil war against Chiang Kai-shek, and the establishment of the People’s Republic, the essence of these laws were again elaborated by Mao in 1956, while summing up the experiences of the CPC relevant to similar countries ‘oppressed by imperialism and feudalism’. While speaking to representatives of Latin American Communist Parties, he said,

“The peasants are the chief ally of the proletariat...”

“The comprador-bourgeoisie is always a running dog of imperialism and a target of the revolution. Different groups of the comprador-bourgeoisie belong to the monopoly capitalist groups of different imperialist countries such as the United States, Britain and France. In the struggle against the various comprador groups it is necessary to exploit the contradictions between imperialist countries, first coping with one of them and striking at the chief immediate enemy. For instance, in the past the Chinese comprador-bourgeoisie consisted of pro-British, pro-U.S. and pro-

Japanese groups. During the War of Resistance Against Japan we exploited the contradiction between Britain and the United States on the one hand and Japan on the other, first striking down the Japanese aggressors and the comprador group depending on them. Then we turned round to deal blows at the U.S. and British aggressor forces and bring down the pro-U.S. and pro-British comprador groups. The landlord class also consists of different factions. The most reactionary landlords are few in number, and those who are patriotic and favour fighting imperialism should not be lumped together with them when we strike. Moreover, a distinction must be made between the big and small landlords. Don't strike at too many enemies at a time, strike at a few, and even with big landlords deal your blows only at the most reactionary handful. To strike at everyone may seem very revolutionary, but actually it causes great harm.

“The national bourgeoisie is an opponent of ours. There is a saying in China, ‘Opponents always meet.’ One experience of the Chinese revolution is that caution is needed in dealing with the national bourgeoisie. While it is opposed to the working class, it is also opposed imperialism...

“Throughout the historical period of the struggle against imperialism and feudalism, we must win over and unite with the national bourgeoisie so that it will side with the people against imperialism. Even after the task of opposing imperialism and feudalism is in the main accomplished, we must still keep our alliance with the national bourgeoisie for a certain period. This will be advantageous in dealing with imperialist aggression, in expanding production and stabilising the market and also in winning over and remoulding bourgeois intellectuals.

“..Towards the national bourgeoisie a policy of ‘both unity and struggle’ should be adopted. Unite with them in the common fight against imperialism and support all their anti-imperialist words and deeds, while waging an appropriate struggle against their reactionary, anti-working class and anti-Communist words and deeds. It is wrong to be on sided; struggle without unity is a ‘Left’ deviationist mistake and unity without struggle is a Right deviationist mistake....

“In countries under the oppression of imperialism and feudalism the political party of the proletariat should raise the national banner and must have a programme of national unity by which to unite with all the forces that can be united, excluding the running dogs of imperialism. Let the whole nation see how patriotic the Communist Party is, how peace-loving and how desirous of national unity. This will help isolate imperialism and its running dogs, and the big landlord class and the bi bourgeoisie too.”<sup>135</sup>

This thus is the Marxist basis and understanding of the united front in colonies and semi-colonies, as developed by Mao.

#### **4. FORMS OF STRUGGLE**

Forms of struggle, which are an important component of the tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat, varying in accordance with the varying conditions in individual countries, ebb and flow of the movement, the strength of the subjective forces, and so on. Forms of struggle may be peaceful or violent, bloody or bloodless, legal or illegal, parliamentary or extra parliamentary, so on and so forth. That depend on the concrete historical conditions.

As described by Lenin, the Marxist approach to the question o forms of struggle should be as follows:

“What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of the forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by the fact that’ it does not bind the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It admits the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not ‘invent’ them; but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to

all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which; as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and offence. Marxism, therefore, positively does not renounce any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle that are possible and that exist at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematisers' in the seclusion of their studies.....

"In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat the question apart from the concrete historical situation means failing to understand the ABC of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary; auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position;

"These are the two principal theoretical precepts by which we must be guided."136

Marx and Engels gave utmost importance to the violent overthrow of the social conditions. As explained in the concluding paragraph of the Communist Manifesto, "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."137

Thus the founders of Marxism were clear that the transition from capitalism to socialism could not be a peaceful transition, i.e., transition to socialism by the parliamentary road, the road proposed by revisionists like Bernstein, Kautsky and Khrushchev. It is while replying to the revisionists that Lenin spoke of, "civil war, without which not a single one of the great revolutions of history has taken place, and without which not a single serious Marxist has conceived the transition from capitalism to socialism." 138 The great revolutions that Lenin here spoke of included the bourgeois-democratic revolutions where one exploiting class overthrew another. Therefore it was all the more clear that this principle would be all the more applicable to a revolution aiming to abolish exploitation altogether.

Stalin presented the question of the proletarian revolution in the following manner:

"To think that such a revolution can be carried out peacefully, within the framework of bourgeois democracy, which is adapted to the rule of the bourgeoisie, means that one has either gone out of one's mind and lost normal human understanding, or has grossly and openly repudiate the proletarian revolution."139

Mao too emphasised that power flows through the barrel of the gun. He said,

"Experience in the class struggle in the era of imperialism teaches us that it is only by the power of the gun that the working class and the labouring masses can defeat the armed bourgeoisie and landlords; in this sense we may say that only with guns can the whole world transformed. We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun."140

## Forms of Armed Revolution

“The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for C and for all other countries.

“But while the principle remains the same, its application by the party of the proletariat finds expression in varying ways according to the varying conditions. Internally, capitalist countries practise bourgeois democracy (not feudalism) when they are not fascist or not at war; in their external relations, they are not oppressed by, but themselves oppress, other nations. Because of these characteristics, it is the task of the party of the proletariat in the capitalist countries to educate the workers and build up strength through a long period of legal struggle, and thus prepare for the final overthrow of capitalism. In these countries, the question is one of a long legal struggle, of utilising parliament as a platform, of economic and political strikes, of organising trade unions and educating the workers. There the form of organisation is legal and the form of struggle bloodless (non-military)... The one war they want to fight is the civil war for which they are preparing. But this insurrection and war would not be launched until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless, until the majority of the proletariat are determined to rise in arms and fight, and until the rural masses are giving willing help to the proletariat. And when the time comes to launch such an insurrection and war, the first step will be to seize the cities, and then advance into the countryside, and not the other way about. All this has been done by Communist Parties in capitalist countries, and it has been proved correct by the October Revolution in Russia.

“China is different however. The characteristics of China are that she is not independent and democratic but semi-colonial and semi-feudal, that internally she has no democracy but is under feudal oppression and that in her external relations she has no national independence but is oppressed by imperialism. It follows that we have no parliament to make use of and no legal right to organise the workers to strike. Basically, the task of the Communist Party here is not to go through a long period of legal struggle before launching insurrection and war, and not to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but the reverse. ..

“In China war is the main form of struggle and the army is the main form of organisation. Other forms such as mass organisation and mass struggle are also extremely important and indeed indispensable and in no circumstances to be overlooked, but their purpose is to serve the war. Before the outbreak of a war all organisation and struggle are in preparation for the war, as in the period from the May 4th Movement of 1919 to the May 30th Movement of 1925. After war breaks out, all organisation and struggle are co-ordinated with the war either directly or indirectly, .....”<sup>144</sup>

The above observation of Mao is a summation of the experiences gained by the proletariat for over a century of class struggles. That the revolution in the capitalist country where bourgeois democratic revolution is completed will take the form of armed insurrection has been borne out by historical experiences.

The principles governing the armed insurrection were written in great detail by Marx while analysing the various bourgeois revolutions in which the proletariat played a crucial role in the 19th century. Lenin summarised Marx's principles in the following manner:

“But armed insurrection is a special form of political struggle, one subject to special laws which must be attentively pondered over. Karl Marx expressed this truth in a remarkably clear-cut way when he wrote that armed ‘insurrection is an art quite as much as war.’

“Of the principal rules of this art, Marx noted the following:

1) Never play with insurrection, but, when beginning it, finally realise that you must go to the end.

2) Concentrate a great superiority of forces at the decisive point, at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents.

3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest determination, and by all means, without fail, take the offensive. ‘The defensive is the death of every armed rising.’

4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

5) You must strive for daily (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town) successes, however small, and at all costs retain the ‘moral ascendancy.’

“Marx summed up the lessons of all revolutions in respect to armed insurrection in the words of ‘Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary tactics yet known: *de l’audace, de l’audace, encore de l’audace!*’ (Boldness, boldness and again boldness).”<sup>145</sup>

Lenin also, on the eve of the October revolution, while preparing for the insurrection, gave the Marxist understanding of the conditions for the success of an insurrection. He said:

“To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon such a turning point in the history of the growing revolution at which the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and at which the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That is the third point....”

“once these conditions are present, to refuse to treat insurrection as an art is to betray Marxism and to betray the revolution.”<sup>146</sup>

### **Mao’s Theory of Protracted People’s War**

Mao applied the principles of dialectical materialism, and particularly of contradictions, to the study of war and particularly to China’s revolutionary war. He thus summed up the characteristics of the revolutionary war and also determined the questions of principle governing the strategy and tactics of the war. These principles are of great relevance to the revolutions in all colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Mao sums up as follows:

“... The four principal characteristics of China’s revolutionary war are: a vast semi-colonial country which is unevenly developed politically and economically and which has gone through a great revolution; a big and powerful enemy; a small and weak Red Army; and the agrarian revolution. These characteristics determine the line for guiding China’s revolutionary war as well as many of its strategic and tactical principles. It follows from the first and fourth characteristics that it is possible for the Chinese Red Army to grow and defeat its enemy. It follows from the second and third characteristics that it is impossible for the Chinese Red Army to grow very rapidly or defeat its enemy quickly: in other words, the war will be protracted and may even be lost if it is mishandled.

“These are the two aspects of China’s revolutionary war. They exist simultaneously, that is, there are favourable factors and there are difficulties. This is the fundamental law of China’s revolutionary war, from which many other laws ensue....”

In 1945 CPC *Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party*, summarises Mao’s military line as follows:

“Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s military line proceeds from two fundamental points. First, our army is and can be an army of only one kind; it must be an instrument subordinate to the ideological leadership of the proletariat and serving the struggle of the people and the building of revolutionary base areas. Second, our war is and can be a war of only one kind; it must be a war in which we recognise that the enemy is strong and we are weak, That the enemy is big and we are small, and in

which therefore we fully utilise the enemy's weaknesses and our strong points and fully rely on the strength of the masses for survival, victory and expansion. From the first point, it follows that the Red Army must fight whole-heartedly for the line, programme and policies of the Party, that is, for all the manifold interests of the whole people, and must combat the tendencies towards warlordism which run counter to this. Therefore, the Red Army must oppose the purely military point of view and the roving-rebel ideology, according to which the military does not obey the political, or even commands the politics. The Red Army must simultaneously shoulder the threefold task of fighting, doing mass work and raising funds (which at present means production); doing mass work means becoming a propagandist and organiser for the Party and for the people's political power and means helping the local people in land distribution (at present, the reduction of rent and interest) and in establishing armed forces, organs of political power, and Party organisations, hence, in its relations with the government and the people, it is required that the Red Army scrupulously respect the organs of the people's political power and the mass organisations, strengthen their prestige and strictly observe the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention. Within the army it is necessary to establish a correct relationship between officers and men and to have both an appropriate democratic life and an authoritative military discipline based on political consciousness. In the work among the enemy troops, it is necessary to have a correct policy for disintegrating enemy forces and winning over prisoners. From the second point of departure, it follows that the Red Army had to recognise that, during the period of the Agrarian Revolutionary War, guerilla warfare and mobile warfare of a guerilla character were the main forms of warfare, and must recognise that only a people's war, in which the main forces are integrated with regional forces, the regular army with guerrilla units and people's militia, and the armed masses with the unarmed masses, can bring victory over an enemy many times stronger than ourselves. Hence, in strategy, the Red Army must oppose a war of quick decision, and in tactics, must oppose protracted fighting; in strategy, it must adhere firmly to protracted warfare and in tactics, to quick decisions; in campaigns and battles it must oppose the use of the few to defeat the many and must adhere firmly to the use of the many to defeat the few. The Red Army must therefore carry out the following strategic and tactical principles:

“Divide our forces to arouse the masses, concentrate our forces to deal with the enemy.

“The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.

To extend stable base areas, employ the policy of advancing in waves; when pursued by a powerful enemy, employ the policy of circling around.

“Lure the enemy in deep.

“Concentrate superior forces, pick out of the enemy's weak spots, and fight when you are sure of wiping out part, or the greater part, of the enemy in mobile warfare, so as to crush the enemy forces one by one.”<sup>148</sup>

These principles, representing Mao's valuable contribution to the science of Marxism and war have become the basis and guide for revolutionary war in the colonies and semi-colonies.

## **5. TACTICS DURING WAR**

### **Just and Unjust Wars**

“With reference to wars, the main thesis of dialectics, ..... is that ‘war is simply the continuation of politics by other (i.e., violent) means’. Such is the formula of Clausewitz, one of the greatest writers on the history of war, whose thinking was stimulated by Hegel. And it was always the standpoint of Marx and Engels, who regarded any war as the continuation of the, politics of the powers concerned-and the various classes within these countries-in a definite period.”<sup>149</sup> – Lenin.

“From the point of view of Marxism, that is, of modern scientific socialism, the main issue in any discussion by socialists on how to assess the war and what attitude to adopt towards it is this: what is the war being waged for, and what classes staged and directed it. We Marxists do not belong to that category of people who are unqualified opponents of all war. We say: our aim is to achieve a socialist system of society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, by eliminating all exploitation of man by man and nation by nation, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war. But in the war to win the socialist system of society we are bound to encounter conditions under which the class struggle within each given nation may come up against a war between the different nations, a war conditioned by this very class struggle. Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility of revolutionary wars, i.e., wars arising from the class struggle, wars waged by revolutionary classes, wars which are of direct and immediate revolutionary significance.”<sup>150</sup>

“The Great French Revolution ushered in a new epoch in the history of mankind. From that time down to the Paris Commune, i.e., between 1789 and 1871, one type of war was of a bourgeois-progressive character, waged for national liberation. In other words, the overthrow of absolutism and feudalism, the undermining of these institutions, and the overthrow of alien oppression, formed the chief content and historical significance of such wars. These were therefore progressive wars; during such wars, all honest and revolutionary democrats, as well as all socialists, always wished success to that country (i.e., that bourgeoisie) which had helped to overthrow or undermine the most baneful foundations of feudalism, absolutism and the oppression of other nations. ...

“...When, in speaking of the wars of such periods, socialists stressed the legitimacy of ‘defensive’ wars, they always had these aims in mind, namely revolution against medievalism and serfdom. By a ‘defensive’ war socialists have always understood a ‘just’ war in this particular sense... It is only in this sense that socialists have always regarded wars ‘for the defence of the fatherland’, or ‘defensive’ wars, as legitimate, progressive and just.”<sup>151</sup>

Thus if the colonies waged war against their imperialist masters it would be a just progressive war. Thus he said, in 1915, “For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be ‘just’, ‘defensive’ wars, irrespective of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory ‘Great’ Powers.

“But imagine a slave-holder who owns 100 slaves waning against another who owns 200 slaves, for a more ‘just’ redistribution of slaves. The use of the term of a ‘defensive’ war, or a war ‘for the defence of the fatherland’, would clearly be historically false in such a case and would in practice be sheer deception of the common people, petty-bourgeois, and the ignorant, by the astute slave-holders.”<sup>151</sup>

Thus the wars waged by imperialist powers were compared to wars between slave-holders for a so-called just re-division of slaves, and were therefore historically reactionary and totally unjust. Thus socialists are against wars waged by imperialism and against the slogan “defence of the fatherland” given by the imperialist: bourgeoisie. However says Lenin, in 1916, “We are not at all against ‘defence of the fatherland’ in general, not against ‘defensive wars’ in general. .... We are against defence of the fatherland and defensive position in the imperialist war of 1914-16 [i.e., World War I] and in other imperialist wars, typical of the imperialist epoch. But in the imperialist epoch there may be also ‘just’, ‘defensive’, revolutionary wars namely (1) national, (2) civil, (3) socialist and suchlike.”<sup>152</sup>

In this manner Lenin developed Marx’s theory of just and unjust war. Marx during the era of bourgeois revolution supported the wars waged by the then revolutionary bourgeoisie against feudal reaction as progressive, revolutionary and just. The guiding principle was therefore support to those wars that would fight feudal reaction, take ahead the bourgeois revolution, and thus facilitate the path to socialism. In the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, Lenin similarly categorised as

revolutionary and just, all wars waged by the proletariat – whether waged within a country as civil war or as a socialist war for defence of a socialist base; and all wars waged by oppressed nations - national liberation wars. Here too the guiding principle was the need to carry forward the World Socialist Revolution.

### **Tactics during Imperialist War**

Following from the above understanding, during World War I, Lenin presented the Marxist tactics in the following manner:

“The war has undoubtedly created a most acute crisis and has immeasurably increased the distress of the masses. The reactionary nature of this war, and the unblushing lies told by the bourgeoisie of all countries to conceal their predatory aims with ‘national’ ideology are, on the basis of an objectively revolutionary situation, inevitably creating revolutionary moods among the masses. It is our duty to help the masses become conscious of these moods, deepen them and give them shape. This task finds correct expression only in the slogan: convert the imperialist war into a civil war; all consistently waged class struggles in wartime and all seriously conducted ‘mass-action’ tactics inevitably lead to this. It is impossible to foretell whether a powerful revolutionary movement will flare up in connection with, during or after the first or the second imperialist war of the Great Powers; in any case it is our bounden duty to work systematically and unswervingly in this direction...

“A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, and cannot fail to see that the latter’s military reverses must facilitate its overthrow.”<sup>153</sup> Thus “the socialists of all the belligerent countries should express their wish that all their ‘own’ governments would be defeated... it is a statement of this kind that would be in keeping with the innermost thoughts of every class-conscious worker, and be in line with our activities for the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war.”<sup>153</sup>

“The temper of the masses in favour of peace often expresses the beginning of protest, anger and a realisation of the reactionary nature of the war. It is the duty of all Social-Democrats to utilise that temper. They will take a most ardent part in any movement and in any demonstration motivated by that sentiment, but they will not deceive the people with admitting the idea that a peace without annexations, without oppression of nations, without plunder, and without the embryo of new wars among the present governments and ruling classes, is possible in the absence of a revolutionary movement... Whoever wants a lasting and democratic peace must stand for civil war against the governments and the bourgeoisie.”<sup>153</sup>

These thus were the tactics of the revolutionary Marxists during World War I. They were however rejected by all the leaderships of the revisionist parties of the Second International. The Bolsheviks were the only ones to implement these tactics and were successful in achieving the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

During the period of World War II, Stalin and the Third International, adopted the basis of the same Marxist-Leninist principles to arrive at the tactics of the proletariat during the war. Thus at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, as the war danger was increasing the resolution on the danger of a new world war said:

“The communists, while fighting also against the illusion that war can be eliminated while the capitalist system still exists, are exerting and will exert every effort to prevent war. Should a new imperialist world war break out, despite all efforts of the working class to prevent it, the communists will strive to lead the opponents of war, organised in the struggle for peace, to the struggle for the transformation of the imperialist war into **civil** war against the fascist instigators of war, against the bourgeoisie, for the overthrow of capitalism....

“At the present historical juncture, when on one-sixth part of the globe the Soviet Union defends socialism and peace for all humanity, the most vital interests of the workers and toilers of all countries demand that in pursuing the policy of the working class, in waging the struggle for peace, the struggle against imperialist war before and after the outbreak of hostilities, the defence of the Soviet Union must be considered paramount.

“If the commencement of a counter-revolutionary war forces the Soviet Union to set the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army in motion for the defence of socialism, the communists will call upon all toilers to work, with all the means at their disposal and-at any price, for the victory of the Red Army over the armies of the imperialists.”<sup>154</sup>

This was the basis for the tactics of the proletariat when the war broke out in 1939. In the period up to June 1941, before the Soviet Union was attacked and forced into the war, the war was a reactionary, unjust, imperialist war and the proletariat’s tactics were to turn the war into civil war. After the attack and the involvement of the Soviet Red Army, the nature of the war changed for the proletariat and all toilers of the world. Their fatherland, the land of socialism, was under attack and its defence became paramount. Thus the war became a just, progressive and defensive war for saving and developing the forces of socialism, against the attacks of the forces of imperialism.

### **Mao’s Development of the Line on World War and Peace**

Immediately after World War II in 1946, Mao gave the following understanding as to the possibility of a third world war: “I think the American people and the peoples of all countries menaced by U.S. aggression should unite and struggle against the attacks of the U.S. reactionaries and their running dogs in these countries. Only by victory in this struggle can a third world war be avoided; otherwise it is unavoidable.”<sup>155</sup> The essence of this understanding that only people’s struggles against imperialism and revolution can prevent the third world war continues to be the basis of the Marxist understanding.

Thus when Khrushchev came out with his revisionist understanding of peace, the CPC under the guidance of Mao, gave the following understanding on the question:

“Since World War II, people everywhere have been vigorously demanding world peace. More and more people have come to understand that to defend world peace it is imperative to wage struggles against the imperialist policies of aggression and war...

“Marxist-Leninists throughout the world are duty bound to treasure the peace sentiments of the people and to stand in the forefront of the struggle for world peace. They are duty bound to struggle against the imperialists’ policies of aggression and war, to expose their deceptions and defeat their plans for war. They are duty bound to educate the people, raise their political consciousness and guide the struggle for world peace in the proper direction.”<sup>156</sup>

“... our difference with the leaders of the CPSU on the question of war and peace is one between two different lines – whether or not to oppose imperialism, whether or not to support revolutionary struggles, whether or not to mobilise the people of the world against the imperialist war plans and whether or not to adhere to Marxism-Leninism.

“Like all other genuine revolutionary parties, the Communist Party of China has always been in the forefront of the struggle against imperialism and for world peace. We hold that to defend world peace it is necessary constantly to expose imperialism and to arouse and organise the people in struggle against the imperialists headed by the United States, and it is necessary to place reliance on the growth of the strength of the socialist camp, on the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and working people of all countries, on the liberation struggles of the oppressed nations, on the struggles of all peace-loving peoples and countries and on the broad united front against U.S. imperialism and its lackeys.

“..With this line, it is possible ceaselessly to raise the political consciousness of the people and to expand the struggle for world peace in the right direction.

“With this line, it is possible constantly to strengthen the forces for world peace with the socialist camp as their core and strike at and weaken the imperialist forces for war.

“With this line, it is possible to turn to account all available factors, including the contradictions between U.S. imperialism and the other imperialist powers, and to isolate U.S. imperialism to the fullest extent.

“With this line, it is possible to smash the nuclear blackmail practised by U.S. imperialism and defeat its plan for launching a new world war. “This is the line for the people of all countries to win both victory in revolution and world peace. It is the sure and effective road in defence of world peace.”<sup>157</sup>

Refuting Khrushchev’s propaganda that support to national liberation and revolutionary civil wars would provoke a nuclear world war, the CPC and Mao, presented the correct approach of the socialist base to revolutionary struggles as well as to the nuclear question.

“The Communist Party of China has always held that the socialist countries should actively support the peoples’ revolutionary struggles, including wars of national liberation and revolutionary civil wars. To fail to do so would be to renounce their proletarian internationalist duty. At the same time, we hold that the oppressed peoples and nations can achieve liberation only by their own resolute revolutionary struggle and that no one else can do it for them.

“We have always maintained that socialist countries must not use nuclear weapons to support the peoples’ national liberation and revolutionary civil wars and have no need to do so.

“We have always maintained that the countries must achieve and maintain nuclear superiority. Only this can prevent the imperialists from launching a nuclear war and help bring about the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

“We consistently hold that in the hands of a socialist country, nuclear weapons must always be defensive weapons for resisting imperialist nuclear threats. A socialist country absolutely must not be the first to use nuclear weapons, not should it in any circumstances play with them or engage in nuclear blackmail and nuclear gambling.”<sup>158</sup>

Thus Mao, basing himself on the principles formulated by Marx and Lenin, developed the principles for the proletariat to understand and act in the conditions following World War II.

# Chapter XIV

## The Party

The concept of a working class party capable of providing leadership to revolution, took shape during the time of Marx and Engels; it underwent continuous development in the course of Paris Commune, Russian and Chinese revolution and other revolutions; and took qualitative leaps during the times of Lenin and Mao. It was mainly in the fight against the opportunist trends in the international communist movements (both left and right) that Marx, Lenin and Mao developed and enriched the concept of the communist party.

### Marx and Engels on the Working Class Party

In the initial period when the working class was a weak political force, Marx and Engels concentrated mainly on uniting the various dispersed working class forces and forming an independent working class party independent of the parties of other classes. Thus the Communist Manifesto proclaimed,

“The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

“They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.”<sup>159</sup>

The rules of the First International founded by Marx stated,

“The working class can act as a class only by establishing a distinct political party, opposed to all the old parties formed by the possessing classes.”<sup>160</sup>

Thus the founders of Marxism, primarily had the task of the ‘formation of the proletariat into a class’, of fusing Marxism with the proletariat, of the formation of a party with ‘no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole’.

It was according to these considerations therefore that the Provisional Rules, or Constitution of the First International began “with a preamble calling for organisation, as follows:

“That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for the equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule;

“That the economical subjection of the man of labour to the monopolizer of the means of labour, that is, the source of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence;

“That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinated as a means;

“That all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed for the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries;

“That the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries;

“That the present revival of the working classes in the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and calls for the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements.’”<sup>161</sup>

Thus the prime organisational considerations of Marx and Engels at that period were the ‘want of solidarity’ between the ‘still disconnected movements’ and therefore the need to unite them at the national and international level.

However, from the very beginning, they put forward, in a preliminary form, the concepts of the Communists as the vanguard, as the advanced detachment of the proletariat. The Communist Manifesto therefore stated,

“The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.” 159

It was Marx who drew the Inaugural Address and Provisional Rules, the first programme and constitution of The First International.

A continuous struggle had to be waged against various wrong trends in the International which grew stronger during 1860s. Sections of the International were created in several countries of Western Europe. As noted by Marx himself, “The International was founded in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by real organisation of the working class for struggle.... The history of the international was a continual struggle of the General Council against the sects and against amateur experiments, which sought to assert themselves within the International against the real movement of the working class.” (Quoted in Foster William Z., *History of the Three Internationals*, p. 45)

The major trends against which Marx and Engels had to wage a constant and bitter struggle were Anarchism led by Bakunin and other leaders who claimed adherence to Proudhon; Blanquist trend led by Luis Blanqui, the French working class leader, which relied more on conspiratorial methods. All these took active part in the Paris Commune of 1871, but most of these trends deteriorated or the active elements went over to Marxism convinced by the brilliant analysis put forth by Marx regarding the reasons for the Commune’s failure.

### **The Party of a New Type**

Due to the efforts of Marx and Engels working class parties accepting a Marxist ideological basis were formed *in* most capitalist countries by the turn of the century. However these parties which grew in the relatively peaceful period following the Paris Commune developed various wrong trends particularly in the period of the ascendancy of the opportunists within the Second International. These parties were oriented basically towards parliamentary struggle. As Stalin describes them, they were “unfit for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, that they (were) not militant parties of the proletariat, leading the workers to power, but election machines adapted for parliamentary elections and parliamentary struggle... the party at that time was really an appendage and subsidiary of the parliamentary group ... under such circumstances and with such a party at the helm there could be no question of preparing the proletariat for revolution.”<sup>162</sup>

Further, matters changed radically with the dawn of imperialism and with intense revolutionary struggles. “The new period is one of open class collisions, of revolutionary action by the proletariat, of proletarian revolution, a period when forces are being directly mustered for the overthrow of imperialism and the seizure of power by the proletariat. In this period the proletariat is confronted with new tasks, the tasks of reorganising all party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of preparing and moving up reserves; of establishing an alliance with the proletarians of neighbouring countries; of establishing firm ties with liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, etc. etc. To think that these new tasks can be performed by the old Social-Democratic Parties, brought up as they were in the peaceful conditions of parliamentarism, is to doom oneself to hopeless despair, to inevitable defeat. If, with such tasks to shoulder, the proletariat remained under the leadership of the old parties, it would be completely unarmed. ...

“Hence the necessity for a new party, a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians in the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks in the path to its goal.

“Without such a party it is useless even to think of overthrowing imperialism, of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat.

“This new party is the party of Leninism.”<sup>162</sup>

Stalin also outlined the specific features of the party of a new type: “(1) The Party [is] the advanced detachment of the working class.” This means, that “The Party is the political leader of the working class”, it is “the General Staff of the proletariat”, and also that it “is an inseparable part of the working class.”

“(2) The Party [is] the organised detachment of the working class.” This means that “the Party is not merely the sum total of Party organisations.” It “is at the same time a single system of these organisations, their formal union into a single whole, with higher and lower leading bodies, with subordination of the minority to the majority, with practical decisions binding on all members of the Party.”

“(3) The Party [is] the highest form of class organisation of the proletariat. This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, etc., should be officially subordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organisations and are doubtlessly influential in them should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organisations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and voluntarily accept its political leadership.”

“(4) The Party [is] an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat... the proletariat needs the Party not only to achieve the dictatorship; it needs it still more to maintain the dictatorship, to consolidate and expand it in order to achieve the complete victory of socialism.... But from this it follows that when classes disappear and the dictatorship of the proletariat withers away, the Party also will wither away.”

“(5) The Party [is] the embodiment of unity of will, unity incompatible with the existence of factions.”

“(6) The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements.”<sup>163</sup>

Such a new type of Party, Lenin insisted would have to be based on a solid core of professional revolutionaries. His words:

“I assert: (1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organisation of leaders maintaining continuity; (2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously into the struggle, forming the basis of the movement and participating in it, the greater the need for such an organisation and the more solid it must be ...; (3) that the organisation must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; (4) that in an autocratic state, the more we confine membership of such an organisation to professional revolutionaries trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult it will be to unearth the organisation and (5) the greater the number of people from the working class and other social classes who will be able to join the movement and work actively in it.”<sup>164</sup>

The party of a new type as expounded above by Stalin was developed by Lenin in the course of struggle against the opportunism of the Second International, against the peaceful evolutionary theories put forth by Bernstein, Martov, Woolmar Jaures, Mac Donald and other so-called leaders of Social Democracy and labour movements, who only advocated the formation of legal parties and opposed the need to form secret and militant revolutionary parties fit enough to overthrow the exploiting ruling classes and seize political power.

Lenin's *Where to begin?* (1901) and *What is to be done?* (1902) laid out an elaborate plan for building a revolutionary party and laid bare the roots of the opportunist philosophy of the Economists that sought to make the working class an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

The debate of the Economists was followed by the emergence of the new opportunist trend of Menshivism against which Lenin had to wage a bitter battle from the time of the Second Party Congress in 1903. The struggle on the formulation of party rules was an important struggle at the Congress. While Martov, Axelrod, Trotsky and others were for a loose and amorphous party by arguing that party membership should be given to any one who accepts the party programme, and pays his or her financial obligations, although he or she is not willing to be a member of a party unit i.e. abiding the constitution and carrying out the responsibilities entrusted by the party. Lenin, in his famous work *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward* written in 1904, thoroughly exposed the Menshevik principles of party organisation and laid the theoretical basis for the building of a revolutionary proletarian party. The organisational principles expounded in this work later became the organisational foundation of the Bolshevik Party and the parties of the new type.

### **Democratic Centralism**

The organisational structure of the Communist Party is built on the principles of democratic centralism. Lenin explained the theoretical basis for this understanding in the following manner:

“We have already more than once enunciated our theoretical views on the importance of discipline and how this concept is to be understood in the party of the working class. We defined it as unity of action, freedom of discussion and criticism. Only such discipline is worthy of the democratic party of the advanced class. The strength of the working class lies in organisation. Unless the masses are organised, the proletariat is nothing. Organisation – it is everything. Organisation means unity of action, unity in practical operations... Therefore the proletariat does not recognise unity of action without freedom to discuss and criticise.” 165

Thus when Lenin, in 1920, drafted the conditions of admission to the Third International, he included the condition that, “Parties belonging to the Communist International must be based on the principle of democratic centralism.”166

In 1921, the Third Congress in its theses on the organisation and structure of the Communist Party, explained democratic centralism as follows:

“Democratic centralisation in the Communist Party organisation must be a real synthesis, a fusion of centralism and proletarian democracy. This fusion can be achieved only on the basis of constant activity, constant common struggle of the entire Party organisation. Centralisation in the Communist Party organisation does not mean formal and mechanical centralisation but a centralisation of Communist activities, that is to say, the formation of a strong leadership, ready for war and at the same time capable of adaptability.

“In the organisation of the old, non-revolutionary labour movement, there has developed an all-pervading dualism of the same nature as that of the bourgeois state, namely, the dualism between the bureaucracy and the ‘people’. Under this baneful influence of bourgeois environment there has developed a separation of functions, a substitution of barren formal democracy for the living association of common endeavour and the splitting up of the organisation into active functionaries and passive masses. Even the revolutionary labour movement inevitably inherits this tendency to dualism and formalism to a certain extent from the bourgeois environment.

“The Communist Party must fundamentally overcome these contrasts by systematic and persevering political and organising work and by constant improvement and revision.

“..... Centralisation should not merely exist on paper. But be actually carried out, and this is possible of achievement only when the members at large will feel this authority as a fundamentally efficient instrument in their common activity and struggle. Otherwise, it will appear to the masses as

a bureaucracy within the Party and, therefore, likely to stimulate opposition to all centralisation, to all leadership, to all stringent discipline. Anarchism is the opposite pole of bureaucracy.

“Merely formal democracy in the organisation cannot remove either bureaucratic or anarchical tendencies, which have found fertile soil on the basis of just that democracy. Therefore, the centralisation of the organisation, i.e., the aim to create a strong leadership, cannot be successful if its achievement is sought on the basis of formal democracy. The necessary preliminary conditions are the development and maintenance of living associations and mutual relations within the Party between the directing organs and members, as well between the Party and the masses of the proletariat outside the Party.”<sup>167</sup>

Thus the Third International placed the greatest importance on real, and not formal democracy, as the basis for the correct implementation of democratic centralism. However in practice there were often serious deviations in many Communist Parties.

Mao, while fighting against such deviations within the CPC, made a dialectical presentation of the understanding of democratic centralism, that was a significant contribution to the Marxist theory of organisational principles. In a talk given in 1962, Mao said:

“I said in 1957 that we should create ‘a political situation in which we have both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness.’ We should create such a political situation both inside and outside the Party. Otherwise it will be impossible to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses. We cannot overcome difficulties without democracy. Of course, it is even more impossible to do so without centralism. But if there’s no democracy there won’t be any centralism.

“Without democracy there can’t be correct centralism because centralism can’t be established when people have divergent views and don’t have unity of understanding. What is meant by centralism? First, there must be concentration of correct ideas. Unity of understanding, of policy, plan, command and action is attained on the basis of concentrating correct ideas. This is unity through centralism. But if all those concerned are still not clear about the problems, if their opinions are still unexpressed or their anger is still not vented, how can you achieve this unity through centralism? Without democracy, it is impossible to sum up experience correctly. Without democracy, without ideas coming from the masses, it is impossible to formulate good lines, principles, policies or methods.

“Our centralism is centralism built on the foundation of democracy. Proletarian centralism is centralism with a broad democratic base. The Party committees at all levels are the organs which exercise centralised leadership. But leadership by the Party committee means collective, leadership, not arbitrary decision by the first secretary alone. Within Party committees, democratic centralism alone should be practised. The relationship between the first secretary and the other secretaries and committee members is one of the minority being subordinate to the majority. Take the Standing committee or the Political Bureau of the Central Committee by way of example. It often happens that when I say something, regardless of whether it is correct or incorrect, if the others don’t agree, I must accede to their opinion because they are the majority...

“Unless we fully promote people’s democracy and inner-Party democracy and unless we fully implement proletarian democracy, it will be impossible for China to have true proletarian centralism. Without a high degree of democracy it is impossible to have a high degree of centralism and without a high degree of centralism it is impossible to establish a socialist economy. And what will happen to our country if we fail to establish a socialist economy? It will turn into a revisionist state, indeed a bourgeois state, and the dictatorship of the proletariat will turn into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and a reactionary, fascist dictatorship at that. This is a question which very much deserves our vigilance and I hope our comrades will give it a good deal of thought.

“Without democratic centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be consolidated. To practise democracy among the people and to exercise dictatorship over the enemies of the people-

these two aspects are not to be separated.... Without broad democracy for the people, it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be consolidated or for political power to be stable. Without democracy, without arousing the masses and without supervision by the masses, it is impossible to: exercise effective dictatorship over the reactionaries and bad elements or to remould them effectively; they will continue to make trouble and may stage a comeback. We must be vigilant on this question and I hope comrades will give it a good deal of thought too.”<sup>168</sup>

Thus in the dialectical relationship between democracy and centralism, Mao showed that the correct method was ‘first democracy, then centralism’. He also showed the crucial importance of democratic centralism both inside and outside the party. He showed how correct democratic centralism was essential for the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, therefore, the establishment of socialism and the prevention of the restoration of capitalism.

### **Mass-line**

Marxism has always stressed the absolute necessity of the Party’s close links with the masses. This was stressed by Marx and Engels and one of the essential features of the Leninist party. Thus the History of *the CPSU (B)* concludes by drawing a historic lesson of the utmost need for close connections with the masses:

“Lastly, the history of the Party teaches us that unless it has wide connections with the masses, unless it constantly strengthens these connections, unless it knows how to hearken to the voice of the masses and understand their urgent needs; unless it is prepared not only to teach the masses but to learn from the masses, a party of the working class cannot be a real mass party capable of leading the working class millions and all the labouring people.

“A party is invincible if it is able, as Lenin says, ‘to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent if you like, to merge with the broadest masses of the toilers, primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian toiling masses.’ (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ, ed., Vol. XXV, p. 174.)

“A party perishes if it shuts itself up in its narrow party shell, if it severs itself from the masses, if it allows itself to be covered with bureaucratic rust.

“‘We must take it as the rule,’ Comrade Stalin says, ‘that as long as the Bolsheviks maintain connection with the broad masses of the people they will be invincible. And, on the contrary, as soon as the Bolsheviks sever themselves from the masses and lose their connection with them, as soon as they become covered with bureaucratic rust, they **will** lose all their strength and become a mere cipher....

“‘I think that the Bolsheviks remind us of the hero of Greek mythology, Antaeus. They, like Antaeus, are strong because they maintain connection with their mother, the masses, who gave birth to them, suckled them and reared them. And as long as they maintain connection with their mother, with the people, they have every chance of remaining invincible.

“‘That is the clue to the invincibility of Bolshevik leadership.’ (J. Stalin, *Defects in Party Work*.)”<sup>169</sup>

Mao, starting from these basic standpoints, developed the concept of mass-line to a qualitatively new level. At the philosophical level he showed how it was an essential aspect of the Marxist theory of knowledge. At the political and organisational levels, he showed how it was the correct political line and also how it was the essential organisational line of inner-party relations.

“In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily ‘from the masses, to the masses’. This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then

once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.”<sup>170</sup>

The 1945 CPC *Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party*, explains:

“As Comrade Mao Tse-tung says, the correct line should be ‘from the masses, to the masses’. To ensure that the line really comes from the masses and particular that it really goes back to the masses, there must be close ties not only between the Party and the masses outside the Party (between the class and the people), but above all between the Party’s leading bodies and the masses within the Party (between the cadres and the rank and the file); in other words there must be a correct organisational line. Therefore, just as in each period of the Party’s history Comrade Mao Tse-tung has laid down a political line representing the , interests of the masses, so he has laid down an organisational line serving the political line and maintaining ties with the masses both inside and outside the Party.”<sup>171</sup>

“The concept of a correct relationship between the leading group and the masses in an organisation or in a struggle, the concept that correct ideas on the part of the leadership can only be ‘from the masses, to the masses’, and the concept that the general call must be combined with particular guidance when the leadership’s ideas are being put into practice - these concepts must be propagated everywhere - in order to correct the mistaken viewpoints among our cadres on these questions. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, drawing together the activists to form a nucleus of leadership, and they do not see the importance of, or are not good at, linking this nucleus of leadership closely with the masses, and so their leadership become bureaucratic and divorced from the masses. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, summing up the experience of mass struggles, but fancying themselves clever, are fond of voicing their subjectivist ideas, and so their ideas become empty and impractical. Many comrades rest content with making a general call with regard to a task and do not see the importance of, or are not good at, following it up immediately with a particular and concrete guidance, and so their call remains on their lips, or on paper or in the conference room, and their leadership become bureaucratic. ....we must correct these defects and learn to use the methods of combining the leadership with the particular in our study, in the check-up on work and in the examination of cadres’ histories; and we must also apply these methods in all our future work.

“Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership – such is the basic method of leadership.”<sup>170</sup> Briefly, this is the essence of Mao’s mass-line.

## **Two-Line Struggle**

This is another aspect of the Party, regarding which Mao greatly developed Marxist understanding and theory.

The essence of Mao’s understanding followed from Leninist understanding of the unity of will of the Party. Stalin presented this understanding as follows:

“.... iron discipline in the Party is inconceivable without unity of will, without complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of conflicts of opinion within the Party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and conflict of opinion within the Party..... But after a conflict of opinion has been closed, after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members are the necessary conditions without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable...

“... from this it follows that the existence of factions is compatible neither with the Party’s unity nor with its iron discipline.”<sup>172</sup>

Mao totally agreed with the incompatibility of factions in a proletarian party. However he presented the question in a different manner. In 1937, Mao wrote:

“... as long as classes exist, contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party are reflections within the Party of class contradictions. At first, with regard to certain issues, such contradictions may not manifest themselves as antagonistic. But with the development of the class struggle, they may grow and become antagonistic. The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shows us that the contradictions between the correct thinking of Lenin and Stalin and the fallacious thinking of Trotsky, Bukharin and others did, not at first manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but that later they did develop into antagonism. There are similar cases in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. At first the contradictions between the correct thinking of many of our Party comrades and the fallacious thinking of Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and others also did not manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but later they did develop into antagonism. At present the contradiction between correct and incorrect thinking in our Party does not manifest itself in an antagonistic form, and if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism. Therefore, the Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate. But if the people who have committed errors persist in them and aggravate them, there is the possibility that this contradiction will develop into antagonism.”<sup>173</sup>

Thus Mao’s approach, based on dialectical materialism was to see incorrect opinions within the Communist Party as the reflection of alien classes in society. Thus as long as the class struggle continued in society there was bound to be its reflection in the ideological struggle within the Party. His approach towards these contradictions too was different. He saw them as non-antagonistic contradictions initially which through ‘serious struggle’ we should try to rectify. We should give ample opportunity to rectify and only if the people committing errors ‘persist’ or ‘aggravate them’, then there was the possibility of the contradiction becoming antagonistic.

This was a correction of Stalin’s presentation which saw, “The theory of ‘defeating’ opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of ‘overcoming’ these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity,.. Our Party succeeded in achieving internal unity and unexampled cohesion of its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of Liquidators and Mensheviks.”<sup>174</sup> Such a presentation refused the possibility of a non-antagonistic contradiction and treated the struggle against opportunism as an antagonistic contradiction from the very beginning.

Drawing lessons from the same historical experience, Mao presented the methods of inner-Party struggle in the following manner. In a talk at a Working Conference in 1962, he said, “All leading members of the Party must promote inner-Party democracy and let people speak out. What are the limits? One is that Party discipline must be observed, the minority being subordinate to the majority and the entire membership to the Central Committee. Another limit is that no secret faction must be organised. We are not afraid of open opponents, we are only afraid of secret opponents. Such people do not speak the truth to your face, what they say is only lies and deceit. They don’t express their real intention. As long as a person doesn’t violate discipline and doesn’t engage in secret factional activities, we should allow him to speak out and shouldn’t punish him if he says wrong things. If people say wrong things, they can be criticised, but we should convince them with reason. What if they are still not convinced? As long as they abide by the resolutions and the decisions taken by the majority, the minority can reserve their opinions.”

It was thus-according to this understanding that even during the Cultural Revolution, in October 1966, Mao suggested that even the chief capitalist roaders like Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping should be allowed to reform themselves. He said, "Liu and Teng acted openly, not in secret, they were not like P'eng Chen. In the past Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao, Wang Ming, Lo Lung-Chang, Li Li-san all acted openly; that's not so serious. ....those who are secretive will come to no good end. Those who follow the wrong line should reform, but Chen, Wang and Li did not reform.

"Cliques and factions of whatever description should be strictly excluded. The essential thing is that they should reform, that their ideas should conform, and that they should unite with us. Then things will be all right. We should allow Liu and Teng to make revolution and to reform themselves. .... We shouldn't condemn Liu Shao-chi out of hand. If they have made mistakes they can change, can't they? When they have changed it will be all right. Let them pull themselves together, and throw themselves courageously into their work."176

Mao's understanding thus was on the clear basis that as long as class struggle existed in society there was bound to be the class struggle in the Party, i.e., the two-line struggle. Therefore it was only correct that this struggle should be fought out openly according the principles of democratic centralism. This contrasted with Stalin's understanding about which Mao commented in his above mentioned talk, "In 1936 Stalin talked about the elimination of class struggle, but in 1939 he carried out another purge of counter-revolutionaries. Wasn't that class struggle too? It was clear therefore that Mao through his understanding and implementation of the concept of two-line struggle attempted to bring about a correct dialectical approach to classes class struggle and inner-party struggle.

# Chapter XV

## The National Question

### Marxist Understanding Regarding Early Nationality Movements

The earliest national movements arose in Western Europe. The bourgeoisie in their fight against the old unstable feudal monarchies, set up modern independent states which were in most cases single-nation states: that is to say, each country was occupied by a single people speaking a common language. Lenin explained the material basis of these movements:

“Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speaks a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

“Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states, under which these conditions of modern capitalism are best satisfied.”<sup>178</sup>

In the whole of Western Europe, only on the British Isles, was there a national minority large enough to give rise to a struggle for independence. The English failed to consolidate their conquest of Ireland, and during the eighteenth century there arose an Irish national movement. Marx and Engels lived in this period, when the national movements of East Europe were yet to emerge, and the upsurge of struggles against imperialism were yet to become a reality. They thus did not devote much attention to developing Marxist theory on the national question. Marx however formulated the basic stand in relation to the Irish Question by calling on the English proletariat to support the national struggle of the Irish people and oppose its national oppression. Marx and Engels took the position that, the liberation of Ireland was a condition for the victory of the English working class. A resolution of the First International drafted by Marx said “A people which enslaves others forges its own chains”<sup>179</sup>

The next phases of nationality movements came in Eastern Europe, with the spread of capitalism, and the weakening of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. It was during this period that Stalin, in 1913, made the first systematic Marxist presentation on the national question. He defined a nation as “a historically evolved, stable community of people, based upon the common possession of four principal attributes, namely: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life, and a common psychological make-up manifesting itself in common specific features of national culture.”<sup>80</sup> Further he saw a nation as “not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism.”<sup>181</sup> Stalin concentrated his analysis on the multinational states of Eastern Europe which were then experiencing a growth of capitalist relations. Further since Marxism had at that time not yet made a complete analysis of imperialism, his analysis could not sufficiently explain the national question of the colonies and semi-colonies. Colonies do not qualify as nations under Stalin’s definition. Colonies and semi-colonies did not really possess an integrated economy given their dependent economic status. And equally inapplicable was the concept of ‘rising capitalism’ to the position of these societies.

## **Leninist Linking of the National and Colonial Question**

The development of a theory which does apply to colonies and semi-colonies was begun by Lenin only two years after the publication of Stalin's article. It was with the development of the theory of imperialism that this came about. Thus, in the words of Stalin:

“Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between whites and blacks, between Europeans and Asians, between the ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ slaves of imperialism, and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies. The national question was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international problem, into a world problem of the liberation of the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.”<sup>182</sup>

Lenin explained the situation regarding the self-determination of nations and the tasks of the proletariat in the face of different situations in different countries. He divided the countries of the world into “three main types:

“First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States of America. In these countries the bourgeois, progressive, national movements came to an end long ago. Every one of these ‘great’ nations oppresses other nations in the colonies and within its own country. The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the nineteenth century in relation to Ireland.

“Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia. Here it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggle. The tasks of the proletariat in these countries – in regard to the consummation of their bourgeois-democratic reformation, as well as in regard to assisting the socialist revolution in other countries cannot be achieved unless it champions the right of nations to self-determination. In this connection the most difficult but most important task is to merge the class struggle of the workers in the oppressing nations with the class struggle of the workers in the oppressed nations.

“Thirdly, the semi-colonial countries, like China, Persia, Turkey, and all the colonies, which have a combined population amounting to a billion. In these countries the bourgeois-democratic movements have either hardly begun, or are far from having been completed. Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation - and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing more nor less than the recognition of the right to self-determination – but must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their rebellion-and if need be, their revolutionary war against the imperialist powers that oppress them.”<sup>183</sup>

This thesis thus summarised the stand of the revolutionaries as unequivocal advocacy to the right of self-determination and total support to the struggle for national liberation. To the criticism that the proletariat is internationalist and favours the merger of nations, Lenin explained the material basis and the proletariat's standpoint.

Thus Lenin pointed out, “Developing capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the break-down of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.

“Both tendencies are a universal law of capitalism. The former predominates in the beginning of its development, the latter characterises a mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society. The Marxists' national programme takes both tendencies into

account, and advocates firstly, the equality of nations and languages and the impermissibility of all privileges in this respect (and also the right of nations to self-determination,...); secondly, the principle of internationalism and uncompromising struggle against contamination of the proletariat with bourgeois nationalism, even of the most refined kind.”<sup>184</sup>

Thus, Lenin says, “The aim of socialism is not only to abolish the present division of mankind into small states and all national isolation; not only to bring the nations closer to each other, but also to merge them.”<sup>185</sup> This merger of nations cannot however be achieved by the forced merger of nations; it can only be achieved by them achieving full freedom and merging in a voluntary union. Thus, “Just as mankind can achieve the abolition of classes only by passing through the transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can achieve the inevitable merging of nations only by passing through the transition period of complete liberation of all the oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede.”<sup>185</sup>

This applied all the more to the proletarian state. That is why when Lenin presented the Revision of the Party Programme in October 1917, he insisted, “We want free unification; that is why we must recognise the right to secede. Without freedom to secede, unification cannot be called free.”

### **National Liberation Struggle**

On the basis of the Leninist understanding of the National Question, it is clear that in the colonies and semi-colonies, it is imperialism that generates nationalism. “In colonial and semi-colonial nations there is no epoch of rising capitalism, i.e., no epoch dominated by a rising domestic bourgeoisie. Domination is exercised by foreign monopolists and the big bourgeoisie which is depending upon it, i.e., the bourgeoisie, is comprador in nature.

“Under these circumstances, the nation is not the outcome of a struggle waged primarily by a rising bourgeoisie against the fetters of feudalism. It is the outcome mainly of an anti-imperialist struggle waged by all the oppressed classes, primarily of the toiling masses. In order to achieve victory in this struggle, the establishment of the hegemony of the working class is a historical necessity.

“Thus colonial nationalism and the national liberation struggle would lead not to a form of ‘mature capitalism’ but to socialism. Therefore, it is not a part of the old bourgeois democratic revolution, but of the new democratic revolution, the essence of which is agrarian revolution.”<sup>187</sup>

These national liberation struggles and democratic revolutions of the new type have become the main trend in the period after Lenin. Drawing attention to this trend Mao says, “A weak nation can defeat a strong, a small nation can defeat a big. The people of a small country can certainly defeat oppression by a big country, if only they dare to rise in struggle, dare to take up arms, and grasp in their own hands the destiny of their country. This is a law of history.”<sup>188</sup>

Another aspect of this trend is the growing to life and the upsurge of the national liberation struggles of the nations within the multi-national states formed in the semi-colonies. “After Lenin, particularly from the second world war period, two important things have taken place in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. First is that the national movement has become a thing of the present, the second is that many of the colonial countries, instead of becoming free democracies, were changed into states wholly dependent upon the imperialists economically, financially and militarily, under the guise of politically dependent states. When we say that national movement has become a thing of the present, we mean that national formation have taken place in backward multinational colonies and semi-colonial countries. Since these colonial countries were changed into semi-colonial countries, the newly emerged nations are not only subjected to the domination of the ruling big bourgeois national chauvinists of their own countries who control their central governments. Therefore, the newly emerged oppressed nations of the multinational semi-colonial countries are

suffering under double yoke. Hence, along with the task of liberating the country from imperialists the task of fighting for the right to self-determination of these oppressed nations of these countries also comes to the forefront.”<sup>187</sup>

How the proletariat in these countries and nations grasps the national question, according to Marxist principles, and how it implements this understanding, is of crucial importance to the success of revolution not only in these countries but also to the progress of world socialist revolution.

# CONCLUSION

## MLM is Not a Dogma but a Guide to Action

“The Marxist-Leninist theory must not be regarded as a collection of dogmas, as a catechism, as a symbol of faith, and the Marxists themselves as pedants and dogmatists.

“Mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory does not at all mean learning all its formulas and conclusions by heart and clinging to their every letter. To master the Marxist-Leninist theory we must first of all learn to distinguish between its letter and substance.

“Mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory means assimilating the substance of this theory and learning to use it in the solution of the practical problems of the revolutionary movement under the varying conditions of the class struggle of the proletariat.

“Mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory means being able to enrich this theory with the new experience of the revolutionary movement, with new propositions and conclusions, it means being able to develop it and advance it without hesitating to replace – in accordance with the substance of the theory – such of its propositions and conclusions as have become antiquated by new ones corresponding to the new historical situation.

“The Marxist-Leninist theory is not a dogma but a guide to action.”

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