

MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM
BASIC COURSE
LARGE PRINT EDITION



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Most of us revolutionary activists are “practical” people. We feel, “Why bother about ideology, and theory, and such other things, ...that is for the scholars and ‘intellectuals,’ ...the most important thing is to get on with the job.” The lower level activists and members feel that it is sufficient that the Central Committee and the higher committees do study and provide guidance, and often many members in the higher committees also feel that other work is too pressing to “allow” much time for theory.

On the other hand, there are a few others who feel it is necessary to know every work of the Great

Teachers in order to work “properly.” They spend a large amount of time trying to read everything. They also have a tendency to treat everything they read as dogma.

It is necessary to avoid both these attitudes in our study. All comrades should give sufficient time and attention to study in order to understand the essence of our ideology—Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM). Rather than knowing by heart a large number of books, it is necessary to understand deeply the essential and basic aspects of our guiding ideology. If we do this and learn to apply it in our day-to-day work we can greatly improve our practice, both as individual activists, as well as, of the Party as

a whole. Very often we understand and analyse the world around us only according to our own limited experiences and therefore arrive at wrong conclusions. A proper understanding of MLM can help us overcome such errors. At other times, a superficial understanding can lead to going by only the letter of certain party decisions and stands and not understanding their essence and spirit. Such mistakes can also be avoided by a deeper grasp of MLM. By our study of MLM, we learn from the positive and negative experiences of world revolution; we learn to absorb the good in it, and we learn to differentiate between the good and the bad in our own practice. We thus learn to recognise, criticise and fight all types of opportunism. In short,

MLM is a must in order to mould our practice in the light of theory.

This Basic Course in MLM is intended to present to activists an understanding of the principal aspects of our ideology. Our ideology is, first and foremost, a “practical” theory meant to be implemented and put into practice. The theory itself emerged in the course of numerous class struggles. It is therefore essential to understand the concrete material conditions and social practice through which the Great Teachers of the proletariat—Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao—discovered and formulated its basic principles. Thus, this book has been presented by relating the historical process of the growth and development of MLM. The basic

concepts have been presented in short by, wherever possible, linking to the socioeconomic conditions, main political events and class struggles that gave birth to them. In order to understand any particular aspect in detail, more particular study would be necessary. This Basic Course however, is meant to provide an essential basis for understanding the dynamic process of the development of our ideology and in what historical conditions and circumstances certain stands and theory came into being.

Come: let's begin our study.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM?

The party leading the revolution is the Communist Party, and the ideology guiding the thinking and practice of the Communist Party is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM). This is known to all of us. However, many of us are not so sure what exactly is meant by communist ideology or MLM and what are its various parts or aspects. Quite a few understand it simply as the ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. Such an understanding is incomplete, insufficient, and superficial. What is needed is to go deeper into the matter and understand the internal essence.

Let us first therefore try to understand this essence of MLM.

At the time when Marx and Engels were first developing and propagating the theory of communism, Engels, in 1847, drafted a booklet called "*The Principles of Communism*." In this he defined what communism is in the following very simple manner:

"Communism is the doctrine of the prerequisites for the emancipation of the proletariat." Thus Engels, in this very short definition explains that the essence of communist ideology is to provide the theory regarding what is needed to achieve the ultimate freedom of the working class (the proletariat). This freedom would finally be achieved through the establishment of communist society.

Stalin explained the same thing in the following way: **"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."** Here, Stalin explains the wide scope of Marxism. **Firstly**, it is a science, which provides the answers to questions concerning not only society but also the whole of nature. Thus, Marxism is an all-encompassing science. **Secondly**, it is a science regarding revolution; and this revolution is not of the rich (as in earlier bourgeois revolutions of the capitalist class), but of the poor and toiling masses. And **thirdly**, it is

the science of building socialist and communist society.

This science is today given the name of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism after the names of the three Teachers who played the greatest role in establishing and developing it—Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong. Besides these three, we recognise two other great Teachers who played a tremendous role—Frederick Engels and Joseph Stalin. Engels was the comrade of Marx who closely collaborated with him in laying the foundations of Marxism, as well as in advancing it after Marx's death. Stalin defended and developed Marxism-Leninism after Lenin's death.

Marxism was first worked out by Marx, with the help of Engels, more

than 150 years ago. The principal parts of Marxism are: the **philosophy** of dialectical materialism and the discovery of the materialist conception of history or historical materialism; Marxist **political economy** which discovered the laws of motion of capitalism and its 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.

Leninism is Marxism in the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. It was first developed by Lenin around the turn of the century during the

course of the Russian Revolution, while fighting the opportunism of the Second International, and while advancing the international communist movement through the Third International. Leninism, while defending and developing Marxism, made the following significant contributions: 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 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; providing the

theory and direction for the nationality movements and the movements in the colonies and linking the national liberation movements to the World Socialist Revolution; the development of the organisational principles of the Leninist Party—the new type of Party. Stalin, while defending and developing Leninism, particularly contributed to the principles and laws governing the period of socialist construction.

Maoism is an extension and development of Marxism-Leninism applicable to the present era. It was developed by Mao during the course of the Chinese Revolution, in the process of socialist construction, in the fight against modern revisionism and particularly during the Great Proletarian Cultural

Revolution. Maoism's contributions include: the theory of contradictions, the development of the theory of knowledge and the formulation of the mass line of "from the masses, to the masses"; the theory of new democracy, the formulation of the path of revolution for colonies and semi-colonies, and the formulation regarding the three instruments 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 contradictions in the process of transition to socialism; and finally and most importantly, the theory and practice of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat 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 represent the constant growth and advancement of one and the same ideology. We shall in the

following pages try to trace the story of the process of its development. While doing this, we shall also try to understand the essence of its various parts and aspects that have been listed above. The list may appear to be long and difficult, but it needs not be so. If we concentrate and try to understand the basic essence of each aspect within its historical context, we will be able to grasp a lot.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS LEADING TO THE BIRTH OF MARXISM

As we will see later, Marxism teaches us that any ideas or theory are always the product of some material conditions. Whenever new material conditions come into being, new ideas and theories are bound to emerge too. This same truth also applies to Marxism itself. Thus, in order to understand Marxism better, we should try to know the material conditions, i.e. the socioeconomic conditions within which Marx and Engels first gave birth to Marxism.

Marxism was established over 150 years ago, during the 1840s. It was established first in Europe, which at that time dominated the whole world economically, politically and militarily. This world domination was such that almost all earlier advanced civilizations like India, China and Persia had been subordinate to it. Marx and Engels were born and lived in some of the most economically advanced parts of Europe while developing the ideas of Marxism. They observed, participated in and were influenced by all the major political events of that time. Thus in order to understand how Marxism was born we first have to take a look at the Europe of that time and see the principal factors in the socioeconomic situation then.

1) The most important factor was the **Industrial Revolution**, which lasted from approximately 1760 to 1830, and, though it was centred in England, influenced the whole world. The Industrial Revolution was named as such because it was during those seventy years that the world first saw an explosive and revolutionary upsurge in industrial development. It was at this time that modern large factories were first set up and grew at a very rapid pace, particularly in England. Along with this was the tremendous expansion of the world market, which sent English manufactured goods to all parts of the world. Though other countries like France, Holland, and parts of Germany and the USA also set up large factories, this period was heavily

dominated by England. Its domination was such that it came to be called the “workshop of the world,” which supplied manufactured goods to all countries.

The Industrial Revolution transformed the capitalist class. This class was economically not so strong earlier and was a middle class (it was called the bourgeoisie because bourgeois in French means middle class). But, with the Industrial Revolution, this middle class was transformed into a class of industrial millionaires—**the modern industrial bourgeoisie**. The untold riches of this new class gave it the strength to challenge the feudal classes more powerfully, which were, until then, still the ruling classes.

Alongside the modern industrial bourgeoisie, the Industrial Revolution also gave birth to another class—**the modern industrial working class, or proletariat**. This class consisted of workers working together by the thousands in large factories was also far different from the earlier workers working in small groups in tiny workshops. The modern proletarians possessed nothing else except their labouring power and had a strength and confidence not known to earlier generations of workers and toilers. This strength came from their contact with modern industry, their discipline learned from the factory system, and their superior organisation due to their large numbers assembled together in single factories under one roof. Their position within society made them the

potentially most revolutionary force in history.

2) The other important factor was that which dominated the political situation in Europe at that time. It was the spate of **bourgeois democratic revolutions** led by the rising capitalist class, of which the most important was the **French Revolution of 1789**. The French Revolution not only brought about very radical changes in France, it also led to the Napoleonic wars where the armies of the French bourgeoisie conquered almost the whole of Europe and introduced bourgeois reforms abolishing feudalism wherever they went. They thus dealt a deathblow to the kings and old feudal classes. Though the French armies were later defeated, the old ruling

classes could never recover their old position. The modern bourgeoisie continued its revolutionary wave with numerous other bourgeois revolutions, which resulted in the conclusive defeat of the feudal classes and the victory of capitalism as a world system.

Thus at both the economic and political levels, the period Marxism's birth was a period of great advances and victories for the capitalist class when it was conclusively establishing its rule in the most advanced and dominant countries of the world.

3) Though this was the period of the greatest advancement of the bourgeoisie, the principal factor that gave birth to Marxism during this period was **the rise of working-class consciousness and proletarian**

organisations and movements thus signaling the emergence of the proletariat as an independent and self-conscious force.

This rise of a class-conscious proletariat first took place in England and France. This was primarily because of the early spread of modern industry in those two countries.

The spread of modern industry, though it brought great wealth to the bourgeoisie, meant at the same time the most inhumane working and living conditions for the working class. Almost three-quarters of the workforce were composed of women and children because they provided cheaper and more easily controlled workers for the capitalists. Children from the age of six were forced to work fourteen to

sixteen hours in the spinning mills. As the bourgeoisie amassed greater and greater wealth, the workers fell into greater and greater misery. While the cloth mill owners multiplied their capital many times over, their weavers' wages reduced to one eighth of what they earlier obtained.

Thus, the conditions of the proletariat were such that rebellion was not merely possible but almost compulsory. The first of such outbursts were spontaneous, without clear direction. An example was the **machine-breaking agitation** of 1810-11 in England, where groups of weavers attacked the textile mills and smash whatever machinery they could lay their hands on. This was their method of protesting against the

modern industry that was destroying their very livelihood. Such protests having no clear direction and being severely repressed quickly died out.

What followed was **the spread and growth of the labour movement and labour organisations** that provided answers and direction to the fighting proletariat. Earlier unions, which had been restricted to skilled workers, started from 1818 uniting all labouring men together in what were then called “general trades” unions. As these unions in England started growing, a movement to start a national level union started building up. This was formed, and by 1833-34 reached a membership of 500,000. Along with the unions, workers also started organising themselves in

cooperatives and mutual benefit societies. In other countries where unions were largely banned these were the main forms of organisations of the working class, which also grew in numbers and strength.

As the workers organisations started growing, in 1837 the workers in Britain launched the **Chartist movement** demanding electoral rights for workers. This was **the first broad, truly mass and politically organised proletarian revolutionary movement**. It used the method of mass petitions to parliament—somewhat similar to the signature campaigns sometimes organised today. These petitions gathered up to five million signatures. Some Chartist demonstrations had

350,000 participants showing the organised strength of the working class. However, as the movement grew in strength and militancy, it faced severe repression and was suppressed by 1850. During the early 1840s while Engels was staying in Manchester (in England) he was in close contact with revolutionary Chartist leaders as well as its weekly, *The Northern Star*, and was influenced by the Chartist movement.

The growing militancy of the workers' movement in this period also often led to the **first worker uprisings**, which were brutally suppressed.

Examples of these were the uprisings in London in 1816 and Manchester in 1819, the uprisings of the silk-workers of Lyon (France) in 1831 and 1834,

and the uprising of the handloom linen-weavers of Silesia in Prussian Germany (today part of Poland) in 1844. The last-named struggle had a strong impact throughout Germany as well as on the young Marx.

Thus, by the time of the 1840s, the proletarian movement was growing rapidly in strength and intensity in many industrial countries. However, it was still very weak and in no position yet to pose a threat to either the dominant big bourgeoisie or the old feudal ruling classes. Nevertheless, the emergence of the proletariat as an independent class force was an event of world historical significance. The proletariat coming into material existence also meant at the same time the birth of the ideas representing this

new revolutionary class. Many ideas and theories claiming to represent working-class interests thus came into being. Marxism, when it was first formulated in the 1840s, was only one among them. However, though many theories had emerged from the same economic conditions, **Marxism alone provided the tools to properly understand those conditions and also to change them. Therefore in the years to come it was Marxism alone that would prove to be the true proletarian ideology.**

CHAPTER 4

THE EARLY LIVES OF MARX AND ENGELS UNTIL THEY BECAME MARXISTS

Obviously nobody can be born a Marxist—not even Marx. There has to be a process through which ideas and views are developed and formulated and take a basic shape, which can be called an ideology. Naturally, Marx and Engels had to go through such a process too before they came to discover and themselves grasp the basic truths of what we today know as Marxism. This process of thought was naturally determined to a great extent by the concrete experiences that both of them went through. In order therefore to understand this in some

depth, let us briefly look at the early life experiences of these two great teachers.

Karl Marx was born on 5th of May 1818, in the town of Trier, in what was then called Rhenish Prussia, and which is today part of Germany. His **father, Heinrich Marx**, was one of the top lawyers of the town. The family was well to do and cultured, but not revolutionary. Both of Marx's parents came from a long line of Jewish priests. Thus, though they were economically well off, they had to face social discrimination in the anti-Jew atmosphere of Prussia. In 1816, Marx's father was forced to convert to Christianity because the Prussian government enacted a rule stopping Jews from practicing law. Similarly,

in 1824, another Prussian law was passed to prevent non-Christians from being admitted to public schools. To overcome this, Heinrich Marx was forced to baptize his son Karl, along with all his brothers and sisters.

Thus, though he was no believer in organised religion, Marx's father was forced to adopt a new faith just in order to pursue his profession and give his children a good education.

Marx's hometown, Trier, is the oldest town in Germany, which for many centuries had been the residence of Roman emperors and later the seat of Catholic bishops, with a religious administration for the town and surrounding area. In August 1794, the French armies captured the town, instituted a civil administration and

brought in the ideas and institutions of the French Revolution. The town only went back into the hands of the Prussian king after the defeat of France's Napoleon in 1815. Thus, during the time of Marx's birth and youth, it still carried the definite impact of twenty-one years of French revolutionary ideas.

Trier was a small town, similar in size to our smaller taluka towns, with a population then of around 12,000. It was principally a market town for the surrounding area, which for centuries had been a famous wine-growing area. Its population was composed of occupations typical to a "service" town—civil servants, priests, small merchants, craftsmen, etc. It had remained untouched by the Industrial

Revolution and was thus economically relatively backward. During Marx's youth, it also had a high degree of poverty. Official statistics in 1830 gave an unemployment figure of one in every four, though the actual figure must have been much higher. Beggars and prostitutes were common and the figures of petty crimes like stealing were extremely high. Thus, Marx from a very young age was witness to the misery of the poorer labouring classes.

After attending elementary school, Marx entered the Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium (secondary school) in 1831, from which he graduated in 1835. Within three weeks he was sent for further studies at the law school of the university forty miles away from Trier, in the city of Bonn

(an important centre which is today the joint capital of Germany). Marx, with a desire to learn as much as possible, immediately registered in nine courses besides law, including poetry, literature, art, etc. He was at first regular at lectures but gradually lost interest, particularly in the law lectures, which he found dry and unsatisfying. He reduced his courses first to six and then to four.

He decided to study on his own and soon got involved in the stormy life of the students of whom he soon became a leader. Being deeply interested in writing poetry he also joined the Poetenbund, a circle of young writers founded by revolutionary students. In the constant struggle between the sons of the feudal nobles and the

bourgeoisie, he soon became a leader of the bourgeois group. He was often involved in fistfights and sometimes in sword-duels. He carried a stiletto knife (somewhat similar to our gupti knives), for which he was once arrested and had a police charge put on him. He was also sentenced to one day in the university's student prison on charges of "nightly uproarious disturbances of the peace and drunkenness." Marx, in one sword-duel was even injured on his right eyebrow. This led to his father withdrawing him from Bonn University and bringing him back to Trier in August 1836.

While he was in Trier, he got secretly **engaged to Jenny von Westphalen**, the daughter of Baron von Westphalen, a nobleman and

senior Prussian government official. Jenny, who was four years older than him, and Marx were childhood loves who had decided to get married while Marx was still in school. They now got engaged with the approval of Marx's parents, but without Jenny's parents' approval, which was only obtained in 1837.

In October 1836 Marx moved to the **University of Berlin**, which was in the capital of Prussia. The university was much larger than Bonn and was renowned as a major centre of learning. After registering for his university courses, Marx immediately jumped into a storm of work. He stayed up night after night, eating irregularly, smoking heavily, reading heavy books and filling up

notebooks. Instead of formal classes Marx pursued his studies on his own. Working at a tremendous pace he moved from law to philosophy to poetry to art and then to writing plays and stories and then back to philosophy and poetry. His overwork had a bad effect on his health, particularly his smoking affected his lungs, and he was sometimes forced to take a break. But he always went back to his excessive work habits, reading up everything, from the ancient to the latest works of scientists and philosophers. His bent was towards philosophy, always trying to find universal meaning, always searching for the absolute in principles, definitions and concepts.

During his second year at the University, he joined a group of philosophy students and teachers called the **Young Hegelians**. They were followers of the famous German philosopher Frederik Hegel, who had taught at Berlin University and died in 1830. They tried to give a radical interpretation to Hegel's philosophy, and for this they were sometimes called Left Hegelians. One of Marx's friends in this group, its intellectual leader, was a professor called Bruno Bauer who was a militant atheist who constantly attacked the church's teachings. Such attacks, along with the radical political views of the Young Hegelians, made them a target of the Prussian authorities. Thus, when Marx completed his doctoral thesis, he could not obtain his degree from the

Berlin University, which was dominated by reactionary appointees of the Prussian government. After completing his studies in Berlin, he submitted his thesis and obtained his Ph.D. in April 1841 from the liberal leaning University of Jena that was outside Prussian control.

After obtaining his degree he had hoped to become a lecturer at Bonn University where Bruno Bauer had transferred to in 1839. But Bauer himself was in trouble because of the student disturbances his anti-religion lectures were causing. Finally, the King himself ordered the removal of Bauer from Bonn University. This meant the end to Bauer's teaching career as well as any hope of a teaching job for Marx.

Marx started concentrating on **journalism**, which he had already started immediately after leaving university. This also helped him to participate more thoroughly in the rapidly **growing radical democratic opposition movement** then developing in his Rhineland province and the neighbouring province of Westphalia. These provinces, which had experienced the liberating influence of the French anti- feudal reforms, were major centres of opposition to the Prussian king. Industrialisation had also led to the growth of the bourgeoisie, particularly in Cologne, the richest city of the Rhineland. This meant strong support for this radical opposition movement by the industrialists, who were fed

up with the excessive controls of the feudals.

Marx first started writing for, and then in October 1842, became the **chief editor of *The Rheinische Zeitung***, a daily newspaper supported by such industrialists. **In Marx's hands, the newspaper soon became a fighter for radical democratic rights.** This, however, brought Marx into constant conflict with the Prussian censors who were very repressive. Finally, when the paper published a criticism of the Russian Czar's despotism, the Czar himself brought pressure on the Prussian king to take action. The paper was banned and had to be closed down in March 1843. Marx then started involving himself in a plan to

bring out a new journal: *The German-French Yearbooks*.

From 1841 to 1843, Marx was deeply involved in the stormy political life of that period.

However, he was basically a radical democrat and did not at that time hold communist views.

His major transformation of the level of philosophy during this period was in 1841 after reading a book, *The Essence of Christianity*, by Ludwig Feuerbach, which presented a criticism of religion from the standpoint of materialism. This book played a major role in shifting Marx's ideas from the idealism of the Young Hegelian group to materialism. Another philosophical work of 1841 (*The European Triarchy*) that influenced Marx was the attempt

by his friend, Moses Hess, to develop a communist philosophy by combining French socialist and Left Hegelian ideas.

However, at that time Marx yet had only a limited knowledge of the ideas of the socialists and communists.

His first contact was in 1842 when he read with interest the works of many of the leading French socialist theorists. **He was however, not converted to communism or socialism by these readings. This change came about more through his contact with working-class communist groups and study of political economy, both of which took place mainly after moving to Paris at the end of 1843.**

Seven years after their engagement, **Marx and Jenny were married in June 1843.** They had a short honeymoon in Switzerland during which Marx wrote a booklet where he presented his initial criticisms of Hegel. After the honeymoon he started the study and preparations for moving to Paris from where the earlier mentioned *German-French Yearbooks* was to be launched. This move to Paris was planned in order to avoid the Prussian censors. However, though the journal was planned as a monthly, it collapsed after only one issue that came out in February 1844.

Marx's period in **Paris** was however marked by very significant new experiences. Of the greatest importance was **direct contact**

with the various socialist and communist groups of which Paris was a hot centre. Besides meeting a large number of theoreticians and revolutionaries, Marx benefited greatly by **regular contact with the many working-class revolutionaries in Paris.** At the same time, Marx started **a study of political economy** in which he read most of the works of the famous English economists. The revolutionary contacts and further study had their impact. These were reflected in Marx's writings.

The single issue of the *Yearbooks* was of crucial importance because it contained **Marx's first broad generalisation of a Marxist materialist understanding of history that was contained in**

an article criticising Hegel's philosophy. It was in this article that Marx made the highly important formulation regarding the historical role of the proletariat. He also here made his famous formulation that religion is the opium of the people. The same issue also contained **an article by Engels on political economy, which also gave a materialist understanding regarding the development of modern capitalism.**

It was Marx's interest in Engels' writings that led to their meeting in Paris between August 28 and September 6, 1844. This turned out to be an historic meeting that helped the two great thinkers to clarify their ideas and lay the first

foundations of Marxism. Though they had both independently come to similar conclusions earlier, this meeting helped them to achieve complete theoretical agreement. It was at this meeting that they more clearly came to an understanding regarding the materialist conception of history, which was the cornerstone of Marxist theory.

Frederick Engels was born on November 28, 1820 in the textile town of Barmen in the Rhine province of Prussia. His father was the wealthy owner of a cotton-spinning mill and was a fiercely religious Protestant Christian with a reactionary political outlook.

Barmen, like Marx's Trier, also belonged to the part of Prussia, which had seen twenty years of French conquest. It thus also had progressive influences on it. However, its main characteristic was that it was one of the biggest Rhenish industrial centres. Thus Engels from a very early age saw the severe poverty and exploitation of the working class. To survive against factory competition craftsmen were forced to work from morning to night. Often they tried to drown their sorrows in drink. Child labour and occupational lung diseases were rampant.

Engels attended the Barmen town school until the age of 14. He was then sent to the secondary school at the neighbouring town of Elberfeld

(today both Barmen and Elberfeld are merged into one town). This **school** had the reputation of being one of the best in Prussia. He was an intelligent student with an early flair for learning languages. He was also part of a poetry circle among the students and wrote his own poetry and short stories. He was planning to study economy and law, but his father was more interested in making his eldest son learn the family business. At the age of 17, he was suddenly removed from school and made to join as an apprentice in his father's office.

Though this was the end of Engels' formal schooling he continued to use his free time to study history, philosophy, literature and linguistics and to write poetry, which he was

attracted to. The next year, in July 1838, Engels was sent to **work as a clerk** in a large trading firm in the large port city of Bremen. The big city atmosphere brought Engels in contact with foreign literature and the press. In his leisure time he started reading fiction and political books. He continued learning new languages and besides German got some knowledge of Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, Dutch, etc. This ability to learn languages continued throughout Engels' life during which he learned to be quite fluent in over 20 languages including Persian and Arabic. Also in Bremen, Engels became a good horseman, swimmer, swordsman and ice skater.

While at school, Engels had been a fighter against bureaucracy. Now as a grown youth he was attracted to the **radical democratic ideas** of the bourgeois democratic revolution then taking shape in Germany. The first group he was attracted towards was the **Young German literary group** that stood for radical political views. He soon started writing for a journal being published by them from the port city of Hamburg, not far from Bremen. He wrote two articles on the situation in his home district. He exposed the severe exploitation of the workers in Barmen and Elberfeld, the diseases they suffered, and the fact that half the children of the town were deprived of school and forced to work in the factories. He particularly attacked the hollowness of the religiosity of

the exploitative industrialists (which included his own father).

Towards the end of 1839 he started a **study of Hegel**, whose philosophy he tried to link with his own radical democratic beliefs. However, he only made progress in this when he finished his clerkship in Bremen in 1841, and, after a few months' gap, moved to Berlin for one year's compulsory military service.

While in **military service** he joined **Berlin University** as an external student and did a course in philosophy. He then became closely connected with the Young Hegelian group of which Marx had been a part. He, like Marx, was also influenced greatly by the materialist views in Feuerbach's book that came out in

that year. Engels' writings now started to have some materialist aspects. The main thing he always stressed was political action. This was what made him split in 1842 from his earlier Young German group, which he felt restricted itself only to empty literary debate. However, he continued to be strongly linked with the Young Hegelians, particularly with Bruno Bauer and his brother.

It was this closeness of Engels with the Bauers that prevented a friendship with Marx when they met for the first time in November 1842. Engels had finished his military service at that time and was on his way from his hometown to join as a clerk in his father's business in Manchester England. On the way he visited Marx

at the newspaper office in Cologne, where Marx was the chief editor. Marx, by then, had however started criticising the Young Hegelians, and particularly the Bauers, for concentrating their propaganda too much on religion rather than politics. Hence, Marx and Engels, having different political affiliations, could not become close at this, their first meeting.

It was Engels' experiences in England that made him a communist. He developed **very close links with the workers of Manchester, as well as the leaders of the revolutionary workers in the Chartist movement.** Manchester was the main centre of the world's modern textile industry and soon

Engels undertook an in-depth study of the working and living conditions of its workers. He regularly visited the working-class areas to gain direct knowledge. In this process **a love grew between him and Mary Burns, a young Irish factory worker who would later become his companion and wife.** Besides collecting material for his future book on the conditions of the working class in England, Engels came to understand the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. His regular participation in the movement convinced him that the working class was not merely a suffering class, but a fighting class whose revolutionary actions would build the future.

Besides working-class contact, Engels also made a **deep study of the various socialist and communist theories** and even met many of the French and German leaders and writers who had formulated them. Though he did not adopt any of these theories, he made an analysis of their positive and negative points. At the same time he started a **deep study of bourgeois political economy**. This was in order to help him analyse the economic relations of society, which he had started feeling was the basis of all social change. The initial results of his study he put down in his article that was published by Marx in his journal published from Paris. As we mentioned earlier, this led to correspondence between Marx and

Engels and their historic meeting in 1844.

Engels was on his way back from Manchester to his hometown Barmen, when he stopped on the way to meet Marx who was staying in Paris. Their discussions helped Marx to better formulate the materialist understanding of history in which they had both started believing. They also, at this meeting, started work on their first joint book, which was an attack on Bruno Bauer and the Young Hegelian group, to which they had both previously belonged.

Engels spent the next eight months doing intensive communist propaganda and organisational work in Germany. During this period he was in constant **revolt against his father** who

opposed his communist work and tried to get him to work in his factory. After just two weeks at his father's office, Engels rejected it completely and left Barmen to join Marx. Marx, by that time, had again become the target of feudal authorities. The Prussian King had brought pressure on the French King, who expelled Marx from Paris. Marx was forced to move to Brussels in Belgium along with his wife and eight-month-old child. This is where Engels came and set up house right next to Marx's house.

Marx, in the meantime, had done deep work and had developed the main features of the new world outlook, which they had discussed at their earlier meeting. In Brussels, both Marx and Engels started intensive joint

work. This was, as Engels said, to develop the new outlook in all possible directions. The result was **the historic book, *The German Ideology***, which only got published almost a hundred years later. **The main purpose this book served at that time was for the two great thinkers to clarify their old understanding and set up the pillars of the new world outlook, which later came to be known as Marxism. Marx and Engels had become Marxists!**

CHAPTER 5

THE THREE SOURCES OF MARXISM

From the earlier account of the early life of Marx and Engels, it is clear that they were both extraordinary and brilliant men. However, it is also clear that Marxism was not some invention that suddenly emerged from the thoughts of these magnificent brains.

The socioeconomic changes of that time provided the basis for the emergence of the true proletarian ideology. The actual content and the form of that ideology however, was the product of the struggles waged in the most important fields of thought of that time. Marx and Engels being deep intellectuals

had a wide and deep grasp of the latest advancement of thought in the most advanced countries of the period. They, thus, could stand on the shoulders of the great thinkers before them, absorbing whatever was good, and rejecting what was wrong in them. And **it was thus that they built the structure and content of Marxism.**

Let us see which were the main fields of thoughts on which they based their ideas. Thus we can also understand the main sources of Marxism.

1) The first source of Marxist thought was **German classical philosophy.** Any ideology has to have its grounding in some philosophy and both Marx and Engels, as we have seen, had a strong base in German classical philosophy.

German philosophy had, during the period 1760 to 1830, grown to become the most influential school in European philosophy. It had its base in the German middle classes. This class was intellectually very advanced but had not developed the political strength to make revolution, or the economic resources to make an Industrial Revolution. This was what probably inclined them towards elaborate systems of thought.

However, this class, having many civil servants, had many contradictory aspects. It sometimes leaned to the industrial bourgeoisie and proletariat on the one side and sometimes to the feudal classes on the other. This was thus reflected in German philosophy having both a progressive as well as

an anti-progressive aspect. This was particularly seen in Hegel's philosophy upon which Marx and Engels largely based themselves. **They therefore rejected all the anti-progressive aspects that upheld the existing feudal society and developed upon the progressive and revolutionary parts to lay the foundations of Marxist philosophy.**

2) **English Political Economy** was the second important source of Marxism. As England was the centre of the Industrial Revolution, it was only natural that the study of the economy and its laws should reach its peak in this country. It was a new field of study, which basically started with the growth of modern capitalism. It had its firm basis in the modern industrial

bourgeoisie and played the role of justifying and glorifying capitalism. It also provided the intellectual arguments for the rising bourgeoisie in its struggles with the feudals.

In England its period started with the publication in 1776 of the world famous book, *The Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith. He basically argued that if capitalism were given the fullest freedom to grow, it would lead to the greatest progress of humanity. He thus provided the argument for the reduction of controls of any sort by the feudals on the capitalist class. David Ricardo was another famous classical economist who played a crucial role in the battles of the bourgeoisie with the landlords. He was the one who pointed out that as

capitalism progressed the average rate of profit of the capitalists fell. His very significant discovery was the development of the labour theory of value, which showed that all economic value is created by labour. Other later economists analysed the causes of economic crises under capitalism.

English political economy basically served the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie. It therefore played a revolutionary role against the feudal classes. However, the economists very often did not carry forward their analysis beyond the point where it began to hurt bourgeois class interests. Thus, for example, Ricardo, though he developed the labour theory of value, did not expose the exploitation of labour by

the capitalist class. This was done by Marx. **He took the work of the English economists beyond the limits of the capitalist class and drew the necessary revolutionary conclusions from them. It was thus that Marx developed the principles of Marxist political economy.**

3) The third source of Marxism was the various **socialist theories, which mainly originated from France.**

These theories represented the hopes and aims of the newly emerging proletariat class. They were both a reflection of, as well as a protest against, capitalist exploitation and oppression of the working class. France at that time was the main centre for revolutionary groups and

revolutionary theory, which inspired the whole of Europe. It was therefore natural that socialist theories too mainly came out of France.

Most of these theories had major defects, as they were not based on a proper scientific analysis of society. Nevertheless, they represented a break with the individualism, self-interest and competition of bourgeois revolutionary theory. They also pointed the way forward for the proletariat from capitalist society. Marx thus made a study of these theories of socialism and communism before formulating the Marxist principles of scientific socialism. While in Paris, he spent a considerable amount of time with the leaders and members of the numerous French revolutionary

and socialist groups. **Marx took what was best in socialism and gave it the scientific basis of the doctrine of class struggle. He thus developed the principles of Marxist scientific socialism.**

This then is the story of how Marxism emerged from the three great sources of ideas in the then most advanced countries of the world. **The three sources of Marxism—German philosophy, English political economy and French socialist theories—corresponded to the three main component parts of the new ideology: Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marxist political economy and Marxist theory of scientific socialism.** In the following pages, we will try to

understand the essence of each of these parts.

CHAPTER 6

THE BASIC FORMULATIONS OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHY: DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

As we have repeatedly seen earlier, Marx and Engels always insisted that all **philosophy should be practical** and linked to the real world. This was expressed in the most clear manner by Marx in his famous saying, "The philosophers have always interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." By this, Marx meant that he did not want to become a philosopher like our rishis and munnis sitting on some mountain and meditating regarding supernatural things. He did not see much point in

thinking and contemplation unless it was linked to the practical world. His basic quest was to try to understand how the world was changing and thus to participate in actual practice and change today's world and society. He thus was interested in a philosophy that would be applied in social practice.

In order to do this Marx had to take a stand with regards to the basic division in all philosophy—**the division between idealism and materialism.** This division is regarding the basic question as to which is primary—spirit or nature. Those who take the stand that spirit is primary belong to the camp of idealism, whereas those who take the stand that nature is primary belong

to the camp of materialism. Idealism is always connected in one way or another to religion. **Being men of practice, who were absolutely opposed to religious beliefs, it was but natural that Marx and Engels established Marxist philosophy firmly in the camp of materialism.**

In doing so, they were definitely influenced and aided by the writings of Feuerbach and other materialist philosophers of that time. However, these philosophers were **mechanical materialists** who understood nature and society to be like a machine, turning round and round, without any development or real change. **Marx rejected mechanical materialism because it did not bring any**

understanding of historical change and development.

For this, Marx had to turn to **dialectics, which is the science of the general laws of motion. The essence of dialectics is that it understands things in their inter-connections and contradictions.**

Dialectics thus was able to provide the science of development that Marx knew was necessary to change the world.

At that time Hegel's philosophy and laws of dialectics (which Marx studied deeply) were the most advanced in Europe. But Hegel had developed his philosophical laws in an idealist way by only making them applicable to the field of thought. He belonged to the camp of idealism and refused to

recognise that nature and material social being are primary, and spirit and ideas are secondary. He thus did not accept that his system of thought itself was a product of the development of human society in a definite stage. He refused to understand that his laws of thought were themselves reflections of the laws of nature and society. Thus, as Marx said, Hegel's dialectics, by being idealist, was standing on its head—meaning it was absurd and illogical. Marx turned Hegel's dialectics the right side up—meaning he made it rational—by putting it on the basis of materialism. **Marx took Hegel's dialectical laws and gave them the approach of materialist philosophy. He thus made Hegel's laws of thought also into laws**

of nature and society. He thus formulated dialectical materialism, which is the essence of Marxist philosophy.

By giving dialectics a rational and materialist basis, Marx changed it into a philosophy of revolution. Marx and Engels applied dialectical materialism to the study of society and history and thus discovered the materialist conception of history. **The materialist conception of history was a new and revolutionary way of understanding society and social change. It explained the basis of social changes and political revolutions not as an invention of some brilliant men's minds but as the product of the processes within society.** It showed all

revolutionaries that the path to social change lay in understanding society and formulating the ideas to bring about change accordingly.

The starting point of the materialist conception of history is the level of development of **the material productive forces, i.e. tools, machinery, skills, etc.** Marx says that according to the stage in the development of the productive forces we get definite **relations of production, i.e. relations of ownership and control over the means of production.** Thus, for example, backward productive forces like the wooden plough, and wind, hand and animal operated mills give us feudal relations; modern productive forces like tractors, harvesters, etc.,

when they are widespread, give rise to capitalist relations of production. These **relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, or the economic base of society.**

On top of the economic base of society, arises a legal and political superstructure with definite forms of social consciousness. Further, Marx says that it is the mode of production (consisting of the productive forces and relations of production) that conditions the social, political and intellectual life in general. Thus, for example, the feudal mode of production gives rise to very severe oppression of women and lower castes and a very undemocratic political system; the

capitalist mode of production, on the other hand, reduces social oppression and brings some bourgeois democratic rights.

At a certain stage in the development of the productive forces, they come into conflict with the existing relations of production. These old relations of production start preventing the development of the productive forces. Unless these production relations are changed, the productive forces cannot develop. **This period when the relations of production start acting as chains on the development of the productive forces is the beginning of the epoch of social revolution. Revolution is needed to change the relations of production, i.e. the relation between the**

various classes in society. Once this happens and the relations of production or property relations are broken, i.e. the economic base is changed, then the change in the whole superstructure follows quite quickly.

This materialist conception of history was the first great discovery of Marx, which he accomplished in 1844-45. It was the foundation on which the other great pillars of Marxist theory were built.

In later years, Marx and Engels and the other Marxist teachers further developed Marxist philosophy. However, its essence remained the basic principles of dialectical and historical materialism described above.

CHAPTER 7

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST UTOPIAN SOCIALISM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

Utopian socialism is the term used to describe the main trends of pre-Marxist socialism, which arose and became prominent in the first half of the nineteenth century. The terms “utopians” (derived from the idea of Utopia, which is supposed to be a state of things where everything is perfect) and “socialist” first became popular in the 1830s. **They were used to describe a group of thinkers who developed theories to transform society on a more egalitarian basis by removing**

individualism, selfishness and competitiveness in human nature. Many of these thinkers or their followers tried to implement their theories by setting up ideal communities where all the members worked, lived and shared the fruits of their labour on a cooperative basis. They believed that such ideal communities would provide the example that would then be followed by the rest of society. They thus did not rely on the actual processes in society for building their schemes of socialism. Rather, they thought that the rationality of their plans and ideas itself was sufficient to convince people and change society.

Utopian socialism was first and foremost a reaction to the oppression

and exploitation of the working class under capitalism. The working people had fought bitterly for the overthrow of feudalism. However, the bourgeoisie's slogans of freedom, equality and fraternity had only meant freedom for the capitalist class and intensified exploitation of the workers.

The various socialist doctrines arose as a result of the emerging class contradictions between the capitalists and workers and as a protest against exploitation. They attempted to build a system that would provide justice to the toilers.

The anarchy of capitalist production was another cause for the new socialist theories. **The utopian socialists attempted to build**

rational systems that would provide for the needs of humankind in an orderly and harmonious fashion. Some of them even tried to convince capitalists and government officials that their socialist systems were much more rational, planned, and therefore desirable than the existing capitalist system. They even thus attempted to get funds from the rich for their projects.

The main defect of pre-Marxist socialist doctrines was that they did not have a real basis in the class contradictions and class struggles unfolding in society.

Though their ideas were themselves the product of the class contradictions within society, the utopian socialists did not realise that it was absolutely

necessary to wage class struggle in order to achieve socialism. Though their ideas were in reality a reflection of the aspirations of the infant proletariat, **the utopian socialists did not recognise the central importance of the revolutionary role of the proletariat in bringing about socialism.**

When Marx and Engels came into contact with the socialist and communist groups, they started trying to convince the followers of the utopian socialist theories of the incorrectness of their ideas. They participated intensively in the debates in the various revolutionary and working-class groups where these theories and ideas were being discussed. Their main aim was to

give a scientific basis to socialist theory. For this, they had to expose the defects and wrong understanding of the earlier socialists and place socialism on the sound basis of the Marxist theory of class struggle.

As Marx himself pointed out, the theory of class struggle was not something new that he invented. In fact, the earlier socialists and even bourgeois writers were quite conscious about it and wrote about classes and class struggle. However, **the essential difference of the Marxist theory of class struggle is that it showed how class struggle led inevitably to socialism and communism.**

Firstly, Marx showed that classes were not something that always existed in human society. He showed

that there was a long period in human history when there were no classes at all (i.e. during primitive communism). There would also be a period in the future when there would again be no classes. **Secondly**, Marx particularly analysed the present day class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and showed how this class struggle would inevitably lead to revolution by the workers and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. socialism. **Thirdly**, Marx pointed out that the dictatorship of the proletariat was itself a period of transition to a new society. The proletariat could only develop by destroying itself as a class by abolishing all classes and establishing a classless society, i.e. communism.

It is this theory of class struggle that Marx and Engels developed, propagated and brought into practice throughout their lives. **It is this Marxist theory of class struggle that converted socialism into a science, which laid the basis for scientific socialism.** With this, **socialism was no longer to be seen as the product of some brilliant mind, but rather the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.** Because of scientific socialism the task of the socialists did not become one of trying to develop the most perfect, harmonious and rational system of society like the utopian socialists had tried to do. Under scientific socialism the task

was to analyse society, to analyse the history and economic basis of the class contradictions in society, and from this economic basis, to find the way to end all class conflict and bring about socialism and communism.

The scientific clarity of Marxist socialist theory was so great that most sincere elements in the various socialist and communist organisations of the 1840s soon rejected the pre-Marxist and non-class varieties of socialism. Marx and Engels soon became ideological leaders within the socialist movement. When a new international organisation was formed in 1847 uniting workers, intellectuals, and revolutionary socialist groups of various countries, they at once became its leaders. They suggested its name, The Communist

League, and it was they who were appointed to draft its programme. This programme is the world historic Communist Manifesto.

***The Communist Manifesto* was not only the first programme and general line of the international proletariat. It also laid down the basic principles of scientific socialism and the approach to all other types of socialism.** With its quick translation into numerous languages, the Manifesto soon spread the basic ideas of Marxist scientific socialism throughout Europe and then throughout the world. **The basic principles outlined in this document have in essence remained firm for more than 150 years, up to this day.**

CHAPTER 8

MARXIST POLITICAL ECONOMY

As we have seen earlier, Marx developed his principles of political economy in continuation of and in opposition to the bourgeois political economy of the English economists. Most of Marx's earlier economic writings from 1844 to 1859 were in the form of a critique of bourgeois political economy. He countered the claims of the bourgeois political economists that capitalism was a permanent and universal system. He also proved that capitalism could exist only for a limited period and was destined to be overthrown and replaced by a new and higher

social system. His later economic analysis, particularly the various volumes of **his main work, *Capital*, concentrated on discovering the economic laws of capitalism. The in-depth analysis of the relations of production in capitalist society, in their origin, development and decline, thus forms the main content of Marx's political economy.**

Bourgeois political economists always made their analysis in the form of a relation between things, i.e. the exchange of one commodity for another. **Marx however, showed that economics deals not with things but with relations between people, and in the last analysis, between classes.**

Since under capitalism it is the production of commodities that dominates, **Marx started his analysis with an analysis of the commodity. He pointed out that the exchange of commodities was not a mere exchange of things but actually an expression of the relations between individual producers in society who have been linked by the market.** Though commodity exchange has existed for thousands of years, it is only with the development of money and the birth of capitalism that it reaches its peak, linking up the entire economic lives of millions of individual producers throughout society into one whole. Capitalism even converts the labour power of the worker into a commodity

that is bought and sold freely in the marketplace.

The wagedworker sells his labour power to the owner of the means of production, i.e. the capitalist. The worker spends one part of his working day producing the equivalent of his wage, i.e. producing what is necessary to cover the cost of maintaining himself and his family. The other part of his working day is spent producing for the maintenance and growth of the capitalist. The worker gets absolutely no payment from this production, which is for the capitalist. **This additional value, which every worker produces, over and above the value necessary to earn his wage and maintain himself, Marx called surplus value. It is the**

source of profit and the source of wealth of the capitalist class.

The discovery of the concept of surplus value exposed the nature of exploitation of the working class. It also brought out the source of the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This class antagonism was the principal manifestation of the fundamental contradiction of capitalist society: the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership.

Engels referred to this discovery of surplus value **as the second important discovery of Marx** (after the discovery of the materialist conception of history). **Lenin called**

the doctrine of surplus value the cornerstone of Marx's economic theory.

Marx also analysed in detail the periodic economic crises that repeatedly affected capitalism. **He explained capitalist crises as another manifestation of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism.** He thus exposed the falsehood of bourgeois economists who at that time propagated that capitalism could not face any crisis, as the operation of the market would solve all problems. They claimed that whatever was produced by the capitalist would automatically be sold in the marketplace.

Marx however, exposed that the nature of the working of capitalism

itself would lead inevitably to crisis. He showed how capitalists in their desperate urge to earn more and more profits went on madly increasing production. At the same time, every capitalist tried to maintain a higher rate of profit by cutting the wage rates of his workers and throwing them into poverty. The working class composes the largest section in society and the poverty of the working class automatically means the reduction of their capacity to buy the goods available in the market. Thus on the one hand the capitalist class increases the production of goods being supplied to the market, and on the other hand it reduces the buying capacity of a large section of the buyers in the very same market. **This naturally leads to a severe contradiction between**

the expansion of production on one hand and the contraction of the market on the other hand. The result is a crisis of overproduction where the market is flooded with unsold goods. Numerous capitalists are thrown into bankruptcy. Lakhs (100,000's) of workers are thrown out of their jobs and forced into starvation at the same the shops are filled with goods that remained unused because there is no one to buy them.

Marx further concluded that the anarchy of these crises of capitalism could only be resolved by resolving the fundamental contradiction of capitalism between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This could

only be done by overthrowing the capitalist system and establishing socialism and communism, thus giving a social character to the ownership of the means of production. Marx showed that the social force that would bring about this revolution had been created by capitalism itself; it was the proletariat class. It was the proletariat alone who had no interest in continuing the present system of exploitation and private ownership. It alone had the interest and capacity to establish socialism.

Marx analysed how every crisis intensified the contradictions of the capitalist system. He described the process with each crisis of the

centralisation of capital into the hands of a smaller and smaller handful of capitalists. This proceeded alongside the immense growth in the misery and discontent of the vast masses of workers. As the contradictions of capitalism sharpened, the revolutionary upheavals of the proletariat grew in strength, finally resulting in revolution, the confiscation of capital of the capitalists and the building of a socialist society with a social character of ownership suited to the social character of production.

In this way, **Marx, starting from the economy's most basic unit—the commodity—brings out the nature of the economic laws governing capitalism. He thus exposes the scientific economic basis for the**

socialist revolution and the road to communism.

CHAPTER 9

MARXISM FUSES ITS LINKS WITH THE WORKING CLASS

As we saw earlier, Marx and Engels were deeply involved in the revolutionary communist groups of the 1840s. They thus came to lead the Communist League, which was an international body uniting the revolutionaries of various European countries. They also drafted its programme—*The Communist Manifesto*—which acquired world historic significance. However, at that time—in **1848—the influence of Marxism had yet to reach the vast working-class masses.** The influence of the Communist League was limited

and consisted mainly of exiled workers and intellectuals. In fact, **at that time Marxism was just one of the many trends of socialism.**

The 1848 Revolution, which spread insurrection throughout the European continent, was **the first major historical event where Marxism proved itself in practice.** Marx and Engels were in Brussels when the revolution first broke out in France. The Belgian government, fearing the spread of the revolution, immediately expelled Marx from Brussels and forced him to leave for Paris, where Engels soon joined him. However, as the revolutionary wave spread to Germany, both decided to move there immediately in order to directly participate in the revolutionary events.

There they tried to consolidate the work of the Communist League and the workers' associations. They published a daily newspaper, the ***Neue Rheinische Zeitung***, which served as an organ of propagation of the revolutionary line. **The newspaper took a line in support of radical bourgeois democracy as the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution was then the main task in Germany. However, the paper simultaneously served as the organiser of the emerging revolutionary proletarian party in Germany.** Marx and Engels even tried to form a mass workers' party by uniting the workers' associations of various provinces of Germany. The paper lasted for one year. With the

collapse of the revolution in Germany and other parts of Europe, the paper was forced to close down and Marx was expelled by the Prussian King. He retreated to Paris but soon had to leave from there too because of persecution by the French authorities. Engels continued fighting in Germany as a soldier in the revolutionary armies until the very end. After military defeat, he escaped, and towards the end of 1849 joined Marx, who had by then settled in London. England then continued to be their centre until the end of their lives.

The defeat of the 1848 Revolution spread confusion among the revolutionaries and proletarian activists throughout Europe. Most of the earlier dominant trends of

socialism could not provide any proper understanding regarding the reasons for the course of events during the revolution. It was in such an atmosphere that **Marx took up the task of explaining the social forces behind the initial victory and later defeat of the Revolution.** Since France was the centre and principal starting point of both the upsurge and decline of the revolution, Marx concentrated his analysis on French events. This he did through his brilliant works, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*, and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. They were Marx's first attempts to explain current historical events by means of the materialist conception of history. He analysed with complete clarity the

class forces behind each of the major turns and twists in the revolution.

He thus provided the class basis for revolutionary proletarian tactics. By exposing the role of various classes at various stages, he showed who were the friends and enemies of the revolution and therefore the approach of the proletariat to each of them.

In the following period, Marx continued his writings on all the major political events throughout the world. In all these writings, he presented a clear perspective from a proletarian viewpoint. This distinguished them from all other varieties of socialism, which proved incapable of providing real answers to the continuously changing world situation. It clearly

established the superiority of Marxism over other brands of socialism as a practical tool for understanding and changing the world.

Simultaneously, Marx and Engels worked energetically to unite the weak and fragmented organisations of the working class. The Communist League, which had its main centre in Germany, faced severe repression from the Prussian police. Many of its members in Germany were put behind bars and the organisation itself was finally dissolved in November 1852. During the long period of reaction after the failure of the 1848 Revolution, Marx and Engels tried continuously to reorganise and revive the working-class movement. Besides writing and publishing their works extensively,

they maintained constant contact with the working-class organisations in various countries, particularly England, France and Germany. Their constant attempt was to form an international organisation of the working class and to set up separate parties of the proletariat in the industrially developed countries.

The main work in this respect was done by Marx. He worked throughout this period under very difficult conditions. After having been driven out by the governments of various countries, even after Marx settled in London, he was under constant surveillance by the secret police, particularly of Prussia. Besides the political repression, Marx's economic situation was always very bad. Due

to the poor and disorganised state of the revolutionary working-class movement at that time it was unable to support him as a full-timer. Thus, his only source of earnings was the small payment per article, which he got for writing for a large American newspaper, *The New York Tribune*. This was of course totally insufficient for Marx's large family. They thus faced constant poverty, debt and even starvation. Many a time household items had to be pawned to provide food. Marx had six children, but only three survived beyond childhood. When his baby daughter died, the burial had to be delayed for a few days until some money was collected for the burial. Marx himself faced constant serious illnesses, which he

had to struggle against to complete his work.

Throughout all these economic difficulties, the main support for the Marx family was Engels. After the failure of the 1848 Revolution, Engels had been forced to take up a job in his father's Manchester firm. He worked there for twenty years, first as a clerk and then for the last five years as a partner in the firm until 1869. During this period he had a substantial income, with which he would regularly help Marx.

Engels' help however, was not merely economic. Though he did not have much spare time because of his job, he put in all efforts to continue study and help Marx. They corresponded very regularly and constantly

exchanged ideas. Marx always consulted Engels on major questions, particularly on decisions regarding the international working-class movement.

Their efforts finally bore fruit in 1864 with the formation of the International Workingmen's Association—the First International. Marx soon became its leader and was primarily responsible for drawing up its first programme and constitution.

The International's programme however, did not contain the strong words of the Communist Manifesto. The First International, unlike the Communist League, was not an organisation limited to small groups of revolutionaries. In fact, many of the sections of the International,

especially those of England and France, represented organisations with a vast mass following of workers. However, most of these organisations did not have a clear and correct understanding. Though they were composed predominantly of workers, the level of consciousness was normally lower than that of the selected revolutionaries of the Communist League. The programme and constitution thus had to be formulated keeping this in mind. The correct line had to be presented in a manner acceptable to the member organisations of the International. Marx, with his great ideological depth and practical organisational experience was at that time the only person capable of thus drafting these documents and was therefore given

this task. In subsequent years too, it was he, who drafted all the most important documents of the First International.

It was thus Marxism alone that could provide the ideological, political and organisational perspective for the First International. Implementation of this perspective meant constant struggle against the various anarchist and opportunist trends that arose within the movement. Among other things, the anarchists opposed a strong organisation whereas the opportunists opposed resolute struggle. Fighting both deviations, Marx and Engels worked to build the International into a mass organisation of struggle, uniting the workers in both Europe

and the United States. In this they largely succeeded leading at the same time the formation of independent proletarian parties in many of the industrialised countries of the world.

By the time of the historic Paris Commune of 1871, Marxism had advanced very far from its position at the time of the 1848 Revolution. Marxism no longer remained merely one of the trends of socialism. The earlier trends of utopian socialism had been swept away by history and it was Marxism alone that retained full practical significance. Marxism also was no longer restricted to small groups but had become a mass phenomenon. Its influence extended to the

proletarian movements in various industrialised countries. It provided the ideological leadership to independent proletarian parties. It headed a massive proletarian movement, which had begun to challenge the bourgeoisie. Marxism had fused its links with the vast working-class masses.

CHAPTER 10

THE LESSONS OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

The **Paris Commune** was the first time in history when the proletariat seized power and attempted to set up its own rule. The Commune could not consolidate its rule and was crushed within a period of 72 days. However, its experience was of world historic significance. During its short existence, it had provided a glimpse of the new society. Through both its positive examples as well as its mistakes, it provided immensely valuable lessons for the working class of the world. **Marx, in his role as leader of the First International, summarised the lessons of**

this great experience for the international proletariat.

The context of the Paris Commune was framed by the Franco-German war of 1870-71. It started in July 1870 with the reactionary French Emperor Napoleon III ordering an attack on Prussia (which with other smaller provinces became Germany in January 1871) because he mistakenly thought that the Prussians were in a weak position. His armies were rapidly defeated and Napoleon III surrendered and was taken prisoner by the Prussians in September 1870. Napoleon III's surrender was followed by the setting up of a Republic headed by a politician named Thiers. In March 1871, Thiers signed a peace treaty with the Germans. Paris however,

which had been surrounded by the Prussian army since September 1870, did not submit to Thiers. It was under the control of the Paris National Guard, which was composed mainly of workers. On March 18th, 1871, Thiers sent his army to disarm the National Guard. There was a revolt in which two French army generals were shot dead and the army was forced to retreat. Power had passed over into the hands of the National Guard, who, within a week, held elections and set up a Council consisting of 92 members. The Council, which had a large number of workers, became the organ of government. It introduced numerous progressive measures for the reorganisation of social life and the administration of the city and

thus had the full support of the whole working people.

The Paris Commune was however, a government under constant attack. Fearing the strength of the working class, the German and French oppressors immediately joined hands to crush the Commune. Germany even directly helped the Thiers government by releasing a large section of the French army who had surrendered and been taken prisoner in 1870. The Thiers government strengthened by reinforcements then launched a full-scale campaign to conquer Paris. The workers fought bravely, but they were no match for the well equipped professional army. After many days of heroic fighting, resulting in thousands of martyrs, the Commune was crushed

on May 28th, 1871. Even after the takeover over 30,000 Communards were butchered in cold blood. Over 45,000 were court-martialed, of whom many were executed and others sent to prison or into exile. It was as if the bourgeoisie was determined to teach an unforgettable lesson to the workers lest they ever even dream of seizing power again.

The First International was at the peak of its popular appeal at the time of the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune. It had a broad base among the workers and regularly provided guidance on political questions.

When the Franco-Prussian war broke out, Marx immediately published a document in the name of the General Council of the First International.

This document is one of the first applications of the Marxist tactical principles regarding war. He called for international solidarity of the workers while putting the blame for the war on the rulers of both France and Prussia. Due to the propaganda of the International, a strong spirit of internationalism existed among German and French workers. In fact Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, two members of parliament and leaders of the German proletarian party, who were Marxist members of the International, were jailed by the Prussian government for voting in parliament against war credits.

In the initial period of the war, Marx characterised it as a defensive war on the part of Germany because of the

reactionary nature of the aggressive Napoleon III regime. He however predicted the fall of this reactionary ruler. When this took place, Marx immediately published a document that called on the German workers to oppose what had now become a German war of conquest. He called for peace with France and recognition of the newly formed Republic. He characterised the Republic as being led by the finance aristocracy and big bourgeoisie. However, he felt it would be premature to attempt to overthrow the Republic and form a workers' government. In fact, Marx firmly opposed any attempt at insurrection in Paris. This was because the German enemy had already surrounded Paris and there was very little chance of

any insurrection surviving under such circumstances.

Despite Marx's advice, activists of various anarchist and conspiratorial trends who had some following in Paris made various attempts at organising an uprising. When the insurrection actually took place Marx, in spite of all his earlier opposition, declared full and militant support for the Commune. He immediately recognised its historic significance and sent hundreds of letters throughout the world trying to build up support. Through messengers he kept in contact with the Communards, sending advice to the Internationalists in the Commune. Consulting Engels, who was an expert in military matters, he also sent advice regarding the military

defence of the Commune. Though the leadership of the Commune was in the hands of the members of other groups and trends, the Marxists within the Commune made all attempts to strengthen its activities and defence. After the defeat of the Commune the International was the principal organization, which arranged for shelter and help to gain jobs for the Communards who had to flee the brutal repression of the French bourgeoisie.

Marx, who immediately hailed the Commune as an event of immense historic significance, made an in-depth analysis trying to draw lessons from its experience. This work, ***The Civil War in France***, was written during the Commune but could

only be published two days after its fall. **It served to propagate its achievements and build the correct perspective towards the Commune among revolutionaries and workers throughout the world.**

Firstly, Marx highlighted the major positive and revolutionary measures taken by the Commune, which he presented as the incubation of the new society. He pointed out the major political decisions as the separation of the Church and State; abolition of subsidies to the Church; replacement of the standing army by a people's militia; election and control of all judges and magistrates; upper salary limit for all government officials and making them strictly responsible to the electorate, etc. The major

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' cooperatives; relief to the unemployed; and rationed houses and assistance to debtors. All the above measures showed that although there was no clear direction to the Commune, all its decisions had the clear stamp of the actions of the proletariat. Despite being faced constantly by the desperate question of its very survival, **the Commune through its actions provided the first glimpse of what type of society the coming proletarian revolution would bring. It provided the first experience of**

**the proletariat in state power—
what Marx and Engels referred
to as the first dictatorship of the
proletariat.**

The Commune by its weaknesses also provided the valuable lessons for the future struggles of the proletariat. These were pointed out by Marx. A serious weakness of the Commune was the lack of a clear and centralised leadership of a single proletarian party. From this, **Marx concluded that for the success of the revolution it was absolutely necessary to have the leadership of a strong, clear-sighted and disciplined proletarian party. The other point, which Marx repeatedly stressed, was the need to smash the existing state machinery.**

In order to build the new workers' state it was not possible to rely upon the existing state machinery of the bourgeoisie with its state officials who were totally committed to preserving the old social order. In fact, in order to build the workers' state it was first necessary to smash the existing state apparatus and get rid of all the high-level officials associated with it.

In the period of reaction and repression following the Commune, there was considerable confusion among the revolutionary forces as to how to assess the experiences and draw the correct conclusions. The anarchists, who had participated in large numbers in the Commune, were particularly at a loss. **Marx's analysis gave a clear-cut position dispelling**

all types of confusion. Marx also helped propagate the correct understanding regarding the Commune throughout the world. Following the Commune, the bourgeoisie portrayed Marx as the real leader of the Commune, and he was therefore even interviewed by the world press. Through these interviews, he thus was able to present the correct stand to various countries. Marxism again was providing the correct answers.

CHAPTER 11

THE SPREAD OF MARXISM AND THE RISE OF OPPORTUNISM

The period after the Paris Commune was one of reactionary offensive by the bourgeoisie on the working-class movement. This had its impact on the First International. The French section was the worst hit with most of the members becoming refugees in other countries with severe factional fights among them. The German labour movement also faced a setback with the long arrest of the main Marxist leaders, Bebel and Liebknecht, who had opposed the war and the annexation of parts of France. This meant that the two of the most

important sections in the International were handicapped. Simultaneously, there was a split in the English section with some of the leaders leaving the International in opposition to the militant stand in support of the Commune taken by Marx. This coupled with the manipulations by the anarchists weakened the International. Marx and Engels decided to transfer the headquarters of the International from London to New York. This decision was taken in the 1872 Congress of the International. **The weakened International however, could not revive and was finally dissolved in 1876.**

The dissolution of the First International however, did not stop the onward march of Marxism and

the setting up of new proletarian parties. The period after the Paris Commune saw a long almost 35 year gap of peace, without any major wars between the big capitalist countries on the European continent. During this period, the labour movement in most industrialised countries expanded rapidly. Socialist parties, which had a basically proletarian composition, set up large and elaborate structures. Under their leadership grew trade unions, daily newspapers, worker cooperatives, etc. Working often under legal conditions they participated quite successfully in the bourgeois parliaments. **It was many of these parties who got together to set up the Second International in 1889.** This formation of the Second International gave further

encouragement to the growth of new proletarian socialist parties in various parts of the world.

Until the end of their lives Marx and Engels continued to play the role of ideological leaders and practical organisers of this growing working-class movement.

They provided constant theoretical inputs to strengthen the foundations of the growing movement. Marx concentrated on further study of political economy and more in-depth study of capitalism. The first volume of *Capital* came out in 1867. After that, Marx continued to struggle against severe ill health to try to complete the later volumes of this work. However, it remained unfinished right up to his death on March 14,

1883. Engels however, completed the monumental task of collecting together Marx's notes, editing them and finally publishing the second and third volumes of *Capital*. Engels in fact also did substantial theoretical work after becoming a full-timer in 1869. Along with Marx and alone, he published various works on philosophy, socialist theory, evolution, origin of social and political institutions, etc. After the death of Marx, he played a central role in guiding and building the movement in various countries. Through regular correspondence, he performed the role of a centre, which was otherwise non-existent throughout this period. This he did till his death on August 5, 1895.

A large part of Marx and Engels' work was fighting the trends of opportunism that started gaining strength with the growth of the movement. One important trend was Lassalleism, which arose first during the First International but continued also in later years. Its originator, Ferdinand Lassalle, was the founder of the first working-class socialist party set up in 1863 in Germany. **The main opportunist aspects of Lassalleism were discouraging worker struggle for higher wages, and making appeals to the State for aid to set up workers' cooperatives, which Lassalle saw as the main means of reforming society and gradually bringing about socialism.** In order to fight the wrong understanding on wage struggles Marx wrote the

work, "*Wages, Prices and Profits*" and presented it in the General Council of the First International in 1865. The fight against Lassalleism continued in 1875 when Marx wrote the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. The Gotha Programme was the programme drafted at the time of the unification of the Lassalleist and Marxist proletarian parties of Germany into one party. At that time the Marxists were so keen on unity that they made many compromises with the opportunist politics of Lassalleism. Marx in his Critique made a thorough criticism of the points that had opportunist politics. However, the Critique was only given to a handful of the leading Marxist members of the German party. It was not circulated and very few of its suggestions were

brought into practice. However, in 1891 when a new party programme was being drafted, Engels insisted on publishing the Critique, despite the protests of some of the leading members of the Party. This time the Lassalleist aspects did not appear in the new programme.

Other opportunist trends that appeared were similarly resolutely opposed by Marx and Engels as long as they were alive. After Engels' death however, one of the biggest attacks on Marxism appeared from within the proletarian movement itself. Since direct opposition to Marxism was very difficult this attack came in the form of an attempt to 'revise' Marxism.

This trend, which later came to be called revisionism, was initiated

first by Bernstein, one of the leading members of the German party and also of the Second International. He first presented his views in 1898-99 within the German party. **Bernstein proposed that because of changed conditions, it was necessary to change all the basic formulations made by Marx. He proposed that it was not necessary to have violent revolution to bring about socialism and that reform of capitalist institutions would gradually bring about socialism.** As opportunism had been growing in the working-class movement, Bernstein's revisionism soon found supporters in various parties. However, at the same time many genuine revolutionaries rallied around in the support of Marxism. The debate was taken up before the

Congress of the Second International held in 1904. The Congress strongly condemned revisionism by a vote of 25 to 5, with 12 abstentions.

There was also another compromise resolution, which did not so strongly condemn revisionism that did pass because of a tie vote of 21 to 21.

Thus in both the resolutions there was a very big section that supported or did not want to take a strong stand against revisionism. **Though the Congress finally condemned revisionism, it was quite clear in 1904 that opportunism and revisionism had built a substantial base for itself at the highest levels of the international working-class movement.** The opposition to opportunism in many countries however, was also strong.

A particularly strong centre was in Russia, where the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin had already waged numerous struggles against Russian varieties of opportunism.

CHAPTER 12

MARXISM IN RUSSIA— EARLY LIFE OF LENIN

Russia was one of the countries where Marxism and Marxist literature spread very early. In fact, the first translation of Marx's principal work *Capital* or *Das Kapital* (in German) was in Russian. An edition published in 1872 (just five years after the original German edition), was an immediate success with good sales and numerous positive reviews in prestigious journals. Its impact was so great that by 1873-74 quotes from *Capital* already started appearing in the propaganda of radical student agitations in big Russian cities. The translation into Russian of other Marxist works was also taken up

quite early by Russian revolutionaries attracted to Marxism.

One such revolutionary was Vera Zasulich, a woman revolutionary known for her attempt to assassinate the governor of St. Petersburg. She started a correspondence with Marx in 1881, which she later continued with Engels after Marx's death. In 1883 she became a part of the first Russian Marxist organisation—the Emancipation of Labour group led by George Plekhanov. Plekhanov participated in the 1st Congress of the Second International in 1889, after which he met Engels for the first time. After this meeting, Plekhanov continued to maintain close links and take guidance from Engels.

Plekhanov played the principal role in establishing Marxism in Russia. He translated and popularised many of Marx and Engels' works. While combating the anarchist, peasant socialist views of the Narodniks he also made many theoretical contributions to Marxism. Russia at that time was under the tyrannical rule of the Tsar against whom many revolutionaries and revolutionary groups had started activities. Many of these groups however had leanings towards anarchism and terrorism. Plekhanov and the Emancipation of Labour group played the crucial role in converting considerable sections to Marxism. **Lenin, who joined hands with this group at a later stage, was however, the outstanding figure**

who advanced Marxism and the proletarian movement.

Lenin was the party name of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, who was born on April 22, 1870, in the city of Simbirsk, which was the capital of Simbirsk province. It was situated on the Volga, which is Russia's biggest river. Though it was a provincial capital, communication with the outside world was limited during Lenin's youth. There was no railway and the main means of transport was via the steamers that traveled up and down the Volga. This however stopped during the long winter months when the river froze into ice and journeys had to be made on horseback.

Lenin's father was a well-educated man who through hard work had risen

from the level of a poor peasant to become a teacher, inspector of schools and finally the director of elementary schools in Simbirsk province. He was also given the noble rank of Civil Councilor in 1874. He died in 1886. Lenin's mother was the daughter of a rural doctor. Though she did not go to school she was educated at home and even learned many foreign languages, which she later taught her children. She died in 1916. They had eight children of who two died in early childhood and one in her teens. Lenin was the fourth child. All his brothers and sisters grew up to be revolutionaries.

Lenin was however, the most influenced by his elder brother, Alexander. Alexander was a brilliant

student and gold medalist of the University of Saint Petersburg (then the capital of Russia). He was a member of secret revolutionary study-circles of revolutionary youth in St. Petersburg and conducted political propaganda among the workers. He stood ideologically between the Narodniks and Marxism. In 1887, Alexander was arrested along with his elder sister Anna and other comrades for trying to assassinate the Tsar. Anna was later released and banned from St. Petersburg. Alexander, who was the leader of the group, was hanged on March 8, 1887, along with four of his comrades. Lenin, who was only 17 years old at the time, vowed to avenge his brother's martyrdom.

From a very young age, Lenin was a model student with a very systematic method of study.

Unlike other students, he never produced his assignments at the last minute. Rather, he prepared an early outline and draft, constantly making notes, additions and changes before producing his final draft. He had a very high level of concentration and did not talk to anyone who disturbed him while studying. He was a great admirer of his elder brother and at a young age tried to imitate Alexander in everything he did. A month after his brother was hanged, Lenin, despite the severe tension and grief, had to sit for his school exit exams. He received a gold medal as the school's best student.

Despite the gold medal, Lenin could not get admission in either the St. Petersburg University or Moscow University because he was the brother of a known revolutionary. He finally gained admission to the smaller University of Kazan. However, he was expelled within three months from the city of Kazan for participating in a demonstration against new regulations limiting the autonomy of universities and the freedom of students. The police officer who escorted him to the city limits tried to convince the young Lenin that he was up against a wall. Lenin however, replied that the wall was a rotten one which would crumble with one kick. The next year in 1888, Lenin was allowed to return to Kazan but was not given readmission into the university. It is then that he started

attending one of the secret Marxist study-circles.

During this period and later when the family moved to another province of Samara, Lenin spent a large amount of his time in reading and study.

Besides reading the works of Russian revolutionaries, **Lenin, at the age of eighteen, started reading many of Marx and Plekhanov's works. He started propagating his knowledge of Marxism, first to his eldest sister Anna, and then by organising small discussion groups of his friends.** He also took to swimming, skating, mountain climbing and hunting.

In the meantime, his mother made repeated attempts to get him readmitted to university. He was

however, again refused at Kazan. He was also refused a foreign passport to go and study abroad. After many applications, in 1890 Lenin was finally accepted only as an external law student at St. Petersburg University. He could sit directly for the examinations without being allowed to attend lectures. Lenin was determined to complete his course at the same time as his former Kazan fellow students. He therefore studied on his own and completed the four-year course within a year. In the examinations held in 1891, he received the highest marks in all subjects and was given a first class degree. In January 1892 he was accepted as a lawyer and started practice in the Samara Regional Court.

Lenin however, was least interested in his law practice. **While taking his exams in St. Petersburg, he had developed Marxist contacts there and had gotten a supply of Marxist literature. In Samara Lenin spent a large part of his time giving lectures in illegal study-circles of workers and others. He also formed the first Marxist study-circle of Samara.** Samara was a centre of the Narodniks and Lenin concentrated his energies on fighting the Narodnik ideology of that time, which had moved to liberalism. At the same time, he had a great respect for the brave, selfless, Narodnik revolutionaries of the 1870s, many of whom were residing in Samara after retiring from politics. **Lenin was always eager to learn from**

them about their revolutionary work, their secrecy techniques, and about the behaviour of revolutionaries during interrogation and trials. It was in Samara that Lenin started his first writings, which were circulated among the study-circles. He also translated the Communist Manifesto into Russian. Lenin's activities and influence started spreading beyond Samara to other provinces of the Volga region.

After developing well-formed views, Lenin now wanted to broaden the scope of his revolutionary work. With this aim, he moved in August 1893 to St. Petersburg, a major industrial centre with a large proletariat. As a cover, he took up a job as an assistant lawyer to a senior barrister of St.

Petersburg. He however, did very little legal work and concentrated wholly on revolutionary activities. **Lenin soon became a leading figure bringing new life to the numerous secret study-circles of St. Petersburg. He also influenced the Moscow circles.** Besides lecturing in the circles, he was always interested in learning every minute detail of the workers' lives. **In the circles he convinced a big section of the revolutionaries to move from selective propaganda (propaganda in those days was understood as similar to our political education classes today) in small circles to mass agitation among the broad masses of workers.**

It was during this period that he met his future wife, Krupskaya, who had already come into contact with Marxism and was teaching without payment at a night school for workers. Many of her worker students were part of a study-circle conducted by Lenin. Lenin himself would always be eager to learn from her deep knowledge of the lives and work conditions of the St. Petersburg workers. When Lenin fell ill, she visited him and gradually their friendship grew into love.

Meanwhile, Lenin continued to expand his contacts in many more Russian cities. In February 1895 a meeting of the groups in various main cities decided to send Lenin and another delegate from Moscow abroad to make contact with the Emancipation

of Labour group. **Lenin's first visit to Europe lasted from April to September 1895. During this period he met Plekhanov and Axelrod of the Emancipation of Labour group, and other leaders of the German and French working-class organisations. He wanted keenly to meet Engels but could not do so as Engels was on his deathbed.**

Upon his return to Russia he united all the Marxist circles of St. Petersburg into one political organisation called the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. The League immediately started agitation and organising strikes in large factories of the city. It also made plans to publish an illegal magazine of

the workers. This magazine however, could not be published. Through the help of an informer, the secret police that had been keeping a close watch on Lenin finally managed to arrest him along with proof. He was picked up in December 1895, along with the manuscript of the first issue of the illegal magazine and was sent to jail.

Even from jail Lenin managed to keep close contact with his comrades outside. His mother and sister Anna brought him numerous books and **he sent letters in the books through a code that he had taught his sister. He also sent letters written in milk, which served as invisible ink that became visible later, on being warmed up.** He used black bread as

his inkpots so that he could swallow them as soon as any prison guard came nearby. Thus **from the jail Lenin could even write pamphlets and direct strikes**, which during 1896 were on an upswing throughout Russia. He came to be known as the real leader of the League. At the same time he also started intense study and research on his first major theoretical work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. **While studying heavily from morning to night, Lenin kept up his fitness by daily regular exercises before going to bed.**

After over one year in jail, Lenin was released but was immediately sentenced to three years' exile in Siberia, which he reached in May 1897. Krupskaya in the meantime had

also been arrested. Lenin proposed marriage to her from Siberia. She replied simply, "If I'm to be a wife, so be it." She was allowed to join him in Siberia, which she reached in May 1898. Lenin spent most of his time in Siberia doing theoretical work. With Krupskaya's help, he translated an English book, *Industrial Democracy*, into Russian. He also completed his work on the development of capitalism in Russia, which was published legally in 1899. **He also started his struggle against the economists—an opportunist trend linked to the Bernsteinian revisionism** mentioned in the previous Chapter. **He also wrote extensively on what the programme and immediate tasks of the Russian revolution should be.** When he came out of exile in

early 1900, he immediately started work on those tasks.

CHAPTER 13

LENIN AND THE PROLETARIAN PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

The most urgent and pressing task when Lenin came out of exile was to build the revolutionary proletarian party. The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) had been formally established in a Congress held in 1898 attended by nine delegates. However, the Central Committee elected at the Congress was very soon arrested. Though the banner of the Party had been announced this Congress did not actually succeed in unifying all the groups and building up a single party

organisational structure. Thus in 1900 this task remained.

The plan for building up the Party had been worked out in detail while in exile. Lenin felt the key to it was setting up an all-Russian political newspaper. Lenin proposed that the only way of politically and organisationally uniting the scattered Marxist study-circles, groups and organisations was through a political newspaper. This newspaper would be able to link politically all the varied cells throughout Russia by presenting the correct line and immediately fighting all opportunist deviations. At the same time the most difficult task of secretly distributing an illegal paper would by itself create an underground organisation trained in facing the

repressive Russian secret police. Lenin wanted to first bring this plan into action before the calling of a party congress, because it was also first necessary to defeat the opportunist and revisionist trends that had raised their heads in the movement in the preceding years.

Lenin's plan was first discussed with and approved by the Leagues of Struggle in various Russian cities and at a conference of Social Democrats, which he arranged to discuss this plan. His principal associates in this plan were Martov and Potresov members of the central group in St. Petersburg who had been arrested and sent to Siberia at the same time as him. The plan was to publish the paper from abroad as it was too

dangerous to publish it within Russia. Lenin also planned for this purpose to unite with Plekhanov's Emancipation of Labour group, which already existed abroad. The editorial board was to consist of six members—three from the Emancipation group abroad and three from Russia—Lenin, Martov and Potresov. After making all of the arrangements, the first issue of the paper came out in December 1900.

It was called ***Iskra*** meaning Spark. Its title page carried the words of the first Russian bourgeois revolutionaries of 1825: "*The Spark Will Kindle a Flame.*" *Iskra* was printed in various countries at various times—Germany, England and Switzerland. It was never sent directly to Russia but went by extremely roundabout routes until

they reached secret *Iskra* committees within Russia. The distributors had an extremely difficult task avoiding the secret police, and if *Iskra* smugglers were caught they were straightaway exiled to Siberia. *Iskra* was a major tool for educating the working class with lectures in study-circles often consisting of reading articles from the paper. *Iskra* agents used every opportunity to distribute the newspaper as well as secret *Iskra* leaflets. These were distributed not only in the factories but also on the streets, in theatres, in army barracks and through the post. In large cities they were widely scattered through the streets or from the balconies in theatres. In worker localities they were distributed late at night or early morning by keeping them in factory

courtyards and near water-pumps where they would be seen in the morning. After each such operation, which was called sowing, a particular marking would be made on a nearby wall so that a full report could be gotten in the morning as to the impact of the night's work. In small towns and villages, the *Iskra* pamphlets were brought in peasant carts on market days and pasted on walls. All this was dangerous work as discovery meant immediate arrest and the possibility of banishment to Siberia. The comrades involved in this work slowly started building up into a team of professional revolutionaries on the basis of whom Lenin planned to build the proletarian party.

As to the structure and composition of the Party itself, Lenin believed that it should consist of two parts: a) a close circle of regular cadres of leading party workers, chiefly professional revolutionaries—that is, party workers free from all occupation except party work and possessing the necessary minimum of theoretical knowledge, political experience, organisational practice and the art of facing and fighting the tsarist police; and b) a broad network of local party organisations and a large number of party members enjoying the sympathy and support of hundreds of thousands of working people.

As the process of building such a party proceeded through the help

of *Iskra*, Lenin gave direction to this process through his articles and books. Of particular significance were ***Where To Begin? What Is To Be Done?*** and ***Letter to a Comrade on Organisational Questions***. In these works, he laid down the ideological and organisational basis of the proletarian party.

Besides the organisational questions a major battle waged by Lenin was the fight against the Economists, who wanted to restrict the Social Democratic Party merely to the economic struggle of the workers. They had grown in strength in Russia during Lenin's period in exile and Lenin realised that economism had to be ideologically defeated before the convening of the Party Congress.

He launched a direct attack on them particularly through his book, *What Is To Be Done?*, **Lenin exposed how the economists' views meant bowing to the spontaneity of the working-class movement and neglecting the role of consciousness and the leading role of the party. He showed how this would lead to slavery of the working class to capitalism. While mouthing Marxism, the economists wanted to convert the revolutionary party into a party of social reform.** Lenin thus showed how the economists were actually Russian representatives of the opportunist trend of Bernsteinian revisionism. Lenin's book, which was widely distributed in Russia, succeeded in decisively defeating Economism.

It thus laid down the principles, which later became the ideological foundation of the Bolshevik party.

The actual birth of the Bolshevik trend within the RSDLP took place at the Second Party Congress, which took place in July-August 1903. **The main debate at the Congress was regarding what should be the nature of the Party and thus who should be given membership to the Party. Lenin, who had in mind a tight, effective, professional revolutionary based party proposed that all party members should work in one of the party organisations. Martov, on the other hand, had as his model the loosely functioning legal parties, which had become common**

in the Second International at that time. He thus proposed loose criteria for membership, which would allow anyone who accepted the party programme and supported the party financially, to be eligible for party membership. He thus was ready to give party membership to any party sympathiser. In the vote on this point the majority was with Martov. However, later when some opportunist sections walked out of the Congress, the majority came over to Lenin's side. This was reflected in the elections to the Central Committee and Editorial Board of *Iskra*, which went according to Lenin's proposals. The differences between the two groups however, remained strong and continued even after the Congress. **From that time Lenin's**

followers, who received the majority of votes in the elections at the Congress, have been called Bolsheviks (which means majority in the Russian language). Lenin's opponents, who received the minority of votes, have been called Mensheviks (which means minority in the Russian language).

Immediately after the Congress the Mensheviks started manipulations and splitting activities. This created a lot of confusion. In order to clear the confusion, Lenin, in May 1904, published his famous book, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*. It gave a detailed analysis of the intra-party struggle both during and after the Congress and on that basis explained the proletarian party's

main organisational principles which later came to form the organisational foundations of the Bolshevik party. The circulation of this book brought the majority of the local organisations of the Party to the side of the Bolsheviks. However, the central bodies, the party organ and the Central Committee went into the hands of the Mensheviks, who were determined to defeat the decisions of the Congress. The Bolsheviks were thus forced to form their own committee and start their own organ. Both groups also started making separate preparations for organising their own congress and conference. These were held in 1905. **The split in the Party was complete. The foundations however, had been laid for the building of the**

**true revolutionary party—the
proletarian party of a new type.**

CHAPTER 14

THE RUSSIAN BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION OF 1905: DEVELOPMENT OF PROLETARIAN TACTICS

The period of the split in the RSDLP came at the beginning of a period of major changes in the world situation. The long 35-year gap of peace in Europe between the main capitalist countries was broken with a series of wars. The age of imperialism had dawned and the new imperialist powers started fighting to capture and expand markets. They entered into a number of regional wars. An important war among these was the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. **These regional wars were only a way**

by which the imperialist powers were preparing themselves for the devastating World War I of 1914-18 for the re-division of the world.

This same period was also a period of a new upsurge of revolutions. The main source of these revolutions was however, now not Europe but Asia. The first of these revolutions was the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905, which was followed by the Turkish, the Persian and the Chinese bourgeois revolutions. **The most important of these revolutions, from the point of the role of the proletariat and the development of Marxist revolutionary tactics, was the 1905 Russian revolution.** Its

starting point was the Russo-Japanese war.

The Russo-Japanese war, which started on 8th February 1904, ended in defeat for the Tsar and a humiliating peace treaty on August 23, 1905. **The Bolsheviks adopted a clear revolutionary standpoint to the war, opposed to their own government and opposed to any false notions of nationalism or patriotism. Their perspective was that the defeat of the Tsar would be useful, as it would weaken Tsardom and strengthen the revolution.** This is actually what happened. The economic crisis of 1900-03 had already aggravated the hardships of the toiling masses. The war further intensified this suffering.

As the war continued and the Russian armed forces faced defeat after defeat the people's hatred for the Tsar increased. They reacted with the great revolution of 1905.

The 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 indiscriminate firing upon and massacre of a demonstration of unarmed workers on January 22, 1905, in St. Petersburg. The Tsar's attempt to crush the workers in blood only inspired a still fiercer response from the 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 Russian Navy sailors of the battleship Potemkin. Twice the Tsar, in a bid to divert the struggle, offered first a "consultative" and then a "legislative" Duma (Duma is the Russian parliament). The Bolsheviks rejected both Dumas whereas the Mensheviks decided 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 were the embryo of revolutionary power and became the model for the Soviet power set up after the

Socialist Revolution 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, were brutally crushed after which 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 affected 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 Prime Minister, Stolypin, called the Stolypin reaction, set in. It was to last until the next wave of strikes and political struggles in 1912.

Though the 1905 Revolution was defeated it shook the very foundations of Tsarist rule. It also, in the short space of three years, gave the working class and peasantry a rich political education. It was also the period when the Bolsheviks proved in practice the basic correctness of their revolutionary understanding regarding the strategy and tactics

of the proletariat. It was in the course of this revolution that the Bolshevik understanding regarding the friends and enemies of the revolution and the forms of struggle and forms of organisation was firmly established.

The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had an opposite understanding of all the above questions. The Menshevik understanding was the reformist and legalist understanding that had by then grown common in many parties of the Second International. It was based on the understanding that the Russian revolution, being a bourgeois revolution, had to be led by the liberal bourgeoisie, and therefore the proletariat should not take any steps that would frighten the bourgeoisie

and drive it into the arms of the Tsar. **The Bolshevik understanding on the other hand was the revolutionary understanding that the proletariat could not rely on the bourgeoisie to lead the revolution and would have to itself take up the leadership of the revolution. It was on this revolutionary basis that the Bolsheviks developed their understanding of all the other important strategic and tactical questions of the revolution.**

Thus the Bolsheviks called for the extension of the revolution and the overthrow of the Tsar through armed uprising; the Mensheviks tried to control the revolution within a peaceful framework and attempted

to reform and improve Tsardom. The Bolsheviks pushed for the leadership of the working class, the isolation of the liberal bourgeoisie and a firm alliance with the peasantry; the Mensheviks accepted an alliance with and leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie and did not consider the peasantry as a revolutionary class with which to be allied. The Bolsheviks were ready for participation in a provisional revolutionary government to be formed on the basis of a successful people's uprising and called for the boycott of the Duma offered by the Tsar; the Mensheviks were ready to participate in the Duma and proposed to make it the centre of the "revolutionary forces" of the country.

The Menshevik understanding was not an isolated example of a reformist trend. In fact, the Menshevik understanding was fully representative of the understanding of the main leading parties of the Second International at that time. Their stand was basically supported by the leaders of the International. **Thus Lenin and the Bolsheviks were not only fighting the reformism of the Mensheviks but also the reformist understanding that then dominated the so-called Marxist parties of the International.**

Lenin's formulations were however, a continuation and development of the revolutionary understanding of Marx and Engels. It was a further development of the Marxist revolutionary tactics applied in the

new conditions brought about by the growth of capitalism into a new stage—imperialism. Lenin published these tactics in his various writings during the course of the revolution and particularly in his book, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. This book written in July 1905 after the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks held separated congresses, brought out the essential differences in the strategy and tactics proposed by the two groups.

The fundamental tactical principles presented by Lenin in this and other works were:

1) The main tactical principle running through all Lenin's writings is that the proletariat

can and must be the leader of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

It order to do this two conditions were necessary. Firstly, it was necessary for the proletariat to have an ally who was interested in a decisive victory over Tsardom and who might be disposed to accept the leadership of the proletariat. Lenin considered the peasantry to be such an ally.

Secondly, it was necessary that the class that was fighting the proletariat for the leadership of the revolution and striving to become its sole leader, would be forced out of the arena of leadership and isolated. Lenin considered the liberal bourgeoisie to be such a class. Thus **the essence of Lenin's main tactical principle of the leadership of the proletariat meant the policy of alliance with**

the peasantry and at the same time the policy of isolation of the liberal bourgeoisie.

2) In regards the forms of struggle and forms of organisation, Lenin considered that the most effective means of overthrowing Tsardom and achieving a democratic republic was a victorious armed uprising of the people. In order to bring this about Lenin called for mass political strikes and the arming of the workers. He also called for achieving the 8-hour working day and other immediate demands of the working class in a revolutionary way by disregarding the authorities and the law. Similarly, he called for the formation of revolutionary peasant

committees to bring about changes like seizure of land in a revolutionary way. These tactics of disregarding the authorities paralysed the Tsar's state machinery and released the initiative of the masses. It led to the formation of revolutionary strike committees in the towns and revolutionary peasant committees in the countryside, which later developed in the Soviets of Workers' Deputies and the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

3) Lenin further held that **the revolution should not stop after the victory of the bourgeois revolution and the achievement of a democratic republic. He proposed that it was the duty of the revolutionary party to do everything possible to make the**

bourgeois-democratic revolution continue into the socialist revolution. He thus gave concrete form to Marx's concept of uninterrupted revolution.

These tactical principles became the basis for the Bolshevik practice during the following period. It finally led to the victory of the proletariat in the 1917 October Revolution and the establishment of the first workers' state.

CHAPTER 15

WORLD WAR I: OPPORTUNISM VS. REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

The dawn of imperialism from the turn of the century brought with it the wars by the imperialist powers for the capture of colonies. An example was the Russo-Japanese war mentioned in the previous chapter. This war took place because both Russia and Japan wanted control over Manchuria in Northern China and Korea. Similar wars for capturing or recapturing colonies started breaking out in various parts of the world. Thus, it became of crucial importance for the international proletarian movement to adopt the correct

revolutionary position on the questions of colonialism and war. This therefore came up before the Congresses of the Second International.

However, opportunism by then had spread quite extensively within the parties of the Second International. Many leading sections of the parties in the imperialist countries had in fact started taking the standpoint of the bourgeoisie on many of the crucial political questions. This was seen very clearly at the 1907 Congress of the Second International where the questions of colonialism and war were first taken up.

On the question of colonialism, the leading body of the Congress—the

Congress Commission—adopted a resolution on colonial policy and placed it before the general body for approval. This resolution, while criticising the bourgeoisie’s colonial policy in name, it did not reject totally the principle of capturing colonies. It in fact argued that under a socialist regime it could be in the “interests of civilization” to capture colonies. Such an openly imperialist position of these so-called Marxists was strongly opposed by the revolutionaries in the general body and the resolution was finally defeated, but only by a small margin of 127 votes to 108.

Similar opportunism of the leadership was seen in the case of the stand on the question of war. Bebel, a known leader and a close follower

and associate of Marx and Engels, prepared the resolution. The resolution however, was left vague without any specific direction or course of action to be taken by the members in the event of war. **This again was opposed strongly by the revolutionaries—particularly Rosa Luxemburg of Germany and Lenin. They then proposed an amendment which gave a clear-cut direction to the members of the International to fight to prevent war, to fight to end the war quickly in case it started, and to make full use of the economic and political crisis in the case of war to arouse the people and bring about revolution. This was a continuation of the revolutionary proletarian position on war that Marx had already**

clearly laid down. Since the opportunists could not openly oppose this understanding, this resolution was passed by the Congress. As the war danger grew greater, the 1910 and 1912 congresses of the International again discussed and adopted resolutions regarding war. They decided that all socialists in parliament should vote against war credits. They also repeated in their resolutions the wording of the amendment proposed in 1907 by Luxembourg and Lenin.

However, the hold of opportunism over the Second International was so great that most of the leaders who passed these resolutions had absolutely no intention of standing by these decisions. This was seen when World War I actually broke out in July-August

1914. The German Social Democratic Party, which was the undoubted leader of the Second International, led the way. The trade-union bureaucrats, instead of trying to rouse the workers against the war and for revolution, immediately entered into a no-strike agreement with the employers. In the party caucus (fraction) meeting that was held before the parliamentary vote on war credits, a large majority voted in support of the war. Only a handful of revolutionaries led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg opposed. Kautsky, who was at that time the main ideological leader of the Second International, voted to abstain. Thus, **on August 4, 1914 the German Social Democratic Party threw aside all the previous Congress resolutions and voted**

unanimously in parliament to support the imperialist war. For the revolutionary proletariat, the Second International ceased to exist from that date. The German party was immediately followed by the majority of socialists in France, Britain, Belgium and other countries. The Second International broke into separate social-chauvinist parties warring against each other.

The Bolsheviks were almost the only party to stand by the anti-war resolutions. In the context of the Second International leaders falling totally into opportunism, it was left to Lenin and the Bolsheviks to uphold and implement the correct Marxist position regarding the World War.

Lenin immediately published writings presenting this correct understanding.

The Central Committee of the RSDLP (B) gave a call to “turn the imperialist war into civil war” and to build a new Third International in place of the Second International. Lenin started the process of building the Third International by uniting all the leftist anti-war forces. Though these forces started holding conferences from 1915 onwards much confusion continued. Lenin had to take up the task of clearing this confusion and establish among these elements the correct revolutionary position on the principles of socialism in relation to war, as well as the tasks of revolutionary social democrats at the international level and in Russia. Lenin did this through

his various writings propagated both within Russia and internationally.

The principles and tasks Lenin outlined can be presented in the following manner:

Firstly, socialists are not pacifists who are opponents of all war.

Socialists aim at establishing socialism and communism, which by eliminating all exploitation will eliminate the very possibility of war. However, in the fight to achieve the socialist system, there will always be the possibility of wars, which are necessary and are of revolutionary significance.

Secondly, while deciding the attitude to be adopted towards a particular war, the main issue for socialists is this: what is the war

being waged for, and what classes staged and directed it? Thus Lenin pointed out that during the period of the bourgeois democratic revolution, Marx had supported the wars waged by the bourgeoisie, which were against feudalism and reactionary kings. Because these wars were aimed at abolishing feudalism and establishing or strengthening capitalism, they were progressive or just wars. Adopting similar criteria Lenin points out that in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution socialists will support all such wars that advance the world socialist revolution. **According to such an understanding Lenin gave examples of the types of wars that may be called just or progressive wars: 1) national wars waged by a colonial or semi-colonial country**

against its imperialist exploiter, 2) civil wars waged by the proletariat and other oppressed classes against their feudal or capitalist ruling classes, 3) socialist wars for the defence of the socialist fatherland.

Thirdly, Lenin pointed out that on the basis of the above understanding there was nothing just or progressive about the World War I. He compared the imperialist war to a war between a slave-holder who owns 100 slaves and a slave-holder who owns 200 slaves for a more “just” redistribution of slaves. The essential purpose of the World War I was for redistribution of the colonial slaves. Thus there could not be anything progressive or

defensive or just about the war. **It was an unjust, reactionary war. The only stand towards it could be the call to convert the imperialist war into civil war. The only use of such a war was to take advantage of it to make revolution.** In order to do this, Lenin pointed out it was advantageous that one's own country is defeated in the war. Defeat would weaken the ruling class and facilitate the victory of revolution. Thus **any socialist revolutionary must work for the defeat of his own government in the war.**

Finally, Lenin pointed out that it was the duty of socialists to participate in the movement for peace. Nevertheless, while participating in the movement for

peace, it is their duty to point out that no real and lasting peace is possible without a revolutionary movement. In fact, whoever wants a just and democratic peace must stand for civil war against the governments and the bourgeoisie.

Though these principles and tactics were propagated among all the parties of the Second International, the only ones to implement them in practice were the Bolsheviks. It was this approach to the war that helped them to make use of the revolutionary crisis situation created by the war and within three years achieve the victory of Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917.

CHAPTER 16

LENIN'S ANALYSIS OF IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM

Marx's analysis of the laws of motion of capitalism belongs to the stage of free competitive capitalism where a large number of capitalist producers compete in the market. He analysed to some extent the process of the centralisation of capital. However, he did not live long enough to see the start of a new stage of capitalism—the stage of imperialism. This happened at the start of the 20th century and it was left to Lenin to analyse this process. In 1897-98 Lenin made some initial analyses of the development

of the capitalist world market but did not analyse the subject of imperialism in full. However, with the start of the World War I, a war caused by imperialism, it was necessary to do a full analysis of imperialism to understand the economic basis of the war and the political consequences for the proletariat.

This question became all the more urgent in 1915 when the opportunist and revisionist leader of the Second International, Karl Kautsky, wrote a book on imperialism where he argued that the world economic system was moving towards “ultra-imperialism” where there would be stability and no risk of war. His argument was similar to some people who analyse globalisation today and

argue that, because of the growth of multinational groups and corporations and the spread of their capital to all countries, these multinationals will be opposed to war and there is therefore no danger of a world war. This theory presented during World War I gave a false picture of imperialism. Since such a false theory was presented by Kautsky, who was recognised at that time as the main theoretician of Marxism, it was absolutely necessary to oppose this theory and present the correct understanding. It was necessary to clear the confusion created by the Second Internationalists and give the correct analysis and present the correct tactics before the international working-class movement. In order to do this Lenin, in 1916, did extensive

research and produced his famous work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Besides this main work, he also wrote many other articles linking this basic economic analysis to the tactics of the proletariat.

In the first place, Lenin tried to clear the confusion created by Kautsky and other opportunists what imperialism is. In order to answer this, he pointed out that imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Imperialism's specific character is three-fold: **(1) monopoly capitalism; (2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism; (3) moribund capitalism or capitalism on its deathbed.** The replacement of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the essence of imperialism.

Monopoly capitalism manifests itself in five principal forms: **(1) Cartels, syndicates and trusts:** the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic associations of capitalists who join together to crush other competitors. They fix prices, allot production among themselves and make other arrangements and agreements to prevent others from entering and succeeding in the market. They play a decisive role in economic life. **(2) The monopolistic position of the big banks and the creation of finance capital through the merger of monopoly industrial capital and bank capital:** during Lenin's time this had already reached the level where three, four or five giant banks manipulated the whole

economic life in the main industrialised countries. **(3) The export of capital, which gains particular importance:** this feature, which is different from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism, is closely linked to the economic and political partition of the world. **(4) The economic partition of the world by the international cartels:** at Lenin's time there were already over one hundred such international cartels, which commanded the entire world market and divided it among themselves in a "friendly" manner. Of course this "friendliness" was only be temporary and would last until war took place for a redivision of markets. **(5) The territorial (political) partition of the world (colonies) among the biggest capitalist powers:** this

process of colonisation of all the backward countries of the world was basically completed at the time of the dawn of imperialism. Any further colonies could only be taken through redivision of the world through war.

On the basis of the above features, Lenin defines imperialism in the following way: **“Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in 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.”

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay, which is characteristic of every monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. As compared to the rapid expansion under free competition, there is a tendency for production as a whole to decline under a monopoly. Technological progress is discouraged and new inventions and patents are deliberately suppressed. **Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of rentiers, capitalists who live without**

working but merely on the basis of the interest or dividend they earn on their investments. Thirdly, export of capital is parasitism raised to a high pitch as it means the open exploitation of the cheap labour of the backward countries. Fourthly, finance capital strives for domination, not freedom.

Political reaction all along the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism.

Corruption, bribery on a huge scale and all kinds of fraud become common. **Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of “great” powers, increasingly transforms the imperialist world into a parasite on the bodies of hundreds of millions in the backward nations.**

It reaches the stage where a privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries also lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the colonies.

Imperialism is moribund capitalism, because it is capitalism in transition to socialism. Monopoly, which grows out of capitalism, is already dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous socialisation of labour by imperialism produces the same result. The basic contradiction of capitalism between the social character of production and the private character of ownership only gets further intensified under imperialism. Thus Lenin says,

“Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat.”

CHAPTER 17

THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

As mentioned in Chapter 14, **the period after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution was a period of extreme repression and reaction under the leadership of the Tsar's Prime Minister, Stolypin.** The working class was made the main target of attack. Wages were reduced by 10 to 15 percent, and the working day was increased by 10 to 12 hours. Blacklists of worker activists were drawn up and they were not given jobs. Systems of fines on workers were introduced. Any attempt to organise was met with savage attacks by the police and goondas organised

by the Tsar's agents. In such a situation many intellectuals and petit bourgeois elements started retreating and some even joined the camp of the enemy.

In order to face this new situation, the Bolsheviks changed from offensive tactics (like the general strikes and armed uprising used during the period of the 1905 Revolution) to defensive tactics. Defensive tactics meant the tactics of gathering forces, cadres withdrawing underground and carrying on the work of the Party from underground and combining illegal work with work in the legal working-class organisations. Open revolutionary struggle

against Tsardom was replaced by roundabout methods of struggle.

The surviving legal organisations served as a cover for the underground organisations of the Party and as a means of maintaining connections with the masses. **In order to preserve their connections with the masses, the Bolsheviks made use of the trade unions and other legally existing people's organisations, such as charitable health societies, workers' cooperative societies, clubs, educational societies and even parliament.** The Bolsheviks made use of the platform of the State Duma to expose the policy of the Tsarist government, to expose the liberal parties, and to win the support of the peasants for the proletariat.

The preservation of the illegal party organisation enabled the Party to pursue a correct line and to gather together forces in preparation for a new rise in the tide of the revolution.

In implementing these tactics, the Bolsheviks had to wage struggle against two deviations within the movement—the Liquidators and the Otzovists (Recallists). The Liquidators, who were Mensheviks, wanted to close down the illegal party structure and set up a legal “labour” party with the consent of the government. The Recallists, who were from among the Bolsheviks, wanted to recall all the Bolshevik members of the Duma and also withdraw from the trade unions and all other legal forms of organisation. They wanted only the

illegal form of organisation. The result of both sets of tactics would have been to prevent the Party from gathering the forces for a new advance of the revolution. **Rejecting both deviations, the Bolsheviks used the correct tactics of combining both legal and illegal methods and were able to gain a strong presence in many workers' organisations and also win over a number of Menshevik worker organisations. This strengthened the Party and prepared it for the next upswing in the revolutionary movement, which started from 1912.**

The Bolsheviks held a separate party conference in January 1912 and constituted themselves as a

separate party—the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) [RSDLP (B)]. At this conference they assessed the rise in the revolutionary movement, which was seen from the rise in the number of strikers in 1911. At this conference and at later meetings of the Central Committee, **new tactics were decided upon according to the new situation. This involved extending and intensifying the struggles of the workers.**

An important aspect of the tactics during this period was the starting of the daily newspaper, *Pravda* (Truth), which helped to strengthen the Bolshevik organisations and spread their influence among the masses.

Earlier the Bolsheviks had a weekly paper, which was meant for advanced workers. *Pravda* however, was a daily mass political newspaper aimed at reaching out to the broadest sections of the workers. Started on May 5, 1912, it lasted for two-and-a-half years. During this period, it faced numerous problems and heavy fines from the government's censors. It was suppressed eight times but reappeared again each time under a slightly changed name. It had an average circulation of 40,000 copies. *Pravda* was supported by a large number of advanced workers—5600 workers' groups collected for the Bolshevik press. Through *Pravda*, Bolshevik influence spread not only among the workers but also among the peasants. In fact, during the period of the rise

of the revolutionary movement (1912-14) the solid foundation was laid for a mass Bolshevik party. As Stalin said, **"The *Pravda* of 1912 was the laying of the corner-stone of the victory of Bolshevism in 1917."**

With the outbreak of war in 1914, the revolutionary situation further ripened. The Bolsheviks did extensive propaganda among the workers against the war and for the overthrow of Tsardom. Units and cells were also formed in the army and the navy, at the front and in the rear, and leaflets were distributed calling for a fight against the war. At the front, after the Party's intensive agitation for friendship and brotherhood 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 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 Working Women's Day, the working women of Petrograd were called out by the Bolsheviks to demonstrate against starvation, war and Tsardom. The male 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. (It is called February Revolution because the Russian calendar at that time was 13 days behind the calendar in other parts of the world and the date of the victory of the revolution was February 27th according to the Russian calendar).

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 (a petit-bourgeois party which was a continuation of the earlier Narodniks) seized the seats in the Soviets, 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 the formation of two bodies representing 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. Lenin called this dual power.

Immediately after the bourgeois revolution Lenin, while still in Switzerland, wrote his famous *Letters from Afar*, where he analysed this dual power. He showed how **the Soviets were the embryo of the workers' government, which had initiative and won victory in the second stage of the revolution—the socialist revolution. Their allies in this were 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, 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 warned 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 declared 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 should 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, and with the tide of the revolution rising, the Party started preparing for armed uprising.**

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 had tremendous theoretical

and practical significance at the international level at that time. This was because, as **Lenin saw clearly, the Russian February bourgeois revolution was a link in a chain of socialist proletarian revolutions being caused by World War I.**

The question of the relationship between the proletarian revolution and the State was no longer merely a theoretical question. Because of the revolutionary situation created by the war, it was now a question of immediate practical importance, and it was necessary for the international proletarian movement and the masses to be educated about the correct understanding.

As the revolutionary tide rose, Lenin again landed in Petrograd on October

20, 1917. Within three days of his arrival, an 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 provisional government started an attack on the Bolsheviks, on November 6, 1917, the eve 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.

It was however, a long battle before workers’ power was consolidated. Firstly, the war with Germany had to be ended. This was finally done by signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in February 1918. This too however, did not bring a lasting peace. As soon as World War I ended, the victorious imperialist powers of Britain, France, Japan and America started direct and indirect intervention and aid to the old ruling classes of Russia to wage a civil

war against the Soviet state. This civil war lasted until the end of 1920. The Soviet state emerged victorious but at the end of the war the economy was in ruins.

CHAPTER 18

THE FORMATION OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The end of World War I was a period of revolutionary upsurge throughout the world. The success of the October Revolution had an impact in numerous countries, even where Marxism had little or no influence. Europe, the main battlefield of the War, was in the deepest revolutionary crisis. The war had resulted in the overthrow of four emperors and the break-up of their four great empires—the Russian, German, 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. This was followed by revolts in the armed forces of various countries. There was also a national upsurge which led to the formation of many new states after the break-up of the old empires.

In Germany and Hungary however, the crisis led to revolution. In November 1918, German sailors mutinied, and this immediately launched a wave of revolt throughout Germany resulting in the overthrow of the emperor and the establishment of a republic under the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party. 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 forces, which had been reorganised by the Social-Democratic government. Later a Soviet Republic was formed in Bavaria (a province of Germany) 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.

Nevertheless, the rising tide of revolution and the success

of the revolution in Russia led to the formation of communist parties in many countries. A real basis now existed for a union of the communist parties, for the formation of the Third Communist International. As mentioned earlier, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had given the call for the formation of the Third International in 1914. Now they took the initiative for actually setting it up.

In January 1919 Lenin addressed an open letter to the workers of Europe and America urging them to found the Third International. Soon after invitations for an international congress were sent out. **In March 1919, the First**

Congress of the communist parties of various countries, held in Moscow, founded the Communist International. The Congress set up an Executive Committee of the Third Communist International.

Just a month after the First Congress, Lenin explained the historical significance of the Third International in the following way: **“The First International laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for socialism. The Second International marked a period in which the soil was prepared for the broad, mass spread of the movement in a number of countries. The Third International has gathered the fruits of the work of the Second International,**

discarded its opportunist, social-chauvinist, bourgeois and petit-bourgeois dross, and has begun to implement the dictatorship of the proletariat.” He thus pointed out that the most significant aspect of the Third International was that it now represented the proletariat that had succeeded in seizing state power and had begun to establish socialism.

After intense preparatory work, the second congress of the Communist International held in July 1920 was a major success with a wide representation from 41 countries.

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, which 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 gathering momentum in all colonies and semi-colonies at that time. In addition, 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 to the Communist International. In its statutes the Comintern (Communist International) clearly declared that it “breaks once and for all with the traditions of the Second International, for whom only white-skinned people existed.”

Besides theoretical formulations, the International, through its Executive Committee started playing a prominent role in guiding the parties and movements in its various member

countries. In particular, it tried to make the utmost of the post-war revolutionary situation in the capitalist countries, which continued until 1923. However, due primarily to the betrayal of the Second International Social-Democrats, and 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 Comintern however, played an important role in establishing, developing and guiding the newly formed communist parties in colonies and semi-colonies. During the 1920s, as national liberation movements in these countries advanced rapidly, the Comintern attempted to guide and

train the communist parties to provide the leadership to these movements. It was the first time that Marxism was building a base among the people of the backward countries of the world.

CHAPTER 19

THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

The earliest national movements arose in Western Europe. These national movements were mainly led by the bourgeoisie in their fight against feudalism. The main aim of these national movements was to unite into one nation and state a large territory, which was under the rule of numerous feudal lords. This was necessary in order for the bourgeoisie to obtain a single large market and avoid the harassment and domination of the various feudal lords. Thus the bourgeois revolution against feudalism and the national movement to establish a single nation-

state often combined into one; the national movement was not normally a struggle for independence from oppression by another nation. In the whole of Western Europe, the only place where a national movement for independence took place was when Ireland fought to free itself from Britain.

Marx and Engels lived in this period when the later national liberation struggles were yet to break out in a major way. 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.

The next phase of national movements came in Eastern Europe, with the spread of capitalism and the weakening of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. National movements and organisations starting growing in the whole of East Europe, including in Russia. It was necessary for the international proletarian movement and the RSDLP to have a proper understanding and stand on the question. During this period Stalin, in 1913, made the first systematic Marxist presentation on the national question. Stalin himself was a Georgian, a member of an oppressed nationality in Russia, where a national movement was

rapidly developing. In Georgia it was therefore doubly necessary to present the correct Marxist understanding and take the correct political stand. This is what Stalin attempted to do in his pioneering work, *Marxism and the National Question*.

In his work Stalin started by defining what is a nation. **He defined a nation as “an 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.”** Stalin rejected the concept of nation based merely

on religion or culture, like the Jewish people. He insisted that a community should have all of the above characteristics to be called a nation. **Stalin proposed that all such nations should have the right to self-determination.** This right of self-determination however, could be limited to autonomy, or to linking up in a federation, as some other parties of that time were proposing. **The right of self-determination had to include the right of secession, i.e. to separate and exist as an independent state.** However, Stalin pointed out that how to exercise the right depended on the concrete historical circumstances at a particular point of time. It was up to the revolutionaries to try to influence the nation's decision regarding self-

determination. The decision of the revolutionary party would be based on whether autonomy, or federation, or secession, or any other course would be in the best interests of the toiling masses, and particularly the proletariat.

Though Stalin's presentation clarified many questions, it was still incomplete because it did not link the national question to imperialism and the question of colonies. This was only done after Lenin's analysis of imperialism in 1916. **On the basis of an analysis of imperialism, Lenin linked the question of self-determination of nations to the national-liberation struggles being waged in the colonial countries.** Thus it came to cover the vast

majority of the world's peoples. It did not remain merely an internal state problem of a few countries, which had oppressed nationalities within their boundaries. **The national question became a world problem, a question of the liberation of the oppressed peoples of all dependent countries and colonies from the burden of imperialism.**

Thus when Lenin, in 1916, presented his *Thesis on The Socialist Revolution and The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, he included all the countries of the world in his analysis. **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.

These are oppressor nations who oppress other nations in the colonies and within their own country. **The task of the proletariat of these ruling nations is to oppose national oppression and support the national struggle of the peoples oppressed by their imperialist ruling classes.**

Second, Eastern Europe and particularly Russia. The task of the proletariat in these countries is to uphold 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.

Third, the semi-colonial countries, like China, Persia, Turkey and all the colonies, which had then a combined population amounting to a billion. With regard to these colonial countries, Lenin took the stand that socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation, but must also give determined support to the movement for national liberation in these countries and assist rebellion and revolutionary war against the imperialist powers that oppress them.

This was the first time within the international socialist movement that such a clear stand had been taken on

the national and colonial questions. There was naturally thus some debate and confusion. One such argument was that support to self-determination and national liberation went against proletarian internationalism. It argued that socialism aimed at the merger of all nations. Lenin agreed that the aim of socialism is to abolish the division of mankind into small states, to bring nations closer together and to even merge them. However, he felt it would be impossible to achieve this by the forced merger of nations. **The merging of nations could only be achieved only by passing through the transition period of complete liberation of all oppressed nations, i.e. their freedom to secede. While presenting the party programme in 1917, Lenin said, "We want free**

unification, that is why we must recognise the right to secede. Without freedom to secede, unification cannot be called free.” This was the proletariat’s democratic approach to the national question, which stood opposed to the bourgeoisie’s policy of national oppression and annexation.

CHAPTER 20

THE EARLY LIFE AND REVOLUTIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF STALIN UP TO THE 1917 REVOLUTION

In the initial years after the October Revolution, Lenin directly guided all the affairs of the State and the Party. In August 1918, there was an attempt on his life by a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, which left two bullets in his body. Lenin was weakened by this attempt but continued his rigorous work schedule, which only left him three to four hours sleep. This overwork soon started having a serious impact on his health, particularly his brain. From end 1921

he started getting severe headaches and spells of vertigo (an illness which causes dizziness), which affected his work. In May 1922 he suffered a paralytic stroke that affected his right hand and leg and his power of speech. From that time on until his death despite Lenin's many efforts to recover and get back to work, he could not play any effective role. **Just before Lenin's stroke in April 1922, the Central Committee had elected Stalin as the General Secretary. Thus Stalin who took over the leadership of the Party during Lenin's illness and after his death on January 21, 1924.**

Stalin (meaning man of steel), was the most popular of many party names of Joseph Vissarionovich

Dzhugashvili, who was born on December 21, 1879, in Gori, a small town of Georgia, which was then an oppressed nationality within the Russian Empire (today Georgia is an independent country). His parents were poor, illiterate, descendants of serfs. His father, a few years after being released from slavery from his landlord, moved in 1875 from his village near Tiflis, the capital of the Caucasus (a backward region of the Russian Empire, which was home to Georgia and several other oppressed nationalities). He set up a small shoemaker's shop in Gori, the equivalent of a district town. He was not able to earn much however, and left his wife and child in Gori to take a job in a shoe factory in Tiflis, where he died in 1890.

Since Stalin's father did not contribute much to the household, his mother, Ekaterina, was the one who looked after him and brought him up. She worked long hours as a washerwoman and her earnings paid for all the expenses of the household. She had three children before Stalin, who all died soon after birth. Stalin being her only surviving son, she made all efforts to give him a proper education. Despite her poverty, she did not send her son to work as would have been normal. She sent Stalin, at the age of nine, to the local church school. She herself put in a lot of effort and learned to read and write later in old age. Ekaterina was thus a remarkable example of the grit and determination of the working masses.

Stalin personally experienced poverty from his earliest childhood days. His house consisted of two extremely small rooms, which served as shop, workshop, and home. Though Stalin was strong and hardy, he suffered an attack of smallpox at six or seven years of age that left lifelong pockmarks on his face. He also had a blood infection, which brought him near death and permanently handicapped his left arm.

During his five years at the Gori School, Stalin was noted for his intelligence and his exceptional memory. It was here that Stalin came first into contact with rationalist ideas and went against religion. He started writing poetry and was influenced by Georgian literature and poetry,

which had strong nationalist trends. It was during these years that **Stalin was filled with strong feelings of fighting against social injustice and against the oppression of his people.**

Due to his poverty, it should have been impossible for Stalin to go for higher education. However, he was recommended as the “best student” for a scholarship by the school headmaster and the local priest. This enabled him to continue his studies from October 1894 at the topmost institution of higher learning in the Caucasus. This was the Theological Seminary (a college for training to become a Christian priest) at Tiflis. **Stalin’s five years at the Tiflis seminary were crucial**

formative years when he became a Marxist.

Georgia, in Stalin's youth was in a constant state of unrest. One of the sources of unrest was the rebellious mood of the peasantry, where the abolition of serfdom had been delayed even after it had been abolished in Russia. The other source was the constant inflow of revolutionary ideas from Russia. This was because the Tsarist government had a long history of deporting many of its rebels and bourgeois revolutionaries to the Caucasus. Later these deportees even included Marxist worker revolutionaries like Kalinin, the future President of the Soviet Union, and Alliluyev, a Bolshevik organiser and later Stalin's father-in-law.

The Tiflis seminary was one such centre of unrest. It was the main breeding ground of the local intelligentsia and also the main centre of opposition to the Tsar. In 1893, just a year before Stalin joined the seminary, there was a strike which led to the dismissal of 87 students. The main leaders of the strike later became prominent Marxists and revolutionaries. One of the leaders, Ketskhoveli, was also from Stalin's Gori school, just three years his senior. He soon became Stalin's first political mentor.

In the first year Stalin immersed himself in reading all sorts of radical literature. This he had to do secretly, because most books of non-religious and political nature were

strictly banned in the seminary. His poetry, radical and political in nature, was published for the first time under another name in a leading Georgian magazine. This was also the time when **Stalin, at the young age of fifteen, came into contact with secret Marxist study-circles.** Soon Stalin came under the vigilance of the seminary authorities and was even sent to the punishment cell for reading forbidden literature. Around this time, he joined a secret debating circle in the seminary. This further increased his activities, which brought him into conflict with the seminary authorities more often.

At the age of eighteen, in August 1898, he joined Messame Dassy (meaning The Third Group),

the first group of Socialists in Georgia, whose leaders later became prominent Mensheviks. Later Stalin would say, "I became a Marxist because of my social position (my father was a worker in a shoe factory and my mother was also a working woman), but also ...because of the harsh intolerance and Jesuitical discipline that crushed me so mercilessly at the Seminary... The atmosphere in which I lived was saturated with hatred against Tsarist oppression." Outside the Seminary, in the city of Tiflis, the workers during this period were on the move. These years saw the first strikes in the Caucasus. **As soon as Stalin joined Messame Dassy, he was given the task of running a**

few workers' study-circles. He did this by holding secret meetings in the workers' slums during the short amounts of free time that he got from the seminary. Meanwhile, the seminary authorities were looking for an opportunity to deal with Stalin. Finally, he was expelled from the seminary in May 1899, on grounds of not having appeared for his examinations.

Expulsion from the seminary however, change Stalin's revolutionary activities much. After a short stay with his mother in Gori, he was back in Tiflis, organising and educating, while staying among the workers. **In December 1899, he took up a job as a clerk with the Tiflis geophysical observatory. This job**

though paying very little, took very little time and provided an ideal cover from the Tsarist secret police.

Under this cover, Stalin continued to expand his activities. The next year, in 1900, he organised and spoke at the first May Day celebration held in the Caucasus. Due to Tsarist repression, this 500 strong meeting had to be held not in the city, but in the mountains above Tiflis. The meeting was an inspiring event which led to strikes in the factories and railways in the following months. Stalin was one of the main organisers. The next year it was decided to hold the May Day demonstration openly in the middle of Tiflis, but the main leaders were arrested in March 1901.

Stalin's room too was raided but he managed to escape. **From that day onwards until the success of the revolution in 1917, Stalin led the life of an underground professional revolutionary.** His first task was to take over the leadership of the organisation and go ahead and organise the May Day event despite the loss of the main leaders. This he did successfully, and despite arrests and violent attacks by the police, an historic 2000 strong demonstration was held.

These first years of Stalin in the Socialist organisation were also days of intense debate on economism and other issues. **Within the Georgian organisation, Stalin always opposed the opportunists and**

stood with the left wing. When *Iskra* started, Stalin's group was the first to become its enthusiastic supporters and distribute it in Tiflis. They soon started an illegal paper in the Georgian language, in September 1901, called *Brdzola* (meaning The Struggle). Stalin was one of its principal authors, writing many articles basically upholding the *Iskra* line. Of particular importance was a detailed article called *The Russian Social Democratic Party and its Immediate tasks*, which came out in December 1901.

In November 1901, Stalin was elected to the Social-Democratic Committee of Tiflis, which was the effective leading body for the whole of the Caucasus at

that time. He was immediately sent to Batum, a small town with a population of 25,000, which was a new centre of the oil industry linked by an oil pipeline to the bigger and older oil-town Baku. **He soon formed a town committee there under cover of a New Year's party.** He also set up a secret press in the single room where he was staying. Many leaflets were published, which led soon to worker struggles. One such struggle led to police firing on a gathering in which fifteen workers were killed. All these activities were carried out despite opposition by the local socialists who later became Mensheviks. Finally after just four and a half months in Batum, Stalin was arrested in April 1902 at a secret Batum committee meeting.

The secret press however, remained undiscovered. **It was during the Batum period that Stalin took one of his many party names, by which he remained famous for the many years he worked in the Caucasus. He was called Koba, which meant the indomitable or unconquerable in Turkish, and was the name of the people's hero of one of the poems of Stalin's favourite writers in his youth.**

Stalin spent one and a half years in various jails. In jail he maintained a strict discipline, rose early, worked hard, read much and was one of the chief debaters in the prison commune. He was also known as a patient, sensitive and helpful comrade.

After his jail time, when no charges could be proved against him, he was still banished in November 1903 to eastern Siberia. **While in prison, in March 1903 he was elected to the executive of the newly formed All-Caucasian Federation of Social-Democratic groups. Since it was very rare for an imprisoned comrade to be elected to a committee, this action gives an idea of Stalin's importance in the Caucasus organisation.** Stalin's banishment to Siberia coincided with the buildup to the Russo-Japanese war. He and his comrades made use of the confusion to escape almost immediately on arrival in Siberia. By the end of January 1904 he was back in Tiflis.

As soon as Stalin returned he was called upon to take a stand on the issues that had led to the split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The majority of the Socialists in the Caucasus were Mensheviks and even many of the Bolsheviks were for compromise. Despite this large majority for the Mensheviks, **Stalin soon took a stand with Lenin and the Bolsheviks. He started writing in the Georgian party press in vigorous support of the Bolshevik line. In his first article he wrote that the Party is “the militant group of leaders” and “must be a coherent centralised organisation.”** His strong political position brought him into contact with Lenin who, from abroad, asked for copies of Stalin’s

articles. Along with his ideological battle against the Mensheviks, Stalin was, at the same time, deeply involved in the revolutionary struggles that were building up throughout the country as part of the 1905 Revolution. Stalin's centre was the Caucasus.

Besides participating in organising the workers' strikes, Stalin immediately started the practical implementation of the Bolshevik call for preparation for armed uprising. **He became the main organiser, inspirer, and guide of the military organisation in the Caucasus. An efficient and secret laboratory for explosives was also set up. Through the struggles a number of fighting squads were set up. They**

participated in the numerous revolts, in attacks on ruling class goonda gangs and kept contact with peasant guerrillas. In the later period of downswing of the revolution, when the Party faced a serious shortage of funds, some of the best fighting squads were used for major and daring money actions. Stalin played the principal role in building up and directing this very secret technical branch of the Party. He also wrote articles during this period explaining the Marxist approach to insurrection.

In December 1905, Stalin attended his first All-Russia Conference of the Bolsheviks, where it was decided to build unity with the Mensheviks. It is here that he met Lenin for the

first time. He also attended the April 1906 Unity Congress where he was the only Bolshevik out of eleven delegates from the Caucasus. The rest were all Mensheviks. He was also the only Bolshevik from the Caucasus who attended the 1907 Congress. At both Congresses, one of the points of discussion was resolutions led by the Mensheviks and Trotsky, calling for bans on armed actions and money seizures. However, the Caucasus continued to be the main centre for such actions with an estimate of 1150 such actions taking place there between 1905 to 1908.

Towards the end of 1907 Stalin was elected to the Baku committee. This oil-town of 50,000 workers had workers of various nationalities and

religions facing severe exploitation. Stalin soon united the workers and developed the lone centre of struggle during the dark period of the Stolypin reaction. Adopting a new identity, he set up residence and a secret printing press in the Muslim part of the city. In this period Stalin started writing for the first time in Russian. In 1908, Stalin was arrested, but continued to write articles and guide party activities from inside the jail. In 1909, he was again banished, but again escaped within four months.

Stalin returned via St. Petersburg and found the disorganised state of the party headquarters in the capital. On returning to Baku he wrote a strong description of the state of affairs and called for an All-Russia paper

published from Russia. He also later called for the practical directing centre to be transferred to Russia. After many months of intensive work in Baku and articles for the party organ abroad, Stalin was again arrested in March 1910. After some months in jail he was again banished to Siberia where he remained until June 1911. This time being forbidden to return to the Caucasus or any big city, he settled in a town near St. Petersburg and Moscow. He was however, again arrested within two months. After a few months in jail he was again released but had to live outside the big cities.

During this period the first Bolshevik Central Committee, elected by the January 1912

Bolshevik Conference, nominated Stalin onto the Committee in its very first meeting. **One of Stalin's first tasks after becoming a central committee member was to publish the first issue of the Bolshevik daily paper, *Pravda*.**

He was however, almost immediately arrested again. After three months in prison and two months banishment in Siberia he escaped again. He reached St. Petersburg in time to lead the campaign for the elections to the Duma. Though the Bolsheviks won only six seats, it represented eighty percent of the industrial workers.

At the end of 1912 and the beginning of 1913, Stalin spent a few weeks abroad where he met and had detailed discussions with

Lenin and other comrades. It was during this period that he wrote his famous theoretical book on the national question. He returned to St. Petersburg in February 1913 but was betrayed within a week by another member of the Central Committee, Malinovsky, an agent of the Tsarist secret police. This agent also betrayed another central committee member, Sverdlov. Both Stalin and Sverdlov were banished to the remotest parts of Siberia from where escape was the most difficult. Lenin made elaborate plans to arrange for their escape, but the escape plans themselves were made through the same secret agent. Rather than arrange escape, this agent only arranged for a closer watch to be kept on the central committee members.

Thus, Stalin was forced to remain this time in exile for four long years until the February bourgeois revolution of 1917 resulted in the overthrow of the Tsarist regime. It was then that he was allowed to return to St. Petersburg, where he arrived on 12th March 1917. From then until Lenin's arrival in April, he led the party centre.

Looking back on Stalin's political life of around twenty years before the revolution, it stands out as a model of courage, self-sacrifice, dedication and devotion to the cause of revolution.

Besides the long years in prison and banishment, Stalin almost always lived in the underground in close and living contact with

the masses. With such a difficult life of total dedication there was hardly any time for Stalin to have much of a “private life.” His first marriage was in his youth to Ekaterina Svanidze, the sister of one of his socialist comrades at the Tiflis Seminary. They had one son, who after Ekaterina’s death during the 1905 Revolution, was brought up by her parents. Stalin’s second marriage was to Nadezhda Alliluyeva, the daughter of one of Stalin’s close worker comrades.

He had had close links with the family and they always sent parcels of food, clothing and books during his banishment days. **This second marriage however, only took place when both were assigned to Tsaritsyn (later renamed**

**Stalingrad) during the Civil War
after the October Revolution.**

CHAPTER 21

SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION—THE RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE

Around the time of the October Revolution, there were two types of so-called Marxist views with regards to building socialism.

One was the view represented by the Mensheviks and others like them. These people were opposed to advancing to the socialist revolution and wanted power to remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Their argument was that since capitalism had not advanced sufficiently and concentrated the means of production, particularly in agriculture, the time

was not appropriate for the proletariat to capture power. They proposed that the proletariat should wait for some time until capitalism had advanced to some extent under the rule of the bourgeoisie. This would create the conditions for the nationalisation of all the means of production and for the construction of socialism. The Mensheviks were completely against the proletariat seizing power and advancing with a programme of socialist construction.

The other view was represented by a group within the Bolshevik party called "Left" Communists. Their stand was that power should be captured and all the means of production immediately nationalised even by means of seizing the property of the small and middle

peasants and other producers. These “Left” Communists thus wanted to take an antagonistic stand against the peasantry and thus drive away the main ally of the revolution.

Lenin, in a struggle against these two trends, drew up the correct path for socialist construction. The main aspects of Lenin’s path of socialist construction can be outlined as follows:

a) The proletariat should not lose the chance but make full use of the favourable conditions to seize power. Waiting will only mean that capitalism will go ahead and ruin millions of small and medium individual producers.

b) The means of production in industry should be confiscated and converted into public property.

c) The small and medium individual producers should gradually be united in producers' cooperatives, i.e., in large agricultural enterprises and collective farms.

d) Industry should be developed to the utmost and the collective farms should be developed on the modern technical basis of large-scale production. The property of the collective farms should not be confiscated, but, on the contrary, they should be generously supplied with first-class tractors and other machines;

e) Exchange through purchase and sale, i.e. commodity production should be preserved for a certain period, because the peasants would not accept any other form of economic ties between town and country. However, trade should only be through Soviet trade—between the State, cooperative and collective farm. This should be developed to the fullest and capitalists of all types and descriptions should be ousted from trading activity.

Of these five points, the first—the seizure of power and the nationalisation of big industry—were completed within the first few months. However, the further steps in the process of socialist construction could

not be taken up immediately because of the extremely difficult conditions of all-sided enemy attacks faced by the first proletarian state. Due to the civil war the very survival of the State was in question. In order to face this all-round attack, the Party had to mobilise the whole country to fight the enemy. A set of emergency measures called "**War Communism**" was introduced.

Under **War Communism** the Soviet government 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 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.

From 1921 there was another turn in the situation in Russia. After completing victory in the civil war,

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 was restarted and private manufacturers were allowed to start small businesses. This was necessary because the War Communism measures had gone too far ahead and were 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 until the end of 1925, when the Fourteenth Party Congress took the decision to move to the next phase of socialist construction, that of socialist industrialisation.**

Socialist Industrialisation: The Soviet Union was at that time still a relatively backward agrarian country with two-thirds of its total production coming from agriculture and only one-third from industry. Additionally, as the first socialist state, the question of being economically independent of

imperialism was of central importance. Therefore, the path of socialist construction had to first 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." Thus, the main focus was on heavy industry, which would produce machines for other industries and for agriculture.**

This policy succeeded in building a strong industrial base independent of imperialism. It also enabled the defence of the socialist base in World War II. Also industry expanded at a pace several times faster than the

most advanced imperialist countries, thus proving the superiority of the socialist system. The principal factor in this was the wholehearted participation in increasing production by the whole working class. **At a time when the whole capitalist world was reeling under a very severe economic crisis, socialist industry was marching ahead without any problems whatsoever.**

However, due to special emphasis on priority development of heavy industry, agriculture was neglected in the plans. Thus in the period when industrial production went up by over nine times, grain production did not even go up by one-fifth. This showed that the growth of agriculture was very low as compared to industry.

This was also the case within industry with heavy industry growing at a much faster speed than light industry. Later, **Mao, in his *Critique of Soviet Economics*, criticised this emphasis and called for simultaneous promotion of both industry as well as agriculture. Within industry he called for the development of both light and heavy industry at the same time.**

Collectivisation of Agriculture: The first step in this process was taken in the NEP restoration period with the formation of the first cooperatives among small and medium peasants. However, due to the resistance of the kulaks (rich farmers), there was not much progress. Also, the kulaks had taken a position of active opposition

and sabotage of the socialist construction process. They refused to sell their grain surpluses to the Soviet state. 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. 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, made 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 advance the collectivisation process. However, the major advance came at the end of 1929.

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 withdrew 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 confiscation of the kulaks' property. It permitted the peasants to confiscate cattle, machines and other farm property from the kulaks for the benefit of the collective farms. The kulaks thus lost all their means of production. They were expropriated just as the capitalists had been expropriated in the sphere of industry in 1918. The difference, however, was 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.

A 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 by many times. State loans to collective farms were doubled in the first year. 25,000 class-conscious industrial workers were selected and sent to the rural areas to help implement this plan. The process of collectivisation despite some errors, advanced rapidly towards success.

By 1934, 90 percent of the total crop area of the country had been brought under socialist agriculture, i.e. state farms or collective farms.

The whole process of the collectivisation of agriculture was nothing less than a revolution in which the proletariat had allied with the poor and middle peasants to break the hold of the kulaks.

This revolution, in one blow, solved three fundamental problems of Socialist construction:

a) It eliminated the most numerous class of exploiters in the country, the kulak class, the mainstay of capitalist restoration;

b) It transferred the most numerous labouring class in the country, the peasant class, from the path of individual farming, which breeds capitalism, to the path of cooperative, collective, socialist farming;

c) It furnished the Soviet regime with a socialist base in agriculture—the most extensive and vitally necessary, yet least developed—branch of national economy.

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 had abolished the exploitation of man by man.”

In January 1934, the 17th Party Congress Report declared that, “the socialist form of social and economic structure—now holds undivided sway and is the sole commanding force in the whole national economy.” The absence of any antagonistic classes was later repeatedly stressed while presenting the Constitution in 1936 and in later Political Reports.

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. **Stalin, in his work *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, tried to theorise regarding the process of socialist construction and the**

economic laws of socialism. He however, did not make a self-critical analysis of the Russian experience. Later, Mao made an analysis of the Russian experience and pointed 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 relations of production and the productive forces. This was reflected in the prolonged coexistence of two types of ownership—on the one hand ownership of the whole people, as represented in the nationalised industries and the state farms, and on the other hand ownership by the

collectives. Mao felt that prolonged coexistence of ownership by the whole people with ownership by the collectives was bound to become less and less adaptable to the development of the productive forces. Essentially, a way had to be found to make the transition from collective to public ownership.

2) Not giving importance to mass-line during socialist construction.

Mao pointed out that in the earlier period mass-line was adopted, but afterwards, the Soviet party became less reliant on the masses. The things emphasised were technology and technical cadres, rather than politics and the masses.

3) Neglecting the class struggle.

After the success of the collectivisation

process, not enough importance was given to continuing the class struggle.

4) Imbalance in the relationship between heavy industry on one side and light industry and agriculture on the other.

5) Mistrust of the peasants. Mao criticised the Russian policy for not giving due importance to the peasantry.

Besides drawing these lessons from Stalin and the Russian experience, Mao learned from the Chinese experience. He thus made an attempt to develop the Marxist theory of socialist construction.

CHAPTER 22

THE FIGHT AGAINST TROTSKYISM AND OTHER OPPORTUNIST TRENDS

Throughout the period of the Russian Revolution and even after the seizure of power, the Bolshevik line had to wage struggles against various opportunist lines. **One of the most important of these anti-Marxist trends was Trotskyism, named after its originator Leon Trotsky.** Trotsky was a member of the RSDLP, who at the time of the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks sided with the Mensheviks. Later, he tried to form a bloc separate from both the Bolshevik and Menshevik trends and even presented himself as the

“centrist” who would unite the two groups. After the success of the February Revolution, he self-criticised for his errors and was admitted into the Bolshevik party and taken into the Central Committee. After the October Revolution he was Commissar of Foreign Affairs (1917-1918) and Commissar of Military and Naval Affairs (1918-1924) a post from which he was removed for his opportunist and factional activities.

In the period of socialist construction in particular, Trotskyism played a very disruptive and factional role. Stalin led the Party in a firm struggle against Trotskyist opportunism. The three specific features of Trotskyism, which were outlined

**by Stalin in his speech on
Trotskyism or Leninism are:**

1) The theory of permanent revolution: According to this theory, Trotsky proposed that the proletariat should quickly move from the bourgeois democratic stage to the socialist stage of the revolution without the help of the peasantry. He thus was opposed to any talk of dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. He rejected the role of the peasantry, the strongest ally of the proletariat. This theory, which looks very “Left,” actually in essence meant the betrayal of the revolution, because without the peasantry there was no hope of success for the proletariat and

the revolution was bound to end in failure. Another aspect of this theory was that revolution in the advanced capitalist countries was necessary for the building of socialism. His theory of permanent revolution was also a theory of world revolution, which proposed that though revolution would start on a national basis, the revolutionaries should immediately work to spread it in other countries. Again this proposal appears very “Left” but actual meant a very defeatist understanding that opposed the possibility of building socialism in one country.

Lenin opposed this anti-Marxist theory as soon as it appeared in the period

immediately following the 1905 Revolution, when Trotsky was not part of the Bolshevik trend. However, it appeared in various ways and had to be fought at various points after the October Revolution, when Trotsky had joined the Bolshevik Party and become one of its leading members.

The first instance was immediately after the Revolution, during the negotiations for peace with Germany. Trotsky, on the basis of his theory, wanted war to continue as he felt that it would help the revolutionary situation in Germany, and that the success of the revolution in Germany, an advanced capitalist country, was more important than the consolidation of the Russian Revolution. Lenin and Stalin forcefully opposed this

argument, but a special Seventh Congress had to be held to discuss and defeat this concept.

Another example of this theory was Trotsky's fight against the introduction of the NEP (New Economic Policy). As an opponent of the alliance with the peasantry, he felt that the NEP was nothing but a retreat. He did not accept the need to preserve this alliance and prepare the ground for socialist construction. Again, this concept had to be fought and was defeated at the Tenth Party Congress.

A third example was at the time the NEP turned to socialist industrialisation. At that time Trotsky united with other elements to propose that it was not possible to build socialism in one country.

This proposal, based on Trotsky's "permanent revolution" and "world revolution" concept, would have meant a defeatist and opportunist approach towards socialist construction, which would have based the success of socialism in Russia on the success of revolution in the developed capitalist countries. Stalin united the Party against this concept at the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1925.

2) The second feature of Trotskyism is its opposition to Bolshevik party principles. Trotsky's opposition to democratic centralism and the concept of the Leninist party was apparent from the very beginning in his support to the Mensheviks during the split with the Bolsheviks.

Even later in 1912, he united all the opportunist trends like the Liquidators and Recallists to form a faction called the August Bloc. While pretending to be a “centrist” who was going to unite the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Trotsky actually totally supported the Mensheviks and worked jointly with them. Lenin, supported by Stalin and others, opposed and fought against this opportunist bloc.

In 1923, when Lenin was grievously ill, Trotsky took advantage of the gap in leadership to demand the withdrawal of all norms of democratic centralism in the Party. He united all varied opposition elements to formulate a *Declaration of the Forty-Six Oppositionists*, which demanded

freedom of factions and groups in the Communist Party. This factionalist demand was also defeated.

However, Trotsky's demand for "freedom" and "democracy" was totally opportunist and depended on whether he was in a position of decision-making or not. Thus, when he was at the centre of decision-making in 1920, Trotsky proposed the "militarisation" of the trade unions and subjecting them to the discipline of the army. He opposed democracy being extended to the trade unions and the election of trade union bodies. Lenin, Stalin, and other comrades led the struggle against this concept and asserted that the trade unions should base all their activities on methods of persuasion.

3) The third feature of Trotskyism was its repeated false propaganda against the Bolshevik leadership. In the initial period Trotsky concentrated all his attacks on Lenin. In the later period Stalin became the focus of all manner of defamation.

After Trotsky could not succeed in winning over the Party to his side in open debate, he started secret manipulations. In 1926 he started a secret faction with an illegal press and secret propaganda. This was discovered and he was finally expelled from the Party. He moved abroad but continued to maintain links with other factionalists within the Party. In 1929 another group (the Right Opposition) was formed under the leadership of

Bukharin, a Politburo member, which opposed the fight against the kulaks and the advancement of the process of collectivisation of agriculture. This line too was defeated.

In the 1930s however, Trotskyism ceased to be a political trend within the working class. It gave up attempts at open propagation of its anti-Marxist line but shifted to secret planning and maneuvering. Trotsky and the top Trotskyists in the Soviet Union developed links with foreign intelligence services and started working on plans to assassinate leading elements in the Party and take over the leadership of the Party. It was as part of this plan that Comrade Kirov, at that time second after Stalin in the Party leadership, was murdered

in 1934. In the investigations that followed, the main conspirators, many of who were central committee members, were discovered. Open trials were held where they admitted their crimes. Many were sentenced to death and executed.

CHAPTER 23

TACTICS DURING WORLD WAR II

During most of the period between World War I and World War II the world capitalist economy was in a state of collapse. World industrial production grew at a very slow pace and world trade remained stagnant. In fact, total world trade in 1948 (three years after the end of World War II) was the same as that in 1913 (the year before World War I started). The worst phase was what was called the Great Depression of 1929-33, from which capitalism did not really recover, even up to the start of World War II in 1939. It was a crisis that affected practically the whole

world, from the most industrialised to the most backward. Industrial production fell and unemployment reached the highest levels ever. In Germany almost half the working class remained unemployed. Prices crashed affecting the economies of almost every country.

As economic hardships increased, contradictions sharpened and there was widespread social and political unrest in many countries.

In Latin America there were attempts to overthrow the government in almost all the countries, many of which were successful. There was also an upsurge in the independence movements in many countries, including India. Thus, throughout colonies and semi-colonies there were

struggles and a shift towards the left. In the imperialist countries, the ruling classes tried desperately to control the social effects of their crisis. Some of them introduced social welfare schemes to divert the masses from struggle. **Most of the ruling classes however, used repressive means to suppress the people. Many countries brought in rightist and fascist regimes.** Italy was the first to turn to fascism. Japan shifted from a liberal to a national-militarist regime in 1930-31. Germany brought the Nazis to power in 1933. In many other imperialist countries, there also was a rise of rightist parties and a retreat of the reformist parties.

The Communist International analysed this growth of fascism. It

showed how three factors in the post-World War I situation had affected the imperialist classes and was leading to the rise of fascism. First, the success of the October Revolution and the victory of socialism had made the bourgeoisie fearful of the advance of the proletariat and the success of the revolution in their own countries. Second, they were facing the most severe economic crisis in the history of capitalism. Third, the first two factors were making the toiling masses throughout the world turn towards revolution. The response of the imperialist ruling classes to all these three factors was to bring in fascism.

At the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, which was held in 1935, fascism and the danger of war were analysed in detail. **Fascism was defined as the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, the most chauvinist and the most imperialist elements of finance capital.** It was explained how the imperialists were planning to drastically increase the looting of the toiling masses. They were preparing to wage a new imperialist world war, to attack the Soviet Union, to divide up China among the imperialist powers and thus to stop the advance of the revolution. As major imperialist countries started setting up fascist governments, they aggressively started local wars in preparation for a new world war for the re-division

of the world. As Germany and Japan started attacking and invading new areas, the other imperialist powers like Britain, France and the USA started a policy of compromise and concession towards the fascist aggressors and attempted to use them to destroy the Soviet Republic. It was in the context of such dangerous tactics by the imperialists that the international proletariat had to work out and implement its tactics.

The tactics of the proletariat were directly opposed to the tactics of the imperialists. The aims of the international working class were 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, the Third International adopted tactics as per Marxist principles of war tactics. As during World War I, the International called on all communists to try to prevent the outbreak of war and in case a war actually broke out, the International gave instructions that all communists should work to convert the unjust, imperialist war into civil war and thus complete the revolution. However, the main difference from the World War I situation was that now there was a single socialist base—the Soviet Union. It was the

duty of every communist to defend this socialist base. Thus, in case the Soviet Red Army was forced to enter the war in the defence of the Soviet Union, then the nature of the war would change. It would become a just war for the defence of socialism and it would become the task of every communist to mobilise the workers and toiling masses of all countries for the victory of the Red Army over imperialism. Thus, the Communist approach to the war and the tasks of the communist parties of the world was made clear in 1935, four years before the actual outbreak of war.

The Third International further drew up detailed united front

tactics in order to fight fascism and implement the above understanding. In the capitalist countries two types of fronts were to be formed. One was the anti-fascist workers' fronts, which were to be formed along with the social-democratic parties. The other was the anti-fascist people's fronts, which were to be formed where necessary along with other anti-fascist parties besides the social-democrats. In colonies and semi-colonies, the task was to form anti-imperialist people's fronts including with 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 countries and the worldwide defeat of capitalism.

In the years leading up to the war, most of the communist parties tried to implement the above tactics. United fronts were formed and movements developed in many countries.

However, during the various twists and turns in the situation, and in the differing concrete conditions in various countries, some of the parties were not successful in implementing the correct tactics.

The Soviet government however, which faced the most dangerous situation, was able, under Stalin, to employ the correct tactics in the concrete situation of World War II. **In the pre-war years, all attempts were made to build up a united front**

of the non-fascist governments against the group of fascist aggressor countries. However, it soon became clear that these countries were not interested in a united front but were trying their best to use Germany to crush the Soviet Union. In order to defeat such tactics, Stalin entered into a no-war pact with Germany in August 1939, forcing the first part of the war to be a war between the imperialist powers. Thus, communist parties throughout the world worked according to the tactics of “turning the war into civil war” during the first two years of the war. The Soviet Union used this period to make all possible preparations for its defence in case any of the

imperialist countries launched an attack.

This happened in June 1941 when Germany attacked the socialist base. With this attack the Red Army was forced to respond, and 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. In particular, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), was able to lead the Red Army and the whole Soviet people to a heroic victory in the war. It defeated the mighty

German army and joined hands with the communist parties and fighters of the East European countries to liberate them from German occupation. Thus, utilising these tactics, the international proletariat not only succeeded in protecting its socialist base, but by 1949, broke the imperialist chain at several places, came out of the imperialist world system and built a socialist camp covering one third of humanity. Thus the strategy and tactics charted out by the Third International, during the period of Second World War were proved in practice to be basically correct.

However, there were also serious failures. This was mainly 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. Parties like the CPI and the Communist Party of Great Britain spent most of its time in the people's war period trying to increase production. Many such parties did a lot of strike breaking activity and became alienated from the working class. Some others like the Communist Party of France, which joined in united fronts with ruling-class parties, did not even try to maintain any difference between

communists and other reactionaries in the united front. Such an approach led to **these parties becoming tails of the ruling classes in the united fronts in which they participated. 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. **After receiving approval from most of the sections, including all the important sections, the Comintern was dissolved on June 10, 1943.**

CHAPTER 24

MAO'S EARLY YEARS

Mao Zedong was born on December 26, 1893, in the village of Shaoshan in the fertile valley of Shaoshan in Hunan Province, China. The district where Mao was born was a wealthy agricultural area. It was also a strategic area with all major routes by road or river passing through the Hunan Province. Being at the crossroads of commerce the Hunan people were known for their peasant traders. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Hunan also became an intellectual centre and a centre of dissidence and revolt, producing many of China's best scholars. It produced both the

military generals who helped the Chinese emperors, as well as the revolutionaries who overthrew their rule. It was also a major centre of the biggest peasant revolt of the nineteenth century—the great Taiping peasant uprising. Hunan provided lakhs of fighters for the rebellion, which lasted for 14 years from 1850 to 1864. This vast support for the peasant revolt was because of the severe poverty of the peasantry due to exploitation by the landlords and excessive taxation. Though the uprising had been brutally crushed, **the memory of the revolt remained strong in the villages around where Mao spent his childhood and youth.**

Mao's father, Mao Yichang, was born a poor peasant and was forced to become a soldier for seven years in order to pay off his father's debts. Later through hard work and careful saving he was able to buy back his land. He grew to become a middle peasant and petty trader. The standard of living of the family however, remained very poor. Even at the age of sixteen, Mao only ate one egg a month and meat about three or four times a month. Mao's father put his children to work as soon as possible. Thus **Mao started work in the fields at the age of six.** Mao's mother, Wen Qimei, was from Xiangxiang district just sixteen miles from Shaoshan. **Mao was the eldest son. He had two younger brothers and an adopted sister. All**

three were among the members of the first peasant communist party branch that Mao formed. All became martyrs in the revolution.

Mao was a rebel from a very young age. He called his father the “ruling power.” He often united with his mother, brother, and the labourer against the authority of his father. This was the opposition. At school too, he opposed the old customs. Once in protest against his schoolteacher at the age of seven he ran away for three days and stayed in the mountains surrounding his village. After this protest—which Mao calls his first successful strike—he was not beaten in school.

Mao’s first school was the village primary school, which he joined at

the age of seven. **As soon as he learned to read sufficiently, he developed a passion for reading.**

He preferred romantic books of rebellion and adventure. Very often he would read the whole night by the light of an oil lamp. Mao's father, who himself had very little schooling, was not interested in Mao continuing his education for too long. He needed somebody to work in the fields and to maintain his accounts. So in 1906, he withdrew Mao from the village school.

Mao however, continued his interest in reading and constantly demanded to be sent for further education.

His father could not understand this interest of his son and thought the solution was in marriage. **At the age of fourteen, Mao was married to**

a girl from the same area. Mao however, refused to consummate the marriage.

Meanwhile, **the revolutionary atmosphere was rapidly growing in the surrounding areas. Two rebellions took place in this period, which had a lasting impact on Mao.** One was the revolt in Hunan in 1906 led by the revolutionaries of the party of the nationalist Sun Yat-sen. The other was a rebellion against a landlord by a group of peasants of Shaoshan itself. Both were crushed and the leaders were beheaded. Mao was very much affected by the injustice and longed to do something radical for the country and its people. He also longed to continue his education. Finally in 1910, he was

sent to a higher primary school in his mother's home district, Xiangxiang.

The students in this school were all from landlord and rich backgrounds who initially looked down upon Mao. Mao however, soon outshone all the other students by his superior intellect and hard work and study. He sat reading for long hours in the classroom after everyone left. His teachers were highly impressed by his ability. Within a few months however, he was restless to move on to a higher level. **After a year he easily passed the exams for admission to the middle school,** which was situated in Changsha, the provincial capital of Hunan. In September 1911, Mao walked the forty miles

to Changsha. Mao, who was almost eighteen, saw a city for the first time.

Changsha, a city of scholars, was in extreme turmoil at the time of Mao's arrival. Revolutionary associations under various names had been formed by teachers and students. Underground literature was being circulated and an explosion was expected at any moment. Mao, who had already developed some radical thinking, was eager to participate in the events. Within a month of Mao's arrival, the 1911 bourgeois revolution broke out under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen. Mao immediately decided to join the revolutionary army. The revolution however, was soon betrayed and

landed in the hands of counter-revolutionaries. After five months, Mao resigned from the army and landed back in Changsha.

On his return, Mao was in search of what to do and what direction to take in life. Looking up advertisements in newspapers, he registered for a number of courses in schools ranging from a soap-making school and a police school to a law school and a commercial school. **He finally sat for the entrance examination for the First Provincial Middle School in Changsha and stood first. After six months however, he left the school and arranged a schedule of education of his own, which consisted of reading every day at the Hunan Provincial Library.**

For six months, he spent every day from morning to night at the library with just a small lunch of two rice cakes. This period of intensive reading covered a very wide range of social and scientific topics of Western as well as Chinese authors. It laid the foundation of Mao's education.

Six months of such study however, left Mao totally penniless. His father, who could not understand his son's desire to just go on reading on his own, refused to support him unless he joined a real school.

Thus in 1913, Mao joined the Hunan First Normal College, which was a teachers' college. He remained there for five years from 1913 to 1918. The collapse of the

central Chinese government and the outbreak of World War I had created conditions of extreme upheaval throughout China and the world. In China wars between provincial armies of warlord generals became a common occurrence. It was also the period when Japan, making use of the involvement of the other imperialist powers in war, tried to achieve total domination over China. This led to strong opposition from Chinese intellectuals and revolutionary sectors.

It was during these years that Mao's political ideas took shape. In 1915, he became secretary of the students' society at the Normal College and created the Association for Student Self-Government. This organisation

organised numerous agitations against the college authorities for student demands. Mao also led this organisation in street demonstrations against Japanese domination and their Chinese puppets. **This organisation later became the nucleus for future student organisations in Hunan Province.**

As the attacks of the warlord generals grew, students in many places formed self-defence corps. In 1917 Mao became the head of his college battalion. He obtained some arms from the local police and led the students in guerrilla attacks on warlord groups to collect more arms. Using his knowledge of guerrilla tactics used by earlier Hunan fighters, as well

as study of military theory, Mao built up the college battalion into an efficient fighting force. Mao also took a keen interest in all the major military campaigns of the ongoing World War I. He lectured and wrote articles on strategy and tactics.

Mao also involved himself in various other activities. He fought against social evils like smoking opium and prostitution. He fought against oppression of women and tried to ensure the maximum participation of women in the student movement. He wrote to encourage swimming, sports and intensive physical training among the students and youth. He himself maintained extreme physical fitness: took cold baths throughout the year,

swam in cold water, went barefoot, and bare-chested for long walks in the hills, etc. In 1917, he started an evening school where he and other students and teachers taught the workers of Changsha's factories free of charge.

In 1918, Mao inaugurated the New People's Study Society, which he had been planning for about a year. It was one of many such student groups, but grew into something else—the core of a political party. From the start, it insisted on action as well as debate. It would not only talk revolution, but practise it, first by revolutionising its own members, turning them into “new men.” It had girl members and took up among

other issues, the oppression of women in the traditional marriage system.

Its activities went according to a programme of debate, study and social action. Social action included night schools for workers, visiting factories, demonstrating against Japanese imperialism, writing articles, and fighting for new ideas and the use of the vernacular language. **In later years, all thirteen of the original members of the society joined the Communist Party of China (CPC), founded in 1921. By 1919 there were eighty members, of whom over forty were to join the Party.**

Around the time of Mao's graduation from the Normal College in 1918, he was joined in Changsha by his mother who went there for treatment. She

however, could not be cured and died in October 1918. After her death, **Mao moved to Beijing, the capital of China, where for six months he took a very low-paying job as an assistant librarian in Beijing University.** This job was obtained through Li Dazhao the university librarian, who was the first Chinese intellectual to praise the Russian Revolution and one of the first to introduce Marxist thought to China. **Under Li Dazhao, Mao rapidly developed towards Marxism. He started reading those works of Lenin that had been translated into Chinese. Towards the end of 1918 he joined the Marxist Study Group formed by Li. He also met many intellectuals and Marxists. One who had an impact**

then on him was Chen Duxiu, who was later to become the first Secretary General of the CPC. Chen at that time was editor of the radical magazine, *New Youth*, for which Mao had already written and had an influence on him.

Mao spent only six months in Beijing. During this period however, **he fell in love with Yang Kaihui, the daughter of one of his Changsha College lecturers,** who was a professor at Beijing University. She was a student doing a course in journalism at the university. For both it was their first love. Their love was of the type that was then called “new” love where the partners made their own choice, going against the traditional system of arranged

marriages. For some time their love remained secret. They were not sure whether there was time for love when the country needed them so much. They decided to wait some time before taking a final decision.

In April 1919, Mao returned to Changsha just before the outbreak of the historic May 4th movement of 1919. This anti-imperialist democratic movement shook the whole of China. Though initiated by the students, it rapidly covered vast sections of workers, merchants, shopkeepers, artisans and other sections. **Mao immediately involved himself wholeheartedly in political agitation. On his arrival he had immediately taken a low-paying job as a primary school teacher.**

All his spare time however, was spent in organising agitations and spreading Marxism. He encouraged the study of Marxism in the New People's Study Society and other student societies with which he was in contact. At the same time, he built up the United Students Association of Hunan, which encompassed even young school students and girls students in large numbers. Uniting all sections, Mao organised a movement for the seizure and burning of Japanese goods. **He published a weekly magazine, the *Xiang River Review*, which quickly had a great influence on the student movement in Southern China. When the weekly was banned in October 1919, Mao continued to write in other journals. Soon**

he got a job as a journalist for various Hunan papers and set out for the big cities of Wuhan, Beijing and Shanghai to win support for the Hunan movement.

However, **when he landed in Beijing in February 1920, he soon got involved with the plans to build the Communist Party of China.** He held discussions with his university librarian mentor, Li Dazhao and other intellectuals. He visited the factories and railway yards and discussed Marxism with the workers. He did further study of the works of Marx and Engels and other socialists. **He also met Yang Kaihui again, who had been studying Marxism. They discussed their dedication to each**

other and to the revolution. They got engaged.

After Beijing, Mao spent four months in Shanghai, China's biggest city and its biggest industrial and commercial centre. Here he held discussions with Chen Duxiu and other Shanghai Marxists. To support himself he took a job as a labourer, working 12 to 14 hours in a laundry. During this period, in May 1920, China's first communist group was set up in Shanghai.

When Mao moved backed to Hunan in July 1920, he started working to set up a similar communist group there. His father had died in the beginning of the year and Mao made his home in Shaoshan

initially. His two brothers and adopted sister were among his first recruits. He then moved back to Changsha where he continued recruiting. There he took a job as the director of a primary school and also taught one class at the Normal College for which he received a comfortable salary for the first time.

Towards the end of 1920, Mao married Yang Kaihui and they lived together for the one and a half years that Mao was in Changsha as a primary school director. They were regarded as an ideal couple with Yang also being involved with the work of the Party of which she became a member in 1922. They had two

sons, one of whom died in 1950 as a volunteer in the Korean War against US imperialism. The other became an accountant. Yang, who performed secret work for the Party, was arrested in 1930 and executed.

Though Mao participated in various agitations during this period, the main focus of his work was the formation and building up of the CPC. After forming a communist group in Hunan, Mao went to Shanghai to attend the secretly held First National Congress of the CPC in July 1921. He was one of twelve delegates who represented only 57 party members at that time.

After the Congress, Mao became the Provincial Party Secretary of Hunan Province. From the very beginning, he paid particular attention to building the party in Hunan on the basis of Leninist party principles. He recruited youth from the existing revolutionary organisations as well as advanced workers who were won by extending the workers' movement. He started two monthly magazines to raise the ideological and political level of the party and youth league members and to help them to carry on communist education among the masses.

It was during this period up to 1923 that Mao concentrated a great deal on the organising of workers in Changsha, the Anyuan

Colliery (in neighbouring Jiangxi Province) and in the Shuikoushan Lead Mine.

By August 1921, he set up the first communist trade union. In 1922 he formed the Hunan branch of the All-China Labour Federation, of which he was made the chairman.

The Anyuan Colliery movement and organisation in particular was an excellent example of

communist organising. At first, the Party ran spare-time schools for the workers of the colliery to carry on Marxist education. It then organised a trade union. Meanwhile, a branch of the Socialist Youth League was formed among the workers, the best members of which were later absorbed into the Party. The Anyuan Colliery saw major strikes, which had country-wide repercussions. It had a strong

organisation, which survived even during the repression periods. The workers provided valuable support and participation at various stages in the revolutionary war. Anyuan was the liaison centre for the first communist base area in the Jinggang Mountains.

Mao did not participate in the Second National Congress of the CPC, held in July 1922, because he missed his appointment. **He participated in the Third National Congress of the CPC, held in June 1923, at which he was elected to the Central Committee. This Congress decided to promote an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal national front in co-operation with the Kuomintang Party led by Sun Yat-sen. It directed Communist Party**

members to join the Kuomintang Party as individuals. Mao did so and was elected as an alternate member of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee at its First and Second National Congresses held in 1924 and 1926. 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.

CHAPTER 25

MAO'S FIGHT AGAINST RIGHT AND "LEFT" LINES AND VICTORY OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

The First Revolutionary Civil

War: From 1924 until the beginning of 1926, the Chinese Revolution advanced rapidly with the proletariat and peasantry in great foment. In 1925, the protest against the May 30th massacre of demonstrators by the British police in Shanghai turned into an anti-imperialist people's movement involving all sectors of the masses throughout the country. 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 was led by the then Party General Secretary, Chen Duxiu. He took the stand that the bourgeois-democratic revolution must be led by the bourgeoisie** and the aim of the revolution should be to form a bourgeois republic. According to his line, the bourgeoisie was the only democratic force with which the working class should unite. **He did not consider any possibility of building an alliance with the peasantry.** On the other hand, **“Left” opportunists were represented by Zhang Guotou, the leader of the All-China Federation of Labour. He saw only the working-class movement. He argued that**

the working class was strong enough to make revolution alone. Thus, his clique also ignored the peasantry.

While fighting these two deviations, Mao made his first major contributions to the development of Marxist theory.

In March 1926, he published 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 he tried to answer the most basic questions of the Chinese revolution: Who are the friends and enemies of the revolution, who is the leading force and who are the reliable and vacillating allies? **He argued that it was the proletariat**

and not the bourgeoisie who would have to lead the revolution. However, the proletariat would not be able to win by fighting alone. He stressed the role of the peasantry, which was the closest and most numerous ally of the proletariat. He also pointed out that the national bourgeoisie was a vacillating ally with the possibility of the Right wing becoming an enemy and the Left wing remaining a friend of the revolution. Mao also presented his ideas on how the masses were to be mobilised, a revolutionary government established and the peasant armed forces organised. This was Mao's clear perspective on the direction the revolutionary forces should take.

This was the time of **the Northern Expedition, which was a critical part of the first phase of the Chinese Revolution—the First Revolutionary Civil War. It was a march by the Revolutionary Army under the leadership of the revolutionary national united front (the Kuomintang-CPC united front). Starting in July 1926 from Guangdong in southern China, its aim was to smash the reactionary government of the imperialist-backed Northern warlords in a revolutionary war and achieve the independence and unity of China.** The Northern Expedition was initially a major success with the whole of southern China and many of the southern warlords being defeated or won over. Under the influence of

the Northern Expedition, there was an upsurge among the peasantry. The proletariat staged many armed uprisings in cities to coincide with the advance of the Revolutionary Army. Even Shanghai, the largest industrial and commercial city of China, was liberated in March 1927 after three attempts at armed worker uprisings.

After achieving major victories however, the bourgeois clique, represented by Chiang Kai-shek (the main Kuomintang leader after Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925), broke the united front. In April 1927, massacres backed by the imperialists were launched on the communist cadres in various parts of the country. The Right opportunist Chen Duxiu leadership of the CPC, instead of mobilising the workers and

peasants against the Kuomintang reactionaries however, submitted to them. In July 1927, another Kuomintang clique launched massacres against the communists. This resulted in the breaking up of the united front and defeat of the First Revolutionary Civil War.

The Right line of Chen Duxiu, which dominated throughout the period of the First Revolutionary Civil War, was one the important reasons for the failure of the revolution during this period. Though Mao struggled against this Right Line, he could not win the support of the majority in the Party. In fact, at the Fifth National Congress held in April 1927, Chen

succeeded in removing Mao from the Central Committee.

The Second Revolutionary Civil War Period: In August 1927, at the start of the next period—the Second Revolutionary Civil War Period—Chen Duxiu was removed as General Secretary after a firm criticism of his Right opportunism. Mao was brought back onto the Central Committee and made an alternate member of the Provisional Politburo that was set up. However, the correct criticism of the Right line gave way in November 1927 to the domination of a “Left” line in the Central Committee, under the leadership of Qu Qiubai, an intellectual comrade who returned

after training in the Soviet Union. This line made the wrong assessment that the Chinese revolution was on a “continuous upsurge,” and therefore called for armed uprisings in many cities. The leadership criticised Mao for advocating and leading a peasant uprising and opposing uprisings in big cities. He was again removed from his central posts. He was also removed from membership of the Hunan Provincial Committee. The “Left” line led to heavy losses and the abandonment of this line by April 1928.

The Sixth Congress of the CPC held in Moscow in June 1928 rectified this first “Left” line and adopted a basically correct

understanding, repudiating both the Right and “Left” positions. Though Mao did not attend the Congress, it basically upheld his position on many points. In his absence he was again elected to the Central Committee. 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 Jinggang Mountains* in November 1928. These historical works provided the theoretical basis for the historic process of building and developing the**

Red Army then under way. Mao, starting from a small group of worker and peasant fighters had, after the failure of the peasant uprising in 1927, set up the first base in the Jinggang mountains in October 1927. Through the period from 1927 to the beginning of 1930, the area of armed peasant uprisings and rural revolutionary bases grew steadily. Many of the fighting sections under communist leadership joined Mao's forces. The Red Army grew to 60,000 soldiers and, a little later to 100,000 soldiers.

However, "Left" ideas again started gaining ascendancy and from 1930 took over the leadership of the Party. Two "Left" lines led by Li Lisan in

1930 and Wang Ming in 1931-34 dominated the Party and caused incalculable harm. In June 1930 Li Lisan drew up a plan for organising armed uprisings in the major cities throughout the country and for concentrating all the units of the Red Army to attack these major cities. The attempt to implement this plan between June and September 1930 led to severe losses and a demand from cadres for its rectification. During this period, Mao led an attack on Changsha but withdrew to prevent heavy losses in the face of superior imperialist and Kuomintang forces. After the withdrawal there was brutal repression in Changsha during which **Yang Kaihui, Mao's wife, who was doing underground work**

there, was executed. Li Lisan did self-criticism at a plenum held in September 1930 and stepped down from leadership positions. Mao and Zhu De (Commander of the Red Army) were taken onto the newly formed Politburo.

This Politburo was however, bypassed by a plenum called in January 1931 by Wang Ming, one of the group of twenty-eight so-called "Bolsheviks" who had returned from training in the Soviet Union. They did not call Mao and Zhu De for the plenum but removed them and others from the Central Committee. **In August 1932, Mao was also removed from his posts as secretary of the Front Committee and political commissar of the Red Army.** With

the Party and Red Army in their full control, the Wang Ming clique committed numerous errors, which led to severe losses. Throughout, their main attack was on Mao, who was the representative of what was according to them, right opportunism and the main danger within the Party. Mao's correct line was called a "rich peasant line." Sectarian and factional methods were used by the "Left" line leadership to attack not only Mao but also the leaders of the earlier "Left" lines, Li Lisan, and Qu Qiubai. While the Wang Ming clique was creating havoc in the Party, Chiang Kai-shek was organising repeated campaigns of encirclement and suppression against the Red base areas. The first four campaigns were defeated because of Mao's leadership and the influence

of his strategic principles before the “Left” leadership acquired full control over the Party and Red Army in the base areas. However, **when the “Left” leadership actually moved into the base area, their direct leadership led to serious errors and the defeat of the Communist forces in the fifth campaign of the Kuomintang forces. 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 move of the Red Army, known as the Long March.** Mao was accompanied by his next wife, He Zizhen, a party cadre from a local peasant family of the Jiangxi base area. They had married in 1931, after the death of Mao’s

earlier wife, Yang Kaihui. They had two children who were left behind with peasants in the Jiangxi base area at the start of the Long March.

It was during the Long March, at the Zunyi Plenum of the CPC in January 1935, that leadership of the Party moved into the hands of Mao and his policies. This was a turning point for the Long March as well as for the Chinese Revolution. 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.

During the Long March, besides the repeated attacks of the Kuomintang troops, the Party had also to face the line of flightism and warlordism led by Zhang Guotou. Two conferences of the Central Committee held during the Long March defeated Zhang Guotou's proposal to retreat to the national minority areas of Xinjiang and Tibet. However, he refused to follow the party decision and tried to form a new party centre. He led a section of the Red Army in a different direction, which was attacked and finished off by Kuomintang forces. Zhang became a traitor and joined the Kuomintang. The main force of the Red Army reached their destination in the Shaanxi Province in Northern China in October 1935, one year after they had started

the Long March. The Red Army, which numbered around 300,000 just before the beginning of the fifth encirclement campaign, had now been reduced to just over twenty thousand. It was this core that set up the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia (on the border areas of these three provinces in northern China) base area. It became famously known as **Yanan**, the name of its capital. This was the base from which Mao led the Party and Red Army to victory in 1945 in the war against Japan.

Mao and He Zizhen were divorced in 1938. In April 1939 he married Jiang Qing. Jiang Qing was the party name of Lan Ping, a theatre and film actress, who had joined the Party in 1933 and moved to Yanan in 1937 to teach drama at the Art Academy there

and participate in the propaganda teams that went among the peasantry. Mao, who took a keen interest in art and literature, met her in the course of this work and they fell in love and decided to get married.

The Period of the War of Resistance Against Japan:

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 for 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, Mao 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. He called for a united front with the Kuomintang in order to drive away the Japanese aggressors.** Chiang Kai-shek however, did not agree to enter a united front until he was forced to do so by the CPC's propaganda and by the pressure of certain factions in his own party. He finally agreed when he was arrested in December 1936 by two of his own generals, who insisted

that a united front should be built with the CPC. The Anti-Japanese United Front was set up in August 1937.

During the period of the War of Resistance, Mao had again to fight wrong trends though these did not grow to capture leadership over the Party and the struggle. One was a pessimistic trend of national subjugation present in some Kuomintang sections of the United Front. These people, after some defeats at the hands of the Japanese, felt that the Chinese was bound to be suppressed and ruled by the Japanese and other imperialists. One faction even prepared for surrender. **On the other hand there was the trend in some sections of the CPC, who felt that since the united front had**

been formed there would be quick victory over the Japanese. These comrades overestimated the strength of the united front and did not see the reactionary side of the Chiang Kai-shek clique. In order to correct these mistaken theories and to point out the correct course of the war, Mao published his book *On Protracted War* in May 1938, which pointed out that the war would finally end in victory but that the victory would not be quick. Also, in this and other writings he laid down the military principles of the war.

Mao also wrote various philosophical works to help educate the party cadres and remove the damaging effects of the earlier Right and "Left" lines. Basing on these writings

between 1941 and 1944, a lengthy **rectification campaign** was held to fight the main errors in the Party. This was combined with in-depth discussions to review the history of the Party. Zhou Enlai, who had been a leading comrade throughout the period, particularly participated in this process. This led finally to an open and complete repudiation of the earlier wrong lines. This understanding was adopted in the *Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party* at the plenum of the CPC held in April 1945.

Armed with the correct line and correct tactics, the CPC led the Chinese people to 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 the Seventh Congress of the CPC in April 1945, Mao in his *Report On Coalition Government* presented a detailed summing up of the anti-Japanese war and an analysis of the current international and domestic situation. He gave a specific programme for the formation of a coalition government with the Kuomintang after the victory over the Japanese forces.**

The Third Revolutionary Civil War Period: However, after the victory over the Japanese, Chiang Kai-

shek, because of the support of US 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 the CPC to come to an agreement, saying that they 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. Relying on the full support of the masses and particularly the peasantry, **the Red Army was able to change the military balance of forces and move in July 1947 from the strategic defensive to the strategic offensive.** By October 1949, the CPC

had, within a period of four years, won nation-wide victory over the US 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 28th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, in his speech "*On the People's Democratic Dictatorship*," Mao said, "28 years of our Party is 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 a long march of ten thousand."

CHAPTER 26

THE PATH OF REVOLUTION FOR COLONIES AND SEMI- COLONIES

Immediately after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the international communist movement gave open recognition to the significance of **the Chinese path of revolution**, for colonies and semi-colonies. **On January 27, 1950, in an editorial entitled "*For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*," in 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.”

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 colonies and semi-colonies.

Mao's formulation of the Chinese path of revolution had been developed in his numerous writings during the advancing of the revolution. Lenin had already pointed out that in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution it was the proletariat and not the bourgeoisie that would lead the bourgeois democratic revolution. **Mao in his work *On New Democracy*, carried this understanding further, pointing out that in this era, any revolution in a colony**

or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism no longer comes within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within a 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. Thus, in order to differentiate from the old bourgeois democratic revolution, he called the revolution in colonies and semi-colonies a

new democratic revolution. On this basis, he elaborated on the politics, economy and culture of new democracy.

Mao also developed an understanding of the United Front that Lenin and Stalin had given. He showed that the bourgeoisie in colonies and semi-colonies was divided into two parts—the comprador bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The comprador bourgeoisie, who depended on imperialism for its existence and growth, was always an enemy of the revolution. The national bourgeoisie was a vacillating ally who would sometimes help the revolution and sometimes join the enemies.

Thus, the united front under the leadership of the proletariat would

consist of a four-class alliance—the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban petit bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The enemies of the revolution were imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie and the landlords.

According to Mao the revolution in colonies and semi-colonies would not follow the path of insurrection followed by the Russian Revolution where the main cities were captured first and then control taken over the countryside. **He showed the Chinese path of *protracted people's war*, which involved the area-wide seizure of power in the countryside, the building of guerrilla zones and base areas and the final encircling and capturing**

of the cities. To achieve this, Mao laid down the military principles of revolutionary war. He taught how to build up the red army which was an absolutely necessary weapon of the revolution. Starting from guerrilla warfare and then moving to mobile warfare and finally to positional warfare, Mao showed how a small force can rely on the vast masses to build up the forces needed to defeat a formidable enemy.

Finally, basing himself on the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the State and the dictatorship of the proletariat, Mao elaborated on the theory regarding the form of the State in revolutions in colonial countries.

On the basis of the theory of new democracy, he formulated

the understanding of the *New-Democratic Republic*.

This new-democratic republic he said would 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 would also be different from the socialist republic of the Soviet type under the dictatorship of the proletariat. For a certain historical period, this form too was not suitable for the revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial countries. During this period, therefore, a third form of state was necessary to be adopted in the revolutions of all colonial and semi-colonial countries—**namely, the new-democratic republic under the**

joint dictatorship of several anti-imperialist classes. Since this form suits a certain historical period, it is therefore transitional. Nevertheless, according to Mao, it is a form that is necessary and cannot be dispensed with.

This state was established after the victory of the Chinese Revolution in the form of the **people's democratic dictatorship.** Mao explained the essence of the people's democratic dictatorship as the combination of two aspects—democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries. The people are the working class, the peasantry, the urban petit 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.

Mao further pointed out that the Communist Party had to lead the process of transformation of the people's democratic dictatorship into a socialist state. The people's democratic dictatorship, led by the proletariat and based on the worker-peasant alliance, required that the Communist Party 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 the Party unite with as many of the representatives of the urban petit bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie who were ready to co-operate as possible, and with their intellectuals and political groups. This was necessary to isolate the counter-revolutionary forces. If this were done it would be possible, after the victory of the revolution, to speedily restore and develop production, cope with foreign imperialism, steadily transform a backward semi-colonial agricultural economy into an industrial country and build up a socialist state.

CHAPTER 27

MAO ON PHILOSOPHY

Mao's writings on philosophy are directed to educating the Party cadres and masses in Marxism-Leninism to change their mode of thinking and practice. Mao himself was an ardent student of philosophy. When he got hold of books on philosophy, he would consume them in intense concentrated reading. Because of the earlier influence of the dogmatists who had returned after study in the Soviet Union and could not relate their knowledge to reality, Mao was continuously eager to make the Party's study and teaching linked to practice. He wanted to make Marxist philosophy and particularly the Marxist dialectical

method of use to all Party cadres and activists and to the common masses.

The Theory of Knowledge: Of prime importance was Mao's teaching on the theory of knowledge. An important work was his essay *On Practice—On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing*. Though it took only two hours of lectures, Mao said it had taken weeks to write. **The central point, which Mao explained, is that knowledge does not drop from the sky—it comes from social practice and from it alone. True knowledge, or correct ideas, comes from three kinds of social practice—the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment.**

Theory depends on practice. It is unthinkable, said Mao, that it should not be measured and checked by practice. In turn, theory changes practice and changes our method of work and thinking. Through this is brought about the transformation and gaining of more knowledge. No one is born wise or born stupid. Knowledge cannot come before material experience; nobody can become an expert before practically doing a thing.

Mao explained the process of obtaining knowledge. It starts from perceptual knowledge, the stage of sense perceptions and impressions, where man at first sees only the separate aspects, the external relations of things. **As social practice continues, things that give rise**

to man's sense perceptions and impressions in the course of his practice are repeated many times; then a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of understanding, and concepts are formed. Concepts are no longer the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things; they grasp the essence, the totality and the internal relations of things. Between concepts and sense perceptions, there is not only a quantitative but also a qualitative difference. **Conceptual or logical or rational knowledge is a higher stage than the stage of perceptual knowledge.**

There are two important aspects to this. One is that **rational knowledge depends upon perceptual**

knowledge. It is foolish to think that rational knowledge can be developed without someone first experiencing and obtaining perceptual knowledge. The second important aspect is that perceptual knowledge remains to be developed into rational knowledge. This means that **perceptual knowledge should be deepened and developed to the stage of rational knowledge.**

The acquiring of rational knowledge is however, not an end in itself. As Marxism has always held, the essential point of all knowledge is to bring it into practice. Thus, as Mao says, "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."**

On Contradictions: The other important contribution of Mao to Marxist philosophy was in dialectics and particularly

relating to the understanding and application of contradictions.

The understanding and use of contradictions appears at various points and almost throughout all of Mao's analysis and writings. His main work is *On Contradiction*, which is an essay on philosophy written in August 1937 by Mao after his essay *On Practice*, and with the same object of overcoming the serious error of dogmatist thinking to be found in the Party at the time. Originally, this essay was presented as two lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yanan.

Mao's work was in a sense the continuation of work by Lenin, who particularly made a deep study of contradictions. Lenin

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.” **Lenin, in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, 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.”

These “explanations and development” were done some twenty years later by Mao. **Mao’s work was a leap in the understanding of contradictions.** He examined the question of contradictions in great detail and clarified them in such a manner as to

make them easily understandable and easily useable by anybody.

First, he asserted that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought.

Following from this he explained **the principle of the universality and absoluteness of contradiction.**

According to this principle, contradiction is present in all processes of every object and of every thought and exists in all these processes from beginning to end.

Next, he gives **the principle of the particularity and relativity of contradiction.** According to this principle, each contradiction and each

of its aspects have their respective characteristics.

A very important concept given by Mao in this respect is regarding the unity and struggle between the opposites in a contradiction. Mao points out **the unity or identity of opposites is conditional; it is thus always temporary and relative. On the other hand the struggle of opposites is unending; it is universal and absolute.**

Another important principle, which Mao gave and used very often in his analysis, was **the understanding of the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.** According to this principle, **there are many contradictions in the process of**

development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determines or influences the existence and development of the other contradictions. Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. **Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved.**

Similarly, in any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. **Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. 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 that has gained the dominant position.

Mao always gave central importance to understanding the principal contradiction in his analysis.

Thus, in his analysis of Chinese society he always analysed the

principal contradiction. This was an advancement of earlier Marxist-Leninist analysis, which did not particularly go into an analysis of the principal contradiction in a country or revolution. Mao however, asserted that unless we examine the two aspects—the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction—we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct method of resolving it. The importance of understanding the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction was that they represented the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops

absolutely evenly and therefore it is necessary to understand the change in the position of the principal and non-principal contradictions and the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction. It is only by understanding the various stages of unevenness in the contradictions and the process of change in these contradictions that a revolutionary party can decide on its strategy and tactics, both in political and military affairs.

Lastly, Mao clarified **the question of antagonism in a contradiction. According to Mao, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism therefore cannot be arbitrarily applied**

everywhere. 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. **Forms of struggle differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Non-antagonistic contradictions can be solved by peaceful and friendly means. Antagonistic contradictions require non-peaceful means.**

Mao came back to the question of antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions during the period of socialist construction and during

the Cultural Revolution. He stressed that despite the victory of the revolution it was wrong to think that contradictions no longer existed in Chinese society. He showed that there were two different types of contradictions that still existed—the contradictions with the enemy and the contradictions among the people.

The contradictions with the enemy were antagonistic and had to be dealt with by suppression. On the other hand the contradictions among the people, which were non antagonistic had to be dealt with in such a way that they did not become antagonistic. Mao always stressed the need for the correct handling of contradictions. He pointed out that if contradictions were not

**understood and handled correctly,
there was always the danger of
restoration of capitalism.**

CHAPTER 28

MAO ON THE PARTY

From the time that Mao took over the leadership of the CPC, he made all efforts to develop the Party on true Leninist lines. Due to the domination of the earlier incorrect lines, particularly the third “Left” line of Wang Ming, there were many deviations in party function. Due to sectarian understanding, there were no proper norms of democratic centralist function and a totally wrong approach to the two-line struggle. Decisions were taken without consultation and without involving the party cadres and by manipulating the holding of plenums and other meetings. Two-line struggle

was not conducted openly and representatives of another point of view were harassed and punished. Also due to dogmatism, there was no implementation of mass line. Mao made all attempts to rectify these deviations as well as build up proper forums and bodies. In the process, Mao also clarified and developed many organisational concepts. He also tried to correct certain wrong understandings that had grown in the international communist movement and also in the CPSU under the leadership of Stalin.

Democratic Centralism: Mao's attempt to correct sectarian and bureaucratic deviations is seen in his explanation regarding democratic centralism. **Mao's understanding of**

**democratic centralism is clearly
“first democracy, then centralism.”**

He explained this in many ways—“if there is no democracy there won’t be any centralism,” and “centralism is centralism built on the foundation of democracy. Proletarian centralism with a broad democratic base.”

This view of Mao was based on his understanding that **centralism meant first of all the centralisation of correct ideas.** For this to take it was necessary for all comrades to express their views and opinions and not keep it bottled up inside them. This would only be possible if there was the fullest possible democracy where comrades would feel free to state what they want to say and even vent their anger. Therefore, without democracy

it would be impossible to sum up experiences correctly. **Without democracy, without ideas coming from the masses, it is impossible to formulate good lines, principles, policies, or methods. However, with proletarian democracy it was possible to achieve unity of understanding, of policy, plan, command and action on the basis of concentrating of correct ideas. This is unity through centralism.**

Mao did not restrict the understanding of democratic centralism only to party function. He broadened the understanding to the question of running the proletarian state and building the socialist economy. Mao felt that without democratic centralism, the dictatorship of the

proletariat could not be consolidated. Without broad democracy for the people, it was 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 would be impossible to exercise effective dictatorship over the reactionaries and bad elements or to remould them effectively. Mao made these observations after the rise of modern revisionism in the Soviet Union and saw that the masses had not been mobilised to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat. He also saw the rise of revisionist tendencies within the CPC at the highest levels and recognised that the only safeguard against such trends was the initiative

and vigilance of the lower level cadres and the masses.

Thus Mao said in his talk in January 1962:

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.

The two-line struggle is another aspect of party organisational principles, regarding which Mao developed Marxist understanding and theory. 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” they should try to rectify.** They should give ample opportunity to rectify and only if the people committing errors “persisted” or “aggravated them,” was there was the possibility of the contradiction becoming antagonistic.

This was a correction of Stalin’s understanding, which he had presented in *Foundations of Leninism*. Stalin was opposed to any attempt to rectify wrong trends through inner-party struggle. He called such attempts a “theory of ‘defeating’

opportunistic elements by ideological struggle within the Party,” which according to him was “a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity.” Such a presentation refused to accept 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. **“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.”

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 to the principles of democratic centralism. Thus, 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.

Mass-Line: Another area where Mao advanced Marxism was regarding

mass-line. Starting from the basic Marxist-Leninist understanding of the Party maintaining the closest possible links with the masses, **Mao 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 basis of a correct political line and also how it was the essential organisational line of inner-party relations.**

Mao explains that in the practical work of the 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 in 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. This, as Mao says, is the Marxist theory of knowledge.

In order to bring into practice the principle “from the masses, to the masses,” Mao explains that it is necessary to have a correct relationship between the leading group and the masses in an organisation or in a struggle. **It is necessary that the Party draws together the activists to form a nucleus of leadership and links this nucleus of leadership closely with the masses.** If this is not done the leadership of the party becomes bureaucratic and divorced from the masses. It is also necessary that the leadership does not remain content with merely giving general calls. **General calls must be followed up by particular and concrete guidance if they are to be properly implemented.** “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.” In this way, Mao explains mass-line as the basic method of leadership of the Party over the masses.

Lastly, Mao says that mass-line should not only be seen in the context of leadership of the Party over the masses. In fact, **Mao also stresses the application of the mass-line to inner-party relations. He thus also saw it as an organisational line. Mao points out that 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). Thus, Mao shows that it was of crucial importance that close ties be maintained between higher and lower levels of the Party. Any break up in inner-party ties would result in a gap in the relation between the party leadership and the masses. It would go against the implementation of mass-line.

CHAPTER 29

SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION—THE CHINESE EXPERIENCE

The implementation of the new democratic economic programme started even before the nationwide victory of the revolution. Soon after the Red Army and the Chinese revolution entered the strategic offensive in 1947, Mao announced and started implementing what was called **the three major economic policies of the new-democratic revolution. These were 1) the confiscation of the land of the feudal class and its distribution among the peasantry, 2) the confiscation of the capital of the comprador**

bourgeoisie and 3) protection of the industry and commerce of the national bourgeoisie. 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, for the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.** The basic aim set for this period was to accomplish the industrialisation of China together

with the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce. The target set to complete this process was roughly eighteen years. This was divided into three years of rehabilitation to recover from the damage and destruction of the civil war, plus fifteen years covering three five-year plans for planned development of the economy.

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 to organise agricultural producer mutual-aid teams** consisting of only a few to a dozen or so households each. These teams had only certain basic

elements of socialism, like help and co-operation among the members of the team. **The second step was to call on the peasants to organise small agricultural producer cooperatives on the basis of these mutual-aid teams.** These cooperatives were semi-socialist in nature and were characterised by the pooling of land as shares and by unified management. **The third step was to call on the peasants to combine further on the basis of these small semi-socialist cooperatives and organise large, fully socialist agricultural producer cooperatives.** The basic principles underlying this step-by-step plan were voluntary participation and mutual benefit. The peasants were to be persuaded to voluntarily

participate in this process of collectivisation.

The first step of mutual-aid teams had started in the revolutionary bases even before the nation-wide victory of the revolution. The second step towards elementary cooperatives took place in the years 1953-55. The third step of transition to advanced cooperatives 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 advanced and completed the process of nationalisation of businesses. Thus, China's industry and commerce was transferred from private ownership to ownership by the whole people far ahead of schedule.

Mao's Dialectical Approach to the Process of 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 adopt all Soviet policies uncritically. With the rise of modern revisionism in the Soviet Union (and particularly after the revisionist 20th Congress of the CPSU in February 1956), the revisionist tendencies in the CPC were immediately strengthened. 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 Shaoqi.

The representatives of this trend upheld the Khrushchevites, negated the class struggle and concentrated attention towards building modern productive forces, primarily through heavy industry. **Their argument was that the productive forces are the main motor of change and it was the backward productive forces in China that were the main factor holding back the development of the country. Changes in production relations should wait until after the productive forces had been developed enough; the cooperativisation of agriculture should wait until industries developed enough to provide**

machinery for rural mechanisation. All these proposals negated the importance of the relations of production and the class struggle. It would lead to growth of revisionist and bureaucratic trends and the growth of a new exploiting class.

Seeing the Soviet experience and 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 lop-sided 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." 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. 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... 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 class struggle at the very core of the process. He asserted that **“class struggle is by no means over... the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet.”** With this he began the struggle against the revisionist sections in the Party who were saying that class struggle no longer existed under socialism. This marked the beginning of a countrywide rectification movement, the **Anti-Rightist Movement**. During this

period many high-level cadres had to present their self-criticisms before the masses, millions of students involved themselves in manual labour to integrate with the workers and peasants, all party cadres in the factories and agricultural cooperatives had to participate in manual labour, workers began to participate in decision making in their factories and a socialist education campaign started among the peasantry. Through this process the Party was brought closer to the people and rightist trends that were growing, both within the Party and outside were checked.

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

With the progress of the rectification movement, the rightists in the party

were put on the defensive. This led, in 1958, to a rectification of the erroneous productive forces theory that had dominated the Eighth Party Congress in 1956. The prime mover of this theory, **Liu Shaoqi, was forced to admit before the Second Session of the Eighth Party Congress in May 1958 that throughout the period before completion of the building of a socialist society, the principal contradiction was between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the socialist road and the capitalist road.** His report also mentioned the Great Leap Forward, which had then begun. There had been major advances on every front in socialist construction. Industry, agriculture and all other fields of

activity had registered greater and more rapid growth.

Aside from rapid growth however, **the Great Leap Forward was a major change in the priorities of the earlier plans and general line.**

The general line of the Great Leap Forward had been formulated at a central committee meeting held at the end of November 1957. **It changed the emphasis on heavy industry and aimed at the simultaneous development of agriculture, heavy and light industry. It aimed at reducing the gap between cities and countryside, between worker and peasant and between worker and peasant on the one hand and the intellectual and manager on the other. It aimed at not merely**

an economic revolution but a technological, political, social and cultural revolution to transform the city and countryside.

In 1958, China started building the people's communes. The process

first started spontaneously when neighbouring peasant associations in a drought-affected area made a plan to merge together their labour and other resources to implement an irrigation project. Mao gave their merger the name "commune." Mao encouraged such formations, and this immediately led to a rapid spread of communes throughout the country.

They were formed by the merger of neighbouring cooperatives 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. The movement to set up people's communes grew very rapidly. The Central Committee of the CPC announced in its famous Wuhan Resolution of December 1958 stating that, "Within a few months starting in the summer of 1958, all of the more than 740,000 agricultural producer cooperatives 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."

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.

Thus, the commune movement represented a tremendous advancement, which basically completed the process of collectivisation of agriculture. However, the expectation of the commune advancing 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. Mao in his speech in February 1959 called it a "communist wind." These **"Left" errors, which Mao identified, were mainly of three types. The first was the leveling of the poor and the rich brigades within the commune** by making the whole commune into one accounting unit. This meant that shares of the peasant members of richer brigades (the former advanced cooperative) would be smaller than the share they would receive soon after the commune was formed. They would thus resent the formation of the commune and

their participation would not be voluntary. **The second error was that capital accumulation by the commune was too great and the commune's demand for labour without compensation was too great.** When larger amounts were kept aside for capital accumulation, the share that the peasant got was lower. Similarly, more labour without compensation can only come where the consciousness has been raised to that extent. **The third error was the "communisation" of all kinds "property."** In some areas attempts were made to even bring minor property of the peasants like hens and pigs under the commune. This too was opposed.

These errors were soon corrected. The production brigade (former advanced cooperative), was kept as the basic accounting unit, and in 1962, this was brought to an even lower level, that of the production team. However, 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 succeed. The basic accounting and ownership unit continued until 1976 to remain at the 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 Shaoqi, remained strong within the Party’s

higher levels. The two-line struggle was represented in direct and indirect ways. In July 1959, Peng Dehuai, then Defence Minister, launched a direct attack on the Great Leap Forward, criticising what he called its “petit-bourgeois fanaticism” and desire “to enter into communism in one step” 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 a veiled defence of Peng and attacks on Mao in the media. This was through articles and also through plays and cultural performances intended 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 Central Committee in 1962. Though the capitalist roaders formally agreed, through their control within the party structure, they ensured that there was no mass mobilisation. They tried to turn the Cultural Revolution in the direction of academic and ideological debate rather than class struggle.

Mao, throughout this period (1959-65), fought the battle at various levels. He realised on the basis of

the Soviet 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 the struggle of the great debate against Khrushchev's modern revisionism, Mao tried to rally the revolutionaries around the world and in China.** Through his works like *Critique of Soviet Economics* and the CPC's analysis of *Khrushchev's Phony Communism and its Historical Lessons for the World*, he tried to inculcate in the party cadres the theoretical foundations for a fight against revisionism and restoration.

However, he mainly tried to draw the masses into the struggle to defend and develop socialism and prevent the restoration of capitalism. Besides his earlier mentioned programme for socialist education, he also gave slogans for socialist emulation of the Dazhai and Daqing experiences as model experiences in building socialism. **But when all attempts to mobilise the masses were diverted by 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.**

CHAPTER 30

THE GREAT DEBATE— MAO'S FIGHT AGAINST KHRUSHCHEV'S MODERN REVISIONISM

In 1953, after the death of Stalin, a revisionist clique led by Khrushchev, enacted a coup and took over the controls of the CPSU, then the leading party of the international proletariat. They threw out or killed the revolutionaries in the Party, started the process of the restoration of capitalism in the first homeland of socialism and proceeded to develop ties with the imperialist camp, particularly US imperialism. By 1956, after securing firm control over the CPSU, at **the 20th Congress of**

the CPSU, they 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.

Peaceful transition meant peaceful transition to socialism by the parliamentary road. Khrushchev proposed that in the present era it was possible to achieve socialism by peacefully winning a majority in parliament and then bringing about reforms to bring in socialism. He thus denied the need for revolution. **This theory was thus a repetition of the**

revisionism of Bernstein and other social-democrats.

Peaceful coexistence between states having different social systems was proposed by Khrushchev as the general line of the foreign policy of the socialist state. He thus distorted Lenin's policy of peaceful coexistence with capitalist states, which was just one aspect of the socialist state's foreign policy of proletarian internationalism. Khrushchev subordinated all other things to his desire to maintain a peaceful existence with imperialism. He made relations with and aid to other socialist countries and the policy of help to the struggles of oppressed nations dependent upon the requirements of peaceful coexistence

with the imperialist powers. **This was thus nothing but a policy of collaboration with imperialism.**

Peaceful competition was the theory that the contradiction between imperialism and socialism would be resolved through economic competition between the capitalist and socialist systems. This theory thus refused to recognise the reactionary and war mongering character of imperialism. It created the illusion that the contradiction between the socialist and imperialist camp was a non-antagonistic contradiction that would be resolved through peaceful forms of struggle.

Khrushchev's theory of the Three Peacefuls was thus a full-fledged

revisionist theory, which he wanted to impose on the international communist movement. It was directed towards building up a close relationship with imperialism. In order to implement his schemes and gain the acceptance of the imperialist powers, Khrushchev simultaneously launched a vicious attack on Stalin in the name of the personality cult. **In order to demolish the revolutionary principles that Stalin had stood and fought for it was first necessary to destroy the image of Stalin among revolutionaries and the masses throughout the world. This was done through a campaign of lies and degenerate propaganda.**

Many 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 collaboration between socialism and capitalism and moved out of the international communist movement; Thorez, the former Third International leader from France, who developed close relations 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 servant 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, which had not been sufficiently criticised and defeated in the earlier period, quite happily collaborated with Khrushchev.

However, wherever such parties tried in any serious manner to implement “peaceful transition” through the electoral system, and wherever 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, from 1948 had already started on the revisionist road and broken off from the socialist camp. Khrushchev however, soon started making friends with him. Most of the remaining leaderships also aligned with Khrushchev. Within the socialist camp it was only the CPC and the Albanian Party of Labour that identified and recognised Khrushchevite revisionism and made a valiant and determined defence of Marxism-Leninism.

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 called *More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, which insisted that the socialist camp should clearly demarcate who were 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.**

As the struggle sharpened, in June 1959 the Soviet revisionists withdrew

technical assistance in the field of defence, and in July 1960 abruptly withdrew all the Soviet technical experts who were working in China. The same was done in Albania. In April 1960, the CPC published *Long Live Leninism* and two other articles upholding the basic principles of Leninism on imperialism, war and peace, proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. These articles opposed the revisionist positions of the CPSU without mentioning it by name.

The revisionists however, continued with their attempts to further systemise their revisionist positions. Thus in the 22nd Congress of the CPSU held in 1961, the programme adopted revised the essence of

Marxism-Leninism, namely, the teachings on proletarian revolution, on the dictatorship of the proletariat and on the party of the proletariat. It declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat was no longer needed in the Soviet Union and that the nature of the CPSU as the vanguard of the proletariat had changed. The Congress advanced absurd theories of a "state of the whole people" and a "party of the entire people." At the Congress, Khrushchev launched an open and public attack on the Albanian Party and even gave a call to overthrow its leader, Enver Hoxha. This was opposed by the CPC delegation led by Zhou Enlai.

Khrushchev also started encouraging other Communist Parties to launch

public attacks on the CPC. Numerous articles in the Soviet Union also attacked the Chinese leadership. The CPC finally started replying to some of the attacks of Togliatti of the Italian Party, Thorez of the French Party, Gus Hall of the CPUSA and others in a series of seven articles, which came out at the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963.

A summary of the main views of the CPC was put out in the famous June 14th Letter of 1963, entitled *A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement*. The CPSU replied with an *Open Letter to the CPC*. Since the whole issue was now in the open, the CPC decided to conduct the debate through the open press. It

published nine commentaries on the CPSU's Open Letter and clarified all of the issues before the masses.

This struggle, which came out in the open in 1963 and continued through 1964, came to be known as the Great Debate. The Great Debate was of immense historic significance. It was a principled and comprehensive struggle against modern revisionism. It provided 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. Mao was the driving force behind the struggle. **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 June 14th letter. The nine commentaries outlined and elaborated the revolutionary position on various crucial issues facing the international communist movement after World War II: 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.

CHAPTER 31

THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) was the answer of Marxism to the obstacles and sabotage of the process of socialist construction created by the Khrushchevites and the capitalist roaders. Particularly after the rise of revisionism in the Soviet Union, Mao realised that one of the biggest dangers of the restoration of capitalism came from within the Party itself. Throughout the Great Debate, Mao, while fighting revisionism, tried to find the answer to the question of how to prevent the restoration of capitalism. He was at the same time deeply involved in the fight with the

Chinese Khrushchevites, like Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Thus **while concluding the Great Debate in the CPC's last document, which was called *On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and its Historical lessons for the World*, Mao stressed certain points on the question of prevention of the restoration of capitalism.**

Mao first stressed the recognition of the need to continue the class struggle throughout the period of socialist society, right to the end. He explained that change in the ownership of the means of production, i.e. socialist revolution on the economic front, is insufficient in itself. **He insisted that we must have a thorough socialist revolution**

on the political and ideological fronts in order to consolidate the revolution, and that this revolution must be continued under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Another point that Mao repeatedly stressed was that in order to carry out this revolution it was necessary to stick to mass line and to boldly arouse the masses and launch mass movements on a large scale. For this the Party would have to rely on, win over and unite with the masses of the people, who constituted 95 percent of the population, in a common struggle against the enemies of socialism. Mao also stressed the need "to conduct extensive socialist education movements repeatedly

in the cities and the countryside.” In these continuous movements for educating the people Mao again stressed the need to organise the revolutionary class forces, and “to wage a sharp, tit-for-tat struggle against the anti-socialist, capitalist and feudal forces.” Thus **Mao clearly saw that the extensive participation of the masses was an essential precondition to prevent the restoration of capitalism.**

This came from Mao’s experience of how the revisionists from within the leadership of the Party itself were the main elements bringing about the restoration of capitalism.

However, within the CPC there was strong resistance from the highest levels, led by Liu Shaoqi, 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 in a direction counter to the line given by Mao. In fact the party bureaucracy, under Liu’s control, started criticising Mao for the actions he was trying to take and opposing the action taken on capitalist roaders like Peng Dehuai. They conducted this criticism through articles in the press and plays and other cultural forums in their full control. Their control was such that Mao could not even get an article defending himself printed in the press in Beijing. Such **an article defending**

Mao and his policies was finally published in November 1965 in the Shanghai press, which was a much more radical centre than Beijing. This was what Mao later called “the signal” for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), which started a flow of criticism of the party bureaucracy and support of Mao’s Line in the media and the field of culture.

There also arose demands for self-criticism by the main culprits. The party bureaucracy however, did all they could to prevent this movement from taking on a mass character. The Cultural Revolution Group, which was supposed to initiate and direct it, actually tried to control the dissent and channel it along academic lines.

Finally the Central Committee under the direction of Mao issued a circular on May 16, 1966, dissolving 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. **The May 16th Circular gave the call to criticise and break the resistance of the capitalist roaders, particularly those within the Party. This action led to the actual initiation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and made it a mass phenomenon involving millions of people.**

On May 25th, the first big-character poster was put up at Beijing University, criticising its

vice-chancellor and the education system. This was only the first of thousands of such massive posters put up by the students and masses throughout the country where they expressed their opinion and criticised what they felt was wrong in society. Demonstrations and mass criticisms were held criticising professors, party bureaucrats and others for their wrong policies. Soon there was a demand from a section of students for the abolition of entrance examinations. In June the Central Committee passed an order suspending new admissions to colleges and universities for six months so that the students and youth could more fully participate in the GPCR. However, the six-month period proved too short and the

universities only opened again after four years.

Mao too started personally participating in the GPCR. On July 17th he participated along with ten thousand other swimmers in a mile long swim across the river Yangtze. This was a symbolic act signifying that he was participating in the flowing stream of the GPCR. **On August 5th, during the Eleventh Plenum meeting of the CPC, Mao gave a much more straightforward signal. He put up his own big-character poster. His main slogan was "Bombard the Headquarters!" This was a clear-cut call to attack the capitalist headquarters of the capitalist roaders in the Party headed by Liu Shaoqi. Mao's call**

gave a further push to actions and militancy of the movement.

On August 18th, Mao was present at the first rally of Red Guards in Beijing—it was a million strong. The Red Guards were the members of the thousands of mass organisations that had sprung up throughout the country for participation in the GPCR. The first mass organisations were composed mainly of students and youth, but as the movement grew such organisations grew among the workers, peasants and office employees. The August 18th rally was the first of numerous such rallies. At some times there were over two million Red Guards from all over the country assembled in the capital.

The Eleventh Plenum defined the GPCR as “a new stage in the development of the socialist revolution in our country, a deeper and more extensive stage.” Mao, in his closing speech at the Plenum 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 the continuation of the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie.”

The Eleventh Plenum adopted what came to be known as the **16 Articles of the Cultural Revolution**. They repeated what had been said by the May 16th Circular, that the present revolution was to touch people's souls, to change man. Old ideas, culture, customs, habits of the exploiting classes still moulded public opinion, offering fertile ground for the restoration of the past. The mental outlook had to be transformed and new values created.

It identified the main target as "those within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road." It identified the main forces of the revolution as "the masses of the workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary

intellectuals and revolutionary cadres.”

The objective of the revolution was “to struggle against and crush those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticise and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic “authorities” and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, art and literature and all other parts of the superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system.” The form of the revolution was to arouse the masses in their hundreds of

millions to air their views freely, write big-character posters, and hold great debates so that the capitalist roaders in power would be exposed and their plans to restore capitalism could be smashed.

The essential 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.

As the masses entered full strength in the revolution, they even created a new organisational form—the revolutionary committee. It was based on a “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 (the Red Guards whose membership reached thirty million in number). 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.

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 mass line. Thus, this strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat was also the most extensive and deepest exercise in proletarian democracy yet achieved in the world.

Under the initial sweep of the Cultural Revolution in 1966-67, the bourgeois

headquarters within the Party was effectively smashed, and most of the leading capitalist roaders like Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping 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.

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. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution showed that Marxism had an answer to the enemy of capitalist restoration. This advancement in Marxism led to the consolidation of numerous revolutionary groups and parties throughout the world on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and the 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 over 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.”

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 the 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 lightly; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to facts.”

Mao's words proved true within a short time. First in 1971 Lin Biao, then vice-chairman, who in the Ninth Congress of the CPC had been appointed as a successor to Mao, conspired to seize power by assassinating Mao and staging a military coup. This was foiled through the alertness of the revolutionaries in the Party.

After this however, arch revisionists like Deng were rehabilitated back to high positions within the Party and state apparatus. **During the last period of the Cultural Revolution, there was again a struggle against these capitalist roaders and Deng**

was again criticised and removed from all posts a few months before Mao's death on September 9, 1976. However, he had many of his agents in positions of power. It was these renegades who engineered the coup to take over the party and lead it on the path of capitalist restoration very soon after Mao's death. It was they who sabotaged the Cultural Revolution and then formally announced its end in 1976.

This coup and capitalist restoration however, cannot repudiate the validity of the truth of the Cultural Revolution. Rather, in a way, it confirms Mao's teachings 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 test of practice of the Chinese Revolution. Its effectiveness 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 achieved a temporary victory does not in any way diminish the objective truth of the necessity and effectiveness 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 manipulative schemes of the bourgeoisie within the communist parties themselves. Therefore, the

time has come to revise Lenin's definition of a Marxist.

Lenin, while defining a Marxist, said that it was not enough to accept class struggle to be called a Marxist. He said it that only those who recognise both class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat can be called Marxists. Today it not sufficient to only recognise class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat to be a Marxist. A Marxist has to accept the basic understanding of the GPCR. Thus, **he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat to the recognition of the continuous revolution in the super-structure with the aim of the completion of the world**

revolution and building communist society as early as possible.

CHAPTER 32

AFTER THE DEATH OF MAO

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 (the area covering Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos) dealt 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 also raged in various parts of the world, as well as armed struggles under Guevarist ideology (ideology following the views and practice of Che Guevara, who played a leading role in the revolutionary struggles in Cuba and Bolivia) in parts of Latin America.

The Indo-China war, the sharpening struggles in the Third World, and the GPCR were among the major factors for the vast outbreak of student and anti-war movements throughout the capitalist world at the end of the 60s. The Paris student revolt of May 1968 was the most significant but only one of a wave of student revolts

ranging from the USA 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. Following the student movement there was also a major growth of struggles of the industrial working class in the West European countries, particularly in Italy and France, though largely on economic demands. 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, Kampuchea, and Laos in 1975. In Africa, the republics of Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Congo and Benin were formed in this period. However, most of these countries were taken over by puppets or satellites of the new imperialism—Soviet social-imperialism. A prominent exception was Kampuchea, where genuine communist revolutionaries—the Khmer Rouge—remained independent until invaded in 1978 by Vietnam at the behest of the Soviet imperialists.

In the following period too there has continued to be an excellent revolutionary situation with the sharpening of all the fundamental contradictions and the further weakening of imperialism. In particular, colonies and semi-colonies continued to be the storm centres of world revolution. At

the beginning of this period, guerrilla struggles continued in Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Eritrea, 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 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. This truth was brought out even more starkly in the 90s in the numerous spots where United Nations peace-keeping forces tried to intervene.

In the 90s Somaliland, which had been controlled for numerous years without major difficulty by British and Italian colonialists, became Somalia, where thousands of American and other troops were forced to retreat in disgrace, 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 has been a continuous revolutionary crisis

there too. Even in the Western imperialist countries 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.**

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 Xiaoping and took over the control of the party under the nominal leadership of Hua Guofeng, a so-called

centrist. As Mao had often taught, with political control going over to the hands of the revisionists, the socialist base left 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 petit 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 the years immediately after Mao's death, there was a considerable amount of ideological confusion in the international communist movement, with the Deng revisionists, through Hua Guofeng, 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 only after the very openly revisionist *History Resolution* of the CPC in 1981

and the Twelfth Congress in 1982 did most revolutionary forces throughout the world start 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 however, made considerable advances. Today these forces form the core of the revolutionary international proletariat. They are leading

armed struggles in Peru, the Philippines, Turkey, Nepal and India. Though these forces are organisationally yet very weak, they continue to grow in strength.

The principal source of their growth in strength is the correctness of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The chain 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 superpower status in the face of people's struggles and the serious weakening of the American superpower in the face of the struggles of oppressed peoples

of the world, have confirmed 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 understanding given by Mao during the Great Debate and also 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.”

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, however, has conclusively proved that it is the historical destiny of this doctrine alone to lead and guide the international proletariat to final victory.

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