

MARXIST CONCEPTIONS OF REVOLUTION : ƒ
A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIES
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO U.S.S.R. AND CHINA

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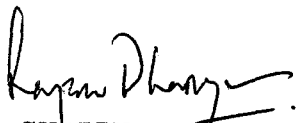
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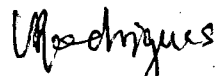
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DECLARATION

The Dissertation entitled "Marxist Conceptions of Revolution: A Study of the Development of Revolutionary Strategies, with special reference to U.S.S.R. and China" submitted by Shri Valerian Rodrigues for the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any University. We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of M.Phil Degree.


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PREFACE

PREFACE

From an analysis of capitalism as a specific historical mode of production, Marx and Engels were to arrive at the conclusion that the objective contradictions within the system engender the process of its transformation into a higher form of social development. The class most equipped to complete this transformation is the proletariat. Once the constraining class divisions are eradicated and man's subordination to forces outside himself are removed, free development of the individual in a self governing community should be possible.

From the analysis of the working class movement in general and the concrete analysis of situations in certain countries, during specific periods in particular, they were to evolve certain specific concepts regarding the revolutionary movement of the proletariat that formed the core of Marxist revolutionary politics. This was to form along with some other key concepts, the main body of Historical materialism, which gradually came to be accepted as the authentic theoretical expression of working class interests and a guide to its action.

However, we notice that the following contradictions would emerge in the process of this revolutionary movement: That Marxism as a concrete body of thought gets impregnated with ideologies alien to Marxism blunting the edge of its revolutionary politics and emasculating its method of analysis. Secondly even when Marxism becomes closely united with the working class movement, it may not be able to bring to the fore of the movement a correct understanding concerning the dynamics of capitalism, of its expansion and changes in the production processes or in social relations as a whole. This makes impossible the precise location of the concrete tasks of revolutionary transformation. Thirdly even when Marxism is able to grapple with the general dynamics of capitalism, it fails in its application to the concrete conditions obtainable in a concrete social formation and therefore is not able to provide a revolutionary strategy to overthrow the hitherto dominant socio-economic formation. Finally, the working class movement itself may develop in such a way that it dissociates or progressively dissociates

with revolutionary politics. This in turn may lead to mistakes in the analysis regarding the exact nature of state power, the configuration of class alliances that are possible for the revolutionary classes to establish their dominance. These then, are some of the problems that are encountered in the process of the overthrow of the state power of dominant classes.

However, further problems of revolutionary strategy emerge after the overthrow of the state power—namely, the nature and form of the state power in the transitional period; the appropriate revolutionary class organisations; the problem of founding new class alliances; contradictions generated from these alliances; problems of restructuring and instituting new production and social relations; contradiction emerging between the level of forces of production and newly emerging relations of production that may, on the one hand, inhibit the development of the former and on the other contrain the process of the consolidation of the latter and resistance put forward by the previous dominant classes and ideologies. These problems may lead to social relations, policies and institutions hostile to the revolutionary interests of the proletariat.

These problems have become part of our historical experience. In fact, a number of attempts have been made to understand their precise nature, to come to grips with them and resolve the contradictions that they necessarily engender. This led to the growth of a wide variety of interpretations of revolutionary marxism, which sometimes become openly antagonistic towards one another. The ideological and political struggle that took place, in its wake, within Marxism have sometimes led to its vulgarization but at other times led to its enrichment by having thrown up fresh conceptions of revolutionary strategy for overthrowing the hitherto dominant state power, to struggle against revisionism and consolidate new socialist relations. Without these struggle, new conceptions that enable accurate description and correct explanation of events would not have emerged.

This body of concepts and strategies for the revolutionary transformation of society that were to evolve through revolutionary practice and ideological struggles in the epoch dominated by the capitalist mode of production and socialist transition, forms the object of this study. The

concrete conditions of class struggle in both their general and specific forms and the ideological arena in which these concepts and strategies emerge form the indispensable background for the elaboration of the latter.

The study limits itself to the elaboration of the revolutionary conceptions that grew during certain specific periods, and in certain specific social formations. The criteria of selection being that the concepts and strategies evolved and the ideological debates engendered in these revolutions have an impact beyond their immediate context and actually had a world wide impact on organised communist movement. It explains the specific concentration of the study on the revolutionary movement in Russia and China.

Although other revolutions that have occurred, have their own specificity, the dominant and different influences exercised by these two revolutionary movements deserve special consideration. If there are still disputes over this selection, then one can perhaps justify only by referring to the limits posed by the very nature of an M.Phil dissertation.

The study is organised around elaborating the revolutionary conceptions of Marx and Engels and the experiences of proletarian class practices in the second international, the Russian and Chinese revolutions. The second international is considered since it forms the most crucial ground for the emergence of diverse interpretations of Marxist revolutionary politics. It was against the background of the second international that Lenin sharpened and specified the revolutionary conception of the October Revolution. The debate on transition in Soviet Russia and the historical background indispensable to it is considered only upto the period of 1929 since then onwards no substantial political and ideological struggle enriching revolutionary strategies appropriate for the transition period were to take place there. The focus, therefore, shifts to China where alternative conceptions of revolutionary transition and appropriate strategies towards it were to be evolved through intensive ideological and political struggles.

In the concluding remarks certain key concepts of revolutionary politics developed by Antonio Gramsci

are considered in relation to the new light it throws in understanding the political and ideological practices of the second International on the one hand, and the revolutionary conceptions and strategies evolved in the process of the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

This is not a historical study of working class political and ideological struggles. Nor is there any attempt to provide a systematic account of the evolution of principal concepts of revolutionary politics. This study does not analyse or critically examine the conceptual framework of Marxist revolutionary theory. There is no attempt to provide any causal links between ideological struggle within Marxism and the truth of revolutionary conception. Nevertheless, all these issues find their way into the study at some stage or another, as they help us to bring into focus the main object of this study which is to review the literature on Marxist revolutionary strategies, within the limits already mentioned earlier. If at all, a critical standard has been applied to these strategies, it is not one

that has been developed by academic marxists or non-marxists but, by and large, only that worked out by the principal spokesmen of revolutionary movements who were directly involved in political struggles. Therefore, only the writings of these perhaps unquestionably prominent representatives of revolutionary politics have been examined. The features of class struggle reconstructed have been drawn mostly from their writings or from the writings of the major historians of the period.

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It was my privilege to have the guidance of Mr. Rajeev Bhargava throughout this study. It is only due to his painstaking and earnest interest, critical comments and constant encouragement that I could pursue this study to completion. However, for the errors and wrong interpretations if any, I alone, am responsible.

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CHAPTER I

MARX AND ENGELS ON REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY:
ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

The conception of revolution occupies the central place in the problematic of both Marx and Engels. Their writings on Political Economy, History and Philosophy are all basically imbued with this basic thrust. They analyse the contradictions in bourgeois society to make explicit the role of the proletariat in the general movement toward the abolition of bourgeois production relations and show the impact and general direction of the new relations emerging from the process.¹ Their critique of German philosophy or political economy had a direct impact on the evolution of a perspective that places the reality and dynamics of class struggle at the centre of social transformation. It is difficult to delve into everything they wrote on this problem. In such a case, one will be forced to reproduce, more or less in a schematic fashion everything they wrote, as everything they wrote revolved around this issue in

1. "For Marx before all else was a revolutionary. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being; to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation" (F. Engels: in K. Marx and F. Engels: Selected Works: vol.3, p.163, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977.)

one way or another.² Here we will concentrate on certain key processes emphasized by Marx and Engels in their analysis of capitalist society and on the proletarian movement as they confronted, which have a direct bearing on any conception of a revolutionary transformation in society.

This analysis is internal to the Marxist problematic and assumes the correctness, though in varying degrees of the basic tenets of historical materialism. A critical examination of some of the concepts assumed here may be deemed necessary, but that falls outside the scope of this study which is concerned with the implications of the dynamics of class-relations and class struggle in bourgeois society.

Although the basic relation between Capital and Labour in the capitalistic process of production, determines the nature of direction and role of the proletarian movement in general,³ such revolutionary perspectives on the movement and their appropriate strategies in specific situations were to be clarified only in the process of this

2. For a recent attempt in this direction, see Hal Draper: Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: Monthly Review Press, 1977.

3. It is necessary to state that it is the working class movement which at first draws the attention of Marx and Engels, to the contradictions within capitalism. The movement may have expressed itself in humanistic, political, moral or religious over-

unfolding of the movement itself. It is from the vantage point of the concrete analysis of this movement and its critical evaluation from the viewpoint of the movement as a whole that Marx and Engels were to articulate a revolutionary strategy by clarifying the role of the State, of class-alliances, of various ideologies, of the appropriate revolutionary organization of the proletariat, including the dictatorship of the proletariat and to the role of 'state' in the period of transition to communism.

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tones ("In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material conditions of production...and the legal, political, religious, artistic, philosophical - in short ideological forms in which men became conscious of this conflict and fight it out...this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life - Marx: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p.21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970). The analysis of Marx led him to see the heart of the contradiction in the process of bourgeois production itself, in the relation of labour and capital expressed in the extraction of surplus value. This contradiction is not immediately visible (see Grundrisse, pp.193-34, Penguin, London, 1973). The workers, however, may react against other contradictions immediately manifest, although overdetermined by this basic contradiction. This movement without being conscious of the specific nature of its exploitation may be able to achieve certain immediate aims, thereby, strengthening its unity and organization, without however affecting the resolution of this basic contradiction. This contradiction can be resolved only by the abolition of the relation between labour and capital as such. But to resolve this contradiction it is necessary to resolve the very conditions which reproduce this contradiction. For Marx and Engels, it is the State which finally holds the unity of capital and reproduces the conditions of its reproduction. Therefore only by tackling the State power that labour confronts capital as capital, and only by taking

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Critique of Utopian Socialisms:

For Marx and Engels capitalism was an historical product giving rise to specific forms of exploitation and domination.⁴ It is also historically a progression

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over State power it creates the conditions for the abolition of capital and resolve the basic contradiction within capital itself. Therefore ultimately the process of transition to communism can be evaluated only at the test of the conscious effort to resolve this basic contradiction.

Marx therefore did not discover the concept of class struggle in capitalism which was obvious. What he discovered was the specific contradictions of capital which formed the characteristic feature of this class-struggle distinguishing it from all other movements. To resolve these contradictions, the class-struggle of the proletariat had to be conscious of these very contradictions and in the long run, could resolve them only consciously. We will have to draw the demarcation of scientific revolutionary theory from the ideological precisely on this aspect. The approach itself was stated by Marx much before the discovery of the concept of 'surplus value', an approach we can say precisely led him to it: "The question is not what this or that proletarian or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment considers as its aim. The question is what the proletariat is and what consequent on that being, it will be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action are, irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society" (K. Marx and F. Engels: The Holy Family, pp.52, Moscow, 1956).

This precisely goes to clarify that Marxism cannot be simply identified with working class movement by itself. At the same time real transformation of the relationship between labour and capital cannot be undertaken by the working class without understanding its own place and role in capitalist production which is expressed in Marxism.

4. These relations of domination and exploitation may be overdetermined by other relations either precapitalist or socialist as the case may be: For the concept of

force in the sense of creating the conditions and the class which are capable of doing away with class antagonisms, and the exploitation and domination necessarily resulting from these antagonisms once and for all.⁵ Therefore any ideology that attempts to turn back the wheel of history and purports to create a model of good society is not merely futile but acts as a "menace to comprehend the real march of history".⁶ In the same way, those brands of socialisms which do not grasp the concrete conditions and their dynamics and the specific articulation of class relations from the perspective of the movement as a whole and its articulation at the moment cannot claim to represent the proletariat movement in terms of its historical goal. With the founding of scientific socialism, the reassertion of the positions of these socialisms can be only retrogression from a revolutionary perspective. Therefore Marx and Engels were to subject these socialisms to a thorough going critique, analyse their formulations and show their impact on the domain of class-struggle at every stage.

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'overdetermination', see Althusser: 'Contradiction and overdetermination' in 'For Marx', London and New York, 1979.

5. See Marx and Engels: 'The Communist Manifesto' in SW vol.I, pp.108-119, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969.
6. *ibid*, p.178.

There was in the mid-forties the brand of 'true socialism' of Weitling who was highly influenced by the 'true social human essence' of Feurbach and spoke of the necessity of integrating the French revolutionary spirit with the German mind. This 'true socialism' rejected struggle for bourgeois rights and contained a lot of moralising and sentiment. Revolutionary enthusiasm was replaced by preaching to establish a community of universal love. For Marx, Feurbachian humanism could not but be incarnated through this variety. It was bringing back religion through the backdoor to establish some sort of secular god, before which petty bourgeois moralising socialists become the high priests. Therefore, Marx and Engels were to write 'True Socialism is nothing but the transfiguration of proletarian communism and its kindred parties and sects in France and England, within the German mind and...of the German sentiment'.⁸

Marx and Engels were to apply some of these basic criticism to even the highly developed but prescientific forms of Socialisms in France. They admitted this historically progression role but it was the historically progressive role of the petty-bourgeoisie socialists. All these varieties had the following features in common:

8. K. Marx and F. Engels: Germany/ Ideology, p.514, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968.

1. A tendency to generalise from the immediately given; from the appearances; an attitude of moral indignation and vehemence and prophetic condemnation of exploitation that emerged from it. They did not analyse the historically specific and concrete conditions that give rise to this exploitation nor the forms in which the workers reacted against these conditions. Engels therefore was to say: 'To all these socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and has to be only discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. And as absolute truth is independent of time, space and of the historical development of man, it is mere accident when and where it is discovered'.⁹

2. It results from viewing the individuals as independent entities, not seeing them in concrete relations of production and interrelations under concrete conditions.

3. It is therefore, not necessary to make a concrete study of the existing situation, in terms of their manifold relations, in terms of their past and future. For example, accusing Proudhon Marx says that his dialectic merely consisted 'in the substitution for use-value and exchange-value and for supply and demand, of abstract and exchange-value and for supply and demand, of abstract and contradictory notions such as scarcity and abundance,

9. F. Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" - S.W., vol. 5, p. 126, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970.

utility and estimation, one producer and one consumer, both of them knights of free will'.¹⁰

4. Their approaches, therefore, resulted in forms of model building of constructing an ethically motivated community, out of the flight of their own imagination. Here idealism, pure and simple, was brought to bear on the actual struggle. Besides, the ties of the new community they propagated are based on the 'individual' free will, considered in the abstract because in the concrete relations neither the abstract individual nor the abstract 'free will' exist. Later Engels was to point out the same shortcomings in the blueprints for socialism manufactured by Saint Simons Fouri and Robert Owen.¹¹ While acknowledging their historically progressive character. Here, therefore, there was absolutely no internal relationship between theory and practice. Marx was to reiterate, the relationship between theory and practice which he had already stated through a critique of these socialisms:

"But to the extent that history moves forward and with it the struggle of the proletariat assumes clearer lines, they no longer need to seek solutions by drawing in their imagination. They have to take note of what is happening before their eyes and become its mouthpiece. So long as they look for knowledge by merely constructing systems,

10. K. Marx: The Poverty of Philosophy, p.46, Moscow, 1956.

11. Engels: "Socialism Utopian and Scientific", op.cit., pp.119-26.

so long as they are at the beginning of the struggle, they see in poverty nothing but poverty - without seeing in it the revolutionary subversive aspect which will overthrow the old society. From this moment, knowledge which is a product of historical process will have associated itself consciously with it ceased to be doctrinaire and become revolutionary.'¹²

5. This 'mish mash', therefore, will be washed off with the development of capital itself and the development of class-struggle and show their true colour as nothing but forms of bourgeois ideology. Marx clearly saw this in Proudhon's analysis: Referring to his economic analysis he said 'Instead of conceiving the economic categories as theoretical expressions of historical relations of production, corresponding to a particular stage of development of material production, he grabbles them into pre-existing eternal ideas and low in this roundabout way he arrives once more at the standpoint of bourgeoisie economy.'¹³

6. Moreover, this analysis makes the bourgeoisie society as naturalistic and permanent. It is not a historical product, manifest in irreconcilable class antagonisms. This attitude results in Proudhon in strictly separating between social movement and political movement. While for Marx "There

12. K. Marx: The Poverty of Philosophy, op.cit., p.112.

13. Marx: "On Proudhon" (Letter to J.B. Schweitzer): SW: vol.2, p.26.

is no political movement which is not at the same time social ...The antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a struggle of class against class - a struggle carried to its highest expression, is a total revolution."¹⁴

The Dynamics of Class struggle in Capitalist Society:

It was the strategic conception of this revolution ~~that was~~ that was delineated in 'The Communist Manifesto'.¹⁵

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14. Marx: Poverty of Philosophy, op.cit., pp.197.
15. In the early writings (The Jewish Question; The Contribution to a critique of Hegel's philosophy of right; Introduction; The Critique of Hegel's doctrine of State; Economic and Philosophical manuscripts; The Holy Family; The German ideology; The poverty of philosophy, etc.), Marx's main focus was to provide a combined critique of Political Economy, Socialist literature and the then dominant philosophical currents. It was during this process that Marx was resolving his intellectual dilemmas and arrived at a set of concepts which alone pointed to a genuinely revolutionary political positions. This process was to go hand in hand with the study of the movement of the proletariat, grappling with its implications. The silesian weavers revolt, which follows Marx study of the political economy ('Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts') was seen by him in sharp contrast to the 'meek, sober mediocrity' of the political literature of the German bourgeoisie for all their philosophers and scholars' (see Marx: Critical notes on the King of Prussia and Social Reform' Early Writings, p.420, Harmondsworth, 1974). Marx was to strengthen this position in the revolutionary role of the proletariat by a close observation and analysis of workers' movement in Brussels, Paris, London and Manchester and through his critique of the existing ideologies among the Working class. The study of Engel's on the situation of working class in England (See Engels 'The condition of working class in England' in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Collected Works, vol.4, pp.295-597, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975) was one of the bitterest denouncement of early capitalism in England.

However it was to give only a general outline of the entire course of class-struggle in the bourgeois epoch. It was not an analysis of the concrete development of class struggle in any social formation. Marx and Engels were to specify in their late writings a number of concepts given only a general expression in the manifesto. But before we proceed to consider them it is necessary to see how Marx and Engels consider the unfolding of Revolutionary process in capitalist society in general:

1. Every class divided society is characterized by class-struggle. Capitalist society is no exception to it. It is the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the predominant proletariat that forms the dominant form of class-struggle in such a society.
2. The bourgeoisie which has established its dominance in the present epoch, itself arose on the ruins of the feudal society.¹⁶ It had to destroy the earlier relations in which production and social existence was bound up giving rise to its own specific relations within which productive forces develop at an unprecedented pace.
3. The bourgeoisie has been able to establish its dominance over the society through a process involving a series of revolutions. This process

was, conditioned by the existence of concrete class relations existint in the society at every juncture.

4. Bourgeoisie in its struggle against the earlier dominant classes and sections of its own class is continuously called upon to rally behind itself the proletariat drawing it into political struggles.
5. However the relations in which this production and appropriation are organised make the interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat antagonistic to each other. The workers are deprived not of the means of production but from appropriating the very product of their labour. They are just commodities who live by the sale of their labour power.¹⁷ This development of the bourgeois mode of production although goes hand in hand with the socialization of the production process, the surplus product however is privately appropriated by the bourgeoisie.¹⁸
6. These relations in which the production process is bound up act as a great fetter to their further development which manifest themselves in recurring crises. The workers find their conditions of existence continually threatened by this anarchic fluctuations of the capitalist economy.

16. K. Marx and F. Engels: "Manifesto of Communist Party" in SW. vol.I, p.113.

17. The concept of 'labour power' and 'surplus value' as governing the exploitative relationship between labour and capital in the heart of the bourgeois

7. The establishment of the dominance of the bourgeoisie over the entire society may take place under different forms. It may abolish the earlier conditions of production, the relation in which these modes of production are bound up and establish appropriate ideological and political instruments and values conducive to and reproducing its own rule. On the other hand it may subjugate the other relations, forms of production, political and ideological instruments to its class domination. Both these processes can assume numerous forms in concrete conditions.
8. The development of proletariat too proceeds along with the development of bourgeoisie society in terms of its organization, demands and class objectives, albeit, unevenly. At first, the workers just form an incoherent mass with respect to their class demands, involved in individual skirmishes against their immediately perceived forms of exploitation. The struggle may be directed not against the real enemy but elsewhere say, the destruction of the instruments of production¹⁹ or against a particular section of

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production itself was to be made explicit by Marx later in its writings on political economy.

18. 'That Marx clearly distinguishes between the contradiction between Labour and Capital on one hand and increasingly socialization nature of the production process and the still private character of appropriation on the other' see Maurice Godelier: "Structure and Contradiction in Capital" in R. Blackburn (ed.) Ideology in Social Sciences, pp.334-367, Fontana/Collins, 1977.
19. For an example: the Luddite movement.

the bourgeoisie aligning with other sections of the bourgeoisie. However, these local struggles will also drive home the lessons that it is not enough merely to be bogged down in either localized or merely economic struggles. The very conditions of bourgeoisie society described earlier on the one hand help the proletariat to organise itself better and on a vast scale and on the other being drawn into political struggle. This of course, is a zigzag process. There will be conflicts among the workers themselves, engendered and utilized by the bourgeoisie of its fractions. However, with their growing consciousness and organizations the workers could also acquire the capacity to utilize the contradictions among the bourgeoisie leading to a national struggle between the classes. This class struggle has clearly political power as its objective.

9. As the struggle of the proletariat and bourgeoisie expands and deepens, a section of the ruling classes themselves could move over to the side of the proletariat: Sections which have been proletarianised due to the very logic of the march of industry or those bourgeois intellectuals who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole. Though the

lower middle class, the small manufacturers, the shopkeeper, artisans, the peasant²⁰ have their contradictions with the bourgeoisie, only the proletariat can provide them leadership to safeguard their long-term general interests, even if not the immediate interests.

10. This proletarian movement is unlike any movement in history. It is the self-conscious independent movement of the immense majority that expresses their real interests.
11. Although the struggle of the proletariat is essentially international, it will have to first settle the score with its own bourgeoisie through a 'violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie,'²¹
12. As the proletariat has no stake in private property, unlike the earlier classes, its historical mission

20. Marx and Engels were to emphasize that a thoroughgoing bourgeois revolution is inextricably bound up with a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution. It was the 'prime condition for national emancipation' (Marx and Engels: "The manifesto of the Communist party" in SW vol.I, p.173). In 1848, Marx takes the German bourgeoisie to task for its inability to carry out the agrarian revolution (K. Marl: 'The Crisis and the counter-revolution' in 'The Revolutions of 1848', Harmondsworth 1973). It is the agrarian revolution which removes the serf and the tenant from the clutches of the landlord and makes them to be drawn into the political and economic life of the larger society.

Although at the stage of the economic and political ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, it faces feudal parti-

is to destroy it. Therefore once the proletariat assumes political power it will make 'despotic inroads in to rights of private property and the conditions of bourgeois production'.²² With the generalisation of the proletarian revolution the global productive forces developed by ~~ex~~ capitalism would be brought under social ownership and regulation.

13. The organized proletariat, organised through the revolution by which it makes itself the ruling class, sweeps away by force, the old conditions of production. Once these conditions are abolished, the conditions for class antagonisms too will be abolished and with it classes as such. The proletariat thereby would abolish its own supremacy as a class.²³ Only after this revolutionary transformation will there be a free association where the development of each is the condition for the development of all.²⁴

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cularism as its enemy, against whom the peasantry too is involved in struggle, with the independent assertion of the proletariat the bourgeoisie avoids a head-on collision with the landed gentry. Therefore, at this stage the bourgeoisie instead of forming a class-bloc with the peasantry, aligns itself with the enemies of the peasantry (See Engels: "Preface to the Peasant War in Germany" in SW. vol.2, p.162).

In such conditions the task of a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution can be undertaken only under the lea-

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As the Communist manifesto was addressed to the 'Communist League', it specifies the relationship of the communists to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. The communists do not uphold any sectarian interests of their own against the working class but are those who uphold the interests of the movement as a whole. In every struggle they bring to the forefront the interests of the Class as a whole. They also form the most advanced and resolute section of the working class movement. They are able to grasp theoretically 'the time of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement'. This theoretical grasp is not the invention of certain principles but a general expression of the actual relations springing from an existing class struggle.²⁵

This general expression of the revolutionary process, however, was to be specified by Marx and Engels through the analysis of classes, class-alliances and class-struggle in concrete social formations as well as from the lessons of the working class movement in their further writings in order to evolve appropriate strategies for the revolutionary transformation of bourgeois society.

dership of the proletariat. Conversely the absence of an agrarian revolution resulting in peasant struggles would provide the necessary support to the proletarian revolution itself. (See Marx to Engels in Marx and Engels selected Correspondence, p.86, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975).

21. Marx and Engels - "The Communist Manifesto" - op.cit., pp.118-119.
22. ibid, p.119.
23. ibid, p.127
24. ibid. 25. ibid, p.120.

Class alliances, Class Struggle and Political PowerThe Analysis of the Class Struggles in France:

The analysis of the class struggles in France that we find in the expositions of Marx, especially in 'The Class Struggles in France: 1848 to 1858', 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' and 'The Civil War in France' bring up vividly to the fore the complex dynamics of the revolutionary working class movement, in a specific social formation. In these analysis he was to apply the 'materialist conception on the basis of given economic situation',²⁶ in the concrete conditions of France. Although class struggles in France had their own specificity the issues concerned were issues of class relations in a society dominated by the capitalist mode of production. In these analyses, the theory of revolution elaborated was to assume concrete forms while simultaneously enriching it, although Marx and Engels were to concretely apply the concepts they developed to the analysis of particular phases of Class struggle in other social formations. France offered the most fertile ground for this analysis. The class struggle in France was highly developed: The comprehensiveness of the bourgeois revolution; the Jacobin trend to push it forward; the attempt of reactionary Europe to contain it from pushing ahead; the attempts of Napoleon Bonaparte to contain the class struggle on the

26. Engels: "Introduction to Karl Marx's 'The Class Struggles in France' 1848-1850" in S.W. vol.I, p.186.

in precipitating, pushing forward, containing or abetting the class struggle.

1. The revolutionary upsurge in 1848, was hastened by the economic crisis manifest in 'potato blight and crop failures of 1845 and 1846' and the 'general commercial and industrial crisis which burst out in 1847'. This was to accelerate the general discontent and the mood for revolt.²⁷

Marx differentiates between the various factions of the bourgeoisie at every particular stage and that which forms the dominant fraction of the ruling bloc. He brings out their internal dissonances; and class alliances within fractions of the ruling block class under the hegemony of a particular fraction of bourgeoisie. He shows their unity when confronted by the proletariat; their flight away from all principles and seeking shelter in the arms of reaction, when confronted by the independent assertion of the proletariat for political power. The July Monarchy was dominated by the Financial aristocracy. At the same time there was the nonruling factions of the bourgeoisie-which denounced the financial bourgeoisie but only to make its own interests the dominant ones. Applying it to the Financial aristocracy, Marx explains:

27. Marx, "The Class Struggle in France", op.cit., p.209.

"The Financial aristocracy made the laws, was at the head of the administration of the State, had command of all the organised public authorities, dominated public opinion through the actual state of affairs and through the press, the same prostitution, the same shameless cheating, the same mania to get rich was reflected in every sphere...to get rich not by production but by pocketing the already existing wealth of others...the finance aristocracy in its mode of acquisition as well as in its pleasures, is nothing but rebirth of the lumpen proletariat on the heights of bourgeois society.²⁸

3. The provisional government that emerged after the February revolution was actually the rule of classes whose interests were antagonistic.²⁹ Marx describes the process how the proletariat in its failure to demarcate between the various factions of the bourgeoisie identifies the republic with its own rule, while the republican bourgeoisie makes its ascendancy by making use of the confused consciousness of the proletariat and by defaming it among the peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie; how the nonrepublican big bourgeoisie while safeguarding its own interests, puts on the cloak of the republican bourgeoisie momentarily, while bidding its own opportunity for dominance;


28. *ibid*, p.208

29. See "The Class-struggles in France", p.214.

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basis of the ideology of aggressive nationalism; the restoration of 1815 where the reactionary Europe was to act unitedly; The overthrow of the restoration through the July Revolution due to the maturing of social forces within France and the development of capitalism in general; the revolutions of 1848 in the wake of the economic crises of 1847 which precipitated revolutionary ferment throughout Europe; the establishment of parliamentary republic; the role of the various classes in this republic and their representation through their parties; the attempt of the working class to carry the revolution forward through the June uprisings, the Emergence of Louis Bonaparte and the attempt of various fractions of the bourgeoisie to renounce their own class rule in order to safeguard their class interests; the rise of the second empire; the overthrow of the second empire and in the wake of the militancy of the workers republicanism falling more and more in to reactionary hands; The emergence of the Paris Commune as the first form of dictatorship of the proletariat, the solidarity extended by the workers towards the commune across the national boundaries; the qualitative demarcation manifest between the bourgeois forms of state power and the proletarian forms of state power; the crushing of the commune and total animosity displayed towards the commune by the established interests of bourgeois society was to display sharply the dynamics of class struggle. Marx lays emphasis on the following elements which helped


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the process of the formation of the alliances among the fractions of the bourgeoisie as well as between classes and the dismantling of these alliances as soon as a particular fraction of the bourgeoisie finds its dominance. Marx was also to point out that if any the dominance of a particular faction was to last it would be on condition that it possesses control over these economic conditions which buttresses its own rule.

4. The dynamics of the state apparatuses and the class which wields these apparatuses is extremely complex. But it is necessary to distinguish between the form and the real content of the functions of these state apparatuses. The principle criteria for this is the changing relations between the fractions of the bourgeoisie on the one hand and antagonistic class relations on the other. The characteristic of a republican constitution being: "The classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate, proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, it puts in possession of political power through universal suffrage and from the classes whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws political guarantees of this power. It forces the political rule of the bourgeoisie into democratic conditions, which at every moment help the hostile classes to victory and jeopardise the very foundations of bourgeois society. From the one it demands that they should not go forward from political to social

emancipation; from the others that they should not go back f
from social to political restoration".³⁰

5. The Bonapartist type of phenomenon and the state power this phenomenon depicts emergencies in conditions where no fraction of the dominant classes or the hetherto dominated classes are able to impose their hegemony over the society. Among the dominant classes, no fraction on its own is able to wield the entire bloc of the dominant classes and posit the interests of this bloc dominated by a particular fraction as the general interest of the whole society. This precisely takes place in an arena where all the classes in a particular society have risen up and wish to posit their interests politically. Marx explains the Bonapartist phenomenon as 'when the bourgeoisie has already lost, the working class had not yet gained, the ability to govern the nation.'³¹ In such a situation the State begins to assume a specific autonomy³² from the society and claiming to represent the interests of a vast unorganised population (in this case the peasantry) carries out the interests of the dominant classes inspite of its conflict with their immediate private interests.

30. *ibid*, p.236.

31. Marx: *The Civil War in France*, in Marx & Engels 'On the Paris Commune', p.54.

32. Nicos Poulantzas: Social Classes & Political Power pp.258-62 & pp.279-86, NLB, London, 1973, *op.cit.*, Also Hal Draper: Marx's theory of Revolution: vol.1, Part II, pp.385-463.

Therefore, Marx and Engels were to call Bonapartism as the 'religion of the bourgeoisie'.³³

6. In these texts Marx analyses the process of the betrayal and defeat of the proletariat when it entrusts its leadership to the petty bourgeoisie and to its ideology of 'doctrinaire socialism'. The petty-bourgeoisie limits the struggle to legalism, with the resulting danger of falling into Parliamentary cretinism. However, the strength of the proletariat, its consciousness and organisation itself is ultimately determined by the development of modern industry.³⁴ The proletariat makes use of all forms of struggle for its own emancipation and with it the whole of the society. However, these struggles must at no cost be borne by the terms set by the bourgeoisie when it itself has scant respect for them, when its hegemony gets threatened. It is precisely when the proletariat posits itself organizationally and in terms of its interests independent of those of the bourgeoisie that a situation of total civil war lets loose.

7. In these writings Marx elaborates on the 'peasant question' which was to become one of the most polemical issues in later day formulation of revolutionary strategy. He demonstrates the peculiarity of the existence of the

33. Engels to Marx, April 13, 1866, MESC, op.cit., p.166.

34. Marx: 'Class Struggles in France' in SW, vol.1, p.214.

peasantry. Although bound by common interests, mode of life and culture which distinguishes it from other classes and puts it in hostile opposition with them, its dispersed nature is a great hindrance in establishing a community bond and political organization of its own. Marx shows how the real interests of the peasantry in bourgeois society can be secured only under the leadership of the proletariat. However, the social condition of existence still preserves its delusive prejudice,³⁵ and its blind faith in ideas nepoleoniennes.³⁶ This 'what was true is true instinct'³⁷ of the peasantry pushes ahead the ambitions of the imperial pretenders like Louis Bonaparte. The peasantry does not realize that the very reforms which Napoleon Bonaparte provided them with and bound them to the throne has led to their continued enslavement. Marx, however, does not specify how the alliance between the working class and the peasantry can take place organizationally and ideologically.³⁸

35. Marx: The Class Struggle in France, op.cit., pp.213-24.

36. Marx & Engels: On the Paris Commune, p.160.

37. Marx: The Eighteenth Burmair of Louis Bonaparte S.W. vol.I, p.483.

38. Marx emphasises strongly the necessity for the victorious proletariat not to take measures which alienate the support of the peasantry (See Marx: Class Struggle in France, op.cit., p.218). Engels says that the steps that the revolutionary proletariat in power undertakes in safeguarding the interests of the peasantry will result in the support of the latter (see "Introduction to Class Struggles in France," vol.I, p.191) Both of them highly recommend

8. The peasantry as an immense mass of dispersed petty property owners, living on the periphery of capitalist relations and forms of exploitation, was unified through the bureaucracy which given the concrete conditions of the Bonapartist regime gives immense importance in the state apparatuses to itself. At the political level, the small holding peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie are typically represented by the bureaucratic body, which maintains their political disorganization, by means of the state.

9. Marx periodicizes the developing class struggle in terms of the relations of classes at every juncture. He shows that the conscious proletariat must continuously do it, in order to form class-alliances and place the appropriate slogans at every step, if they are not to jeopardize their political goals.

10. The political struggles have their own autonomy and dynamism. The political factors do hasten and accentuate the economic crisis. However, the economic factors remain the ultimate determinant. The revival of industry and trade from 1850-57 onwards was to convince Marx and Engels that there is hardly a possibility of the revolutionary



the cooperative forms of production. Engels emphasized the fact that neither Marx nor himself 'had ever doubted that in the case of transition to a communist economy it would be necessary to make expensive use of cooperative enterprises as an intermediate rung.

tempo of 1848 to be immediately revived. Besides, although Britain was as much affected by the industrial crisis, its advanced industrial organization and trade was able to contain the crisis within the limits without breaking in the open.

11. For Marx, Parliamentary republic was the rule of the United bourgeoisie, It wanted to maintain its own class rule in such a republic unitedly, while at the same time representing the republic through the franchise as the rule of the whole people. But such a state would lead to a state of civil war undermining its own foundations. On the one hand, the state has to show that it is neutral in the class struggle, positioned above the class conflicts as a 'national leader' obtaining habitual obedience. On the other hand it has to carry forward the economic interests of the dominant classes in society. The bourgeoisie effects this by sacrificing its own direct rule to maintain its domination in the economic sphere.³⁹ However, the shaping of this parliamentary republic as an effective instrument of the rule of the bourgeoisie was to emerge progressively.

39. See Marx: The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte in SW vol. I, p.436, Also, see on Paris, Commune, p.205..

12. Marx distinguishes between the ruling dominant classes and the nonruling dominant classes in a parliamentary republic. The ruling dominant classes enjoy the support of the latter as long as the former safeguard the interests of the latter. But when the dominant ruling class/classes are not able to maintain the tranquility of law and order in society the nonruling dominant classes directly resort to support that organ of the government where real power exists. As soon as the dominant classes are able to contain a crisis arising out of the independent movement of the proletariat inspite of the contradictions within the bloc of the dominant classes emerge to the forefront, again, and this inspite of the common front they had formed against the proletariat. In France this discord among the dominant classes themselves helps Louis Bonaparte to undermine the parliamentary republic.

13. The bourgeois regime cannot tolerate the independent assertion of the proletariat, of their own power. Therefore, all efforts are made to disarm the workers after every revolution. Once the bourgeoisie gets an upper hand the organization of workers get banned, education subordinated⁴⁰ to the desire of the ruling classes and oppositional press totally gets subdued.

40. Education was repeatedly entrusted by the stabilised ruling class to the Clergy (especially the Jesuits in France). This was true throughout the Continent. "The intellectual food allowed to the nation was selected with the minutest caution and dealt as sparingly as possible" (Engels: "Revolution and Counterrevolution in Germany" SW, vol.1, p.323.

14. The huge governmental parasite - the bureaucracy police, standing army, clergy, magistrates - takes to ascendancy during the rise of the bourgeoisie to strengthen the hands of the centralised authority against feudal particularism. As division of labour went on growing in the society, the parasitical body extended itself too. Every revolution resulted in its strengthening "After each new popular revolution resulting in the transfer of the direction of State machinery from one set of ruling classes to another the repressive character of the state power was more fully developed and more mercilessly used, because, the promises made and seemingly assured by the revolution could only be broken by the employment of forces."⁴¹

In this analyses Marx develops the concrete development of class-struggle, the interaction and changing alliances of Classes and, Class fractions. He shows the bearing of this class struggle on the political power and in changing its own forms. Marx and Engels repeatedly argue that the capture of State power is the revolutionary objective of the proletariat movement before fundamental revolutionary transformation can be effected in bourgeois society. Here their conception of the state and its actual role in the existing class relations and reproducing those class relations becomes crucial.

41. Marx & Engels: On the Paris Commune, p.204.

The state for Marx and Engels is the necessary and product of social conditions.⁴² But the social conditions that lead to the rise of the state are conditions of class struggle. Arising out of these conditions the state by monopolising the coercive instruments of power proceeds to act as the arbiter in class struggle and creates the illusion of embodying the general interests of the society as a whole, which in its absence would have resulted in internecine class-struggle leading to the denegeration of society. But the general interests that the state proclaims to safeguard are basically particular interests since to safeguard the unity and reproduction of the society it has to reproduce and help reproduce the existing organisation of production and the relations of production. As the forces of production and the relations in which this production is organised are organised in favour of a particular class the state necessarily has to act on behalf of the interests of that class. Engels explains this in his letter to Danielson thus:

"All governments, be they ever so absolute are en dernier lieu (in the last analysis) but the executors of economic necessities of the national situation. They may do this in various ways, good, bad and indifferent.

42. See Engels in Marx-Engels Selected Works, vol.2, p.394, Progress Publishers, 1969-70.

They may accelerate or retard the economic development and its political and juridical consequences, but in the longrun they must follow it".⁴³

In this sense State represents an ideology. It shows that social relations among human beings and the unity of the society cannot be maintained except through a power posited external to and above the society. Marx calls the state therefore as the supernatural excrecence. It is the ideology, i.e. false consciousness⁴⁴ par excellence. The various functions that the state undertakes, apart from its strictly coercive functions further buttresses the role of the state as the embodiment of the general interest.⁴⁵ Therefore, it is in and through the state that the dominant classes portray that they as a fraction or united under the domination of a particular fraction or united under the domination of a particular fraction of the dominant classes embody the general interests of the whole society.

43. Engels: "Letter to Danielson," June 18, 1892, MESC, p.421.

44. False consciousness does not mean that it has no necessity of existence. In the real relations false consciousness, in fact expresses the real necessity of it, in the existing social conditions.

45. See Althusser: Ideology and ideological State apparatuses: In Lenin & Philosophy, pp.127-188, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1971.

The embodiment of the state as the general interests of the society easily gives rise to what Engels calls 'a superstitious reverence for the State and everything connected with it which takes root the more readily since people once accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after otherwise than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials". This also camouflages the fact that 'in reality the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another and indeed the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy.'⁴⁶

Marx and Engels definitely preferred a democratic republic to that of any other form of the organization of state power precisely because the democratic republic brings the class struggles to the fore, exposes the real nature of the state, not as embodiment of general interests but as the instrument of a particular class and provides the general conditions on the basis of the ideology of the democratic state, to carry the class-struggle forward. In other words, the democratic republic brings the state from its heights to the arena of real class-struggles.

46. Engels: "Introduction to the Civil War" in France in On the Paris Commune, op.cit., p.34..

This is precisely what the dominant classes cannot tolerate and constantly scream that 'legality is death to us' and the legality they refer to is the legality of the democratic republic. Therefore, the constant provisø's in the constitution in which a right granted is 'nullified and hedged in by other rights.'⁴⁷ It is in this sense that we have to understand Bonapartism as the 'religion of the bourgeoisie' whereby the bourgeoisie after tasting its direct rule feels that it cannot afford it and therefore gives in to a phenomenon of Bonapartisan by which the State can again display itself as the embodiment of general interests. Even though it may lead to circumscribing a number of the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie.

Violent and Peaceful Transition to Socialism:⁴⁸

Irrespective of the forms assumed by the Capitalist state it is an instrument in the hands of the dominant classes to organize the general conditions of production and reproduction of the existing relations. It is therefore necessary that the proletarian movement has its

47. Mars: 'The Class Struggles in France', SW, vol.1.

48. 'The policy of peaceful path towards socialism certainly does not imply advancing without struggles. It was a policy of having things develop without a civil war in the least peaceful way as Lenin often said' "F. Marek: Philosophy of World Revolution: p.127, Lawrence and Wshart, 1969).

basic aim in the capturing of political power in order to change the conditions of production and transform the social relation. The means by which the proletariat comes to capture state power may depend upon the complex relationship of class forces, the nature of the political process and characteristics of state and ideological apparatuses.

In the writings of Marx and Engels in 1840s and 1850s there is a strong insistence that capitalism would have to be overthrown forcibly, by civil war, that force is the midwife of every society pregnant with a new one,⁴⁹ that in the final analysis the issues of class against class can be decided only by the brutal clash of man against man.⁵⁰ In the Communist manifesto too Marx and Engels declare that the class struggle, the more or less veiled civil war, reaches a point where it breaks out into open revolution where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat. The Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions.⁵¹

49. Marx: A Contribution to the critique of Hegelism philosophy of right in Early Writings', p.254.

50. Marx: The poverty of philosophy, op.cit., p.

51. Marx and Engels. "The Communist Manifesto", op.cit., p.137.

In the 1860s and further, there is, however, a certain qualification that was made to this analysis: The question of violent overthrow or peaceful transition depended upon the relations of classes in the concrete situation as well as the nature of state apparatuses. Even after the Paris commune and upholding unequivocally the necessity of smashing the bourgeois state machinery Marx was to say that different paths are possible towards the working class taking over as the ruling class depending upon the concrete conditions. In an interview given to 'The World' on 3rd July 1871 he pointed out the feasibility of a peaceful transition in England; "In every part of the world different aspects of the problem emerge. The workers take these into account and approach the solution in their particular way. The organisations of the workers cannot be absolutely identical, down to the last detail, in New Castle and Barcelona, in London and Berlin. In England the way is open to the working class to develop their political power how they will. There an uprising would be foolishness, when the goal can be reached more quickly and certainly through peaceful agitation. In France, the great number of repressive laws and the deadly antagonism between the classes seems to necessitate a violent solution of the social conflicts."⁵² The London

52. In Marx-Engels Works vol.XVII, p.641 quoted in Franz Marek: 'Philosophy of World Revolution', p.122-Lawrence and Wishart, 1969.

Conference of the international which followed the Paris Commune found Marx stating "We must declare to the Governments: We know that you are the armed might directed against the proletariat. We will proceed against you peaceably where it is possible and by force of arms when it is necessary."⁵³ In the Hague Congress of the international too Marx holds out a possibility of the workers reaching their goal through peaceful means in England and America while asserting that in the continent the level of the revolution can only be force.⁵⁴ However Marx and Engels were to clearly distinguish between the possibility they envisaged of peaceful transition and the working class parties succumbing to bourgeois institutions and become part of the institutions. He characterised them as "The representatives of the petty bourgeoisie full of anxiety that the proletariat, under the pressure of its revolutionary position may 'go too far'. Instead of determined political opposition, general mediation; instead of struggle against government and bourgeoisie, an attempt to win over and persuade them; instead of defiant resistance to ill-treatment from above, humble

53. Marx and Engels Works vol.XVII, p.652, Quoted in D. Maclellan: 'Karl Marx', op.cit. p.406.

54. Marx and Engels: Works vol.XVIII, p.160, Quoted in Marek, op.cit., p.123.

submission and confession that the punishment was deserved. Historically necessary conflicts are all interpreted as misunderstandings and all discussion ends with the assurance that after all we are all agreed on the main point."⁵⁵ Both of them were to clearly assert that the interests of the proletarian revolutionary movement enjoy the absolute primacy even in acts of participating in bourgeois institutions.

The overthrow of the bourgeoisie by peaceful means of violent means, there was of course no doubt in their writings however that the form of the state power in the period of transition cannot be anything but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx was to state it in 1852 that Class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.⁵⁶ He was to repeat it again confirmed on this through the experiences of the Paris Commune.

The establishment of social democratic parties, in Europe, their electoral successes and the avenues for mass mobilisation and revolutionary propaganda that representative bourgeois democracies offered was to lead to a

55. Marx and Engels to Babel etc., "Circular Letter", September 17-18, 1879, in MESC, p.305.

56. Marx to Weydemeyer: March 5, 1852, in MESC, op.cit., p.64.

The establishment of social-democratic parties, in Europe, their electoral successes and the avenues for mass mobilisation and revolutionary propaganda that representative bourgeois democracies offered was to lead to a strong emphasis in Engels, in 1880s and early 1890s, to avoid putchist attempts and make use of the weapon of franchise. In his introduction to the class struggles in France he was to state that the Franchise from a means of deception has become the gauge of the maturity of the working class.⁵⁷ In his 1892 forward to 'The condition of the working class in England' he was to characterize the franchise as an achievement which ought to be used in the interest of the working class.⁵⁸ In his introduction to Marx's class struggle in France he was to say that universal suffrage, which hitherto had been a means of deception had become an instrument for the emancipation of the masses, that the bourgeoisie has become more afraid of the weapons of votes than the traditional barricade warfare. However, nowhere in the later writings of Engels, did he find it necessary to change the strategic viewpoint of the revolution outlined in their entire writings which stressed the working class movement

57. Engels: Marx and Engels, SW, vol.I, p.196.

58. See Engels: Introduction to Class Struggles in France in SW, vol.I, pp.196-203.

necessarily having its objective a revolutionary change. All means for this purpose, legal or illegal, have to be undertaken. The opting for this or that tactic depended upon the concrete conditions in which the movement itself is bound up. But the tactics themselves must strengthen the consciousness and organisation of the working class, weaken the enemy and hasten the process of revolution.⁵⁹

The Strategy of Permanent Revolution:

The method that Marx and Engels followed made it imperative that it is necessary to analyse the relations between all classes, the interests that the classes articulate and the class antagonisms and class alignments that they generate, and the respective strength of classes and class-blocs in the concrete conditions. Therefore, the proletariat sometimes aligns with the bourgeois against the pre-bourgeois dominant classes, sometimes against the pre-bourgeois dominant classes, sometimes against the bourgeois, uniting under its leadership the other oppressed classes and sometimes the interests of the proletariat may come in contradiction those of the oppressed section. This precisely determines the nature

59. See the next chapter for the necessary elaboration.

and stage of the revolutionary transformation, the nature of the revolutionary bloc, the type of revolutionary strategy, the form of the revolutionary state power and the demands to be realized immediately.

They were to apply this analysis to the concrete conditions of class relations in Germany, where the democratic revolution was not yet completed, where the proletariat had already begun to assert themselves independently due to which bourgeoisie was not prepared for a revolutionary change against the monarchy and the feudal forces.

In the wake of the revolutionary upsurge of 1848-1850, in the context of Germany due to the unfinished bourgeois revolution and the nature of class relations manifest therein, they uphold and fight for a radical democratic revolution rather than immediately a socialist revolution. The task of the Communist league likewise far from being a secret organisation has to be open and support the radical wing of the bourgeoisie.⁶⁰ The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* which Marx edited during this period had its subtitle as 'An organ of Democracy' which supported an 'United Front' of all democratic parties. Its programme was not immediately socialist but that of

60. See Maclellan D: Karl Marx, His Life and Thought , . p.197, Macmillan, 1973.

the bourgeoisie Universal suffrage, direct elections, the abolition of all feudal dues and charges the establishment of a state banking system, the admission of state responsibility for unemployment. Capitalism, private property and class antagonism would still exist and indeed, expand. The essence of the programme was the emancipation of the bourgeoisie with some concessions for workers and peasants. This programme actually represented the programme of the radical section of the bourgeoisie.⁶¹

In an address to the communist league Marx and Engels were to define the strategy as follows:

1. This democratic revolution is not going to bring about basic changes in the situation of the workers as wage labourers. However the democratic petty bourgeoisie want to increase wages to the workers and provide security and do this through state employment and welfare measure. Through these measures they 'hope to bribe the workers with a more or less disguised form of alms and to break their revolutionary strength by temporarily rendering their situation tolerable and want to bring the revolution to an end as quickly as possible'.⁶²

61. This position of Marx and Engels was inspite of sizeable section of the Communist League pressing for an immediate preparation for a socialist Revolution (see *ibid*, pp.189-218.).

62. Karl Marx and F. Engels, 'Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League' March 1850 in The Revolutions of 1848, pp.326, Harmondsworth, 1973.

2. The task of the communists however is to make the revolution permanent until the proletariat is able to establish its supremacy over the society. They defined the process as follows:

"It is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their positions, until the proletariat has conquered state power and until the association of the proletarians has progressed sufficiently far - not only in one country but in all the leading countries of the world - that competition between the proletarians of these countries ceases and atleast the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the workers".⁶³

3. The strategy must be to drive the demands of the petty-bourgeoisie to their logical extremes. It is however, necessary that the workers get organised into independent and centralised clubs' - independent political organisations.⁶⁴ Marx and Engels were to advise

63. *ibid.*

64. "The workers must try to organise themselves independently as a proletarian guard with elected leaders and with their own elected general staff; they must try to place themselves not under the orders of the state authority but of the revolutionary local councils set up by the workers".
ibid. p.329.

the workers to base themselves in relationship to the struggle on the basis of the analysis of the concrete relations of forces at the particular conjuncture. In the concrete conditions of Germany this process of radical democracy, with independent political organizations of workers will help the working class to go through its own revolutionary transformation. It will test their organization, leadership, consciousness and ability to rule. Therefore, to those who wanted to go straightaway to a socialist revolution. Marx was to say "For them revolutions are not the product of the realities of the situation but the result of a mere effort of will. What we say to the workers is you will have fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil war and national struggle and this is not merely to bring about a change in society but also to change yourselves and prepare yourselves for the exercise of political power. Whereas you say on the contrary 'Either we seize power at once, or else we might as well take to our beds'. Just as the word 'People' has been given an aura of sanctity by the democrats, so you have made an idol of the world 'proletariat'. Like the democrats you ignore the ideas of revolutionary development and substitute for it the slogan of revolution".⁶⁵

65. K. Marx: 'The Cologne Communist Trial',
R. Livingstone (ed.), p.63, London, 1970.

From the above analysis certain concrete conclusions emerge:

1. That a bourgeois democratic revolution can be transformed into a socialist revolution depending upon the concrete class relations without going through a stage of the consolidation of capitalism itself.
2. In such a bourgeois revolution, the proletariat supports the most radical sections of the bourgeois at the same time exposes the inherent contradictions in their positions. This process draws the backward sections of the proletariat and the other oppressed masses more and more under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat.
3. It is necessary that the proletariat maintains its organizational independence to articulate and struggle for its class objectives in the process.
4. The proletariat after the conquest of State power in a particular country is going to carry the revolution forward assisting the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in other countries, before profound changes can be effected in the economic sphere.

5. The process itself is necessary to transform the proletariat from an oppressed class into a ruling class, to bring about the necessary transformation, unity and organization within itself.

The Working Class party:

In the communist manifesto Marx was to state that the Communists do not form a party independent of the working class parties but represent the interests of the movement as a whole in every struggle. Although Marx and Engels did not outline an explicit conception of the proletarian party, they were to specify the general position articulated in the manifesto both in their theoretical and practical struggles, subsequent to the manifesto. These struggles were to go hand in hand with the struggle against the various sects which claimed to represent the interests and demands of the working class. Initially they were to believe that with the increasing struggle of the workers their consciousness organization and experience, they will outgrow the narrow limits in which these sects really confine the movement.⁶⁶

66. Engels was to explain this in a new introduction to the Manifesto written in 1888: "Marx who drew up this programme (that of the international) to the satisfaction of all parties, entirely trusted to the intellectual development of the working class, which was sure to result

Therefore they were to urge to the co-ordinated activities of diverse forms of organizations: trade-unions, co-operatives, educational associations, socialist societies, working class parties. What was therefore emphasized was the organizational unity of the various workers organizations rather than their ideological unity. It was assumed that the latter will come about through the process of practical struggles and ideological struggle. We can see it clearly in the First International,⁶⁷ However the experience of the international especially the struggle against Bakuninism⁶⁸ and the restraining influence played by Proudhunism and Blanquism on the Paris Commune was to convince them that to lead the revolutionary movement of the proletariat an ideologically mature party is required and that any unity between the parties can be based only on this foundation. This can be clearly seen in the 'Critique of Gotha Programme'. Here Marx clearly shows that a revolu-

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from combined action and mutual discussion. The very events and vicissitudes of the struggle against capital, the defeats even more than to victories, could not help bringing home to men's minds the insufficiency of their various favourite nostrums and preparing the way for a more complete insight into the true conditions of working class emancipation" (Engels; 'Preface to the English Edition of Communist Manifesto', vol.1, pp.75-80, The Revolutions of 1848, p.63).

67. See J. Branthal, History of the International (2 vols.), London, 1966.

68. See Marx and Engels: 'Fictitious Splits in the International' in SW, vol.2, pp.247-286.

tionary working class party must be based on a programme of a clearly articulated proletarian position which analyses the position and demands of the proletariat, its relationship with the various classes in a social formation, its strategy for the overthrow of the dominant classes and its immediate and long term objectives with the establishment of proletarian state power. This can be done only on the basis of the scientific understanding of the society already elaborated and relying on the experience of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. He accused the Gotha programme for its vague and confused concepts and analysis which reduces scientific socialism into a ho potch, while maintaining its service attitude to the State.⁶⁹ A party based on such an understanding will never be able to lead the working class towards a revolutionary transformation of bourgeois society.

Although Marx and Engels desired unity among the working class, this unity was not to be at the cost of the revolutionary view point of the proletariat. Therefore they were to threaten sometimes to review their relationship with German Workers' Party.⁷⁰ Engels was to say before the Gothe Congress of Unification that division among the working class movement is unavoidable and healthy and one should not opt for unprincipled unity:

69. See Marx: Critique of Gotha Programme, in SW, vol.3, p.30.

70. See Engels letter to A. Babel: March 18-25, 1875, op.cit., p.35.

"Hegel said long ago a party proves itself victorious by splitting and being able to stand the split. The movement of the proletariat necessarily passes through different stages of development; at every stage part of the people get stuck and do not join/the further /in advance".⁷¹

Marx and Engels were to welcome ideological debate within the party. Most of their writings were of a polemical character. Of course, the ideological struggle implied that it is not retrogression by nature and accepted the proved and tested scientific positions. Later, writing to Bernstein, Engels was to reiterate that internal struggle within a party is healthy and is the sign of its growth. The internal struggle also shows the dialectical development in general.⁷² In 1879 Marx Kayser, a Reichstaag deputy of the social Democratic Party voted for one of Bisamarch's taxation policy against the clearly laid down party policy and was attacked by Hirseh in the party's theoretical journal. The party leadership then appointed a commission to supervise editorial policy. Marx was to violently

71. Engels to Babel 20 June, 1873, MESC, p.268.

72. See Engels letter to Bernstein, 20 October 1882, *ibid*, p.332.

attack this supervisory policy whereby real ideological debate is curbed: Attacking the leadership he said "They are already revolting so much in the feeling of bureaucratic omnipotence...that they are already claiming the new power to decide on the acceptance of the articles. The editorial commission has already become a commission of censorship".⁷³

The internal democracy within the party did not mean that the party would throw its doors open to all forms of bourgeois ideology, which would draw up blueprints of a future society based on justice liberty etc., in the abstract. Even some of the workers when they act as 'theoreticians' and imitate these ideologists fall into the trap of drawing up Utopias. These incursions of bourgeois ideology commonflaged in forms akin to scientific socialism was a great threat to the revolutionary movement itself. They play the role of diverting the working class movement from concrete struggles based on a **serious** analysis of the existing class relations based on the materialist method of Utopian dreams which Marx felt had a progressive role once before the emergence of 'materialistic critical socialism' can now be nothing but playing in the hands of reaction.⁷⁴

73. Marx and Engels: 'Circular letter to Babel, Lisbnecht etc., 'The First International and after', pp.364, Harmondsworth, 1974.

74. "A rotten spirit is making itself felt in our Party in Germany not so much among the masses

Lessons of the Commune:

The Paris Commune was the first Revolutionary state power of the proletariat. Marx and Engels were to study the organization, revolutionary policies and actions of the commune and critically evaluate them in terms of the revolutionary strategy of the proletariat, towards the overthrow of the bourgeois society. Although Marx had stated much earlier that the Working Class revolutionary movement necessarily leads to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, it is through the lessons of the Commune that they were to clarify its various features.

The Paris Commune had proved beyond doubt that the Proletariat cannot lay its hand on the readymade apparatus of the State and use it for its own purposes. Marx not only emphasizes it but also says that this is the principle laid down by the Commune for all further social revolutions to come.⁷⁵ The commune had to destroy these institutions in order to evolve the

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as among the leaders (upper class and 'Workers'). The compromise with Lassaeans has led to a compromise with other half way elements too: in Berlin with Duhring and his 'admirers' and moreover with a whole gang of half-mature students and superwise doctors of philosophy who want to give socialism a 'superior idealistic' orientation, that is to say, to replace its materialistic basis (which demands serious study from anyone who tries to use it) by modern mythology. With its goddesses

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institutions for the new age - the standing army replaced by People's militia; the centralised government machinery replaced by organs of self government; the commune to consist of representatives chosen by universal suffrage responsible and revocable in short time; it is to be a working not a parliamentary body-executive and legislative at the same time; elected and revocable judges; the salary of commune functionaries not to exceed a workman's wages; even the functions of the central government are to be executed by communal agents under the control of the commune, education to be freed from its religious establishment, science to be freed from its class prejudice. All these measures were to result in the breaking down of government-force of repression and authority over society. The fact that the state is not an organism above and beyond ~~and~~ the society but its responsible agent has been proved by the commune.⁷⁶

The working class through the commune was to show that it is the only class capable of social initiative. The petty bourgeoisie sections - the shopkeepers, tradesmen and merchants had come to wholeheartedly support the

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of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity...
 The Workers themselves, when...they give up work and become professional men always cause theoretical mischief are always ready to join muddleheads from the allegedly 'learned caste' ".
 Marx to F. Sorge in Hoboken, October 19, 1877,
 MESC, p.290.

75. Marx and Engels - On the Paris Commune, p.204, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971.

working class. The commune had objectively defended the interests of the peasantry through the replacement of the parasitical sections who lived by drawing the surplus from the peasantry. The commune, therefore was the representative of all the healthy elements of French society and truly the national government. It alone was able to posit its interests as the interests of the whole society, give leadership to the hitherto dominated classes and able to do away with the State which had posited itself as a force independent of the society in order to cloak itself into the garb of arbiter in class conflicts.

The commune as the organised proletariat, organised as the ruling class is emphatically international. Marx calls it as the political form atleast discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour".⁷⁷ It showed in its composition the international character. It bid farewell to that National chauvinism displayed from the days of Napoleon Bonaparte, by pulling down 'that colossal symbol of Martial glory, the vendom column'.⁷⁸ The vast sections of working class militants

76. That the commune was not a return to the medieval ages was emphasized by Marx and Engels repeatedly See, Marx, 'The Civil War in Paris' in 'On the Paris Commune', p.73.

77. Marx, 'The Civil War in France' in On the Paris Commune, p.75.

78. *ibid*, p.80.

in Europe were to rally round to support the commune especially the international.

Marx commends the immediate social measures instituted by the commune, which showed the regenerative qualities compared to the old one and the dying, manifest by the Versailles Government.

The commune was a state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx clearly says that the commune is not a social movement of the working class and therefore, a general regeneration of mankind. But it was an organised means of action. The commune does not do away with the class struggle through which the working class strives for the abolition of all classes and therefore of all class-rule; but it affords the rational form in which the class struggle can run through its different phases in the most rational and human way. The working class knows that they have to pass through different phases of class struggle. For the transition from the economic conditions of the slavery of labour to the conditions of free and associated labour can only be the progressive work of time. Even economic transformation is not merely a change in distribution but a new organization of production. This task of social transformation, however, is impeded by vested interests and class enemies. But the commune form of organisation is a mighty weapon in the hands of the proletariat to work out and carry

forward the revolution. The commune, therefore, was not a revolution against this or that legitimate, constitutional, republican or imperialist state power. It was a revolution against the state itself which was nothing but the 'super naturalist abortion of society'.

Marx commended the task of cooperatively organisation of the economy undertaken by the commune along with commune type organization right from the local level upto the national level, peopled by the directly elected representatives of the exploited. The organization of the large scale industry by the commune in union based on the association of the workers of each factory, but also to combine these unions in one great union was called by Marx as a necessary step which in the end would have led to communism. In spite of the dominance of the Blanquists and Productionists the thrust of the commune was to undo their doctrinaire socialism.⁷⁹ To ascertain that the commune centralized the power in its hand and was authoritarian Engel was to say: 'When I hear people speak of authority and centralization as two things, deserving condemnation whatever the circumstances, I feel that those who say this either have no idea of what revolution is or are revolutionaries only in word'.⁸⁰

79. Engels: "Introduction to the Civil War in France" in 'On Paris Commune', p.31.

80. Engels: Letter to Carlo Terzaghi: Jan. 14, 1872, On Paris Commune, p.292.

Engels was to argue that precisely the lack of it, cost the commune itself.

The commune had a number of shortcomings which Marx and Engels were to articulate in the processes of learning from the experiences of the commune. But the commune declared that even its errors were open to scrutiny and correction. "The commune did not pretend to infallibility, the invariable attribute of all governments of old stamp. It published its doings and sayings, it initiated the public into all its shortcomings'. The commune had a number of incompetent leaders including those who wish to incarnate in the present revolution the type of the past and saw its model in the past and, therefore, necessarily become an obstacle in its progress. But they were unavoidable evil. With time they are shaken off. But time was not allowed to the commune'. Marx was to say that amidst 'the multiplicity of the interpretations to which the commune has been subjected and the multiplicity of interests which considered it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing class against the appropriating class.

Marx and Engels also established a critique of the functioning of the commune:

1. 'The majority of the commune was in no wise socialist'.⁸¹ The activity of Blanquists and the theoretical vagueness they displayed prevented resolute action to be taken. Therefore, later Marx and Engels were to strongly emphasize on a theoretically mature party which can be decisive in action. Marx was to say in the same letter quoted above, that the uprising took place in strange circumstances. Marx felt that in the given conditions it would have been most worthwhile to strike a compromise with the versailles government although he was to denounce the latter in no uncertain term in his 'Civil War in France'. But resolute steps by the victorious proletariat is a must to consolidate the victory. 'Socialist government does not come into power in a country unless conditions are so developed that it can immediately take the necessary measures for intimidating the mass of the bourgeoisie sufficiently to gain time - the first desideratum - for permanent action'.⁸²

2. Both Marx and Engels felt that the commune needed to take resolute economic steps whereby the bourgeoisie would have pressurised the Versailles government. Engels

81. Marx: Letter to F. Domela, Feb. 22, 1881, MESC, p.318.

82. *ibid.*

was to say later 'The Bank of France in the hands of the commune would have been worth more than ten thousand hostages. It would have meant the pressure of the whole of the French, bourgeoisie on the Versailles government in favour of peace with the commune.'⁸³

3. The theoretical confusions resulted in laxity and failure to take a firm stand against the counter-revolutionaries. The commune was too much concerned with its moral position - 'too great decency'⁸⁴ and it did not want to provoke a civil war. But the Versailles government had already declared a civil war. In the process, the commune sacrificed its own revolutionary initiative and began to function within the terms set, for it by the reactionary forces. Marx was also to criticise the military strategy applied by the commune.⁸⁵

Engels was to characterise the commune as 'no longer a state in the proper sense of the word'. This is precisely because of the following characteristics which were posited vis-a-vis the bourgeois state in specific and state as such in general.

83. Engels: 'Introduction to Civil War in France', 'On the Paris Commune', p.30.

84. Marx: Letter to William Leibrecht: April 6, 1871 in MESC, p.190.

85. Marx to Edward Spencer Besley, June 12, 1871, 'On the Paris Commune', p.239.

1. The commune like the earlier states shares the characteristic that it is the organised coercive power and organised means of action of definite classes. But unlike the earlier state it does not proclaim itself as embodying the general interests but as embodying the class-interests. Therefore, it is not a social movement of regeneration of the entire society but a class instrument.
2. It is not an organ placed above the society and acting as the arbiter of class conflicts. On the contrary it is manifest in the organized proletariat itself which takes quick measures in smashing the old state apparatuses and transferring power to the elected representatives controlled and directed by class interests. These also participate in the communability of their constituents: manifest in their salaries, etc.
3. Its principal task is to suppress the class enemies and bring the means of production under the direct control of associated producers. Therefore, it cannot be called as the 'free People's state', since it is precisely the dictatorship over the enemies. As soon as it is possible to speak of Freedom for people, as a whole, the state will have ceased to exist.
4. But unlike the earlier state which was the organized force of a minority to suppress the majority,

the commune is the organized force of the majority, organised in the consciousness of its interests, to suppress the minority.

5. As the expression of the interests of the vast majority it also embodies the real freedom of the vast majority and evolves appropriate institutions towards it. It takes away the myth that only bourgeois parliamentarism can embody freedom and democracy.

6. Besides, the commune does not operate on the basis of separation between the economic and political levels that the capitalist state has to engender. On the contrary, as the organised power of the vast majority, the direct producers, it takes control of the means of production on behalf of and in the interests of the vast majority. The measures effected by the commune, therefore, has to be seen in the light of the characteristic of that state which it actually came to supersede.

This was precisely where their crusade of attack on the anarchists rests. The anarchists by speaking of the abolition of the State before the abolition of antagonistic class relations which give rise to the State were to actually do a service on behalf of the dominant classes. Marx was to express it in 1873 'If the political struggle of the working class assumes

revolutionary forms and if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of violating principles for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar, everyday needs and to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transient form, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing state".⁸⁶

Engels was to elaborate it in his article 'on authority' in polemics mainly directed against the 'anti-authoritarianism' displayed by the Proudhonists. Engels argues that authority and autonomy are relative concepts conditioned by the nature of class struggle and cannot be used idealistically. The proletarian revolution by engendering the conditions for the abolition of classes in society also engenders the condition for the disappearance of the political state and political authority and replace it by simple administrative functions watching over the true interests of the society. But to undertake the latter step the social conditions for such a step must be already be born in the society.

This can be done only by the organised force of violence of the proletariat and other oppressed masses who suppress the resistences of the yet dominant classes.

86. See Marx: Engels Works, pp.299-304, quoted in Lenin, "State and Revolution", SW, vol.2, p.281.

"A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is. It is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon - authoritarian means, if such there be at all, and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries".⁸⁷

The organised power of the proletariat will no longer be necessary when the class divisions in society that reflect themselves in class struggle are no longer and reproduce no further. When the State has no function to perform then it will also die away.

"When at last it (the state) becomes the real representative of the whole society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as a class rule and the individual struggle for existence based upon the present anarchy of production, with the collisions and excesses arising from this struggle, are removed, nothing more remains to be held in subjection - nothing necessitating a special force a state...State interference in social relations becomes in one domain after another superfluous and then it dies down of itself.

87. Engels: 'On Authority', SW, vol. II p.319

The government of persons is replaced by administration of things and by the conduct of processes of production. The State is not abolished. It withers away".⁸⁸

It is not necessary to emphasize here that the State that Engels speaks of withering away is naturally the state of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Profound transformation in class relations and organisations of production in the wake of this revolution. The first stage of the communist society that results with the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is in every respect—economically, morally and intellectually - marked with the birthmarks of the old society. Therefore at the early stage, the individual producer would receive means of consumption equivalent to the cost of his productive labour, after the necessary deductions. The prevailing principle would be exchange of equal values, given the condition, that nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. This 'equal right' however, is still a bourgeois right. The producer receiving from the society the equivalent of his contribution. Here measurement is made alike i.e. the measure of labour. This 'equal right' however is an 'unequal right' since

88. Engels: Anti Duhring - pp.301-302.

the capacity to labour, skills and techniques, the intensity and duration of labour and the family conditions differ from individual to individual both physically and mentally. To make amends to this, the right instead of being equal has to be unequal, which can come through only as the society moves to a higher phase of building communism.⁸⁹

The higher phase of the Communist society will have done away with the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour⁹⁰ and the distinction

89. Marx: 'The Critique of Gotha Programme' in SW, vol.3, pp.16-20.

90. The Enslaving division of labour in class society especially in capitalist society was a recurrent theme in the writings of Marx and Engels. Engels writing in Anti-Duhring says "Not only the labourers but also the classes directly or indirectly exploiting the labourers, are made subject through the division of labourer, to the tool of this function; the empty minded bourgeois to his own capital and his thirst for profits; the lawyer to his fossilised legal conceptions, which demarcate him as a power independent of him; the 'educated classes' in general to their manifold local limitations and one-sidedness: to their stunted specialized education and the fact that they are chained for life to this specialized activity itself even when this specialised activity is merely to do nothing (F. Engels: 'Anti Duhring', pp. 435-36, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1947). The division of labour is an expression of class relations prevailing in society. For example in the German ideology Marx and Engels wereto state: The existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individual to one another with reference to the material, instruments and product of labour. (Marx and Engels: Ludwig Feurbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, SW, vol.3, p.367).

between mental and manual labour. Here labour becomes a choice rather than a necessity. The change in the relation of production will have unleashed such a development of productive forces that the all-round development of the individual becomes feasible.

CHAPTER II

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL'S PERSPECTIVE ON
REVOLUTION

WITH the emergence of the socialist groups and parties in Europe especially based on Marxist analysis, the theory of revolutionary politics of Marxism becomes more and more the expression of the organised movement of the working class. During this very period economism which basically attempted to confine the working class movement merely to economic struggles and revisionism which attempted to revise certain basic concepts of Marx and Engels and in the process their conception of revolution were to emerge as concrete forms of ideological currents within the fold of Marxism itself and eventually led to the confinement of the proletarian movement to the capitalist order.

Economism and Revisionism, however, were to assume numerous forms both before and after the seizure of state power by the class struggle. However, their basic effect was the same. They constrained the working class from achieving a revolutionary transformation of the capitalist order. At the same time, it was only the radical reactions to these practices that were to enrich the Marxist conception of revolution. While the

coming chapters will deal with the concrete manifestation of the ideological and political struggles between revolutionary politics and on the other, in the present chapter we will consider the concrete conditions of the emergence of these forums, their support structures and their impact on the class struggle during the period of the Second International. For this purpose we need to probe into the nature of the class struggles of this period as well as the dominant trends in Marxist Theoretical practice. It will help us to understand the extent to which working class struggle itself began to get integrated within capital, through its various transformations, while a search into its theoretical practice will reveal the extent to which Marxism of the period gets entrenched into pre-Marxist and anti-Marxist positions.

Marxism as the theory of class struggle was located in the overall context of a capitalist society. The bourgeois theories of society which once provided legitimacy to the revolutionary aspirations of the rising capitalist class either became increasingly distant from the practical concerns of the day or tended to provide legitimacy to the established order. The various utopian varieties of socialism¹ survive during the

1 See, Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific in Marx and Engels", S.W., vol.3, pp. 95-151.

period, inspite of the widespreadness of Marxism. All these three factors assert their influence on Marxism as a science of the society especially in a situation where the class struggle of the proletariat begins to get itself confined within the bourgeois framework. It is the contention of this paper that the theoretical writings of interpretations of the dominant section of Marxists begin to be more and more mediated by approaches and concepts articulated by the representatives of the bourgeoisie and the proletarian struggle got increasingly bogged down within the limits specified by the bourgeois order. In normal times, i.e. in nonrevolutionary situations it became very difficult to distinguish between the practices of revisionist and revolutionary groups. Similarly the primacy of economist practices could not challenge the progressive interpolation of Marxism by the bourgeois ideology, since the former was based on the very same foundations as the later.² Therefore, when capital in

2. Ideology has real basis in society. It builds itself up on the given apparent unity and does not look behind this unity into the raging contradictions to uncover the real alignment of relations. See Marx: 'Grundrisse' p.255, Penguine, London, 1973.

its stage of imperialism, profoundly reorganised itself in terms of its expanded reproduction resulting in crises and war, the working class and the majority of the organised socialist movement became part of the crisis and tools of imperialism rather than agents for a revolutionary change in society. It is necessary to locate precisely this process of capitulationism. We need to explain why Lenin and the Bolshevik party and a number of groups and sections within the second international were able to uphold the revolutionary conception of Marxism and in their practices both in theory and practice were to enrich it. The world war shatters the unity between the two approaches and only from a hindsight, as if, and, of course, from the class point of Marx and Engels, we are able to evaluate and assess the process.³

The writings of Engels during this period, which also critically review his own and Marx's

3. "Only when raised to the peak of contradiction do the manifold entities become active (regsam) and lively in relation to one another. They receive, acquire that negativity which is the inherent pulsation of self-movement and vitality." (Lenin: Conspectus of Hegel's Science of Logic, p. 143, Collected Works (CW) Vol. 33, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1961)

writings of the earlier period, as well as the class struggles of the period provide us with a starting point. Lenin's decreasing break with the dominant current of the international revisionism, after 1914 and his reflections over it provides us with the tools to assess this process.

Dominant Pattern of the Class Struggle During the Period

Social democracy in Germany registered a tremendous growth after 1871 especially after the Gotha Congress of unification between the Social democratic workers party (Eisenacher) led by August Bebel and William Liebknecht and the Lassalean General German Workers' Union. Together with the growth of the party and unions, workers' cooperatives also developed.⁴ While the leaders of the Unions and representatives of the party in the Reichstag were to establish a stake in the existing affairs of things progressively. The leaders and staff of the workers' cooperatives, practically all social democrats, supported the gradualist wing of the

 4. See Engels, "Introduction to class-struggles in France" SW, Vol. I, p194.

party since their life work consisted of an attempt to transfer the existing society peacefully into a better order and would have been wrecked by a violent revolution. However the contradiction between the Gradualist aspirations and revolutionary objectives was not to come sharply to the fore for a considerable time. There was tremendous enthusiasm in the party that they would be able to achieve their socialist aim within a short period.⁵

In France, the party of the possibilists led by Paul Barousse had organized two international working class congress in 1883 and 1886. The possibilists had broken away from the Federation du Parti des Travailleurs Socialistes (FPTS) set up in 1880, the programme of which, under the influence of Jules Guesde and Paul Lafarquet, was dominated by the Marxist outlook. Possibilists were committed to an evolutionary socialism to modest immediately realizable reforms, in alliance with the radical wing of the bourgeoisie. After being battered

5. At the Erfurt congress of the SPD in 1891 August Bebel told his fellow deputies: "I am convinced that the fulfilment of our aim is so close, that there are few in this hall who will not live to see the day (Quoted in J Braunthal: 'History of the International 1864-1914, pg. 194., Nelson, 1960)

during the Paris commune the Blanquists still survived. With the amnesty of 1879 they were to form the Parti socialist revolutionnaire under the leadership of Villant. The PPS contained within its ranks three incompatible groups. Besides the Marxists, there were the followers of Proudhon, believers in 'socialism' through the development of cooperatives who rejected both the theory of class struggle and desirability of political action. A third group was that of the anarchists who while arguing with the Marxists in acknowledging the class-struggle, opposed all forms of political activity including parliamentary elections.

The Belgian party developed novel forms of tactics especially in its struggle for vote manifest in street demonstrations, together with political strikes. It was not organised like SPD, but actually was a federation of trade unions, cooperatives, retail and producers societies, associations of employees in workers' health insurance and students and socialist societies of various kinds.⁸

Italy remained a stronghold of anarchism. It's fertile soil being formed of characteristic features of early capitalism, vast estates owned by a landlord-aristocracy and cultivated by semi-servile labour, large land

8 Landuer Carl: European Socialism, vol.I, p. 469, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 1959

hungry rural poor, an urban proletariat living in wretched squalor and a large number of declassed intellectuals. Like Italy, Spain and Holland were also the stronghold of anarchism. In Norway, Marcus Thane lays down a strong basis among the peasantry for a militant movement under the demands of redistribution of land, universal suffrage and education for the children of the poor.

The British working class movement was basically embedded in economic struggles and colonial ideology. The scientific theory of socialism hardly becomes a part of the working class consciousness in Britain.⁹ Although certain leading intellectuals Hyndman and his circle expounded and were inspired by the whole range of Marxist ideas, the ideology as such never gained any great influence over the movement.

In Austria, Victor Adler succeeded in reconciling the various factions, and establishing a united social democratic labour party in 1889. A large section of the students and intellectuals formed the intellectual backbone of this party especially under the influence of Carl Grünberg who urged them to develop a 'conception of Marxism as social science which should be developed in a rigorous and systematic way through historical and sociological investigations.'¹⁰

9 Ibid, P.448

10 T Bottomore and Patrick Goode (ed,) Austro-Marxism, p. 3, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978

In Russia, the Russian Social democratic workers party emerges by its struggle against the Narodniks. It splits itself up into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks in 1903.¹¹

This generalised survey of social democracy in certain countries is useful in terms of locating the sheer susceptibility of this movement to bourgeois influence and their inability to lead the working class politically and ideologically against capital. The ideological and organisational consolidation of socialist movement was too weak to contain the onslaught of the bourgeois ideology. A number of attempts to develop Marxism in this period actually end in integrating Marxism with bourgeois ideology. Marx had already drawn attention to it in 1877 when discussing German social democracy.¹²

With the rise, growth and prestige of social democratic parties, trade unions and cooperative movement, a large number of functionaries of these organizations also came up. Opportunism, therefore could find an extremely fertile field in this organizational hierarchy, in times of peaceful movement. The inroads of bourgeoisie ideology within scientific socialism objectively strengthened the position of these opportunists and legitimised their role. In turn, they could be very successful in

11 See Next Chapter

12 Marx letter to Sorge, October 19, 1877, in Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, p. 290: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975

containing the class struggle within definite limits, as they could always authoritatively speak as the representatives of the working class. Engels was to strongly draw attention to this rising opportunism and even felt that a split within the party was welcome to counter opportunism.

The Second International

It was founded in 1889. It was not a uniform body with a centralised organ, but a loose federation of parties and trade unions working separately though united by their belief in socialism.¹³ Unlike the first international which had an effective organization and constitution, the second international remained for the first eleven years of its existence without any formal organization. It was not until 1900 that the Central Commission, which assumed the title of international socialist bureau, was formed, entrusted with the function of maintaining effective liaison between the parties and organization of future congresses including the preparation of the agenda. The general tenets which held it together can be enumerated as follows:

13 Lazek Kolokowski: Main Currents of Marxism.
The Golden Age, p. 5., Claredon Press, 1978

1. The tendencies of capitalist society have activated the natural tendency of the historical process towards socialism, which is unavoidable or is the most probable consequence.

2. Socialism implied public ownership of the means of production: abolition of all forms of exploitation; equal opportunities, and a comprehensive system of social welfare.

3. Socialism is in the interest of all mankind and will lead to the universal development of culture and welfare. The standard bearer in this is the working class.

5. The interests of the proletariat throughout the world are identical and therefore, socialism can only be international in character.

5. Advance towards socialism calls for economic and political struggles on the part of the proletariat which must fight for short term improvement and long term goal. The proletariat, therefore, must organize itself into independent political parties.

6. Capitalism cannot alter its inevitable course. However, the proletariat must fight for reforms to increase its own strength.

7. Capitalism will finally be swept away by revolution when economic conditions under capitalism result in inevitable and an all pervasive crisis and the class consciousness of the proletariat is ripe to seize power. It is not a coup d'etat, but the work of the overwhelming majority.

8. The backward countries are to inevitably follow the capitalist growth as in the capitalist countries through a revolution led by the bourgeoisie.

9. As in industry, so in agriculture, it is inevitable that large scale organization of agriculture occurs.

These tenets, abstract and general as they are, could be interpreted differently in different situations, and failed to provide guidelines for a concrete analysis of concrete situations. The organizational looseness merely expressed their ideological looseness. As Karl Korsch says as far as the second international is concerned Marxism as 'A unified theory of social revolution was changed into criticism of the bourgeois economic order, of education, of bourgeois religion, art, science and culture. The criticism no longer necessarily developed by the very nature into revolutionary practice. They can well develop into all kinds of attempts at reform which fundamentally remain within the limits of bourgeois society and the bourgeois state and the actual practice usually did so'.⁴

Intervention of Engels

Engels published 'The Critique of Gotha Programme' in 1890, which he had so far withheld due to its likely disapproval by the Lassaleans. The Halé Congress of SPD

14 Karl Korsch: Marxian Philosophy, p.57, NL, London, 21972

had put the discussion of Gotha programme on the agenda. Marx had clearly stated in it that the seizure of political power by the proletariat can result in nothing but revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁵ A section of the SPD strongly resented Marx's analysis of the struggle of the working class as necessarily leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁶

Engels was to draw attention and criticise the growing opportunism within the SPD in his critique of the Erfurt programme addressed to Kautsky which remained unpublished for ten years. "What else can result from this than that the party may suddenly at the first critical moment prove helpless, that on decisive questions confusion and division will arise within the party because these questions had never been discussed. The neglect of great fundamental contradictions for the sake of momentary interests of the day, the chase after momentary success and this race after them without account of ultimate results, the sacrifice of the future movement for the present is perhaps the result of 'honest' motives but is and remains nonetheless opportunism and honest opportunism is perhaps more dangerous than any other."

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15. Marx: "Critique of the Gotha Programme", MESW, vol.3, p.26.
16. Karl Grillenburg a representative of SPD was to say in the Reichstaag, "The social democratic party rejected the suggestion which Marx had made for its programme... For us a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is out of question" (J. Braunthal op.cit., pp.)

The trend however towards a peaceful capture of power by obtaining a majority in the Reichstag was to continue. The whole effort of class struggle was to be to obtain a majority in the parliament and bring about the reforms peacefully to achieve socialism. The centrality of the concepts i.e. the destruction of the state and of the dictatorship of the proletariat was to be totally evaded. This made Engels to retort strongly in 1891 in his introduction to the Civil War in France: "Of late, the social-democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to look what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris commune. That was the dictatorship of the Proletariat".¹⁷

The dichotomy that was occurring between theory and practice was getting progressively intensified within the SPD. The illusions generated by the successes achieved through the process of elections prevented it from perceiving the real nature of the state or struggle to destroy it. Now problems that arose in the course of the practice were utilized to counter theory rather than make use of the theory to analyse the concrete situation, enrich theory and orient the practice towards the political goals set by theoretical reflection. We can see it in terms of the

17. Marx: "The Civil War in France": MESW, vol.2, p.189.

peasant question posed in the SDP Concretely. In 1895, owners of small and middle sized holdings numbered more than two million in Germany - nearly 20% of the German population. Vollmar argued that if the dictatorship of the proletariat implied dictatorship over these sections then it was better to give up this idea altogether. He emphasized the need for improvement in workers' conditions within the present order. He maintained that any state budget should be judged by its merits and if the socialists found that the major part of the budget was in conformity with their demands, it was only logical to express approval when the budget, as a whole, came to vote. This implied that the state was neutral with respect to the class struggle and can be made use of by any class to effect its own class rule. The opportunists tended to read their own positions in the introduction that Engels wrote to Marx's *Class Struggle in France*: In it Engels makes a selfcriticism of the position that he and Marx held as regards the possibility of economic development in the continent and the revolutionary tactics required of the proletariat, in 1848. He argues that the introduction of popular democracy has brought profound changes in the forms of class struggle. It has provided the means for the conscious participation of the majority in the revolutionary transformation. By the weapon of franchise the German workers had built the strongest, most disciplined and rapidly growing socialist party. The franchise has been transformed from a means of

deception into an instrument of emancipation even to threaten the bourgeoisie itself. It required that social democracy too change the forms of class struggle.

"The time of surprise attacks of revolution carried through by small minorities at the head of unconscious masses, is past. Where it is a question of complete transformation of the social organization, the masses also must be in it. Must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for, body and soul. The history of the last fifty years has taught us that but in order that the masses may understand what is to be done, long, persistent work is required and it is just this work that we are now pursuing and with a success that drives the enemy to despair".¹⁸

What Engels suggests is a tactical revision of the line of the party. Nowhere in the whole text does Engels suggest anything that could prompt one to alter the understanding of the nature of the State as a partisan instrument of the ruling classes, the necessity of its destruction and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat which were confirmed by the experiences of the working class struggles and as articulated in the conception of Marx.

18. Marx and Engels, vol.3, p.200.

However the moderate leadership of Social Democracy making use of this tactical revision of proletarian class practices suggested Marx's conception of the state and on the Dictatorship of the proletariat as the form of organization of state power of the proletariat during the period of transition. This was particularly true of Social Democracy in Germany. The introduction of representative democracy, withdrawal of anti-socialist law and the growing success of the SDP in the elections was to further evoke their suspicion with regard to the Marxist formulations. The trade union and cooperative apparatus was more and more to get integrated within the State apparatuses and the former was to decisively influence the policy of the party.¹⁹ For the democratic wing of social democracy the bourgeois society came to be progressively conceived as representing the general interests of the society and the State, the embodiment of this general interest. Therefore when Bunsen came to challenge the entire range of Marxist concepts including the dictatorship of the proletariat it could evoke only a feeble response even from Kautsky. Kautsky tried to bypass the entire problem by saying that the problem of Dictatorship could be safely left to the future. In 1902, in his 'The Social Revolution' he was to use the vague term 'Conquest of State Power for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.' This was as Lenin

19. See J.P. Nettle: The German Social Democratic Party 1890-1914 as a political model; in Past and Present, p. 30 (1965).

was to argue later was a concession to opportunism both in theory and practice.²⁰ In his 'Road to Power' Kautsky talks about the situation leading to a revolutionary period but was to avoid the crucial question with regard to the nature of this power to substitute the present state power. Pannekoek was to characterize this approach of Kautsky as 'passive radicalism', a 'theory of passive expectancy'.²¹ In his 'The Labour Revolution' Kautsky was to argue that taking into stock the experience of the movement, the Marxist concept of the Dictatorship has to be changed and was to define it as follows: "Between the Period of purely bourgeoisie state and a purely proletarian state.

Reorganization of Capital:

The second international stood at a juncture when profound changes were occurring in the reorganization of capital itself. The period from 1873 to the middle of 1890s is known as the period of great depression forming a watershed between two stages of capitalism: "the earlier vigorous, prosperous and flushed with adventurous optimism: the later more troubled, more hesitant and some would say

20. See Lenin: State and Revolution, p. 132, Progress Publishers, Moscow.

21. A. Pannekoek: Quoted in D. McLellan, Marxism after Marx, op.cit., p.172.

already bearing the marks of senility and decay".²² It manifested itself first in a violent slump and then in a lengthy movement. It resulted in the fall of the rate of profit due to the increased organic composition of capital, stagnation and partial saturation of outlets for investment and unimpeded action of competition which resulted in a spectacular fall in prices. Engels speaks of these new tendencies emerging within capital in a long note to the III volume of Capital, in Marx's discussion of joint stock companies.²³

22. Maurice Dobb: Studies in the Development of Capital. International Publishers, New York, 1976, p.300.
23. "A Change has taken place here since the last major general crises. The acute form of the periodic process with its former two year cycle appears to have given way to a more chronic, long drawn out, alteration between a relatively short and slight business improvement and a relatively long indecisive depression...It is possible that we are now in the preparatory stage of a new world crash of unparalleled vehemence". The changes that have taken place resulted in "colossal expansion of means of transportation and communication...has made a real world market in fact: England's monopoly has been challenged by the new industrial nations, opening of new fields in all parts of the world for investment of capital. By this most of the breeding grounds of crises and opportunities for their development have been eliminated...Cartels and trusts have replaced competition in the domestic market 'while protective tariffs characterise the foreign market. These are the preparations for the ultimate general industrial war which will decide who has supremacy in the world market. (See Marx: Capital, vol.3, p.489, progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974).

Capital therefore survived the chronic crises of the previous era by reorganizing itself internally by what Maurice Dobb calls as "searching for an escape in the insured (from narrower profit margins) foreign markets of positive imperialism, in tariffs, monopolies and employer's associations. The extension of investment field and the search for the stimuli of new markets to keep productive equipment working to capacity; the race to partition of the underdeveloped parts of the globe into exclusive territories and privileged markets, were quickly to become the order of the day".²⁴

The SPD was not to grasp the implications of this reorganization of capital and even it was to grasp the development of monopolies, export of capital, pursuits for colonies and struggle for division and redivision of the world, it was not able to see that this would necessarily result in imperialists wars, nor were they able to apply this analysis to the immediate tasks of the class struggle. For some of them it became an added proof that the development of capital had invalidated the basic, economic premises of Marx and therefore his political conception too has to be drastically altered.

24. M. Dobb: Op.cit., p.312.

Intrusion of bourgeois ideology into Marxist Theory

The progressive rise of opportunism in class practice, the inability to grasp the specific concrete situation of class struggle at the stage of imperialism, helped alien ideologies to make inroads into the scientific content of Marxism. These remarkably flexible ideologies with deep roots in objective reality and in the consciousness of workers, were organised in various institutions of the society including the State. They legitimised existing reality, and objectively acted as a great constraint on the advance of the class struggle of the proletariat.

Kautsky, the most prominent spokesman of the second international, was a Darwinian before he came to Marxism.²⁵ His conception of social development influenced by natural evolutionism, laid undue emphasis on productive forces and objective necessity. Clearly the dialectical tradition was quite alien to him.²⁶ Maclellan says "Kautsky could not work up any enthusiasm for Hegel, of whom he was profoundly ignorant: for him Hegel was an evolutionary determinist with

25. Kolokovski commenting on Kautsky says: "Kautsky's views changed remarkably little during the course of his career. In his youth he had embraced Darwinism and a naturalistic view of the world he soon discovered historical materialism and wove the two elements into an integral whole which satisfied him for the rest of his life" (L. Kolokovski: Main Currents of Marxism, Golden Age, op.cit., p.52).

26. David Maclellan: Marxism after Marx - an introduction, p.36, Macmillan Press, 1979.

unfortunate speculative and conservative bents". At the same time Kautsky felt a strong attraction to Kant. He wrote to Plekhanov in 1898 "The economic and historical stand point of Marx and Engels is capable of being integrated, if necessary, even with Neo-Kantianism".²⁷ This later aspect connected Kautsky with the Austro Marxian School on the one hand and Bernstein on the other. This was what was to compel Lenin to say that they all call themselves Marxists but their Marxism is impossibly pedantic. They have not yet grasped the core of Marxism i.e. its revolutionary dialectics.²⁸

Bernstein was to be influenced from a whole spectrum of current bourgeois theories of development as much as he was to be from the revolutionary conception of Marxism. During his long stay in England, he came under the strong influence of the Austrian Marginalist theory profounded by Eugen Bohur-Bawerk. Bernstein came to assert that 'Marx's theory of value was a purely abstract concept',²⁹ and took upon himself the task of revising the entire economic analysis of Marx. He rejected materialism and declared himself as an adherent of the school of positivist philosophy and

27. Kautsky to Pukhanov: Der Kampf, vol.18 (1925), p.I. Quoted in *ibid*, p.36.

28. See Lenin: "On Dialectics", Collected works, vol.38, p.358.

29. E. Bernstein: Evolutionary Socialism: p.29, New York, 1961.

sociology,³⁰ accepted the evolutionary conception of Darwinism and came under the strong influence of neo-Kantianism.

Neo-Kantianism as the dominant method of social theory within Marxism was developed systematically by the Austro-Marxist intellectuals.³¹ For Max Adler, a representative of this school, what he absorbed from new Kantian philosophy was not an ethical theory with which to supplement Marxism as was being attempted by some German thinkers,³² but the idea of a critique of knowledge applied to the foundations of society. According to Adler, Marx had been able to construct the theory of society by introducing the fundamental concept of 'socialized humanity' sketched in theses on Feuerbach which made possible investigation into the causal regularities of social life and the rapprochement between the natural sciences and the social science which would eventually allow them to be brought together in a single scientific conceptual scheme.³³ The concept of socialised humanity is transcendently given, which would lead to the Kantian duality of ethics and knowledge. From these positions Adler was to emphasize Marxism as an empirical science which like all other sciences attempts to establish causal connections among the phenomenon in the field.

30. Bernstein quoted in David Maclellan, op.cit., p.34.

31. See Max Adler in 'Marxiste Probleme' (1913) in Bottomore and Goode (ed) Austro Marxism, op.cit., p.62. The Austro-Marxist school was highly influenced by positivism more or less in the manner of Ernest Mach.

Thus the Kantian dichotomy between fact and value, the descriptive and the normative, was introduced into Marxism. This resulted in a total separation between theory and practice, between scientific analysis on ^{the} one hand and the practice and immediate concerns of class struggle on the other. Concrete class struggle was already pervasive of economism and opportunism separating it widely from the precept of seizing political power. Now this gulf further diluted working class struggles with heavy doses of reformism and moralism.

These developments were also to create the wide gulf between economic determinism as the inevitable casual outcome of the phenomenon and socialism as a matter of choice. This mechanical determinism combined with voluntarism could reach such ridiculous limits, as to claim that if the triumph of socialism is a historical necessity, then the practical activity of the social democrats is completely superfluous. After all, why work for a phenomenon to occur which must take place in any case.³³

This duality between theory and practice, revolutionary practice and necessity, inexorable laws of development and ethical choice was not confined to a marginal section of social democracy. It was true with regard to the most prominent theoreticians of the Second International itself.

33. See Plekhanov, 'Cant against Kant, or Herr Bernstein's Will and Testament, in Selected Philosophical Works, vol.II, pp.352-378, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976.

Hilferding was to express it more sharply in his *Finance Capital*: 'Marxism is only a theory of the laws of motion of society...To recognize the validity of Marxism (which implies the recognition of the necessity of socialism) is by no means a task for value judgements, let alone a pointer to a practical line of conduct. It is one thing to recognize a necessity, but quite another to place oneself at the service of that necessity".⁵⁰ For Kautsky the ethical motivation is required for revolutionary practice but it has nothing to do with scientific socialism. In his ethics and the materialist conception of history, Kautsky said: "Even social democracy as the organization of the proletariat in its class struggle cannot do without the ethical ideal, without ethical indignation against exploitation and class rule. But this ideal has nothing to do with scientific socialism, which is the scientific study of the laws of evolution and motion of social organism".³⁵ For Plekhanov, 'Social democracy considers historical development from the standpoint of necessity, and its own activity as a necessary link in the chain of those necessary conditions which combined made the triumph of socialism inevitable".³⁶ In this interpretation of Marxism there were profound ideas of Marx that were at stake. There-

34. Hilferding, quoted in Lucio Colletti, From Rousseau to Lenin, p.74.

35. Kautsky: Ethics and Materialist Conception of History quoted in Lucio Colletti, op.cit., p.73.

36. Plekhanov: quoted in *ibid*, p.88.

fore, although all of them came to condemn Bernstein the condemnation was really no condemnation at all as they too voiced the same position, at least in their basic content.

In this conception social democracy was something grafted among the workers which was either free to take this or that course. For Bernstein socialism was basically an ethical ideal which can be fashioned on the model of certain dominant values existing a priori. Both Kautsky and Plekhanov agree fundamentally on it. This conception has its roots not only in Kant for whom the ethical norms exist a priori but in an entire Christian tradition.

However, for Marx values are bound up and conditioned by the specific stage of class struggle on the one hand and its ideological and cultural expressions on the other. Therefore, social democracy is not a particular ethics institutionalized, but the expression and the instrument in the class struggle of the proletariat as a whole. What the position of Kautsky and others adds upto is the voluntariness of choice of the individual being prescribed as the choice of the class. This element of 'individual choice' as has already been noted is a very strong datum, in Kant and the Christian tradition.

Their 'revolutionary' politics had nothing to do with the concrete analysis of the concrete situations, of continuousl

taking stock (not by individual but by the class) of the stage and dynamics of the struggle. Their explanation was a process of starting from a central point, say the economy, from which all the elements of the model can be drawn out without any reference to practice. Bernstein, strongly was to explain this approach very aptly. "To be a materialist means first of all to trace back all phenomenon to the necessary movements of matter. These movements of matter are accomplished according to the materialist doctrine from beginning to end as a mechanical process. Mechanical facts determined in the last resort, all occurrences even those which appear to be caused by ideas".³⁷

This Marxism was therefore to become an explanation of events post factum, a form of contemplation of the historical process which Marx rightly ascribed to Feurbach.

Bernstein's Revision of Marxism

Bernstein was quick to grasp the contradictions existing between theory and practice, between the goal and the immediate concerns of the movement, between the changing nature of capital and the current notions of economism based on an inevitable breakdown of capitalism and set in

37. Bernstein, op.cit., p.6.

his book 'Evolutionary socialism' the great task of establishing the unity between these areas and correct those ideas in Marx, which he termed, Utopian. Although in the process he revised Marxism and reduced it into sheer economism and into an adjunct of bourgeois ideology, he was successful in drawing attention to the contradictions existing within social democracy at this juncture, both in theory and practice.

Bernstein starts off his exposition from Engel's last few documents especially his introduction to the Marx's class struggles in France.

Engels in the above mentioned text had argued for a revision of tactics of social democracy in the changed conditions of parliamentary democracy. Bernstein argued that the question involved was not merely a revision of tactics but certain basic conceptions of revolution in Marxism itself. It is necessary to change the insurrectionist and Utopian phraseology which is the inheritance of social democracy and bring it in line with practice. The wrong was not in the practice of class struggle but in the theoretical postulates governing social democracy. In a letter to A Babel he expressed his desired thus: "What I am striving for, and as a theoretician must strive for, is a unity between theory and reality, between phraseology and action".³⁶

According to Bernstein there was a contradiction between the wishes and scientific output of Marx. This makes

capital just a tendencious work full of excessive abstraction and theoretical phrasemongering.

Seizure of power by the proletariat, or the Marxist conception of revolution, was due to the influence of Blanquism. This ideological element tarnished the scientificity in Marx and led to all sorts of Utopian predictions which are not borne out by history. The prediction of polarization of society into two classes, the idea of the growing immiseration and proletarianization of the middle strata; progressive worsening of economic crises and growth of revolutionary tension have not materialised as Marx predicted. In fact the rise of the joint stock companies have really diversified the ownership of the means of production rather than concentrating it in few hands.

"It is thus quite wrong to assume that the present development of society shows a relative or indeed absolute diminuation of the number of the members of the possessing classes. Their number increases both relatively and absolutely. If the activity and the prospects of social democracy were dependent on the decrease of the 'wealthy' then it might indeed lie down to sleep. But the contrary is the case. The prospects of socialism depend not in the decrease but on the increase of social wealth.³⁹ In the whole of Western Europe...

38. Bernstein Letter to Bebel, Quoted in L Collecti, op.cit., p.49.

39. Bernstein, op.cit., p.48.

the small and medium sized agricultural holding is growing in numbers while the large or very large holding is declining.⁴⁰ This was a proof for Bernstein that polarization of society, as Marx predicted is not taking place.

Privileges of the capitalist bourgeoisie are slowly giving way to democratic institutions. Factory legislation, the democratization of communal administration and universal suffrage tend to erode the very basis of class struggle. "In all capitalist countries we see the privileges of the capitalist bourgeoisie yielding step by step to democratic organizations."⁴¹

Where parliamentary democracy is dominant the state can no longer be seen as an organ of class rule. The more the political institutions of modern nations become democratised, the more occasions and necessity for great political crises are removed. Hence the working class should not strive to seize power for revolution, but should rather seek to reform the state, remodelling it more and more into a democratic mould. There is therefore, a contradiction between capitalist exploitation and political democracy. He further read his own positions in Engels text mentioned above. "Engels abandoned the conquest of political power by the working classes because he wished to avoid the steady growth of social democracy secured by lawful means being interrupted by a political revolution".⁴²

40. op.cit., p.50.

41. ibid, p.XI

42. ibid, p.XIII

With the growing number and knowledge of workers, democracy is changed into the instrument by which to transform the representatives of the people from the masters into real servants of the people. For Bernstein, Democracy was in principle, the suppression of class government'.

Further Bernstein directly challenged the proletarian movement as inherently internationalist. With the growth of political democracy the worker becomes more and more a citizen and those were his real interests:

"The proletarian has no fatherland. This sentence might in a degree, perhaps apply to the worker of the forties without political rights, shut out of public life. Today, inspite of the enormous growth in the intercourse between nations it has already forfeited a great part of its truth and will always forfeit more, the more the worker, by the influence of socialism, moves from being a proletarian to a citizen".⁴³

From these positions, Bernstein came close to justifying German colonial expansion. Social democracy cannot be oblivious to national interest present or future. Therefore, it must support the furthering of the interests of German nation, precisely because it represents the whole people and not the interests of a particular group or section. "Where on the German side it is not a question merely of fancies or of the

43. *ibid*, pp.169-170.

particular interests of a separate groups which are indifferent or even detrimental to the welfare of the nation, where really important national interests are at stake, internationalism can be no reason for a weak yielding to the pretensions of foreign interested parties."⁴⁴ In the Stuttgart Congress of the International Bernstein was to argue for a 'socialist colonial policy'.⁴⁵

Engels in a letter to J Block in 1890, had said 'According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase'.^{45a} From this Bernstein argued that the materialist conception of history was in fact not purely materialist, much less purely economic. He wanted the ideological and ethical factors to have their due say. He felt eclecticism provided larger scope for production of thought than determinism.

From these positions Bernstein was to argue that the theory of social democracy has no worth at all. The practice of social democracy has to move forward unencumbered by the shackles of this theory. "Movement means everything for me

44. *ibid*, p.171.

45. See Rajani Paline Dutt *The Two Internationals* Pg 184, 1920

45a. Engels letter to J Block, 21 September 1890, MESC, p.498.

and that what is usually called 'the final aim of socialism' is nothing".⁴⁶

The positions of Bernstein, as they were, could hardly be important for consideration in the Marxist concept of revolution except for the other conditions that accompanied it:

(1) The gulf between theory and practice that Bernstein referred to in SDP was really true. The arguments expressed the true state of affairs and consciousness of large section of social democracy, the trade union leaders and functionaries of cooperative societies.

(2) It strengthened their position as they were not to face the catastrophe of a revolution. Bernstein legitimised the existing practice.

(3) Bernstein was a prominent theoretician of the second international and was personally very close to Engels. There was an aura of authority in what he said.

(4) Bernstein could not be easily challenged by the other ideologues as they were based on the same problematic. Therefore, most of their rebuttals did not challenge the roots of the problems that Bernstein raised and provided a revolutionary alternative.

46. *ibid*, p.XV

(5) Their theoretical elaboration did not help them to analyse the changing historical times or evolve a different method to pursue this analysis.

The official social democracy resorted to a mixed condemnation of Bernstein's views, reasserting the socialist aim. There was no effort to analyse the ideological roots of Bernstein's views, reassert in revolutionary politics of Marxism by the concrete analysis of the situation, taking into consideration the changes that have occurred in the organization and reproduction of capital and thus establish a new link with the practical class struggles and Marxist Revolutionary theory. As the existing state of affairs of Social democracy was left unaltered, it confirmed the triumph of Burnstein rather than that of revolutionary social democracy.⁴⁷

The first major attempt at a comprehensive criticism of Bernstein's views from a revolutionary Marxist perspective were made by Rosa Luxemburg in her article 'Social Reform or Revolution'. She asserted that there is an indissoluble link between social reform and revolution. But Bernstein confining himself to social reform wants to achieve socialism: Luxemburg accuses Bernstein for 'the explanation of the socialist programme by means of pure reason'.⁴⁸ But according to scientific

47. Shorske in his excellent study of German Social Democracy brings out this point well: "The distinction between the contenders remained largely a subjective one, a difference of ideas in the evaluation of reality rather than a difference in the realm of action" (C. Shorske: German Social Democracy, 1905-1917, p.29, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955).

socialism the growing anarchy in capitalist society is going to lead to the inevitable collapse of capitalism, which alone through revolutionary transformation can lead to the passing over to socialism. For Luxemburg the expansion, concentration and socialization of capital and the expansion of credit basically confirmed Marx's analysis and was going to lead to greater crisis by intensifying the contradictions within capitalist society, rather than regulating these contradictions. The separation between ownership and production on the one hand and cartellisation on the other, increase the contradictions between producers and consumers, between organised capital and working class, between the international character of capital and national economy. The survival or disappearance of the middle sized capitalist has to be seen dialectically in the ebb and flow of big capital. She accuses Bernstein of substituting the property notion of capitalism for the notion of relations of production, which Marx emphasizes. Social reforms and the trade union movement cannot lead to socialism because on the one hand they do not let the working class exercise exclusive control over capital and secondly these very rights, with the growing crisis of capital and increasing proletarianisation of the middle class are under threat. The democratic institutions have largely played out their role as the working class increasingly

48. Rosa Luxemburg in Alice Waters (ed.).
Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, p.41, Pathfinder Press,
New York, 1970.

became conscious that they cannot achieve their goal within the bourgeois framework. She accuses Bernstein of being an apologist of the bourgeoisie,⁴⁹ "When Bernstein rejects the economic decline of Marx in order to swear by the teachings of Bernsteine, Bohm-bawerk, Jevons, Say and Julius Wolff, he exchanges the scientific base of the emancipation of the working class for the apologetics of the bourgeoisie. When he speaks of the generally human character of liberalism and transforms socialism into a variety of liberalism he deprives the socialist movement of its class character, and consequently, of its historic content, consequently of all content; and conversely recognizes the class representing liberalism in history, the bourgeoisie, as the champion of the general interests of humanity".

However Luxemburg is unable to explain the basic reasons for the rise of this opportunism or its all pervasiveness. She does not provide the ways and means to combat opportunism within social democracy or resolve the contradictions that have developed within social democracy in the concrete conditions so that alternative practices of class struggle could develop. Luxemburg's critique hardly speaks about the inroads made by bourgeois ideology into social democracy. It does not refer to the dictatorship of the proletariat, the smashing of the bourgeois apparatuses and the bearing that the specific character of capitalism at that juncture has on class struggle.

49. *ibid*, p.85.

Bernstein's strength therefore has to remain undiminished. The trade union and cooperative leadership stood with him almost in a whole to whom he promised immediate bliss rather than distant dreams.

We have seen that there were various strands within the second international which were to resolutely oppose the naked revisionism displayed by Bernstein. Also, even when they adhered to the ideas of Marx they failed to make a concrete analysis of the specific situation, the contradictions expressed therein and the nature of the class-alliances called for. We can see this more clearly with regard to the national question.

On the National and Colonial Question

The second international was to pass a correct policy regarding this question in its Congress of 1896: "The congress proclaims the full right to selfdetermination of all nations, and it expresses its sympathy to the workers of all countries at present suffering beneath the yoke of military, national or any other kind of absolutisms. The congress calls on the workers of these countries to join the ranks of the conscious workers of the whole world in order to struggle beside them to defeat international capitalism and attain the goals of social democracy".⁵⁰ However, this general

50. See Brunthal, op.cit., p.225.

conception could and did hide a whole range of positions which were blatantly national chauvinistic. The stereotyped conception of bourgeois democratic revolution, to remain entrenched for a long time before the advent of socialism was mechanically imprinted in the dominant perception of second international. An abstract and nationalist conception of the 'laws of history' prevented it from assessing the class relation and arrangement of class forces in the specificity of a social formation. Therefore, it made Plekhanov exclaim on hearing of Lenin's April Theses: "But it is a violation of all laws of History".⁵¹

The national chauvinistic position that Bernstein advocated has already been stated. Its influence can be seen even in the 'radical left'. The 'radical left' current represented by Luxemburg, Pannekoek and Strasser was characterised to varying degrees and sometimes, in different forms, by its opposition to national self-determination. Rosa Luxemburg was to call the right of national self-determination as an abstract and metaphysical right'. For her, the right of secession for each nation implied in reality support for bourgeois nationalism and the independence of each small nation is Utopian from the economic point.⁵² Even

51. Quoted in Michael Lowy, "From the Great Logic of Hegel to the Finland Station in Petrograd: Critique, 6 Spring, 1976.

52. See M. Lowy, "Marxism and the National Question" in R. Blackburne (ed.) Revolution and Class Struggle, p.142, Fontanna and Collins, 1977.

though she changed her position slightly, after the experience of the October Revolution in her Junius Pamphlet⁵³ she was to be bogged down in her previous economic and mechanical perspective rather than see the national question politically. Karl Renner tried to neutralize the danger of political separatism especially in terms of Austria by providing an administrative and constitutional arrangement. Otto Bauer by using the concept of National Evolution, emphasized the cultural characteristics of the nation which was above and beyond the classes.⁵⁴ Class struggle, therefore, had nothing to do with this question, neither did they elaborate the question of national self-determination in terms of this proletarian revolution.

The question of colonies was seen in terms of the progressive aspects of capital in breaking down the Feudal and obscurantist structures and developing the economy and not in terms of the struggle of the masses against imperialism and colonialism and the struggle of the masses objectively aligned with the struggle of the working class in capitalist countries against capital. In Hilferding's 'Finance Capital' we find a strong emphasis on the former aspect. This was just an expression of the economic and mechanical understanding prevalent in the dominant section of the second

53. Luxemburg, "The Junius Pamphlet" in Mary Alice Waters (ed.) Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, Op.cit., p.304.

54. Bottomore and Goode (ed.) Austro-Marxism, op.cit.

international. It was definitely not a wonder, therefore, that when the war broke out, the dominant section of the international was to support the imperialist policies of their respective nations.

Lenin's break with the Revisionism of the Second International

How does Lenin see the theory and practice of class struggle in the second International, It gives us a clue in understanding not only why the dominant faction of the second international fell a prey to opportunism but also ^{why it failed} to understand the October Revolution itself. When one closely analyses Lenin's writings, one finds that he is not satisfied with merely criticizing opportunism in theory, which of course he does. Lenin criticizes opportunism in practice as well. Against the ideological and organizational weakness of Social democracy he was to evolve a conception of the party, representing the most advanced section of the proletariat, equipped with the most advanced theory, based on democratic centralism, equipped with the weapon of criticism and self-criticism deeply rooted in the masses in struggle and keeping politics in command, i.e. the overthrow of the state power is its basic objective and all other struggles are complementary and supplementing it.

To achieve it the struggles cannot be fought within the framework of the legality prescribed by the rulers.

Neither can it be based on the foundations of bourgeois ideology. It can be based only on the foundations of scientific socialism, i.e. the working class, in their immediacy, in the specific situations of the present, must be able to grasp their class situation vis-a-vis capital as a whole, not by appearances but by the real relations that exist between them, which are the relations of, as Marx, called raging contradictions. Unless the workers are equipped with theory, their struggle will always remain within the perimeters of capital.

The working class can fight its struggle by basing itself only on its own terrain not conceding the latter to the problematic influenced by the short sighted practices of economism. This they can do only when they are firmly rooted in class struggle, for only during the course of this struggle a class begins to constitute itself politically. Moreover, only a scientific theory can enable it to be firmly anchored in class struggles, for it actually reflects the internal dynamics of existing contradictions thereby maintaining the possibility of its own internal restructuring as and when required. Therefore, theory can only be concrete i.e. it must help the proletariat to develop its own consciousness: make it understand the enemy in all its facets and changing forms; as also the weapons it utilizes to keep the workers within its bounds, so that the struggle of workers is able to adjust to the

changing planks of the enemy. Trotsky commenting on this approach of the Bolsheviks was to say: "For the fundamental Bolshevik prejudice consists precisely in the idea that one can learn to ride when one is sitting firmly on a horse".⁵⁵

Therefore Lenin does criticise the opportunists remaining within the paradigm they set but always through revoking scientific socialism one hand, analysing the concrete situation in the interests of the working class as a whole in order to bear on revolutionary practice on the other. Therefore it is a criticism that is creative both in theory and practice. This can be seen from this note of Lenin in his philosophical notebooks:

"Plekhanov criticizes Kantianism (and agnosticism in general) more from a vulgar materialistic standpoint than from dialectical materialist standpoint in so far as he merely rejects their views a lamine (from the threshold) but does not correct them (as Hegel corrected Kant) deepening, generalising and extending them showing the connections and transitions of each and every concept...Marxists criticised the Kantians and Humists more in the manner of Feubach (and Buchner) than of Hegel".⁵⁶

55. Trotsky: *Terrorisms and Kommunisms*, p.82. Quoted in G. Lukae's, *History and Class Consciousness*, p.314, Merlin, London, 1971.

56. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.38, p.179. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1961. This condemnation of Plekhanov is inspite of Lenin's great approval of Plekhanov earlier: "We simply note that the only Marxist in the international social democratic movement to criticize the incredible platitudes of the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism was Plekhanov" (Lenin: *Marxism and Revisionism*", in

We will see in the next chapter how Lenin sees the emergence of revisionism in Marxism in the process of conceding its ideological terrain to bourgeois ideologies, in renouncing the revolutionary dialectics for vulgar metaphysical materialism and the renouncing of the revolutionary role of the proletariat by making the State absolute and the bourgeois society as permanent. He was to recognize like Bernstein that profound changes are occurring within capitalist society which must be brought to the knowledge of the proletariat as a weapon to further its own struggle. However unlike Bernstein these changes for Lenin heralded the organic crisis of capitalism and the era of proletarian revolutions. We will have to see how this revolutionary preparation was made both in theory and practice in the Russian social democracy.

S.W., vol.I, p.51, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970). This shows that Lenin, himself was to grasp the depth of revisionism in social democracy progressively.

CHAPTER III

THE RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE

To understand the Russian Revolution we will have to demarcate clearly between the two phases: First, the development of class struggle in Russia, leading upto the October Revolution and the establishment of Soviet Power. Second, the period of transition. The paper limits itself to the relationship of scientific socialism to the decisive moments of class struggle,¹ the concrete conditions in which it was waged and the contributions it makes towards enhancing the conceptions of revolution and sharpening and deepening the class struggle. In it, the role of Lenin has been very prominent at least from 1902 to 1923, in guiding the class struggle, defending and developing scientific socialism and waging a bitter war against bourgeois ideologies and practices. Therefore, for the period mentioned the writings of Lenin need to be carefully followed.

The Context of Class Struggles:

The following factors impinge on the immediate theoretical elaborations and ideological and political struggles of Lenin:

1. The transformation occurring within capital itself and their reflection politically and ideologically;

1 The decisive moments of class struggle can be termed as those when the existing class relations go through qualitative change and give rise to a new equilibrium of class forces or when the existing class relations are drastically threatened as to effect substantial changes within the system of class relations.

2. The development of class struggle in general and in Russia in particular;
3. The working class movement upto the present as reflected in the class struggle in Russia and in other social democracies;
4. The growing opportunism within the social democracies and the ideological struggles waged around it;
5. Scientific socialism as elaborated by Marx and Engels and later elaborations based on this foundation;

These factors, of course, cannot be considered, independently but as forming the basic context in the elaborations of Lenin, related dialectically to the enrichment of the concept of revolution.

Capitalism in Russia develops very rapidly after 1860. In spite of the opinions of Marx and Engels² that under certain

2 The basic point that the Narodniks argued is that Russia can pass to communism basing themselves on the rural commune without passing through Capitalism. In 1877, Marx does not hold much chance to this argument; "If Russia continues to pursue the path she has followed since 1861, she will loose the finest chance ever offered by history to a people and undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of a capitalist regime". (Marx to Mikahilovsky in K Marx, F Engels, selected correspondence, p.312, Moscow, 1965). However, Marx was to express himself more sympathetically to the populists in 1881. "The analysis given in capital assigns no reasons for or against the vitality of rural community, but the special research into this subject which I conducted, the materials for which I obtained from original sources, has convinced me that this community is the mainspring of Russia's social regeneration, but in order that it might function as such which assail it from every quarter and then to ensure conditions normal to spontaneous development. (Marx, selected writings (ed) D Maclellan, (Oxford & New York) p.576, 1976) Similarly, Engels in his Controversy against Rkatchev, says, "It is clear that communal ownership in Russia is long past its flourishing period

conditions Russia may have its specific road to socialism, it was Plekhanov who first argues against the Narodniks³ that the destiny of class struggle in Russia and development of Capital is closely bound up with the developments in Europe. Plekhanov's basic argument was that capital is developing in Russia and in the wake of the partial liberation of the serfs from 1860's the character of rural commune is changing, showing signs of the development of bourgeois relations in the countryside. Therefore, the task immediately confronting Russia is a bourgeois democratic revolution rather than the populist revolution argued by the Narodniks. But since the bourgeoisie is incapable of mobilizing the broad masses against the autocracy, this task is fallen on the shoulders of the proletariat, which alone is consistently revolutionary and therefore, singularly equipped to carry through the bourgeois democratic revolution to its completion. Based on this analysis, the group for the emancipation of Labour was founded in 1883, in Geneva.⁴ There are also small groups, that

and to all appearances is moving towards its destruction. Nevertheless, the possibility undeniably exists of transforming this social form into a higher one. This, however, can happen only if, before the complete break up of communal ownership, a proletarian revolution is successfully carried out in Western Europe". (M Marx, & F. Engels: Basic writings in Politics and philosophy, L Feuer (ed), p.473, New York, 1959).

3 Narodniks emphasized the potential of peasant revolution by emphasizing to the Russian peculiarities of countryside, especially the rural commune; Mir. They made propaganda among peasants and a section of it turns into terrorists.

4 See A Sacher: Pavel Axelrod and the Development of Menshevism, pp 133-136, Cambridge, (1972).

develop within Russia based on this understanding, especially in St Petersburg. The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was founded by bringing in the groups based in Russia and abroad, in 1898. Therefore, Lenin's first few writings were meant to confront the problems that the small social democracy faced in Russia. In his 'What the Friends of the People are', Lenin argues against the Narodnik line upholding Plekhanov's analysis. In his 'Development of Capitalism in Russia', Lenin, once again arguing against the Narodniks, analyses the course and development of capitalism in Russia and explains how the Russian Proletariat is destined to play the crucial role in the Bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia.⁵

But 'what is to be done' written in 1902, although based in the Russian context and immediately aimed at carrying the ideological struggle against Russian varieties of 'economism' and 'legal marxism' and elucidation of the basis of the Russian Social Democratic party, was to be a document which drew from all the factors and was a response to all those factors stated earlier. We will have to demarcate the specific elements of the Russian social formation of the time of Tsarist autocracy that go into this text as well as those which were ideological and political responses based on the analysis of Marx and Engels, to the working class movements as a whole and

⁵ See V. Lenin, 'Development of Capitalism in Russia' Collected Works (CW) Vol.I, 4th ed., Foreign Publishing House, Moscow, 1960-1970. (Henceforth referred as CW).

the various revisionist trends within the social democracies. We will analyse the latter first: Marx in his 'communist manifesto' had defined a communist as the one who represents (or embodies) the interests of the class as a whole.⁶ But the class as a class confronts another only politically i.e. in the process of the overthrow of another class.⁷ The decisive constitution of the working class is in the act of Revolution and the establishment of its dictatorship.⁸ Therefore, amidst all the struggles of the working class, this singular and immediate interest of the working class, in the interest of the class as a whole must be in the forefront, together with the exact estimation of class/classes placed antagonistically

6 See Marx: "Communist Manifesto" in SW. Vol.I, pp.119-120.

7 Marx clearly distinguishes between the various forms of struggle of the workers, economic conditions had at first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted a few phases, this mass becomes united and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle. (K Marx: The Poverty of Philosophy, p.150, FLPH, Moscow, 1956).

8 See Marx's letter to Weydemeyer; Marx Engels Selected Correspondence pp.64, Moscow, 1975. Also Marx: "Critique of the Gotha Programme" in SW. Vol.3, p.26. opp. Besides: '..... The class overthrowing it, can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the much of ages and become fitted to found society anew' (K Marx and F Engels: The German Ideology, pp. , Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970).

opposed to it, and the exact relation of class forces.⁹ From it Lenin draws the conclusion that it is necessary not only to have this advanced section, equipped with most advanced theory, but to counter the isolation that capital continuously: economically, politically and ideologically there must be the horizontal relationship between the advanced elements based on democratic centralism. The membership of such a party can be limited only to professional revolutionaries because they alone can keep the interests of the class as a whole, i.e. political demands unencumbered by the individual demands or the demands of a sect.

The economic struggles and spontaneous outbursts of working class even though may take generalized forms do not threaten the existing political power as such and therefore, remain defensive in character. Through all these struggles and, amidst all these struggles the decisive interests of

9 "The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe every other social class in all the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical and political life. Unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even merely upon itself alone are not social democrats. For the self knowledge of the working class is indissolubly bound up not solely with a fully clear theoretical understanding it would be even truer to say, not so much with the theoretical as with the practical, understanding of the relationships between all the various classes of modern society acquired through the experiences of political life'. (Lenin, "What is to be Done",) in Selected Works Vol. I, pp. 145, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976. (Henceforward referred as SW).

the class can be posited and carried forward by the decisive instrument of the party. "All worship of the spontaneity of the working class movement, all belittling of the role of the 'conscious element' of the role of social democracy, means quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers".¹⁰

Lenin recognized the growing influence of opportunism within the social democracies of other countries. This opportunism can be countered more effectly only through a compact organization of the vanguard. "The growth of opportunism for Lenin is inextricably bound up with opportunism in organization."¹¹ Actually in the name of unity the second international had openly allowed the dissemination of bourgeois ideology even within the most advanced ranks. The vanguard cannot be constituted of the fighters and fought both.

For Lenin this growing opportunism is based deeply in the prevailing class relations. The Dominant class continuously gives birth to a dominant ideology which has its purvasive influence on the exploited classes and even on their vanguard. Trade union struggles and spontaneity cannot break through it. It is necessary to counter it through the standpoint of scientific socialism. Its organized expression is the party. "Our party is the conscious spokesmen of an unconscious process".

10 V.Lenin, "What is to be Done", C.W., Vol.5, pp.382-383.

11 V.Lenin: "One step forward Two steps Back", in S.W., Vol.I, p.394.

The hotpotch of eclectic consciousness cannot make a revolution.¹²

By bringing in these aspects Lenin counters the notions of mechanical development of working class struggle culminating in revolution. It is also countering the theory that consciousness is just an imprint of the given, the apparent, the one sided unity. Lenin, was already insisting on the concept of the dialectical process in the concept of the organization.

Therefore Lenin's theory of organization is in fact, above all a theory of revolution.¹³ It is not an organization in the sense of a bureaucratic institution. Its rationale consists precisely in so far as it is involved in the day to day struggles of the masses, and through them brings the complete overthrow of the present class relations to the consciousness of the masses. At the same time Lenin admits the possibility of the party lagging behind the masses. In 1905, he was to say "our party has stagnated while working underground".¹⁴ When Lenin presented his famous April thesis, the majority of the Central Committee did not stand with him "On that day (April 4) Comrade Lenin could not find open sympathisers even

12 Ibid.

13 See, Ernest Mandel: 'The Leninist Theory of Organization' in Blackburn R (ed) Revolution and Class-struggle, pp.78-123, Fontana/collins, 1977. It is an extremely lucid exposition of Lenin's conception of the party taking into account the positions of his critics, relating it to the theory and practice of revolution.

14 V.Lenin: "The Reorganization of the party," CW, Vol.10,p.32.

in our own ranks".¹⁵ In October large sections of the party were not prepared for the insurrection. Lenin had to threaten to appeal to the masses directly bypassing the Central Committee. This tension has to be grasped. The party is part of the social reality and therefore reflects the contradictions, the class struggle in society. Therefore, it is quite liable to make mistakes. But its ability rests precisely to recognize its mistakes, underline the reasons of its mistakes, correct its course, and struggle against those tendencies which have led to the mistake. Only the Bolshevik party proved during the revolutionary period to exercise this utmost 'revolutionary flexibility',¹⁶ precisely because it was equipped with the 'most advanced theory',¹⁷ and its earlier practice had demonstrated to the vanguard class that it alone was capable of carrying through the tasks on which it swore.

The party does not make the revolution. But the party possessed of the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat and the most advanced sections of the revolutionary masses, acts as the most effective instrument of the revolution. Lenin was to emphasize it continuously. "We are convinced that the emancipation of the working classes must be won by the working

15 Goldenburg Quoted in M.Lowy; From the Great Logic of Hegel to the Finland Station in Petrograd Critique"6, Spring 1976, pp.

16 V.Lenin - "Our Revolution", CW, Vol.3.

17 V.Lenin, "Two Tactics of S.D. in the Democratic Revolution", S.W., Vol.I, p.435.

classes themselves. A socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class-conscious and organized, trained and educated in an open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie." ¹⁸ He wrote on the eve of the revolution: "To be successful insurrection must rely not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon the revolutionary upsurge of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon the turning point in the history of the growing revolution where the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Blanquism." ¹⁹

Lenin's conception of the Party took the Marxist method seriously. That there are contradictions. In the process of their growth they will not only break the existing unity but will result in a change of relations in the contradictions of the unity itself. Revisionism, within the party if allowed to exist and grow can entirely reduce the party into an appendix of the bourgeoisie in critical times, which the social

18 V.Lenin, C.W., Vol.26, p.22-23.

19 V.Lenin, C.W., Vol.26, p. 22-23.

democracy proved amply in the wake of World War I. "What at first sight appears to be an 'un-important' mistake may lead to most deplorable consequences and only shortsighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian social-democracy for many, many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or other 'shade'".²⁰ Therefore, Lenin was to utilize the Marxist dialectical method much before he actually came to study it in Hegel's Logic.²¹

Lenin emphasizes strongly the absolute necessity for the revolutionary party to make all progressive demands and movements of all oppressed social layers and classes its own.²² He clarified it in 'One step forward: Two steps back'. The linkages between the party and other mass organizations is stated as follows (1) Organization of revolutionaries; (2) Organization of workers, as broad and varied as possible. (I confine myself to the working class taking it self evident that, under certain conditions certain elements of other classes will also be included here); (3) Workers' organizations associated with the party; (4) Workers' organizations not associated with the party but actually under its control and direction; (5) Unorganized elements of the working class who

20 V.Lenin, "What is to be Done". in SW, Vol.I, pp.109.

21 See for the Possibility of it in Althusser - "Lenin before Hegel" in Lenin & Philosophy and other Essays , pp.107-127, Monthly Review Press, New York, London, 1971.

22 V.Lenin: "What is to be Done," in SW, Vol.1, pp-157-158.

in part also came under the direction of the social democratic partys at any rate during big manifestations of the class struggles'.²³ The emphasis of centralization clearly lies in political and not in the formal organizational sphere.²⁴ For the class to act against a class which the party anticipate before the final act itself the instrument must be sharp, decisive, and effective to the task. The character of the instrument of course changes according to the given conditions without loosing its essence. Here we find Lenin himself correcting a lot of his emphasis which he laid down in what is to be done later, precisely because the altered conditions necessitated the changes. In 1902, he was dealing with the Russian autocracy, the pervasive influence of revisionism within the party. Therefore, there was a great emphasis on secrecy and centralization. "The economists" he said at the Congress in 1903, "have gone to one extreme. To straighten matters out somebody had to pull in the other direction and that is what I have done".²⁵ Immediately, after the democratic upsurge of 1905, he was to say that the new form of the basic organisation or nucleus of the workers' party must be definitely broader than were the old circles. Apart from this, the new nucleus will most likely have to be less rigid, more free, looser organization.²⁶ In the 'Social democracts and the Duma Electins',

23 V.Lenin, S.W. Vol.I, p.291.

24 Ernest Mandel, Opp. Cit, p.91.

25 V.Lenin, "Speech on the Party Programme", CW, Vol.6, p.489.

26 V.Lenin, "The Reorganization of the Party", CW, Vol.10, p.34.

Lenin argued for the elective principle, the curtailment of the powers of the Central Committee and the principle of referendum'.²⁷ In 1906, he emphasized that the principle of democratic centralism consisted in 'working tirelessly to make the local organizations the principal organizational units of the party in fact, and not merely in name, and to see to it that all the highest standing bodies are elected, accountable, and subject to recall. The right of the minority to dissent was asserted.²⁸ With the suppression of Soviets the party had to take increasing recourse to secrecy and centralization.²⁹ After the February revolution till the Kronstadt rebellion, the primacy of democracy over centralism, the right of dissent for minority, the two line struggle within the party was to be emphasized.³⁰

The attack of Rosa Luxemburg on the Leninist conception of party was based on two counts. The one derived from the practices of SDP from which she derived the conclusion that the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat in itself is going to lead to the organized proletariat, and secondly Lenin is

27 V.Lenin, C.W., Vol.II,p.434

28 V.Lenin: "Report on the Unity Congress": CW, Vol.10, pp.276, 381.

29 V.Lenin: Resolution adopted by the Second Paris Group, CW, Vol.17, pp.221-223.

30 See L Sehapiro: The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, II Ed., p.174, London 1970.

accused of advocating an ultra-centrist line, of dictating the composition of the local party committees and insisting to do away with the initiative of lower party committees.³¹ The course of the revolution and their successes and failures have stood against the first argument of Luxemburg.³² The Second argument although apparently looks true is not really true as the Bolshevik party showed real democratic spirit in practice atleast, till Lenin's death and if it was constrained it has to be explained by the relations of class forces which themselves conditioned the party. Trotsky accused the party for 'substitutionism' i.e. the replacement of the initiative of the working class with that of the party alone'.³³ On the one hand this approach repeats the mechanically deterministic approach of the second international and on the other it did not seriously understand Lenin's conception itself which was never to make the party substitutionist. In that case the April Thesis has to be rejected and the planned insurrection of October withdrawn since the majority of the party, initially was to oppose them. The Mensheviks (yet to be formed) had no objection to

 31 Rosa Luxemburg, "Organizational Question of Social Democracy," in Mary Alice Walters (ed) - Opp. Cit., pp.112-130.

32 It is not this or that failure of success but the working class movement as a whole. Failure in one instance or at several instances need not necessarily repudiate a theoretical position. The position of Rosa Luxemburg is wrong, because it is based with a conception of mechanical evolution of consciousness and does not see the role of conscious intervention, an intervention which Marx calls can grasp the process as a whole.

33 Trotsky quoted in Ernest Mandel: Opp. Cit, p.30.

'what is to be done' and gave their assent to it when first published. It was only after the split that Plekhanov and Martov were to accuse Lenin of 'dictatorship'.

The two stages of the Revolution and the role of the Peasantry

It has already been stated that the decisive role of the proletariat in the overthrow of Tsarism and the establishment of a bourgeois democracy was acknowledged by the entire range of social democratic viewpoint in Russia. But the differences arose mainly regarding the character of this bourgeois democracy, the nature of the class relations in it and the transition from bourgeois democracy to socialism. The viewpoints of Trotsky expressed in 1906 and later termed as the 'doctrine of permanent revolution' fell in a different framework. The Russian social democrats could draw the parallel from Marx who after the failure of the liberal democracy in Germany in the revolutions of 1848-1851 under the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois leadership turned more and more to the working class to lead the revolution in Germany, which would in turn, precipitate socialist revolutions in western Europe, which in turn react back on Germany strengthening the process leading to the establishment of socialist revolution in a chain of uninterrupted revolutions.³⁴

Lenin in his two tactics of social democracy in the Russian revolution argued for the two stages of the Russian Revolution and delineates the revolutionary blocs in the two stages:

1. In the first stage the revolution is led by the

³⁴ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: The Revolution of 1848, especially p.323-4, 326, 327, 329, Harmondsworth, 1973.

proletariat by relying on the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie will be vacillating given their manifold interests, binding them both to the autocracy, feudalism in the countryside and the specific Asiatic features of the reaction of Russia. Lenin calls this the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.³⁵ But the task of social democracy is not to consolidate bourgeois democracy³⁶ but to deepen the revolution, based on the independent organization of the proletariat, arousing the semiproletarians and carrying forward the revolution when bourgeois democracy will be overthrown.³⁷ Lenin further says that the exact tactics to be adopted at that stage cannot be predetermined as it depends upon the class relation of forces and the consciousness and organization of the proletariat and semi-proletarian masses.³⁷

Lenin here does not argue from mechanical transformation of one mode of production to the other. His emphasis is primarily on the relations of class forces of providing a strategic conception and giving the correct slogans. The autocracy has not provided an opportunity for the backward masses to be aroused and develop socialist consciousness and to realise

35 Lenin: "Two Tactics of S.D. in the Democratic Revolution," SW, Vol.I, p.156.

36 A Provisional Revolutionary Government is for the immediate repulsion of attempts at counter-revolution, and not at all an organ for the implementation of the historical aims of the bourgeoisie revolution in general; (Ibid, p.446).

37 "The Proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the masses of the peasantry in order to crush the autocracy's resistance by force and paralyse the bourgeois instability. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population, so as to crush the bourgeois resistance by force and paralyse the instability of the peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie. Ibid, p.494.

their class position vis-a-vis the other classes. The economic process too has not developed to bring about sharp class-differentiation among large section of the masses. Therefore, at this juncture to give the socialist slogan, to wipe out the distinction between the minimum and maximum programme will be to strengthen the hands of the enemy, by making the allies of the proletariat or a specific historical moment as the allies of the enemy i.e. making the upper layers of the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie and lead to the isolation of the proletariat and crush it.³⁸

The other issue which Lenin emphasizes is the character of the united front. In 'two tactics' Lenin strongly emphasizes the role of the peasantry in the transitional period. 'In classifying the big social groups according to their political tendencies, we can, without danger of serious error, identify revolutionary and republican democracy with the mass of the peasants'³⁹ Lenin argues that there are contradictions within

38 "By making implementation of the minimum programme the provisional revolutionary government's task (the resolution of RSDLP) eliminates the absurd and semianarchist ideas of giving immediate effect to the maximum programme and to conquest of power for a socialist revolution. The degree of Russia's economic development (an objective condition) and the degree of class-consciousness and organisation of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably bound up with the objective condition) make the immediate and complete emancipation of the working class impossible. Only the most ignorant people can close their eyes to the bourgeois nature of the democratic revolution, which is now taking place", Ibid, p.435.

39 Ibid. p.450.

the peasantry but during the whole stage of the democratic revolution it is the ally of the workers. "It is not merely by the prospect of the radical agrarian reform that the peasantry is attracted to the revolution, but by all its general and permanent interests as well. Even when fighting with the proletariat, the peasantry stands in need of democracy. For only a democratic system is capable of accurately expressing its interests and ensuring its predominance as a mass, as the majority. The more enlightened the peasantry becomes the more consistently and resolutely will it stand for a thorough going democratic revolution; for, unlike the bourgeoisie, it has nothing to fear from the people's supremacy but on the contrary stands to gain from it".⁴⁰

Social democracy in the event of the bourgeois democracy does not fold its hand and offer power in the hands of the bourgeoisie. But recognizes the contradictions existing between the liberal bourgeoisie and workers, between the upper peasantry and poor peasant masses and organizes them to struggle for the socialist revolution. For this purpose social democracy maintains its ideological and organizational independence.

Lenin draws the picture of the Russian bourgeoisie as extremely vacillating. The big bourgeoisie, the landlords, the factory owners cannot lead the revolution inspite of their contradictions with Tsarism. They are too heavily fettered by

40 Lenin: "Two Tactics of S.D. in the Democratic Revolution" - CW, vol.9, pp.98-99.

private property of capital and land to enter into a decisive struggle. They are in too great need of Tsarism, with its bureaucratic, police and military forces for use against the proletariat and peasantry to want it to be destroyed.⁴¹ Therefore, although, they may be opposed to the Tsar, they are more opposed to the masses. And in case they came to power, they will soon betray their reactionary nature.

Lenin had already worked up this dialectical process in an earlier text which was going to prove of immense use later 'the struggle cannot be understood at all unless the concrete circumstances of each battle are studied. But once that is done, we see clearly that development does indeed proceed dialectically, by way of contradictions. The minority becomes the majority, and the majority becomes the minority, each side passes from the defensive to offensive and from the offensive to the defensive..... one of the basic principle of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete."⁴²

We have to grasp the 'shades' that distinguished this position from that of the Mensheviks and that of Trotsky. The Mensheviks actually took the bourgeoisie as a block and ascribed them naturally the right to lead and consolidate the bourgeois democratic revolution initially precipitated by the working class.

41 Lenin: "Two Tactics of S.D. in the Democratic Revolution," SW, vol.I, p.457.

42 V.Lenin: "One Step Forward: Two Steps Back;" in SW, vol.I, p.410.

They were to remain fairly aloof from tackling the issue of the peasantry in terms of the revolution, and not tackling this issue seriously meant either 'resigning to spontaneity or letting the hegemony of the landlords, remain over the large masses of the peasantry. Thirdly their position did not allow them to articulate the strategic concept of transition from bourgeois democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. Therefore, they stopped where Bourgeois democracy ends, and therefore, according to Lenin's analysis represent no more than radical democracy, at the most, under idealist conditions, and form part of the reactionary forces in the process of transition to socialism.

Trotsky's position did not distinguish between the Maximum and the minimum programme.⁴³ If Trotsky was to voice the concrete slogans emerging from his position, large masses of the peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie would have moved over, objectively, to the camp of reactionary forces and the proletariat would be isolated. It would have been very easy for the reactionary forces to crush it. Besides, Trotsky did not realize the importance of the masses becoming conscious in the process of struggle which can be afforded only through the mediacy of the revolutionary bourgeois democracy. If Trotsky's position were driven to the extreme it would have resulted in the dictatorship of a conscious minority over unconscious majority of

43 See Trotsky: The Permanent Revolution.

workers and peasantry, apart from the dictatorship over the reactionary classes. Therefore, 'the permanent revolution' was an abstract truth. It did not proceed from the all-sided analysis of the contradictions existing in the concrete. It did not grasp dialectics.

The positions of Lenin, therefore, were much closer to the positions he would assume in April Thesis in 1917, than that of Mensheviks and Trotsky. The concrete class relations of the forces in April, the rise of the Soviets and the widespread peasant revolts which the provisional revolutionary government wanted to repress gave tremendous concreteness to the positions articulated by Lenin in 1905. In 'social democracy's attitude toward the peasant movement', Lenin calls his strategy mentioned above as the strategy of 'uninterrupted revolution'. Lenin was to elaborate his conception of revolutionary bloc consisting of the peasantry, concretely, in his preliminary draft theses on the Agrarian Question' presented to the Second Congress of the Third Communist international.⁴⁴

Struggles against revisionism in the Philosophical, economic and political fronts

The inroads made by neo Kantianism into Marxism and its concrete relationship with the development of revisionism in the social democracies during the period of second international has already been dealt with. Although new Kantianism in its

44 See Lenin, S.W., Vol.3, pp.378-389, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976.

western forms was not to make serious inroads in Russia, it was to be made through the philosophy of Ernest Mach, who tried to reconcile certain latest discoveries in natural sciences, especially the discovery of electron by recourse to a form of sensationalism. Mach attempted to construct a world view which constituted entirely of sensations. The 'object' is nothing but mere grouping of sensations arranged economically and coherently.⁴⁵ Earlier Bishop Berkely had argued for the same in his famous dictum 'Ens Est in Sensatione' (Being is in sensation'). In Russia the Otzovists led by Bagdanov develop the ideas of Ernest Mach in a system called Empiriomonism. According to them physical and mental phenomena were the same experience, although differently organized. Central to Bagdanov's theory was the idea of experience as organized. Mental phenomenon as organized individually and physical phenomenon socially. It was an approach where the principle of organisation was fundamental. Organisation strives to realize itself through history which will triumph in the end. It will be brought about by the socialist revolution, which puts an end to contradiction and ensures the victory of organization. The proletariat was the agent of realization of the idea of organization and socialist society is the form of realization of its essence.⁴⁶

45 J Blackmore: Ernest Mach, ch.5, Berkely, 1972.

46 Lecourt DI Proletarian Science? The case of Hysenko, p.158. New Left Books, London, 1977.

This view by undermining the materialist world outlook challenged certain basic premises of Marxism and would have had serious implications in terms of the class struggle and the linkages of the party with the masses. What it had in common with other varieties of revisionism was

(1) Socialism becomes an ethical pursuit worked out by human will, opening the doors as Lenin rightly pointed out to all forms of Fideism.

(2) It will lead to model-building, the elitism of the model builders dissociating the party from its immediate linkages with the masses.

(3) It will be reducing the class-struggle to a mechanical process and there is no need of the concrete analysis of concrete situations.

Lenin was to establish a basic critique of Empirio-criticism by showing its roots, the bearing of this idealist philosophy on the class struggle, reassert the materialist dialectics, and clarify the relationship of the developments in science, with the materialist principles. Lenin explained the critical criterion, regarding the role of matter in materialist philosophy: The sole property of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of being an objective reality, of existing outside the mind".⁴⁷

47 Lenin: "Materialism and Empirio Criticism?" CW, vol.14, p.23.

In his philosophical note-books written in 1914-15, Lenin reading Hegel 'Materialistically' was to establish a serious critique of the mechanical materialism of Plekhanov and Kautsky. 'The recognition of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts is the essence (one of the essentials, one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics.⁴⁸ The recognition of identity or unity of opposites is the key to understanding the movement of all process. This he sharply opposed to the mechanical conception dominant in social democracy hitherto, which is 'pale, lifeless, and dry' while the 'dialectical conception alone furnishes the key to the leaps, to the break in continuity, to the transformation into the opposite, to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new'.⁴⁹

Without the world view the Bolshevik party would have been reduced to the Feurbachian 'contemplation' being tailist, at the time of the February revolution, unable to recognize and act upon the concrete conditions of the moment. Referring to Marx, Lenin would say "Marx considered that without this aspect materialism was irresolute, onesided and lifeless. He defined the fundamental tasks of proletarian tactics in strict conformity with all the principles of the materialist dialectical conception. Only the objective considerations of all the class-

48 Lenin: On the "Question of Dialectics", CW, vol. 38, p. 358.

49 Ibid, p. 360.

relationships in a given society and consequently its objective stage of development and its relations with other societies can serve as the basis for a correct tactic of the advanced class. And classes and countries are not regarded statically but dynamically, i.e. not in a state of immobility but in motion. Motion in its turn, is regarded not only from the stand point of the past, but also from the standpoint of the future. It is regarded moreover, not in accordance with the 'vulgar' evolutionist conception of slow change, but dialectically".⁵⁰ The danger of the mechanical conception could be seen precisely, in the fact of large number of Bolshevnik leaders opposing the April Thesies, at the juncture of their immediate presentation. Lenin's conception of philosophy, therefore, is inextricably bound up with a world view which can advance or abett a revolutionary process.

Recognition of the concrete conditions as the stage of
Imperialism and Revolution

Lenin had already asserted in 1904 that there is no abstract truth. Truth is always concrete which was the basic Marxist position. The concrete has to be grasped, through its concrete analysis and through all its contradictions. This is what Lenin sets out to do in 'Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism'. The basic raw material that Lenin chooses was

50 Lenin, CW, vol.21, p.58-59.

already elaborated by Hobson, Hilferding and lately by Bukharin,⁵¹ in his 'Imperialism and world economy'.⁵¹ For Hilferding, at the stage of Finance Capital the suppression of competition and the planned organization of production creates a basis for a future rational organization of the world economy. From it Hilferding concludes, which is an idea which reappears in the writings of Bauer and Renner - that revolutionary politics does not consist in abolishing the state but in seizing state power in order to bring this rationalization and conscious direction of social life to full fruition.⁵² For Kantsky Imperialism might develop into 'ultraimperialism', in which the leading capitalist countries in the world divide up the world peacefully in some kind of international cartel. On the contrary for Lenin imperialism is 'moribund capitalism', leading to export of capital, division and redivision of the world into colonies which results in intense competition and war. The result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and extreme intensifications of antagonisms. While it increases militarism in the imperialist countries, in the colonies more and more subject people will be thrown into waging struggles against imperialism. Lenin also argues that the growth of opportunism

51 Bukharin's analysis which preceded a few months before Lenin had already anticipated a number of Lenin's conclusions especially that imperialism necessarily leads to war and revolution. See S. Cohen: Bukharin and the Bolshevik revolution, pp.25-27, New York, 1973.

52 Bottomore and Goore (ed): Austro-Marxism opp. Cit, p.35.

is organically bound up with imperialism. The receipt of high monopoly profits in industry or through the exploitation of certain countries, the monopoly, bourgeoisie can buy a certain section of workers and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or of a given nation,⁵³ which helps the bourgeoisie or the nation in turn to plunder and oppress small and weak peoples and fight for the division of the capitalist spoils.⁵⁴

The Destruction of the State and the Establishment of the Dictator-ship of the Proletariat

In the 'state and Revolution' Lenin develops the concept of the state, the necessity of smashing the bourgeois state apparatus, replacing it with a new organization of the communal type and the character of the transition under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The basic objective of the text is the ideological struggle against opportunism rampant in social democracies and against its theoretical expression found in the writings of Kautsky, to bring to the fore the conception of the state outlined in Marx and Engels writings especially on the Commune and guide the party, the proletariat and the revolutionary masses in their concrete tasks in the moment of the 'actuality of the Revolution'.

53 Lenin: "Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism," SW, vol.1, p.728.

54 Lenin, CW, vol.24, p.55.

The aim of political struggle for Kautsky was the conquest of the state power by winning a majority in the Parliament and by raising parliament to the rank of the government. The state which the majority of social democrats aimed to control is neutral viz-a-viz the class struggle. As such it need not be destroyed, smashed. The military-bureaucratic machine is going to be transferred from one hand to the other. It has to be just deepened and widened and the bureaucratic, administrative distortions have to be removed. Kautsky understood power purely instrumentally, it was not the expression of class relations. Thus, the genuinely marxist conception of the state was systematically buried by these social democrats. Therefore Lenin was to say:

"Now one has to engage in excavations, as it were, in order to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the masses".⁵⁵ Lenin, therefore proceeds to reconstruct the concept of the state from the writings of Marx and Engels.

That the state is the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. Once it arises in society it concentrates the coercive power around itself and acts as the instrument of the powerful classes and brings about their dominance. It attempts to weld the powerful classes into the ruling bloc. Through all the ages the ruling classes have

55 Lenin: State and Revolution, p.65, FLP, Peking, 1970.

attempted to mould it to subserve these interests, to keep the masses subservient, divided through the separation of the masses and power, their subordination and dependence. The state depends upon the alienation and separation of power from the masses.

This 'supernatural exerescence' of the society, has to be destroyed. The aim of the socialist revolution is not to transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another,⁵⁶ but to transfer power directly into the hands of the people, and that is impossible if this machine is not smashed.

"People's revolution is one in which 'mass of the people, its majority, the very lowest social groups crushed by oppression and exploitation, rise independently and place on the entire course of the revolution the impress of their own demands, of their attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that is being destroyed.'⁵⁷

This is not the same as bourgeois democracy. It is the destruction of the narrow limited democracy and its replacement by full democracy. "Full democracy is not the same as incomplete democracy. Behind what might seem formally a difference in quantity, what is actually at stake is a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type."⁵⁸ For Kautsky there is no distinction between

56 Lenin: "State and Revolution: SW, vol. 2, pp. 293-94.

57 Ibid, p. 295

58 Ibid, p. 298.

proletarian and bourgeois power except in the quantitative, mechanical sense of it. Lenin asserts that for Marx and Engels Proletarian power was qualitatively different from bourgeois power. Under socialism says Lenin "The mass of population will rise to taking an independent part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the everyday administration of the state. Under socialism all will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to the art of governing".⁵⁹

This new power is symbolized in the Paris commune and represents the first form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The state that is going to wither away is not the bourgeois state but the dictatorship of the proletariat a state which at the same time is 'not a state' because its objective is not the perpetuation of class antagonism but to destroy it.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is precisely the form of state power that represents the form of the state during the transition from socialism to communism and establishes the basis for the withering away of the state. Therefore, for Lenin 'A Marxist is solely someone who extends the recognition of class-struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes, the most

59 Ibid, p.357.

profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeoisie. This is the touch stone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested.⁶⁰

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the profound transformation effected by the 'organised proletariat itself' in the entire sphere of social relations and in the profound transformation effected at all levels of society. It is necessary to maintain the proletarian state power precisely because the socialist society as it emerges from the capitalist society is still marked by the birth pangs of the capitalist society. The defeated class still exist. There is the persistence of bourgeois right 'and so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) 'bourgeois right' is not abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e. only in respect of the means of production. 'Bourgeois right' recognizes the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into common property. To that extent - and to that extent alone - 'bourgeois right' - disappears.

However, it continues to exist as far as its other part is concerned. It continues to exist in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and

60 Ibid, p.328

the allotment of labour among the members of society.⁶¹

Lenin was to further qualify and say that the withering away of the state is not merely conditioned by the 'abolition of class antagonisms' but the very root of the springing up of class antagonisms, i.e. the mental and manual division of labour: It requires 'such a high stage of development of communism that the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, when there, consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern social inequality - a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of capitalists.'⁶²

We have to see this text in terms of the dialectical unity that it represents. The parallel is between Lenin's notion of the party and the class. The party although the conscious embodiment of scientific socialism, i.e. the theory of proletarian movement operates in the concrete situations of class relation and class struggle, at the same time keeping the direction of the class struggle constantly in view and orients the movement towards it. In the same way the withering away of the state is continuously bound up in terms of the concrete

61 V.Lenin: State and Revolution, p.112, FLP, Peking, 1970

62 Ibid, p.114.

relations of class struggle at every juncture. As it is not the party which makes the Revolution but the concrete dynamics of the class struggle, the independent action of the masses at a specific historical juncture, so too the withering away of the State is determined by the conscious action of the masses continuously to create their own organs of self-rule, in the process destroying and smashing all the relations that are exploitative and continuously challenge those structures which maintain and reproduce class antagonisms in different forms.⁶³

Lenin was to clarify the conception further after the October Revolution in terms of the problems of transition and the nature of the class-relations at specific moments. In the 'economic and politics in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat', he points out: 'And classes still remain and will remain in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship will become unnecessary when classes disappear without the dictatorship of the proletariat they will not disappear'.⁶⁴

Further he would say that classes will remain for a long time in the period of transition. The small scale production continuously hegets it. The small producers cannot

63 See the section on cultural revolution in the next chapter.

64 Lenin: CW, vol.30, p.115.

be immediately crushed but remoulded and reeducated in the long process.⁶⁵ This bourgeois also emerges 'from among our Soviet government employees'⁶⁶ many of whom were bourgeois intellectuals trained in old society 'on the ground cleared of one bourgeois generation, new generations continuously appear in history, as long as the ground gives rise to them, and it does give rise to any number of bourgeoisie".⁶⁷

And in his report to the Central committee of Eleventh Congress of RSDLP (B) he was to ask: 'If we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap, we must ask who is directing whom? I do not think very much whether it can truthfully be said that the communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they are not directing, they are directed".⁶⁸ This aspect will be considered more when we discuss the problems of transition. However, it is better to remember what Marx said, way back in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung 'The Best form of state is that in which social antagonisms are neither blurred nor forcibly compressed, that is to say superficially and artificially. It is that state in which antagonisms can be expressed openly and

65 V.Lenin: 'Left wing communism an infantile disorder', p.32, FLP, Peking 1970; Marx also makes a similar point in the letter to Bolte regarding the role of the workers organization. This role is clearly conditioned by the movement and struggle to change the relations (see Marx's letter to Bolte, in Marx Engels Selected Correspondence(MESCS) pp.254-255.

66 V.Lenin: "fight congress of the RCP(B)", CW, vol.25, p.189.

67 V.Lenin: "Report on the immediate tasks of the Soviet Government" CW, Vol.27, pp.300.

68 V.Lenin: CW, vol.33, p.288.

thereby find their solution".⁶⁹

The National and Colonial Questions

The attitude of the second international towards the national and colonial question has already been discussed. It will be further elaborated in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to say that Lenin recognized the profound significance of the national liberation movements that were waged in the Russian empire. The national question has to be seen not mechanically but dialectically in terms of the contradictions that capitalism engenders by subjugating other nations under its economic, political and ideological dominance. The interests of the proletarian movement in the developed countries and of the national liberation movement in the colonies objectively face a common enemy, in imperialism, and therefore, calls for a united front of both these forces. Therefore, it is necessary for communists to unequivocally assert the rights of nations to self determination including the right to secession. The german social democracy by voting the war bills of the state had become a partner in the suppression of nations.

Uneven development of Capitalism and Theory of the Weakest Link

Capitalism not only developes unevenly but also exacerbates the unevenness existing between nations. . This process

⁶⁹ Marx quoted by Francois George in "On Contradiction" Telos, No.36, Summer, 1978.

actually gets intensified at the stage of imperialism. This uneven development by accentuating the contradictions in a specific social formation can precipitate a revolutionary change in it. Therefore, a socialist revolution can occur even in a relatively backward country. Here Lenin decisively breaks with the analysis that was dominant in the second international, that when the productive forces have reached their peak and when they cannot be contained within the given production relations, then and then only there is a collapse of capitalism.

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone.⁷⁰ Russia constituted the weakest link precisely because all the contradictions of a social formation in the imperialist epoch were concentrated in it. Russia was engaged in the protracted primitive capitalist accumulation since the 18th century and in the 1890s this uneven process reached a new peak with industry growing at a rate of eight per cent. The peasantry, the source of finance for enforced industrialization was impoverished, bearing the burdens of the imperialist adventures, and in the absence of serious agrarian reforms set

70 Lenin: "On the slogan of United States of Europe", in SW, vol.I, p.391-392.

off tremendous unrest in the countryside. Therefore, the peasant factor becomes an extremely important issue objectively the overall importance of which the Bolsheviks alone were able to recognize. Russian capitalism was basically developed 'from above', huge imports of western European capital forming about half the total joint stock company. Foreign capital dominated the crucial heavy industrial sector and the banks, making the Russian indigeneous bourgeoisie a weak and dependent class. This Capital-penetration had the further consequence that backward Russia contained some of the modern and large scale factories in the world. Thus a relatively weak indigenous bourgeoisie faced a concentrated and rapidly proletarianised working class within the framework of antiquated and repressive state apparatus dependent upon foreign capital. That Russia, was the weakest link in the imperialist chain showed itself in the accumulation and aggrevation of all historical contradictions, then possible, in a single social formation. World War I brought all these contradictions to the fore - The contradiction between feudal exploitation and the vast masses of the peasantry, of large scale capitalist and imperialist exploitation, of colonial exploitation and suppression of nationalities, capitalistic method of production and medieval state of countryside. This resulted in the heightening of class struggles throughout the country, splits within the ruling classes, the big landlords supporting autocratic bureaucratic-military regime, the big bourgeoisie and the liberal bourgeoisie opposed to the Tsar, at the same time afraid

of the masses, the petty bourgeoisie oscillating between conformism and anarchistic leftism.⁷¹

These objective conditions forged the subjective conditions and in turn reinforced each other - The Bolshevik party far ahead of any western socialist party;⁷² the emergence of the Soviets, representing the workers, soldiers and peasantry; the revolutionaries forced to flee from their country at the face of Tsarism, acquiring the revolutionary heritage of the west and at the same time seeing it in terms of their own conditions; polarization of the masses through incessant propaganda via legal and illegal work inducting the masses into living participation in the political issues of the days. The contradictions within the imperialist bloc, by drawing Russia into war, further heightened these contradictions.⁷³

The Revolution

On 27th February, workers and soldiers stormed the Winter Palace leading to the abdication of the Tsar and full of the autocracy. The storming itself was preceded by waves of strike by workers, rebellion by soldiers, and long drawn

71 See Lenin: "Political Parties in Russia and the tasks of the Proletariat", CW, vol.24.

72 See Lenin: "Left wing Communism - an Infantile Disorder", SW, vol.3, pp.293-306.

73 See Lenin: "Can the Bolsheviks retain state Power" CW, vol.26, p.87, also Stalin, "October and Tactics of Communists" in 'Problems of Leninism', p.117-118, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1975.

out struggles of the peasantry. This led to the formation of the Provisional executive committee of the council of workers' deputies and to that of Petrograd Soviet. The Petrograd Soviet immediately assumed the defacto power in the capital. This was followed by the development of Soviets immediately in the cities but in slow succession among the peasantry. The Duma consisting of the representatives of landlords and big bourgeoisie was the only institution that remained after the collapse of the autocracy. On March 1, the Petrograd Soviet dominated by the mensheviks and socialist revolutionaries made a pact with the Duma Committee and by virtue of this a Provisional government composed of bourgeois politicians was formed and the soviets undertook to support the government under certain conditions. This situation, Lenin described as Dual Power.⁷⁴

1. The provisional government cannot but follow the imperialist policy of Tsar as it is the government controlled by big bourgeoisie. Therefore, any support in the name of 'defending the revolution' is simply playing in the hands of imperialism.

2. Therefore, the provisional government cannot provide peace. It cannot stop annexation of territories, it cannot renounce repressive tactics, it cannot support the agrarian revolution or supply food to the hungry millions.

⁷⁴ Lenin: "April Theses" - CW, vol.24, pp.20-26, also "Dual Power" - Ibid, p.38-41.

3. The characteristic feature of the revolution is that it has set up a 'dual power'. The provisional government as the government of the bourgeoisie and the Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies as the govt. of the majority of the exploited which attempts to exercise power parallel to the provisional government. However there cannot be two sovereign powers within one state. One of them has to give the power to the other. Nevertheless, the existence of two power regimes itself is a sign of a revolutionary situation especially as these powers are qualitatively different in terms of their class supports.⁷⁵

Therefore, Lenin argued, there cannot be a status quo, there cannot be a coalition government with the Bolsheviks either participating in it or extending support to it. There can be only one way. 'A complete change of the soviets' policy, no confidence in the capitalists, and the transfer of all power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' deputies'.⁷⁶

The rise of Soviets as parallel centres of power shows with remarkable clarity that the stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution is over. 'This transition is characterised on the one hand by a maximum of legally recognized rights (Russia is now the freest of the belligerent countries in the world) on the other, by the absence of violence towards the

75 See: Trotsky: History of the Russian Revolution, p.224. Pluto Press, London, 1977.

76 Lenin: "The tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" SW, vol.2, p.31.

masses'.⁷⁷ To argue not for the soviets but for parliamentary democracy is therefore a retrograde step.

Lenin also suggests, the immediate preparation for the establishment of a new international, an international against social chauvinism and against the centrists represented by Kautsky.

The Mensheviks and socialist revolutionaries poured scorn on Lenin's April Theses. Bodganov said 'That is raving, the raving of a lunatic'. Plekhenov termed them as 'mad dreams'.⁷⁸ Even the Bolsheviks were to immediately reject them in majority. Only its steeling in revolutionary theory and revolutionary consciousness',⁷⁹ helped the Bolsheviks, grasp the significance of the reality and of the tasks before them enabling them to accept the analysis provided by Lenin.

From March the spread of the Soviets was fairly rapid. Together with the Soviets also emerged the Factory Committees. At first the Soviets were dominated by the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. For them the Soviets were just organs of struggle and propaganda. They did not want to see the Soviets

77 Ibid

78 Quoted in Michael Lonvy: "From Hegel's great logic to the Finland station in Petrograd" opp. Cit. pp.

79 E.H. Carr terms Lenin's conception of the party as 'repository of revolutionary theory and revolutionary consciousness' (see 'Bolshevik Revolution; 1917-1923, vol.I, p.30, Penguin, 1975).

as organs of power as that would have violated their conception of bourgeois democratic revolution. However, the lack of authority of the provisional government itself was transforming the soviets into local organs of power at number of places.⁸⁰ There was a gap between the reality and the consciousness, which Lenin insisted was to be bridged by the intensification of propaganda.

The garrison troops were radicalized much earlier than the troops at the rear. But soon soviets movement was to spread even among the latter. The peasant Soviets were slow to take off and even when they did, were dominated by the upper echelons of the peasantry, remaining under the strong influence of the rural commune (which diluted the expression of class contradictions) and under the strong ideological influence of the Socialist Revolutionaries.⁸¹ However, the movement of the peasantry to seize land and divide the estates developed which was eventually to be opposed by the provisional government. This is precisely where the large masses of the peasantry objectively came to support an intensification of the revolution as the present conditions held together by the State were opposed to them. The analysis given by Lenin in April

80 Charles Bettelheim: Class struggles in USSR, First period: 1917-1923, p.73, Monthly Review Press, 1976.

81 Marc Ferro, The Russian Revolution of February 1917, pp.121-130, Routledge, London, 1972.

allowed this new situation to be seen as a defacto breakdown of the class collaboration between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry marking the opening of 'a new stage in the bourgeoisie - democratic revolution'.⁸²

However, the peasantry, especially, the lower peasantry and agricultural labour were not to acquire socialist consciousness in large numbers due to the factors mentioned above. This was to create immense difficulties in the process of transition after October.

The radicalization of the Soviets, especially of the workers and that of the factory committees was quick to take place as the incapacity and betrayal of the Provisional government became obvious. The hold of bourgeois ideology on the workers was countered by the Bolsheviki, by drawing out the implications of the concrete class relations of forces at every moment and placing themselves before the masses. By October the Bolsheviki had come to enjoy a majority in the second All-Russia congress of Soviets as well as in the Petrograd Soviet.

In October Lenin was to emphasize that the conditions for an insurrection were present. The situation of a revolution had arrived when the lower classes did not want to live in the old way and when the upper classes too were unable to live in the old way. The suffering and want of the oppressed

82 Lenin: "First letter on Tactics", CW, vol.24,p.54.

classes had become more acute than usual and due to this there was considerable increase in the activity of the masses who in 'peace' time quickly allow themselves to be robbed, but who in turbulent times are drawn both by the circumstances of the crisis and by the upper classes themselves into independent historical action. Lenin was to emphasize later that not every revolutionary situation gives rise to a revolution. Revolution arises only out of such a situation when to the above mentioned objective changes, a subjective change is added, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to carry out revolutionary mass actions strong enough to break the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis 'falls' if it is not dropped.⁸³ Lenin was to clearly demarcate between the Blanquist concept of capture of power and the capture of power by the advanced class. To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon the conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that turning point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at the height and when the vacillations in the ranks of enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That

 83 Lenin: "The collapse of the Second International" vol.21, p.188-89.

is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Balnquistism".⁸⁴

The overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie exercised by Kerensky's Provisional Government, and the establishment of a new ruling power resulted from an armed conflict in the form of insurrection. This was to be a brilliant application of the Marxist theory to the concrete situation of the class-struggle. For Marxists, the concrete analysis of the concrete situation, is not the opposite of 'pure theory' on the contrary it is the culmination of all genuine theory, its consummation, the point where it breaks into practice'.⁸⁵

The Russian Revolution was to prove the inadequacy of the model of revolution possessed by the second international. It was to prove much more strongly that without a revolutionary theory, i.e. without scientific socialism, there cannot be a revolution. The October Revolution was also unlike all previous revolutions (except the Paris Commune) in that it was carried out consciously under the guidance of a theory of proletarian movement. The Bolshevik party as the materialized expression of this theory enabled the Russian proletariat to raise itself to the position of being the dominant class. On the other hand

84 Lenin: C.W. vol.26, p.22-23.

85 Georg Lukacs: Lenin, p.43, NLB, London, 1970.

the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks even though enjoyed a large mass base in the initial stages of the bourgeois democratic revolution could not guide the movement precisely because they represented bourgeois ideology; they could perceive only the one-sided, apparent expression of reality and not the underlying profound contradictions.

PROBLEMS OF TRANSITION: ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

It is not possible, in the scope of this essay, to deal with all those issues, both theoretical and those that emerged in the process of class-struggle at every concrete juncture, that affected the conception of revolution. Here the exposition will be confined to the major directions that class-struggles took in practice, and their ideological reflections. Further their critique in terms of the concept of revolution, articulated in the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, would be provided.

The October Revolution brought a new relation between classes in Russian. This new relation was expressed in the establishment of new organs of power - the Soviets, which proclaimed the Proletariat as the dominant class in Russia. It led to the dismantling of the organs of power that represented the class interests of the autocracy, landlords and big bourgeoisie. The Bolshevik party, providing the ideological and political leadership to the working class, was naturally called upon to assume the leadership of the new process.

But the furthering of the specific objective class interests of the proletariat depended upon, the nature of struggle between the dominant and the vanquished classes, and between the dominant and the friendly classes/class fractions. It was also a function of the capacity of the proletariat to become conscious of its objective class interests at every concrete juncture of the class struggle fought at political, economic and ideological levels. The Bolshevik party, as the ideological and political vanguard of the proletariat naturally to be a part of these class struggle, and reflected in full measure their contradictions. These contradictions within the party once articulated ideologically, had an impact on the concrete dynamics of class struggle, and affected the ability of the proletariat to pursue their objective class interests, more so because of the complete dominance of the party after the Revolution. The roots of these inner-party struggles have to be traced to the dynamics of class struggle in general and to the history of the Bolshevik party in particular.

The Context of the Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat:

Every perceptive observer has drawn attention to the stupendous tasks confronted by the Russian Proletariat and the Bolshevik party at the head of the proletariat in the wake of the revolution. The Revolution had sharply brought to the fore the contradictions in the Russian social formation. The contradiction between the provisional government and the constituent assembly on one hand and the proletarian power represented

in the Soviets of Workers, peasants and soldiers was to result in the dogged determination of the former to overthrow the revolutionary proletarian power. The proletarian power immediately in the wake of the revolution had to confront the attack of German Imperialism resulting in the Brest-Litovsk treaty, bringing about serious dissensions within the Bolshevik party itself. The armed attack on the Soviet power spearheaded by the defeated classes in collusion with imperialist powers was to call forth the best efforts, both in men and materials of the Soviet power. Industry was in ruins. There was large scale sabotage and refusal to cooperate by the bourgeoisie with the Soviet power. The imperialist war, requisition, pillage and looting had ruined agriculture. The large scale peasant rebellions that broke out, while aided in the overthrow of the bourgeois power, had to be seriously attended to, in terms of their demands, if it was not to shift its allegiance to counter-revolutionary forces.

Although a section of the Socialist Revolutionaries were to form a coalition with the Bolshevik party for a short time, large sections of the menshevik and socialist revolutionaries were to adopt an antagonist attitude to soviet power and join the counter revolutionaries in their attempts to overthrow it. Their presence in the Soviets was to provide them great leverage in their propaganda against the Bolsheviks.

The situation was exasperated due to the poor presence of the Bolsheviks among the peasantry, which was still under the ideological hegemony of the Socialist Revolutionaries. The

conscious attempt to lead the peasantry especially the landless and poor peasantry ideologically and organizationally towards support and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat was a ~~st~~ stupendous task.

The policy adopted by the Soviet power towards the nationalities was falling within the Tsarist Empire, was a great aid in consolidating the dictatorship and furthering the revolutionary prospects in these nationalities. But the new relationship that should unite the Soviet power established in their nationalities and the Russian Soviet power, in practice, was to give rise to a number of dilemmas.

Although the support extended to the Soviet by the proletariat in the west cannot be minimised, the greatest support could have been furthering the revolutionary prospects in their own nations. Among other factors the rampant reformism in the social democrat parties in the west, made the revolutionary proletariat in Russian to maintain and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat singlehandedly.

Although the Russian proletariat, was steeled through the process of bitter struggles against the bourgeoisie and against the autocracy, threw up its own institutions in the form of the Soviets and factory committees, and had the leadership of the Bolshevik party, the revolution suddenly thrust on it the responsibility of being the ruling class, which demanded that it provide leadership to the other oppressed classes, suppress counter-revolutionary forces, organise production on a

new basis through the establishment of relations conducive to its rule.

Finally the Soviet power heralded a Socialist revolution in the urban areas while in the countryside the revolutionary process was still democratic symbolized in the seizure of land of the landlords and redivision of land. This unevenness of the revolutionary transformation necessitated a different strategy towards the countryside.

These contradictions were to immediately seize the attention of the Dictatorship of the proletariat. They had found their sharpest possible expression on the eve of the Revolution. The proletariat and at their head the Bolshevik party confronted the stupendous task of fighting the vanquished ruling classes, completing the bourgeoisie democratic revolution, consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and moving towards socialism,⁸⁶ Lenin later used a metaphor to describe the scene. He compared capitalism to a fortress which the party had taken by storm rather than through prolonged seizure. Until the fortress was taken it was not possible to know that it could be taken over in this manner. Now that the fortress was under control one has to deal with it without pre-determined answers.

86 The working class, objectively determined the class nature of this power. 'Power is the capacity of a social class to realize its own specific objective interests' - See Nicos Poulantzas: Political Power and Social Classes, pp.104-NLB, London, 1968.

Therefore "In solving a problem in which there are very many unknown factors, it is difficult without the necessary practical experiences to determine with absolute certainty the mode of operation to be adopted against the enemy fortress, or to make a fair approximation of it".⁸⁷

Major Ideological Debates in the Bolshevik Party
Preceding NEP and in the wake of it

'Left Communism' or State Capitalism and Proletarian State Power

The left communists questioned the policy of the Bolshevik Party on the following issues:

1. The policy of centralization and control in industry led to the recalling of a large number of former capitalists and technicians on high salaries. The left communists contended that this had led to the emasculation of the workers organizations like factory committees and the integration of the trade unions in the state apparatuses.⁸⁸ The workers were integrated within this system through a division of labour based on piece-rate, incentives, bonuses, etc.

"It would diminish the class initiative, activity and organization of the proletariat. It threatens to enslave the working class. It will arouse discontent among the backward elements as well as among the vanguard of the proletariat.

87 Lenin: CW, vol.33, p.63.

88 See Maurice Brinton: "The Bolsheviks and Workers Control" 1917-1921, 'The State and counter-revolution, pp.38-40, Solidarity, London, 1970.

In order to introduce the system in the face of the hatred prevailing at present among the proletariat against the capitalist saboteurs, the communist party would have to rely on the **petty** bourgeoisie as against the workers".⁸⁹ Bukhain was a strong advocate of this point of view. Lenin's reply to this consisted mainly in emphasizing the overall context of the class struggle in the concrete situation, and to argue against the tendency to pit sectional interests before class interests:

In the immediately given situation the workers are not ideologically equipped to see the interests of the class as a whole. They are not capable of organizing industry as a whole based on their collective ability. If the policy of the left communists is accepted it would result in a total disorganization of production, pitting the interests of a section or unit of workers to the interests of the workers as a whole, pitting the advanced workers against the large backward workers and thus exacerbate the contradictions within the working class itself. The policy argued by the left-communists is a definite petty-bourgeoisie tendency among the workers. If this is allowed to persist, it will strengthen the forces of the defeated ruling classes, who can attempt a comeback resulting in a threat to the revolution itself.

89 'Kommunist' quoted in Bettelheim, *op. Cit.*, p.375.

Secondly, the working class as the leading class, must also lead the other oppressed sections, the vast majority of which is constituted of the peasantry. If the working class looks only to itself then it will alienate the peasantry into the camp of counter-revolution helping the peasantry implies immediate restoration of production in industry in exchange for the peasant produce and political support to the peasantry in the agrarian revolution that is taking place and to move this phase towards the socialist orientation.

Given the nature of proletarian statepower, therefore, and under its hegemony those capable of restoring production should be called in and large-scale production needs to be restored. This will be the great training ground for the workers to see the interests of working class as a whole and to acquire those techniques and skills which are indispensable to the modern industry. Therefore, for Lenin, State Capitalism was the first and immediate link to move over to socialism. At this stage therefore, Lenin considered the anarchy of petty-producers and this ideology as the principal enemy of the revolution.⁹⁰

90 "We have one extremely dangerous secret enemy, more dangerous than many open counter-revolutionaries; this enemy is the deadly enemy of the socialist revolution and the soviet power. The enemy of whom I have spoken is the anarchy of the petty-proprietors, whose life is guided by one thought: I grab all I can - the rest can go to hang. This enemy is more powerful than all the Kornilov's, Dutovs and Kaledins put together".
Lenin: CW, vol.27, p.232.

Debates on Transition at the End of War Communism

War communism had integrated the workers much more strongly within the planned direction of labour, by integrating the trade unions within the state apparatuses, and by the organization of the entire economy, in a highly centralized fashion. In January 1920, the Sovnarkom proclaimed that it was necessary to 'supply industry, agriculture, transport and other branches of the national economy with labour power on the basis of a general economic plan'.⁹¹

With the close of the war ideological struggles within the party break out from a number of fronts.

a. Militarisation of labour

In 1920, Trotsky argued for militarising labour and the trade unions. The measures taken during ^{war} communism were not to be a temporary step but expressed the lasting needs of socialist transition whereby the trade unions strictly subordinated to the government. The argument was simple. State power is in the hands of the proletariat. The proletariat cannot rebel against itself, against its own self organised expression. Accordingly the mass of the workers must be bound to their jobs, made liable to transfer, told what to do, ordered about. State compulsion will, in the period of transition reach its, highest degree of intensity in the organisation of labour. The trade unions must be statized, to achieve this

91 Quoted in E.H. Carr; The Bolshevik Revolution, vol.2, p.211, note 4, Penguin, London. 1966.

purpose.

'Militarization of labour is unthinkable without the militarization of the trade unions, as such, without the establishment of a regime in which every worker feels himself a soldier of labour who cannot dispose of himself freely. If the order is given to transfer him, he must carry it out. If he does not carry it out he will be a deserter who is punished, who looks after this? The trade union'.⁹² Bukharin not only supported it but was to provide theoretical justifications for it: He called it a 'military proletarian dictatorship', i.e. 'the militarization of the proletariat...constitutes a method of self-organization of the working class and organization of the peasantry by the working class'.⁹³

This viewpoint refused to recognize the contradictory reality of the transition period at all. It made the state a 'pure' idea and identified the working class with it. It did not recognize the distinction between the party and the masses, between the self-activity of the masses and discipline.

The tenth party congress rejected the views of left communists and militarisation of labour by a narrow majority, but in effect, it showed the extent to which dogmatism, mechanism and an undialectical approach were noted within the Bolshevik party itself. Opposed to this view the resolution

 92 Trotsky : Quoted in E.H.Carr: Ibid. pp.214-25, Also see Brinton: opp. Cit, p.64.

93 Bukhanin Economics of the Transformation Period, p.156, New York, Bergman, 1971.

Of the Tenth Party Congress stated: "A gradual but steady transition must be effected from urgency procedures to a more even distribution of the forces broader appreciation of democracy, the promotion of initiative, participation in the management of industry, the development of emulation and so forth."⁹⁴ It also condemned the militarization of labour - as 'the degeneration of centralization and the militarising of labour into bureaucracy, arrogance, petty functionaries and pestering influence in the trade unions'.

Lenin later developed this conception more systematically and termed the real nature of the Soviet State as extremely complex.⁹⁵ The nature of this State demanded that the workers have their own independent organizations 'to protect the workers from their state'.⁹⁶ Later he analysed that there could be 'an antagonism of interest' between the workers and the State enterprises and this antagonism would justify strike struggle of the workers to combat bureaucratic distortions and capitalist survivals.⁹⁷ In 'Once Again on the Trade Unions' he argued that the fundamental problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat was to consolidate proletarian power and not as Trotsky and Bukhanin argued, struggle

94 Lenin, CW, vol.31, pp.374-375.

95 See Lenin: "The Trade Unions, The Present Situation And Trotsky's Mistakes", CW, vol.32, pp.19-21.

96 Ibid, p.25.

97 Lenin: "The Role & Functions of Trade Unions;" vol.33, pp.185-87.

for Production. The former required the struggle to win the masses to a correct political approach 'without a correct political approach to the matter the given class will be unable to stay on top and consequently, will be incapable of solving its production problem either'.⁹⁸ For Lenin increase of production was inextricably bound up with a correct political perspective.

b. The Workers' Opposition: The Problem of Workers' initiative and Democracy

The workers opposition advocated a radical alternative to present party line. They pointed out the grave dangers inherent in Russia's proletarian dictatorship due to the power enjoyed by bourgeois specialists and administrators. It fought for the greater initiative of the workers and a power based on the strength of their organization. It called for effective criticism against administrative apparatus and their tendency to dominate the masses. It demanded freedom of criticism for the worker, inside the party and the workers' organization. It called for steps to gradually eliminate the distinction between manual and mental labour and attacked the inequality in the wage system.⁹⁹

However Kronstadt rebellion which threatened the very existence of Soviet power¹⁰⁰ was to decide the course of the Official policy. The mensheviks and socialist revolutionaries

98 Lenin: vol.32, p.84

99 Bettelheim, opp. cit. p.402.

100 See for details: Avrich Paul: Kronstadt, 1921, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970.

openly extended their support to Kronstadt. The counter-revolutionary tendencies abroad supported the rebellion.¹⁰¹ Lenin and the majority of the Bolsheviki sensed a definite tendency, in the workers opposition', which enjoyed a fairly vast base among the workers,¹⁰² to objectively lend support to the Kronstadt. This was so because a number of demands voiced by them were no different from those coming from the suggestion of Kronstadt uprising.¹⁰³ The Tenth Congress of the party rejected the theses of Trotsky and also of the workers opposition. It also laid down rules forbidding factions within the party. However the ban was a temporary measure justified in exceptionally difficult circumstances. Lenin commenting on this drastic provision said 'Our party has never allowed the Central Committee to have such a right in relation to its members. This is an extreme measure that is being adopted specially, in view of the dangerous situation'.¹⁰⁴ However, later, this very resolution was to be used to repress opinions diverging from the majority of the Central Committee and the Politburo. The tenth party Congress also set in motion, what is known as the New Economic Policy, making a major change in the direction of Socialist transition in Russia.

101 See Ibid, pp.106-125.

102 See Brinton: Opp. Cit, p.76, Also: R.V.Daniels: The conscience of the Revolution, p.127, Harvard University Press, 1960.

103 For a parallel see the next chapter on Chinese Revolution: During the Cultural Revolution a number of political slogans of Lin Piao were the same as those of the Proletarian Headquarters.

104 Lenin: CW, vol.32, p.258.

The Workers' Opposition actually raised extremely crucial issues, drawn from Lenin's own 'State and Revolution', a full discussion of which is not possible here. In fact, the resolution of the Tenth Congress and the principles underlying N.E.P. were not opposed to the thesis of the workers opposition. Where they had gone wrong was their failure to see the total context of the class-struggle in Russia and the leading role of the proletariat. However, the very condemnation, and banning of that platform, were to strengthen the tendencies towards the centralization and bureaucratization since a political viewpoint emerging in the Socialist state opposed to these tendencies was organizationally silenced. It did not let new production relations to emerge in the industrial units by throwing up the initiative of the workers and strengthening their organizations. It did not establish a counterweight to the process of centralization by throwing up local initiative, which probably would have determined an entirely different course of development. It strengthened the powers of the managers and bureaucrats, drawn from the former ruling classes and strengthened the hands of the functionaries in the party apparatus. However, this was still a tendency. But if the tendency was not actively countered by criticism and by raising the initiative of workers, it could consolidate itself, as we have already seen in the Second International. Besides, since it was never articulated openly, it escaped frequent ideological attacks. It had a subtle impact on class struggle.

c. The Problem of Nationalities:

The Revolution in Russia precipitated the revolutionary movement or bourgeois democratic movement in a number of nationalities that came within the Tsarist empire. We have already stated Lenin's position on the national question. However, the bourgeois nationalistic positions held during the second international which were extremely mechanical in their approach were to have a great influence on a number of Bolsheviks. Stalin voiced this position in 1918 as 'the necessity of interpreting the principle of self-determination as the right to self determination not of the bourgeoisie but of the labouring masses of the given nation'. The principle of self determination should be a means in the struggle for socialism and should be subordinated to the principles of socialism.¹⁰⁵ Buharin and Preobrazhensky also argued on this principle.¹⁰⁶ Lenin argued against this saying the right of self determination to the labouring masses can be applied only where a division has taken place between the parasitical classes and the labouring masses. However, it must be applied even to nations where such division has not taken place, otherwise it will be nothing but a cloak to hide the Russian Great Nation Chauvinism.¹⁰⁷ Only through such a policy will it be possible to create conditions for the realization of a durable and amicable union

 105 Stalin: Works: vol.4, pp.32-33, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952-1955.

106 See Bukharin and Preobrazhensky: The ABC of Communism, Edited by E.H. Carr, Penguin, London, 1969.

107 See Lenin: CW, vol.29, pp.171-172.

between the diverse elements of the international proletariat. However, the tendency was to continue in practice, although, in theory, the 8th Congress had upheld Lenin's formulations. In 1922, Stalin proposed the plan of 'autonomization' for the non-Russian republics and bring them under the authority of Central Executive Committee and Sovanarkhon, inspite of the opposition of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party in these republics. Lenin opposed it but in his absence the Central Committee was to approve of Stalin's proposal with a few alterations. As soon as Lenin heard of it he wrote to Kamanev 'I declare war to the death on dominant-nation chauvinism'.¹⁰⁸ Lenin was to write later: 'Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeoisie in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.'¹⁰⁹ For Lenin this approach underlined the basic aspects threatening internationalism, and was especially serious because in the context of national liberation movements emerging in the East, it might just undermine the solidarity of the Russian revolution with them.¹¹⁰ When under Stalin's instructions Ordzhonikidze applied administrative measures on the Georgina Central Committee, Lenin was to strongly condemn it as Great Russian National chauvinism.¹¹¹

108 Lenin: CW, vol.33, p.372, See also Lenin, Moshe: Lenin's Last Struggle, pp.51-53, Faber, London, 1969.

109 Lenin: CW, vol.36, p.608.

110 Ibid, p.610.

111 Ibid, p.610.

The NEP and Political-Ideological Struggles of the Period
The Dictatorship of the Proletariat as alliances of classes:

Unlike the tendency of militarization of labour which argued for a dictatorship of the proletarian State power over the workers and the other masses, and unlike the 'workers opposition' whose position would have seriously disrupted the worker-peasant alliance, Lenin conceived the dictatorship of the proletariat as essentially an alliance between classes.

'The dictatorship of the proletariat is a specific form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people and the numerous nonproletarian strata of the working people (petty bourgeois, small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligensia, etc), or the majority of these strata, an alliance against capital, an alliance whose aim is the complete overthrow of capital, complete suppression of the resistance offered by the bourgeoisie as well as attempts at restoration on its part, an alliance for the final establishment and consolidation of socialism".¹¹²

Lenin saw at the close of war communism, in the dynamics of class struggle after the revolution and in the ideological struggle within the Bolshevik party, precisely a threat to this alliance. Therefore, he increasingly emphasized the question of workers-peasant alliance and made it a point to judge all the ideological struggle and the attitude to be adopted to the

 112 Lenin: CW, vol.29, p.381.

dynamics of class-struggle. In this connection, he came to question the strategy of neutralizing the middle peasant and advocated a firm alliance of the workers' state with the middle peasant.¹¹³ The New Economic Policy, therefore, has to be seen not in terms of 'retreat' from the dictatorship of the proletariat, but a 'retreat' from the policies advanced so far to consolidate the dictatorship and an attempt to give it a different direction to it, from the experience gathered during the process.¹¹⁴

Therefore we can mark two stages in the evolution of Lenin's thought to grapple with the complex nature of class struggle in the period of NEP in order to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. The first stage was one in which Lenin saw the concessions, as primarily a political move to strengthen state capitalism. The chief enemy to be fought was the petty-bourgeoisie rural and urban and their ideologies. The alliance with the peasantry of the working class was, therefore, merely 'economic'.¹¹⁵ The working class 'friend' was state capitalism. "The principal basis for the development of proletarian class consciousness is large-scale industry."¹¹⁶ The enemy to be fought: "A class of small producers and small farmers. The main problem of the revolution now is how to

113 Lenin, CW, vol.29, pp.145 also 210-211.

114 Bettelheim, *Opp. cit*, pp.477-506.

115 Lenin: CW, vol.32, pp.404-405.

116 *Ibid.* 408.

fight these two classes".¹¹⁷ Therefore, the initial conception implied 'a more or less socialist exchange the restoration of large scale industry for the products of agriculture, and by means of that commodity exchange, the restoration of large scale industry for the products of agriculture, and by means of that commodity exchange the restoration of large scale industry on the sole basis of socialist organization'.¹¹⁸ However, with the failure of this policy Lenin advocates a further retreat from state capitalism to the creation of state-regulated buying and selling, to the money system'.¹¹⁹ But this retreat in order to not consolidate the bourgeois system, a political alliance between the workers and the peasantry is called for. This political alliance, Lenin says is manifest in the organization of cooperatives because 'they are the simplest easiest and most acceptable to the peasant'.¹²⁰ Further he says, 'If the whole of the peasantry had been organized in co-operatives, we would by now have been standing with both feet on the soil of socialism'.¹²¹ This did not mean that the cooperatives were to be brought under the control of the state apparatus. Lenin terms the

117 Ibid, 410

118 Ibid, CW, vol.32, p.484

119 Lenin, CW, vol.32, p.95.

120 Ibid

121 CW, vol.33, p.474.

cooperatives themselves as 'the system of socialism'.¹²²

This advocated a basic orientation of the party in entirely different channels. He advocated a large scale transfer of Bolshevnik leaders with jobs in the central administration to posts as leaders of countries and rural districts 'to help train new workers and provide examples that other districts could follow with ease'.¹²³

The new perspective implied a new orientation to party work and a different conception of socialist transition than advocated so far:

1. The peasantry has to move through their own experience to cooperative forms of organization which are definitely socialist in character. The leadership of the working class, here, is the ideological and political leadership to educate the peasantry to move towards the cooperative goal.

2. It meant that primacy must be provided to 'local initiative. The utmost local initiative'¹²⁴ as he termed.

3. It also meant a strong assertion of the mass control i.e. that state machinery and even the party members being supervised by the masses and learn from the masses. In 'instructions from the council for labour and defence to local Soviet bodies' he wrote: "A number of capable and honest non-

122 Ibid

123 CW, vol.33, p.356

124 Lenin, CW, vol.32, p.352.

party people are coming to the fore from the ranks of the workers, peasants and intellectuals, and they should be promoted to more important positions in economic work, with the communists continuing to exercise the necessary control and guidance. Conversely, we must have non-party people controlling the communists. For this purpose, groups of non-party workers, and peasants, whose honesty has been tested, should be invited to take part on the one hand in the workers' and Peasants' inspection, and on the other, in the informal verification and appraisal of work, quite apart from any official appointment.¹²⁵ He further stressed it in 'cooperation': 'The main thing now is to advance as an immeasurably wider and larger mass, and only together with the peasantry, proving to them by deeds, in practice, by experience, that we are learning and that we should learn to assist them, to lead them forward'.¹²⁶ For this purpose Lenin argued for teams of urban workers to be formed who take up this task of going and educating the peasantry.

Lenin in his last writing launches a strong attack on the State machine as it existed. His emphasis is 'To organize the state machine, which is utterly useless'¹²⁷ along with educating the peasants towards cooperatives. He calls the state

125 Lenin, CW, vol.32, p.388

126 Lenin, CW, vol.33, p.326

127 Lenin, SW, vol.3, p.710

apparatus 'utterly impossible, indecently prerevolutionary and forms a lot of objection coming from certain sections of the party to bring about reforms in it. He calls for a drastic overhaul in the state machine. "We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy we must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from Tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine".¹²⁸

In the same way in 'How we should Reorganise workers and peasants inspection: Lenin argues for basic changes to be effected within the party that it may become more capable of maintaining the worker-peasant alliance, responsive to the needs of the masses. He admits the existence of bureaucrats within the party as well as the state.

As revolution in Western countries reduces in the horizon Lenin lays, greater stress, in the last writings, on the struggles emerging in the East of 'the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe',¹²⁹ and the prolonged process of transition.

128 V.Lenin, SW, vol.3, p.725.

129 V. Ibid, p.724.

The Dynamics of the class alliance between the workers and peasantry in practice:

During the period of NEP both the interpretations provided by Lenin were to continue and clash. We cannot identify these interpretations with any particular personality. Every concrete conjuncture brought its own permutations and combinations. The first view point stressed NEP as just a temporary measure to be given up under auspicious circumstances. The other view maintained worker-peasant alliances as a strategy during the period of transition. The other issues of workers initiative, transformation of the state, internal democracy which Lenin mentioned in his last writings were to be the main issues of ideological debate and concrete shaping of the process of transition. The dynamics of the class struggle during N.E.P. can be stated as below:

1. There was a growing struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the latter represented in the 'Nepaman' as well as in the private bourgeoisie.
2. There was also a growing contradiction between the private bourgeoisie and traders and the heads of state run institutions.
3. The development of industry itself called for basic changes in terms of its structure and priorities.
4. The stress was laid on onesided emphasis of the development of heavy industry.

5. The measures which were adopted during 'war communism' as 'temporary' continued to exist, which strengthened the management, reproducing relations which were no different from capitalist relations. The resistance put by the managers and technicians increasingly deprived the workers from seizing the initiative. The work norms were established from above. e.g. The Thirteenth Party conference in 1924 stressed that regular conferences be held to discuss problems concerning production and for the exchange of experiences. These conferences increasingly brought out the necessity of participation of workers in maintaining labour discipline and productivity. This new initiative of the workers was extremely resented by some managers,¹³⁰ and pressure was exerted both by the managers and VSNKH to thwart the workers initiative. In April 1928, in the session of the Central Committee, Stalin emphasized the need to develop criticism and self-criticism of really a mass character.¹³¹ In the same year, Stalin stressing that class-struggle still goes on called for 'organizing mass control from below. It is not merely the old bureaucracy but 'it is a matter of new bureaucrats, bureaucrats who sympathise with the Soviet Government and finally communist bureaucrats".¹³² This support extended by the party resulted in a mass movement from below in 1928.¹³³ However the heads of the enterprises repeatedly complain of 'slackening of labour discipline', lower

130 See Carr & Davies: Foundations of a planned economy, vol. I, part 2, p.570, Macmillan, London, 1969.

131 See J.V. Stalin Works, vol. II, pp.30-32

132 Stalin: Works: Vol. II, p.74

133 See Bettelheim: Class Struggles in USSR, 1923-1929, vol. 2, pp.228-236.

productivity and production, increased costs, poor maintenance of equipment and excessive absentism.¹³⁴ This pressure of the managers and technocrats can be seen in Stalin's 'Against Vulgarizing the slogan of self-criticism'. Where he argues for mass criticism and pressure from below but to strengthen labour discipline and strengthen the leadership.¹³⁵ Making use of the second, the heads of the establishment were to strengthen their position rather than permit evolution of new forms of labour discipline and leadership.¹³⁶

A clarification need to be made here. The relations of production existing in the industry must be distinguished from relationship of ownership. Also 'Nationalised ownership' from 'socialist ownership'. In the initial period of transition although ownership may be nationalised, the relations of production and relationship of distribution remain basically capitalist. If attempts are not made to change these relations through greater initiative and self organization of workers, whereby they come to control, manage and govern the entire process of production and distribution in the interests of the class as a whole, these capitalist relations are going to further consolidate themselves and seriously threaten real relationship of ownership as well as socialist ownership. Secondly, Socialist ownership and the possibility of providing guidance to the changes in capitalist relations of production

134 See: Carr and Davies: Foundations, vol.I, p.2, pp.508-9.

135 Stalin: Works: vol.II, pp.133-35.

136 See Bettelheim, Opp. Cit, p.233.

towards socialist relations of production (as towards all social relations) depends upon the existence of dictatorship of the proletariat guided by scientific socialism, i.e. the theory of the proletarian movement, what Lenin called as the correct political approach. However, the economic process and the relationship of production will finally determine the nature of political relations, if the dictatorship of the proletariat does not take active measures to reorganize the economic process and change the production relations.

Further we should not absolutize the importance of the development of productive forces of changes in the relations of production independently of each other. They are represented in the production process in their dialectical unity. At certain juncture the existing relations have to be consolidated in order to develop the productive forces themselves as they facilitate their growth and leads to the maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as during the period, of State Capitalism and at certain junctures the production relation have to undergo basic changes to evolve socialist relations to remove the constraints on the development of productive forces themselves. In the process of transition, the primacy definitely rests upon evolving new socialist relations.

Precisely because these contradictions exist during the transition period, together with other contradictions,

class struggle does continue and it is the duty of the party to guide this class struggle to evolve socialist relations. Since class struggle exists, there is also the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What we find in 1928, is a serious attempt made by the working class, with the guidance of the party, once again, to change the relations of production, as the existing relations had seriously constrained the development of productive forces themselves. Although the party provided support, on a number of issues it wavered and came under the pressure of the managers, technicians and apparatus of industrial enterprises and permitted their bourgeois line to exert influence. The case is illustrative how during the second international itself, the trade union leaders, holding a bourgeois line came to influence the SDP more and more.

Class Relations in the Countryside

It is not possible to delve into the question of class differentiation of the peasantry in the Russian countryside, immediately in the wake of the revolution and during the period of NEP.¹³⁷ Only certain general conditions are taken up. The agrarian revolution of 1917-19 resulted in the more equitable distribution of land. The process of NEP basically strengthened the middle peasants, resulting in the reduction of the

137 See T Shanin: The Awkward Class: Also Lewin: Opp. Cit, elaredon, Oxford, 1972.

number of poor peasants in the total proportion of peasant population, a section of them being reduced to the line of landless labour and a section moving up to the rank of middle peasant. The importance of Kulaks grew only slightly.

The NEP stood on the explicit understanding that requisitioning will be replaced by taxes on peasant produces. The peasantry was free to sell their surplus produce in the market in exchange for other necessities of life, especially commodities supplied from the industry. This exchange was conducted through the mediacy of private sector as well as State organs and the cooperative sector which itself was under the overall control of Soviet State. The latter as Lenin termed it was to beat the capitalists on their own ground. 'Here is something we must do now in the economic field, we must win the competition against the ordinary shop assistant, the ordinary capitalist, the merchant, who will go to the peasant without arguing about communism'.¹³⁸ This was supposed to constitute the 'economic' side of the worker peasant alliance. There were, however, certain presuppositions involved: The ability of the state and the cooperative institutions depended upon their ability to supply the commodities required by the peasantry on the one hand and secondly in offering relatively better or equal terms compared to the private traders.

However, the private traders by offering better prices in the prevailing general situation of society were to attract peasant produce.

The political forms that Lenin characterized in his last testament were to evolve in certain parts of Russia, in incipient forms, although individual farming was predominant. These were associations of poor and middle peasants for joint utilization of means of production, traditional forms of mutual aid, poor peasant committees, etc. However very little encouragement was to be extended in this regard towards the strengthening of these new forms.¹³⁹

Increasing collections of peasant produce was a necessity both for the supply of raw materials to industry and to feed the growing population of the towns. Besides grain was one of the major exports of Soviet Union to obtain machinery from abroad during this period. As industrialization speeded up the secure supply of grain and its augmentation was a necessity.

The grain procurement crisis of 1927-28 and further in 1929-30, was therefore to be explained by the complex process of interaction of all these contradictions, and not by a uni-causal explanation based on Kulak Strike, together with the

 139 See Bettelheim: Class-struggle in the USSR, Second period: 1923-1930, The Harvester Press England, pp.99-101.

shortage of grain production in 1927-28 was to go hand in hand with insufficient supply of industrial goods to the peasantry in exchange for their produces through the state agencies and cooperatives. Together with these factors, the influence of the Kulak both ideological and political were to lead to the forceful process of collectivization from 1929 onwards. The bureaucratic manner in which State- agencies, cooperative organs, and centralised industrial organs functioned further intensified the crisis.¹⁴⁰

Ideological Struggle in the Party concerning Consolidation of workers peasant alliance

It is not possible to discuss in depth the complex debate that went on within the Bolshevik party during the period after Lenin's death till 1929 when practically the NEP comes to a close. The debate was greatly centered around the continuation of the Revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the outcome of the debate seriously affected the cause of socialist transition in Russia and had tremendous significance in terms of the working class movement world-wide whose implications live with us even today.

Lenin in his last testament, summarising the experiences of the previous five years of Soviet power had indicated certain directions with regard to, what he considered

as the dominant issues before the Soviets and the Bolshevik party. These were just the directions which had to be tested in practice in view of the concrete conditions of class struggle keeping in view the political perspective of the proletariat. The thirteenth congress of the Party therefore asserted that 'to solve the problem of the Party's work in countryside it was necessary to start from the principle that the task of the whole historical period was to realize the alliance between the working class and peasantry and this alliance was based on the efforts to lead the peasantry to socialism through cooperation.

However, before the Congress the 'Platform of the 46'¹⁴¹ was to challenge the economic policy followed so far, which was defective in credit policy, planning and aid to industry and questioned the centralised nature of policy making.¹⁴² The thirteenth congress condemned the platform of the 46' and called for application of the principle of workers democracy' an open discussion by all party members on all important questions and elections from below. Trotsky's views too were to be subjected to a strong criticism following the congress, especially these elaborated in Permanent Revolution.

141 So named after the signatures of the 46 which included Preobiazhensky, Pyatakov, Osinsky, Kaganovich, Saprano, and others. Though Trotsky did not sign it, he substantially agreed with it (see EH Carr: The Interregnum: p.106-7, Macmillan, London, 1965).

142 Ibid, p.368

Stalin in his article 'October and Comrade Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution', was to counterpose 'Socialism in one country; to Trotsky's 'theory of permanent revolution'.¹⁴³ Trotsky had argued in 'permanent revolution' that in a backward country the contradiction between the workers and peasants could not be resolved and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot take place without the support of socialist revolution in the West.¹⁴⁴ Stalin's basic argument was that the commonality of interests between the workers and peasants under the dictatorship of the proletariat sets them against counter-revolution and socialism can be built on the basis of the alliance of the former two classes.

As the revolutions in the west had not precipitated, for Trotsky, the only way out to save the Revolution was to undertake rapid industrialization. Preoblazensky was to give a systematic outline to it in his 'New Economics' putting forward the conception of 'Primitive Socialist Accumulation'. As the ways of primitive capitalist accumulation as the capitalist countries availed themselves of, were not available to Russia, and as no large scale help can be expected from developed countries due to the failure of the revolution, the only way for Russia for speedy industrialization was to extract surplus from agriculture.¹⁴⁵

 143 Stalin: Works, vol.7, pp.112-113.

144 Trotsky : Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects, 3rd ed. p.105, New York, 1969.

145 See: Preobrazensky: The New Economics, Oxford, Claredon, 1965.

Against this view, Stalin, at this point asserted the maintenance and continuation of 'workers-Peasant alliance' by a continuous improvement of the livelihood of the peasantry, by revitalizing the rural soviets and by educating the peasantry on the socialist path.¹⁴⁶ The fourteenth conference of the party, however, were to lay a strong emphasis on reliance on rich peasant by widening the right to lease land, removed restrictions on the employment of wage earners in agriculture reduced the agricultural tax, and condemned the practice of imposing fixed prices when procuring agriculture produce.¹⁴⁷

The controversies to follow were mainly centered around three issues, emphasizing one issue or the other without necessarily excluding the others.

1. The worker-peasant alliance and the concrete forms of continuing this alliance.
2. Counterposing a speedy rate of industrialization to policies of worker-peasant alliance as seen in the prevalent practice of NEP.
3. Emphasizing on greater initiative of the working class, increasing the wages of workers, freedom and discussion within the party, and struggle against the state apparatuses.

 146 Stalin: Works, vol.7, pp.127-28.

147 E.H.Carr: Socialism in one country, vol.I, p.263, Macmillan, London, 1964.

In the fourteenth congress, the Platform of four¹⁴⁸ were to emphasize on 3rd point while critical of NEP. This platform was to be condemned by the majority and the NEP Policy was upheld. The fourteenth congress called for a wide participation of workers in production, and criticized the trade unions for siding with the management against the interest of workers. Stalin was to argue for a decentralized process of industrialization and predicted that the rate of industrialization may have to be slowed down due to the shortage of capital.¹⁴⁹

After the fourteenth congress, the tendencies expressed in (2) and (3) were to combine together to form the 'united opposition. The party majority took organizational steps to counter this bloc'.¹⁵⁰ The fifteenth conference the positions of the 'United Bloc' were subjected to a strong criticism. Stalin Said: 'The Opposition bloc fails to realise and refuse to recognize that industry cannot be advanced if the interests of agriculture are ignored or violated. It fails to understand that while industry is the leading element in the national economy, agriculture in its turn is the base on which industry can develop'.¹⁵¹

148 Zonoviev, Kamenev, Sokolnikov and Krupskaya

149 See Stalin: Works, vol.7, p.323

150 L.Schapiro: The Communist Party of Soviet Union; p.304, 2nd Ed., Methuen, London, 1970.

151 Stalin: Works, vol.8, p.301.

This conference was to resolve to supply machines and other goods for the development of agriculture, better marketing facilities, credit, support for collective farming and emphasized on rural industry.

However as shown earlier, these resolutions were hardly practiced and wherever practiced met with strong opposition from the entrenched bureaucracy.

The defeat of the United Opposition was to be followed outside the party and was dragged into the Executive Committee of Comintern as well.¹⁵² Legal and administrative measures were taken against the opposition. Zinoviev and Trotsky were expelled from the party.

The fifteenth congress which met after the defeat of the United Opposition reaffirmed the policy of continuing the NEP with certain major emphasis:

1. Increased pressure on the Kulaks as the alliance of the workers with the peasantry has been strengthened.
2. Emphasized the policy of collectivization which was to be carried out with caution, by means of persuasion and without constraint.
3. Called for rapid industrialization while attacking the doctrine of 'Primitive Socialist Accumulation'.

 152 T. Deutcher: The prophet Unarmed: p.334-337, Oxford University Press, London, 1959.

4. It emphasized the formula of the opposition, the formula 'Optimum accumulation'- by maintaining correct proportions between the development of industry and agriculture, between heavy industry and light industry, between town and country.

The positions of this congress were mainly argued out by Bukharin.¹⁵³

However, within a short time following the congress Stalin was to launch a strong line of divergence from the resolutions of the fifteenth congress calling for rapid industrialization praising the collective and state farms, advocating emergency measures against the Kulaks and accusing Bukharin of following a policy meant to please everyone.¹⁵⁴

Against this Bukharin argued that there cannot be rapid industrialization without improving agriculture. The emergency measures were leading to declining agricultural produce, leading to peasant riots and threatening worker peasant alliance. The pressure exerted on the rich peasant has to be clearly demarcated on that applied on the middle peasant. Exaggerated state centralization will stifle initiative. Prior policy must strengthen the worker-peasant alliance.¹⁵⁵

 153 See: F Cohen: Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888 - 1938, Ch.7, Wildhood House, London, 1974.

154 Stalin, CW, vol.II, p.52.

155 Robert V Daniels: *Opp. Cit.* pp.331-333.

Stalin increasingly stressed the danger of a 'right deviation' while calling for struggle against 'left deviation' (Troskyite). Bukharin during this period was to elaborate his views basing on the fifteenth congress of the party while repudiating the positions argued out by the united opposition. Against this view Stalin counterposed his own views:

1. The key factor is industrialization i the development of the production of the means of production while ensuring the greatest possible speed of this development which demanded the maximum capital investment in industry.¹⁵⁶

2. The principal contradiction in Soviet Union is the backward technique possessed by Soviet Union and its Soviet system 'the most advanced type of state power in the world'.¹⁵⁷

3. The rate of development of agriculture is lagging behind industry which can be solved by reconstructing agriculture 'on a new technical basis'.

Although Stalin was still to pay lip-service to certain earlier formulations of NEP, his basic thrust now was a call to change the entire approach to NEP. Stalin was to further elaborate his positions said above in his speech at the Plenum of April 1929.

1. The present conjuncture represents an intensification of class struggle given the relation of forces.¹⁵⁸

156 Stalin: Works: vol.II, p.257

157 Ibid, p.263-64.

158 Stalin, Works: vol.12, p.38.

2. The very nature of the Soviet regime precludes any sort of exploitation of the peasantry by the state.¹⁵⁹

3. New bonds have to be established between town and country. "It is a question of reconstructing agriculture on the basis of new technique and collective labour."¹⁶⁰

4. Collectivization was basically a demand for industrial growth. Otherwise there will be a rift between industry and agriculture. "In order to eliminate this danger of a rift we must begin seriously re-equipping agriculture in the basis of a new technique. But in order to reequip it we must gradually unite the scattered individual peasant farms into large state farms, into collective farms".¹⁶¹

5. The supply of machines to agriculture cannot be provided unless there is rapid growth of industrialization.¹⁶²

The plenum and the subsequent conference while, laying down this line were to reiterate all the positions that Lenin and the various oppositions had made, i.e. emphasis on the initiative of the workers, struggle against bureaucracy, the need to purge the party from opportunists, the organization and supervision by the masses, and continuation of ideological struggle against revisionists.¹⁶³

159 Ibid, p.53

160 Ibid, p.60-61

161 Ibid, p.62

162 Ibid, p.64

163 Bettelheim, Opp. Cit, pp.434-444.

The conference also ratified the five year plans based on the above premises, while agreeing to continue the NEP. This new ideological and political direction resulted in a barrage of criticism against Bukharin and all those who had held his views while all means of expressing their opinions were deprived to them.¹⁶⁴ Although the sixteenth conference tried to put together all the positions and tried to provide a 'realistic' line on the ideological and political front, the developing situation in industry and agriculture made the party to give up its policy of 'equidistance', of step by step collectivization, and move towards a policy of rapid collectivization, especially from November 1929. Stalin was to term it as the 'great change'. The change was to be the virtual dictatorship of the soviet state over the peasantry not merely on the Kulaks but also the middle and poor peasantry.¹⁶⁵ On the basis of fighting the Kulaks a revolution was being carried through in the countryside in a bureaucratic and repressive fashion, and could not fail to turn the whole peasantry against the Soviet regime.¹⁶⁶

Implications of this 'Great Change'

Lenin had argued in the philosophical notebooks that 'in order to really know an object we must embrace study, all

164 See Cohen: Opp. Cit; p.461.

165 Lewin: Russian Peasants, pp.470-480.

166 Jean Ellenstein: The Stalin Phenomenon; p.79, Lawrence Wishart, London 1976.

its sides, all connections and 'mediations'. We shall never achieve it completely but the demand for all sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity.¹⁶⁷ The immediate pressure of the circumstances and its onesided expression was to lead to drive a wedge in the worker peasant alliance.

Stalin and the Bolshevik Party¹⁶⁸ by the 'Great Change' and in the process of effecting this change brought about basic changes in the conception of the Dictatorship of the proletariat during the period of transition and in turn, effected basic changes in an entire complex of relationship that were articulated by Marx, Engels and Lenin, i.e. the relationship of the party and the revolutionary masses; the proletarian state and the working class; the state, workers' power and the party; internal democracy based on democratic centralism with primacy on democracy; on the relationship of productive forces and changing the relations of production; relationship between the central authority and the local initiative; between the learning process and imposing a consciousness; the nature of the alliance between workers and peasants, between the superstructure and the base, between theory and practice. The change resulted in strengthening those very relations and institutions which had to undergo basic changes to be in the true expressions

167 Lenin: "On the Question of Dialectics": CW, vol.38, pp.357-358, Moscow, 1958.

168 It is necessary to note that the majority in the Bolshevik party agreed with Stalin's position in the battle against the opposition view point actively or passively throughout the period of 1923-29. It is more likely that Stalin just represented the viewpoint of the majority of the top echelons of party and state functionaries which gave him a great leverage against the opposition.

of the working class, inspite of statements and elaborations to the contrary.

It does not mean that the views that were opposed to that of Stalin and the party majority were in line with the revolutionary conception elaborated in scientific socialism. Some of them just expressed a partial critique of certain deviations and did not tackle the chief issues at a particular conjuncture, e.g. the platform of four. Some of them like Trotsky and Preobrazensky really merged with that of Stalin and the course he undertook after 1929, regarding the socialist construction. This explains why in 1929, a lot of those who supported Trotsky in 1924-27 came to support Stalin. Although the positions of Bukharin and the 'right opposition' in 1927-29 were the closest to Lenin in terms of his last testament, they failed to analyse the concrete class relations and the directions of change in these class-relations. Therefore their positions could not intervene into the concrete conditions of class struggle and direct it towards a political strengthening of the worker-peasant alliance.

Stalin's theory of transition is basically 'the theory of the development of productive forces' given the 'advanced social system in Soviet Union'. This reduces the role of relations of production to merely juridical relations of ownership. The main enemy of the working classes in such a system is the defeated classes-represented in Defeated capitalists,

Tsarist bureaucracy or survivals of Feudalism and imperialism. The working class initiative has to be kept alive and mass participation of the workers must take place in production, precisely against these enemies and their impact in retarding the growth of production forces. There was an inbuilt contradiction in this position: The principal task is the growth of productive forces. Struggle should be aimed towards it and against those forces which retard it. But if the struggle against bureaucracy threatens the given growth of productive forces, then the struggle should not be waged at all.

This kind of a conception does not leave much room for mass initiative, local initiative and the application of mass line. It delimits the struggle from actively attempting to change the existing relations and therefore can function only on a centralised basis. Given, the factors a huge standing army, a gigantic secret apparatus a tight control over the small nationalities begin to be a necessary phenomenon. The defeated classes are seen not representing a class outlook, a class line and waging a class-struggle, but in terms of the personalities. Therefore, to move forward to the 'construction of socialism' these individual personalities have to be wiped out or locked up in labour camps. They cannot be educated through class action. Class line here begins to be an attribute of the individual. This is nothing but a positivist notion of a class.

This positivist notion can easily combine itself with abstract truth, universal truths. The reality begins to be immobile, static except for the mechanical quantitative growth. Therefore for Stalin Soviet Power will always remain the Soviet power. It is illustrated in the analysis given by him: "The very nature of Soviet Regime precludes any sort of exploitation of the peasantry by the State".¹⁶⁹ Therefore, with Stalin the concrete analysis of the concrete situations is not the heart of marxism as Lenin said but Marxism becomes a theory of abstract truth.

In Stalin's conception there was no active role for the superstructure. It is determined by the economic base. It is a conception, like the other conceptions in his position, which was methodically nonMarxist and non-Leninist and represented the positions of the second international.

There was no place in Stalin's conception for dialectics. Dialectics for him was just the unity of opposites taken mechanically. He did not emphasize the struggle between the opposites and their mutual transformation as Lenin clearly did in his writings.

Stalin's position therefore can easily succumb to eclecticism as that of Bernstein who gloriously exalted his position as eclecticism. Since it does not see the principle contradiction and the relationship of this contradiction with other contra-

169 Stalin: Works: vol.12, p.38

dictions, all of them get meshed up. It also becomes possible, in such an eventuality to waver from one position to another. And Stalin's position actually did succumb to such a position. As an instance in his 'Great Change' he tried to combine his thesis with all the positions of the opposition from 1923-1929. In that capacity these positions failed to guide the struggle in terms of the concrete class relations and contradictions of each phase.

In Stalin's theory, Marxist theory forgoes its role and becomes nothing but one sided expression of the existing reality. It was just another form of the dominant ideology that prevailed in the second international. The effect of this theory was to contain the struggle of the workers from actively moving towards change in social relations and initiating the consciousness of a class as a whole. By its very nature it strengthened the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology among the workers which was continuously reproduced due to the existence of the capitalist relations of production and the very nature of the social relations in a transitional society. Thereby it strengthened the capitalist relations and all those apparatus and organizations which reproduced capitalist relations. Accordingly it strengthened the role of the bureaucrats and the centralised organs of state power. It led to the complete fusion of the party with the state apparatuses in fact, if not in theory. These process definitely led to the resurgence of bourgeois nationalism, whose roots were

present already.¹⁷⁰

The Roots of Stalinist Ideology

In spite of the break effected by the Bolshevik party with the second international, a lot of the basic presuppositions of the second international especially those of SDP were to be the part of the concept was world of the Marxism in Russia mainly mediated through the Mensheviks. We could see it at a number of times in the response of the majority of the Bolsheviks to the Soviets in February 1917; at the time of the October insurrection; attitude towards state capitalism and in Stalin especially with regard to the national question. Although Lenin attempted to counter them at number of times, a systematic critique of these positions and self criticism

170 Stalinist means not in the sense that Stalin created it. We have already said that Stalin's views had the concurrence active or passive of the majority of the top echelons of the party and state functionaries. Stalin was mainly the spokesman of this majority. It is an ideology in the sense Marx refers to it in the German ideology. It was a relatively coherent resemble if representations related to the human experience of the period. Unlike the scientific ideology of Marxism "It's function was not to give agents a true knowledge of the social structure but simply to insert them as it were into their practical activities supporting this structure (See Nicos Poulantzas, Opp.Cit. p.207). It had scientific elements in it as there are in bourgeois ideologies (see Lenin 'critical notes on the national question, CW. vol.20, p.24) but comes to be more and more dominated by the interests and becomes a vehicle of expression of capitalist relations and their agents, in the dynamics of class struggle. It was a process which was to say that regarding Bernstein's ideology which had to cloak itself in Marxist phrasology to be effective to control the struggle of the working class in the specific conjuncture (See Lenin SW.vol.I, Marxism Revisionism).

among the Bolsheviks from the side of revolutionary marxism could be only in the course of the revolution. Stalin was to draw a lot from these conceptions, as foundation of his ideology.

2. The principal concepts were the primacy of development of productive forces (Lassalean in origin); 'The neutrality of state in class struggle; A naive Conception of Peasantry', and a mechanical abstract interpretation of Marxism instead of its dialectical understanding.

For Lenin immediately after the war, the petty bourgeois ideology and practice which would have further increased the chaos and disorganization of production and threatened the revolution itself was the main enemy and to counter it development of State capitalism was the principal task. But it was a transitory measure and therefor had to be perceived in its dialectical unity. This measure advocated by Lenin could go hand in hand only with the strategic conception of transition advocated in State and Revolution. But Stalin was to emphasize only on the onesided unity of State capitalism which argued for the development of large-scale productive forces. Therefore, the differentials in wages, division of labour worked from above, one man management separation between mental and manual work were not only to continue but intensify.

Similarly the State apparatus too had to be seen in the dialectical way. The transition process should have led to

greater and greater evolution and strengthening of the organized proletariat in production and administration through self governing organs rather than the state placed above the masses. Truly to achieve it there had to be greater emphasis on local initiative, extension of democracy in all sphere of Soviet existence and emphasis on local organs through relatively self-sufficient growth. Therefore, socialist development and organs of self rule must have been based from below. The leadership in this process could be extended by the Party alone. But the total merger of the party with the State apparatuses which took the Tsarist organizational structure, if not institutional, led to the highly centralised state apparatuses, centralised planning and organization, and the party could not play its role effectively to continue the revolution while increasing production. The norm became the latter which reproduced the existing relations if there was simultaneously no effort to change the relations of production.

The second international had a naive attitude towards the peasantry continued from the Gotha Programme. Marx strongly criticised Lassale's attitude towards the peasantry manifest in this programme. This attitude was also part of Russian intelligentsia which either was very contemptuous of the peasantry or took an extremely romantic attitude towards it which manifested in the other side of the contemptuous, as too naive. For the Mensheviks and Trotsky, the peasantry did

not figure in much in their conception and practice of class struggle, inspite of forming a large mass in Russia. Their main conception rested on analysing the peasantry as a threat to the revolution, at different stages rather than as a firm ally. Therefore, establishment of worker peasant alliance politically was beyond their conception. The peasantry has to be either patronised or wiped out. Stalin was to do both.

An Undialectical Conception of Marxism

This was manifest in all areas. The undialectical conception was the dominant trend in the second international as has been analysed already. Even Plekhanov was unable to escape its influence. In Russia Neo-Kantianism was to manifest itself in Empiriocriticism of Bogdanov. Bogdanov's influence was to continue in the '20s and '30s in the emphasis laid on organisation.¹⁷¹

Connected with these influences was the emphasis on Totality which Stalin propounds as the first principle of the dialectical method. According to it, Dialectics regards nature as 'a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomena are organically connected with, dependent on and determined by each other.¹⁷² Lenin's emphasis that dialectics is basically the unity of opposites is not emphasized. Further, the independence of the phenomena is presented through the concept of an environment which is supposed to condition every

171 See Bettelheim: *Opp. Cit*, p.538.

172 J.V.Stalin: Leninism, p.592, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1940.

phenomenon.¹⁷³ After this Stalin asserts that there are internal contradictions in every reality. This implies that development, change and motion have to be basically explained through external causes rather than internal causes.

In this conception Marxism as a theory of proletarian movement, as an instrument to analyse the basic relations of society becomes nothing but an ideology of legitimation. Marxism become Tailism which is useful to rationalise events post factum but not a conscious guide to practice.

173 Ibid

CHAPTER IV

THE CHINESE EXPERIENCE

THE Soviet Revolution as envisaged and led by the Bolshevik Party and Progressively articulated by the principal spokesmen of the Bolshevik party in the subsequent years, provided the dominant conception and model for communists and communist parties, world over, who came to align with the Third International. This conception was buttressed, on the one hand, by the total futility and capitulation of other strands of 'socialist' thought which went to make the Second International perspectives articulated by the Third Communist International (Comintern), founded in 1919. There were the rich traditions of working class movements and their theoretical elaboration in a number of countries whose working class parties or sections came to join the Third International. Quite often, the lessons of October Revolution were not applied towards the furtherance of class struggle and revolutionary seizure of power, in the conditions of class struggle obtaining in their own nations but as a readymade

substitute of stereotypes.¹ Therefore, the inner party debates that went on within the Bolshevik party that concerned basically the problems of transition in the soviets themselves began to be the overarching concerns to the constituent units of the Comintern, during certain crucial periods.

 1. The statement needs to be qualified due to a barrage of criticism that has been launched, especially in the recent period, against the III International holding it responsible for the failure of the revolutionary movement in the West. Without going into the analysis of it, in general we can say, the III International was a great help in resolutely upholding the line of all hues, to guide and support revolutionary movements and in the founding of communist parties especially in colonial and semi-colonial countries. The failure of the class struggle towards the revolutionary seizure of political power, by the proletariat, in spite of excellent opportunities in some countries must be ascribed to:

(a) The relations of class forces in the individual nations concerned, in terms of concrete objective conditions and subjective preparation of the class politically and organizationally.

(b) The prevalence of revisionism of the main thought among the working class, and its impact on the revolutionary sections itself.

(c) The ability of capital to reorganise itself nationally and internationally.

(d) The marshalling of national chauvinist ideology both among the victorious and defeated nations in the aid of capital and against the struggle of proletariat and the soviets.

(e) The reorganisations of the relations with the colonies in such a way that it facilitates the more incisive exploitation of the latter etc.

Given these conditions, which marxists could never forget, at the risk of adventurism or capitulation, the revolutionary struggle should have been led basing on the conditions and initiative thrown up by the revolutionary classes in each country by applying the political and organizational clarity provided by the Soviet Revolution to these conditions and initiative. This is, however, not to deny the impact of the revisionist current manifest in the Comintern itself, taking different forms in different periods, which affected the working class parties.

In the working out of the Chinese Revolution and building of socialism in China, we find a creative application of the October Revolution with a resolute struggle against dogmatism. Precisely, therefore, it affords a qualitative development of the revolutionary conception and practice in a social formation marked by its own specifications.² In Mao's writings we find a continuous emphasis to apply Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution to the concrete conditions of China, to adopt its stand point and method in the context of the Chinese revolution rather than apply it as a dogma.³ Therefore, the course of the Chinese revolution and its understanding creatively enriches the marxist conception of revolution, helps to understand and appreciate the Soviet revolution,

 2. Mao wrote in 1938: "For the Chinese communists, who are part of the great Chinese nation, flesh and blood of its blood, any talk of Marxism in isolation from China's characteristics is merely Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in a vacuum. Hence to apply Marxism concretely in China becomes a problem which it is urgent for the whole party to understand and solve. Foreign stereotypes must be abolished...dogmatism must be laid to rest and be replaced with the Chinese style and spirit....To separate internationalist content from national form is the practice of those who do not understand the first thing about internationalism".

Mao-Tse-Tung, Role of the Chinese Communist Party: Selected Works (S.W) Vol.II pp 209-210, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1963.

3. Ibid,pp208

provides a revolutionary critique to the revisionist practices within the international communist movement and assists in the struggle of the proletariat and other oppressed Sections towards their emancipation. The Chinese revolution shows in practice the working out of a revolution under the leadership of the proletariat in a country subjected to feudal and semi-colonial exploitation. It subjects to a profound critique the analysis and theoretical positions held by the various protagonists on the colonial question as well as on questions of transition and validates or invalidates them. Its analysis can help us understand and precisely locate the quality of the innovation at the different stages of class struggle both within China and internationally and in terms of the ideological positions of Marxism.⁴

 4. Here, a clarification is called for. Revolutionary Marxism cannot be treated as equivalent at all times, to Marxism as it was historically manifest at various times. The working class struggle in its totality has two contradictory aspects on the one hand it embodies bourgeois practices and thoughts alien to the class interests of the proletariat, at the same time furthers class interests and develops Marxism. Therefore, Marxist scientific thought is not 'given' once and for all: it has to be developed, enriched and rectified on the basis of new struggles and new initiatives. The remark of Lenin in this connection is pertinent: "We do not regard Marx's theory as something complete and inviolable; On the contrary we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the science which scientists must develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life" (Lenin: Collected Works, Vol.4 pp 211-212, 4th ed. FIPH, Moscow, 1960-1970)

REVOLUTION IN THE COLONIES1. POSITIONS OF MARX AND ENGELS.

In the writings of Marx and Engels we do not find any clear exposition of the revolutionary movement in the colonial countries, although they resolutely supported the struggle of the oppressed nations.⁵ Marx of course brings out how the development of capitalism has drawn even the remote areas within the vortex of capital breaking down all barriers.⁶ Colonisation for Marx was a contradictory phenomenon. But the contradiction engendered by colonialism was basically seen in terms of its effect on the class struggle in the colonizing country and enhancing the crisis in the capitalist economy,

5. See Marx's writings supporting the struggle of Poland against Russian oppression and the struggle of the Irish Nationality against British domination. Also see Engels 'What have the working classes to do with Poland?' in Marx: 'The first International and after', London 1974, pp378-88.

The writings of Marx on Ireland which have general significance bring out the following themes:

(1) Only the national liberation of the oppressed nation enables national division and antagonisms to be overcome and permits the working class of both nations to unite against the common enemy. (2) The oppression of another nation helps to reinforce the ideological hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the workers in the oppressing nation. (3) The emancipation of the oppressed nation weakens the economic, political and ideological bases of the dominating classes in the oppressor nations. (Michael Lowy - "Marxism and the national question" in Robin Blackburn (ed.) Revolution and Class struggle, pp.138, Fontanna, 1977).

6. See K Marx & F Engels: Manifesto of Communist Party pp 34, 37, 38, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1971.

Commenting on the British colonial subjugation of China and Taiping Rebellion in its wake, Marx says "Now England having brought about the revolution in China the question is not how that revolution will in time react on England and through England on Europe. The question is not difficult of solution, if one of the great markets (of England) suddenly becomes contracted, the arrival of the crisis is necessarily accelerated thereby. Now the Chinese Revolution must, for the time being have precisely this effect upon England."⁷

The specific form of the revolution in the East and the interlinkages between the revolution in the West and East and vice versa are not clarified. Even as late as 1882, Engels writing to Karl Kautsky was to say "As to what social and political phases these countries will have to pass through before they like-wise arrive at socialist organization, I think we today can advance only rather idle hypothesis."⁸

 7. Marx: 'Revolution in China and in Europe' in Karl Marx and Fredric Engels/ 'On Colonialism', pp 22-23 Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968

8. Engels to Karl Kautsky, *ibid* pp342

2. POSITIONS OF LENIN AND COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

It is the development of capitalism to the stage of imperialism which brings the colonial question sharply into focus. Lenin says that in the stage of imperialism the division of the world is complete and there is frantic struggle for the redivision of the world. This results in more intense colonial exploitation on one hand and consequent resistance from colonial people, on the other. Imperialism at the stage of highest development of capitalism i.e. moribund capitalism is also the stage of proletarian revolution. Therefore the struggle of liberation in the colonies and the struggle of the proletariat face a common enemy-capitalism at the stage of imperialism. Therefore, Lenin argued that the struggle for independence waged in the colonies would objectively be part of the socialist revolution. However, the weakness of the bourgeoisie in the colonies will force them to compromise and vacillate in its struggle against imperialist domination. A through going struggle can be carried out against

it only under the leadership of the proletariat. Lenin, therefore, argued in the draft programme to the Second Congress of Comintern "The communist international must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form".⁹

Lenin further qualifies the nature of communists support and involvement of communists. It involves:

1. The resolute support to the present movement against the landowners, against landed proprietorship and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism.
2. The need for determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colour to bourgeois democratic liberation trends in backward countries.
3. This support to bourgeois democratic movements will be under condition that in these countries the elements of further proletarian parties which will be communist not only in name are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e. those of the struggle against the bourgeois democratic movements within their own nations.¹⁰

9. Lenin, Selected Works, Vol.III pp 377 Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977

10. Ibid, pp 376=77

These positions definitely involved contradictions, which later Mao would clarify as the contradiction between the people and the enemy in order to evolve the strategy of the united front.¹¹ However, at the moment of the second congress these positions remained at the heart of the discussion: Bourgeoisie democratic movements taking advantage of the Soviet Union and after calling themselves socialists diverting the embryonic proletarian associations from the direct tasks of class organisation.¹²

On objections raised at the second Congress chiefly by M.N.Roy¹³ Lenin amended the phrase 'support to bourgeois democratic movement' by 'support to National Revolutionary movement'. He further clarified "We communists should and will support bourgeoisie liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organizing in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If

11. See Mao-Tse-Tung: 'On New Democracy' in Selected Works, Vol. II, pp.348-352, FLP, Peking, 1977

12. See Jane Degras (ed) The Communist International (1919-1943) Documents, I, pp387-88, London 1956-65

13. See for M.N.Roy's alternative thesis = Sehram and Carrere d' Encausse: Marxism and Asia (1953-1964), pp 150-63.

these conditions do not last, the communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeois ie".¹⁴ The Congress also agreed to the amendment brought forward by M.N.Roy which said "The Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries could^gover to the Soviet System and through certain stages of development to communism without having to pass through the capitalist stage."¹⁵ Marx had already in his day framed a similar thesis with regard to Russia.¹⁶

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern brought about greater specification on this issue. It stressed strongly on the primacy of agrarian revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, reliance on the broad peasant masses and the intimate linkage of the bourgeois nationalists with feudal

14 Lenin S.W. vol.III, pp.406-7.

15 Lenin S.W. vol.III, pp.408, opp.cit. See also fernando Clandin: The Communist movement from Comintern to Cominform: pp.260-66, Penguin, 1975.

16 Marx: 8p reface to the Introduction of the Russian Edition of Communist Manifesto'. In Marx and Bengels Selected Works vol.1, pp.100, opp.cit.

forces.¹⁷ It asserted that only by fighting for the most radical possible solution of the tasks of bourgeois democratic revolution, by extending and intensifying the struggle against imperialist yoke by organizing the working and peasant masses for their special class interests and exploiting the contradictions in the nationalist bourgeois democratic camp, will the working classes be able to ensure for itself the role of the revolutionary leadership.¹⁸

These elaborations were necessary to prove how close the development of the Chinese revolution was to the general positions articulated by the Comintern in the second and fourth congresses. These remained the basic approaches, what Mao called as the method or standpoint towards a revolutionary strategy in China. The concrete

 !7. See F. Claudin, op.cit pp266

However, the fifth congress considerably modified the initial attitude of the colonial communist parties towards the national bourgeoisie. It laid stress on collaboration with these bourgeoisie (see *ibid* pp270) This was an expression of the inner party struggle in Soviet Union itself, when the 'Kulak' was extended support of the Soviet state.

!8. See *ibid* pp 27.

class practices in China, however, adopted the dominant conception of Soviet Revolution of working class uprising in cities and giving secondary importance to work in the countryside. The fifth congress of Comintern suggested the alliance between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party as permanent during the whole period of bourgeois democratic revolution. This resulted in the conception that the alliance with Kuomintang instead of being a contradictory alliance i.e. unity as well as struggle, just became unity without struggle. It was due to this conception of unity without struggle, that Communist Party of China was left open to the onslaught of Chiang-Kai Shek. The conception of revolution modelled on that of Soviet Union led it to adventurist urban uprisings in the wake of the crisis of 1927.¹⁸

If we wish to grasp the full impact of the Chinese Revolution, especially to understand the crisis of CPC (Chinese Communist Party) during 1926-27 we need to avoid a number of misinterpretations, by which this crisis is explained. These misinterpretations do not let us fully appreciate the relations of class forces at various stages of alliance

18. See Ibid pp27

of CPC with Kuomintang,¹⁹ the necessity of alliance with bourgeoisie democracy or the break effected by Mao and the communists with it after 1927, though substantially holding on to the theses of second and fourth congress of the Comintern.

(a) The theory of 'betrayal' by Chiang-Kai-Shek is a theory that smacks of moralism. It does not see the alliance of the communist party representing the proletariat with the Kuomintang representing the national bourgeoisie dialectically and therefore the probability of the Kuomintang changing into its opposite.

(b) Trotsky never reconciled himself to the alliance of the communist party with Kuomintang.²⁰ But this is due to Trotsky's adherence to the viewpoint of socialist Revolution which was nothing but idealist in Chinese conditions. The history of

19. Mao says, 'If people do not pay attention to the stages in the process of development of a thing, they cannot deal with its contradictions properly': 'On Contradiction', in Selected Readings from the Works of Mao-Tse-Tung, pp 102, FLP, Peking (SRWMT) 1971.

20. See Issac Deutcher, Maoism and its outlook in R Blackburn (ed) Revolution and Class Struggle, op.cit page 196.

of the development of class struggle which resulted in Soviet-type uprisings after the volte-face of Chiang-Kai-Shek bears the hollowness of his thesis. In the 1930s, Trotsky did not give a chance to the Chinese Revolution unless there are uprising of workers in the cities who came forward to assure the leadership. He was afraid that Maoism may become the mouthpiece of peasantry and eventually come into opposition with the proletariat.^{2!}

(c) The third view point puts the blame on the Comintern. In fact the Comintern had defined the Kuomintang as a 'bloc of four classes' capable of carrying through the revolution to the bourgeois democratic stage. Kuomintang was 'a sympathising party of the Comintern and Chiang

2!. Ibid pp 207.

Deutcher says, 'Trotsky's analysis reverberating unmistakably with decades of Russian-Marxist controversy and the experience of the Russian Revolution, was reduced ad absurdum by some of his Chinese disciples who denounced the victory of Maoism in 1949 as a 'bourgeois and Stalinist counter revolution.

Kai Shek was a honorary member of the Presidium of the Comintern. The fifth congress put the alliance of CPC and Kuomintang on a permanent footing. Therefore, it looks apprently b true to blame the Comintern for the debacle of 1927. Even Bukharin seem to own up the debacle self-critically by providing three reasons: (a) for not sufficiently criticizing the Kuomintang which resulted in the CPC being reduced into an accessory and not an ally; (b) the inability to assess the change in the objective situation from one stage to the other; (c) the CPC at times acted as a brake on the mass movement, a brake on the agrarian revolution and a brake on the labour movement.²²

(d) Stalin who was at the moment involved in debate with the United opposition puts the blame mainly on the right diviation within the Chinese Communist Party. However, the right diviation was adhearing to the line advocated by the Comintern. Therefore, it was nothing but

22. Impreor (English ed.) No.4!, 1928, pp733-34

a formal explanation of the debacles. The urban uprising of workers in 1930 proved further that Stalin did not understand the substantive issues underlying the debacle of 1926-27 since during his time as the principal spokesman of the Comintern that these left-adventurist uprisings were launched.

THE BREAK EFFECTED BY MAO

Only Mao provides a substantive understanding of the debacle both in theory and practice. He blames 'Chentuism' not the individual but the whole political viewpoint that went with it as responsible for the debacle. He criticizes it for its immaturity to understand the character, the tasks and methods of the revolution.²³ This implies that the Revolutionary course in China has to be characterized differently. It has to be applied to the concrete conditions of class struggle in China. That the universality of Marxism-Leninism can exist respond to and act upon only by integrating with the particularity of China.

23. Mao=Tse=Tung, 'On Contradiction' -SRWMT p 105

The mistake of Chen Tui lay in not being able to grasp the question of the Chinese Revolution because he just gave importance to the one sidedness of the question and not the all sidedness. For Bukharin it was the issue of correcting the mistakes. for Mao it was the question of effecting basic changes in the entire approach to the revolution, at a new phase of imperialism and in conditions of semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism²⁴

Therefore, for Mao the general political analysis in the age of imperialism and October Revolution and as articulated in terms of the colonies in the thesis of 2nd and 4th international were to persist. He was still to insist on the united front of four classes, but after the coup of Chiang-Kai-Shek, this united front can be led only by the proletariat. He still held on to the principles of Sun-Yat-Sen. Mao was very clear that the programme of Sun-Yat-Sen, that included Nationalism, democracy and People's livelihood on its agenda was the programmes of any national

24. See Mao-Tse-Tung, 'On Contradiction', S.W Vol. I, op.cit. pp 325-26.

bourgeoisie who wish to mobilize the masses behind these slogans. And yet the historical role of these slogans do not get exhausted after the bourgeoisie has forsaken them and moved over to counter-revolution. Mao clearly distinguished between the national bourgeoisie as a class and its representation in the Party of Kuomintang.²⁵ He argues that as the Kuomintang begins to serve the interest of imperialism and feudalism the distance between the national bourgeoisie and the Kuomintang as its party will turn antagonistic, the former moving over more and more to the side of those who uphold its class interests and struggle against its enemy, i.e. imperialism. Mao still maintained the primacy of the agrarian revolution only the method has to be changed. It cannot be a replica of the Russian revolution. He asserted the necessity of maintaining the political and organizational independence of the Communist party

 25. Mao-Tse-Tung, "On Contradiction", SRWMT, P 100
 op.cit The words sound very accusing. One sided means 'To be superficial.....it means to deny the necessity for probing deeply into a thing and minutely studying the characteristics of its contradictions, but instead merely try to resolve the contradiction' (Ibid, p 101)

in the United Front and worked it to near perfection during the anti-Japanese war. This independence involves struggle within the united front, conducting the struggle from the class position of the proletariat while struggling unitedly against the common enemy and adjusting the demands of the proletariat in the interest of the unity of the struggle. Mao later stated during the period of united front against anti-Japanese war "it is through this kind of complex relationship with the Chinese bourgeoisie that the Chinese revolution and the communist party of China have progressed in their development. This is a special historical feature: a feature peculiar to the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries and not to be found in the revolutionary history of any capitalist country."²⁷

To that extent, therefore, Mao's break with the hitherto accepted official conception of the Chinese Revolution amounted to a critique of all positions on revolution in China, and led him to a rediscovery of Marxism and Leninism in the conditions of China.

27. Mao-Tse-Tung, "Introducing the Communist," S.W. Vol. II, pp 287-88, op.cit.

It is being the case, it is imperative that we analyse the specific innovation effected in the course of the Chinese revolution, which in turn enriches the very conception of revolution. When the volte-face of Chiang Kai Shek in 1927 occurred it was received as a shock by the Comintern and by the official CPC leadership, which resulted in two main reactions from the official side:

(1) To see division of the Kuomintang as constituted of two factions 'left' and 'right'. The right has walked over to counter revolution. The 'Left' is safe. Therefore, build an alliance with the left. However, the 'left' soon proved to be no better than the 'right'. In fact it landed the CPC in a terrible dilemma. The Communist who headed the ministry of agriculture in the Wuhan government had to use his position in order to clamp down on revolutionary peasant movement.²⁸

28. On 30 June 1927 the Central Committee of CPC passed a resolution which carried the appeasement policy to extremes. The resolution stated 'Mass organisations - workers, peasants, and other must submit to the leadership and control of Kuomintang authorities; the requests of the people's - worker's peasant's etc. movements must conform with the resolutions passed by the Kuomintang Congress or by its central executive committee as well as with government laws and decrees: See Guillermaz Jaques; A history of Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1949, p.137, Methuen, London, 1972.

(2) The second attempt was to stage uprisings in the various cities- the principal one being the Canton uprising at the end of 1927 - and attempts to establish the soviets. Of course, counter revolution rode roughshod over these sporadic outbursts.²⁹

ASSERTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF THE PEASANTRY

Just a few months before this debate Mao after an investigation of the peasant struggle³⁰ in Hunan had given the call to the party to lead the peasant struggle as that would decide the outcome of the class struggle in China: "For the present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time, in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however, great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep away all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil

29. See the explanation for the defeat by Mao Mao Tse Tung : Selected Works, Vol. 4, p172, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1956

30. The China's whole history in full of peasant rebellions. Fitzgerald, C.P. Revolution in China, P.13, London, 1952.

gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice clearly".³¹ In fact it was an authentic discovery of the peasantry which was to mark the entire course of the Chinese revolution with its indelible mark. It was not merely a discovery of the peasantry for the communists in China but the communists at large. The great role that the peasantry was to play in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle in the colonies throughout the world bears testimony to this discovery. Claudin says that the report represents the first living and thorough fusion of Marxism with

31. Mao-Tse-Tung: "Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan"-S.W.Vol.I, pp23-24, FLP Peking 1975.

Chinese reality-social and political. Without any stereotyped Marxist formulas, but using the Marxist method, here we have an analysis of the anatomy and the dynamic of the fundamental part of Chinese society, namely, the life of the countryside.

From this analysis Mao argued that for the Chinese communists, the vanguard of the working class, the primary task is to unite with the peasantry. The road of revolution is not armed uprisings but that of protracted armed struggle by establishing base areas in the countryside. In his analysis of the classes in Chinese society Mao had already clarified who were the enemies of the revolution and who were the friends as the basic datum for the revolution. "Our enemies are all those in league with imperialism- the war lords, the bureaucrats, the comprador class, the big landlord class and the reactionary section of the intelligentsia attached to them. The leading force in our revolution is the industrial proletariat and petty bourgeoisie. As for the vacillating middle, bourgeoisie, their right wing may become an enemy and their left wing may become our friend. But we must be constantly on our guard and not let them create confusion within our ranks."³²

32. Mao Tse Tung: "Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society," S.W. Vol. I, p13, op.cit. We can see that this analysis closely parallels that of Lenin in 'Thesis on Agrarian Question' for the II Congress of Comintern, regarding classes in the countryside in capitalist society, pp378-380 SW Vol.3, pp Moscow, 1967.

This breakthrough towards revolutionary practices does not mean that the other lines of collaboration or ~~or~~putchism do not survive. They do and surface during the different periods taking different forms and waging bitter struggles against the revolutionary line. These attempts manifest themselves in various forms, different periods: Blindly following the Comintern or Soviet Union; discarding the dialectics of this relationship, attempting to duplicate the model of Soviet Revolution in China; arguing for collaboration with the bourgeoisie which was nothing but capitulation to the interests of bourgeoisie; arguing for the development of productive forces on-sidedly without effecting changes in production relations; emphasizing unity while bypassing struggle; concentrating only on the workers while ignoring the question of the leadership of the working class over the other exploited sections manifest in the policy of worker-peasant alliance; emphasizing only on the economy while ignoring the revolutionaization of the superstructure; etc. The Chinese revolution and the socialist transformation under the leadership of the proletariat, with Mao at its head, developed

by the constant struggle against these lines which find expression at the various stages of the development of Chinese revolution. In 1930 itself Mao was to say: "We must wipe out idealism and guard against all opportunist and putchist errors before we can succeed. The only way to wipe out idealism is to make the effort and investigate the actual situation."³³ It is almost repeating Lenin, "The most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism (is) the concrete analysis of concrete conditions."³⁴

We have already seen, within the scope of our problem, the reaction of CPC and Comintern to the debacle of 1926-27, in fact, what we find is that the same attempts in other forms were repeated again in 1930 and 1934 although in different circumstances. These attempts further show that the model of Soviet Revolution was to persist in the official line of Comintern and CPC, without explaining and learning from the debacle of 1926-27. Besides, the course chartered out by Mao was merely seen as peripheral

 33. Mao Tse Tung: 'Oppose Bookworship', SRWMT op.cit. pp 43

34. Lenin, Collected Works: Vol. 31, pp 143 Moscow, 1950

to the substantive correctness of the earlier line. In June 1930, the Executive Committee of Communist International passed a special resolution on China, in which it was said 'Events are moving in such a way that the revolutionary situation will shortly encompass, if not the whole of Chinese territory, then at least the territory of a number of key provinces and a directive was issued to concrete the efforts of the Red Army so as to be in a position to take over one of several of the industrial and administrative centres.'³⁵ Applying the Russian experience, the urgent need for an urban working class base for the revolution, able to provide and secure the leadership of the proletariat over the whole of the revolutionary movement was emphasised upon. Criticizing the Maoist position, the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC in 1930 said "The great struggle of the proletariat is the decisive force as far as preliminary success in one or several provinces are concerned. Without a wave of strikes staged

 35. See: Shram and Carriere d'Encausse, op.cit.243
 245,246 also Degras, Op.cit III p 135.

by the working class, without armed insurrection in the key cities, there can be no success in one or several provinces. It is a wholly mistaken idea not to pay attention to urban work and to count on the villages to surround the towns.³⁶ As per this plan a series of uprisings were launched in Wuhan, Nanchang, Changsha, Shanghai, Nan Kind, Canton, Tientsin, etc. These uprisings were naturally crushed.³⁷ In 1934 this same line of course, in different form, camouflaged as Military tactics was applied in the Chun-Kiang-Kiangsi base when the Red Army was placed in a frontal attack with the army of Chiang Kai Shek during its fifth expedition. Like the earlier uprisings it implied that Chiang-Kai-Shek can be defeated in a single deadly blow. Mao opposed this military line. It was the defeat that the Red Army suffered that set it on the proverbial long march. It also ensured that the leadership of Maoist line over the communist party. During the long March Chang=Kuo=Tuo put

36. Guillermaz, Op.cit. p201

37. According to Chinese Trade Union Experts about 38000 trade union militants perished in that year. 25000 died in battle and 13000 were executed, See Guillermaz Op.cit. p226

forward a line opposing the base areas and using the red army to engage in revolutionary warfare against the Japanese aggressors.³⁸ This was a line of simple capitulationism to Kuomintang. Mao in opposition to this insisted that it was through the establishment of base areas, the waging of the war against Japan and with full mobilization and arousal of the masses for this struggle, that the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary armed forces would grow and become stronger.

We will have to see the emergence of revolutionary institutions and perspectives that emerged from this concrete analysis of the situation under the conditions of imperialism.

Establishment of Liberated Base Areas.

The base areas were the liberated areas where an alternative power was established and in which agrarian reforms and cultural transformation was worked out by actively mobilising the masses and their consequent participation in various forms of revolutionary activity. The base areas were not only different centres of power but exercised alternative type of power which Mao came to

38. See, Mao Tse Tung: 'Role of the Chinese Communist party', SW Vol.II, pp 206, op.cit.

define later in 'New Democracy'. In that sense they can be compared with the Soviets as an institutionalised power of the Revolutionary masses posited antagonistically against the Kuomintang which after 1927 represented the interests of feudalism and compradore bourgeoisie³⁹ buttressed by imperialism. The base areas were to constitute the first link in the growth of Red power facilitating the march of the revolutionary process, which had to be co-ordinated with other measures. "The policy of establishing base areas; of systematically setting up political power; of deepening the agrarian revolution, of expanding the people's armed forces by a comprehensive process of building up first the township of Red guards then the district red guards, then the country red

 39. Mao defined the Compradore bourgeoisie as "a class which directly serves the capitalists of the imperialist countries and is nurtured by them; countless ties link it closely with the feudal forces in the countryside..... different sections of the compradore big bourgeoisie owe allegiance to different imperialist powers." It has no revolutionary character but in inter imperialist contradictions sharpened and expressed by war, the contradiction within the compradore bloc can be utilized by the proletariat. "On the other hand the national bourgeoisie has a dual character. On the one hand it is opposed by imperialism and fettered by feudalism and consequently is in contradiction with both of them. In this sense it constitutes a revolutionary force. But on the other hand, it lacks the courage to oppose imperialism and feudalism thoroughly because it is economically and politically flabby and still has economic ties with imperialism and feudalism." (Mao-Tse-Tung: Chinese Revolution and Chinese Communist Party' in S.W. Vol. II pp 320-2! op.cit)

guards, then the local red army troops, all the way upto the regular red army troops, of spreading political power by advancing in a series of waves, etc. Only thus is it possible to build the confidence of the revolutionary masses throughout the country.....Only thus is it possible to create tremendous difficulties for the reactionary ruling classes, shake their foundation and hasten their internal disintengration.....Only thus is it possible to hasten the revolutionary high tide".⁴⁰

Mao maintained that in the peculiar conditions of China, the red bases cannot only be maintained but grow. The rural areas were torn by peasant unrest. The support of the peasantry as the main force of the revolution was already available, objectively,

But the formations of the red bases itself preceded by united forms of class struggle by revolutionary masses. "The regions where China's Red political power has first merged and is able to last for a long time have not been those unaffected by the democratic revolution.... but regions.... where the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers rose in great numbers in the course of bourgeoisie democratic revolution of 1926 and 1927."⁴¹

40. Mao Tse Tung, A Single Spark can Start a Prairie Fire, Selected Military Writings, p 75, FLP, Pekings

41. Mao Tse Tung: 'On Protracted War', ibid, p187

In the red bases after the establishment of revolutionary power it was consolidated by effecting basic changes in the existing conditions. John G Gurly examining the Yenan base says that apart from land reforms its distinctive features were self-reliance, decentralization, antagonism to bureaucratism and elitism collective aims and discipline, non material incentives and participation of the masses in all aspects of social and economic activity. Development was comprehensive designed to bring up all sectors and not just a chosen part.⁴²

The base areas had their primary task of upholding revolutionary politics in the sense of revolutionary warfare while attending to economic construction on the bases of new relations. They were both the instruments of struggle and expression of revolutionary transformation.⁴³

The rationale for the establishment of these nuclear of revolutionary power was explained by Mao as follows: In the capitalist countries the communist parties prepare for a civil war, They prepare the proletariat and other sections for the eventual situation when making use of the helplessness

 42. See John G Gurly: China's Economy and Maoist Strategy, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1976

43. Mao Tse Tung 'Our Economic Policy', S.W.Vol.I p 141, Ibid.

of the bourgeoisie they launch the insurrection. In such a strategy the first step is to seize the cities and then advance onto the countryside. This strategy was also proved to be correct by October Revolution. But in China this strategy was not possible. "The characteristics of China are that she is not independent and democratic but semi-colonial and semi-feudal; that internally she has no democracy but is under feudal oppression and that in her external relation she has no national independence but is oppressed by imperialism. It follows that we have no parliament to make use of and no legal right to organise the workers to strike. Basically the task of the communist party here is not to go through a long period of legal struggle before launching insurrection and war, and not to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but the reverse.⁴⁴

44. Mao-Tse-Tung: 'Problems of war and Strategy'
Selected Military writing, pp 269-270 op.cit.

The Path of Protracted Armed Struggle as the Strategy of the Revolution

The Russian Revolution was a revolution through armed insurrection. So was the Paris commune. But for Mao, History, had proved the futility of adopting such an approach in China due to its repeated suppression, peculiarly being the conditions of 'semi colonial and semi feudal country'. Therefore the path of revolution could only be through protracted armed struggle by the establishment of liberated base areas. The Chinese revolution develops an entire strategy of this armed revolution by applying the Marxist method of Dialectics to the overall conception and pursuance of war. This armed struggle however is not the pitting of might against might. It is basically characterised by its class perspective. Therefore, in order to survive and grow, from small to grow into large, it has to fulfill the following conditions:

(a) Reliance on the masses: by boldly arousing them;

(b) Upholding the Revolutionary political line. Therefore the leadership of the party is essential.

(c) It is conducted in conditions of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. Therefore the necessity of united front.

(d) This armed struggle is of a protracted nature against that of an armed uprising.

(e) The role of the peasantry as the mainforce of the revolution.

This entire conception of a protracted armed struggle was till now alien to the communist movement. Besides, military strategies undergo basic changes due to the lessons elaborated during the China's protracted war. Mao himself was to claim their novelty. 'The tactics we have derived from the struggle of the past three years are indeed different from other tactics ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign. With our tactics the masses can be aroused for struggle on an ever-broadening scale, and no enemy, however, powerful, can cope with us. Ours are guerilla tactics. They consist mainly the following points:

"Divide our forces to arouse the masses, concentrate our forces to dealwith the enemy:

The enemy advances, we retreat, the enemy camps, we harass, the enemy tires, we attach, the enemy retreats, we pursue.

To extend stable base areas, employ the policy of advancing in waves pursued by the powerful enemy, employ the policy of circling around. Arouse the largest numbers of masses in the shortest possible time and by the best possible methods. These tactics are just like casting a net. At any movement, we should be able to cast it or draw it in. We cast it wide to win over the masses and draw it in to deal with the enemy. Such are the tactics we have used for the past three years. ⁴⁵

Mao called it the sixteen character formula covering both the stages of strategic defensive and strategic offensive and within the defensive it covered the stages of strategic retreat and the strategic counter-offensive. The later developments were just the development of this formula.

Fighting against the left adventurist lines of Wang Ming the Red Army applied these tactics to successfully win four battles against the encirclement and suppression tactics of Ching Kai Shek in the period 1934. The same tactics were applied in the anti-Japanese war of resistance.

45. Mao Tse Tung/ A single spark can start a Prairie Fire
SW Vol.I opcit. p 75

Although the nature of warfare to follow certain basic principles, it had to proceed with an analysis of the concrete conditions of the concrete situation in the given conjuncture. This could be ensured only if the army follows the political leadership provided by the party.

The change in the concrete conditions calls also for changes in the tactics. Therefore, dogmatism has to be struggled against. Mao called for the repeated alternative between defensive and offensive in the anti-Japanese war at the same time emphasizing on the strategic defensive as it alone provides for the largest participation, of the masses and their close supervision over the army.⁴⁶ Of course, the strategy of passive defense was also wrong as it smacks of capitalisationism and upholding the strength of the enemy strategically. The enemy strategically is weak, and always weak, however strong it maybe tactically, as it is opposed to the masses.

46. Later Mao was to criticize the Soviet Military policy as it is based on the primacy of the strategic offensive. See Stuart Schram's Mao talks at the People p.28. Pantheon Books New York, 1974.

"Our experience is that reliance on the people together with a fairly correct leadership enables us to defeat a better equipped enemy with our inferior equipment."⁴⁷ We can, therefore, see that the military line was not something standing above the masses but served the political line.⁴⁸ Besides the guerilla strategy was the closest to draw in from the experience of large scale peasant revolts in China. It was the application of the latter that is found in the famous saying 'study the past to serve the present'.

47. Mao-Tse-Tung : 'One Great Victory in the War to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea and our further Tasks S.W. Vol.5, pp 116-117 op.cit
48. A whole range of Maoist conceptions bear close resemblance to that of Gramsci although woven in different conceptual framework and developed under different conditions. The Maoist analysis can be purposefully compared with the Gramscian conceptions of revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat, the hegemonic class bloc, the party as the collective intellectual and the Revolutionary Military line as basically political (See A. Gramsci: Selections from Prison Notebooks International Publishers New York, 1976.

The United Front as Constituted of Revolutionary Classbloc

Mao continuously insisted that China had been able to carry out the Revolutionary Civil War or war of national liberation due to the three weapons wielded by the Chinese people. The Party, the army and the policy of the United Front. The Party to uphold the revolutionary strategy as manifest in the protracted war and the policy of United Front which anticated the relation of class forces at every moment of revolutionary struggle.

In the specific conditions of China the United Front was constituted of the four classes: The Workers, the Peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. It was led by the Proletariat represented in the communist party, basing themselves on the landless labour and poor peasantry.⁴⁹ and uniting finally with the middle peasantry and petty bourgeoisie and taking along the national bourgeoisie⁵⁰ and rich peasantry.

49. They form the biggest motive force of the Chinese revolution the natural and most reliable ally of the proletariat and the main contingent of China's revolutionary forces (Mao in Chinese Revolution and Chinese Communist Party in S.W. Vol.II Op cit. p 324

50. We will have to remember that Chiang Kai Shek not only turned against the earlier declared policy of Sun Yat Sun. He also turned on the capitalist elements themselves subjecting them to confiscation and compulsory loans amidst threats of prison and execution. See Issacs H. The tragedy of the Chinese Revolution, Ch.II (Revised edition), Stanford, 1951

Uniting with the national bourgeoisie for Mao, was a specific feature peculiar to colonial and semi-colonial countries and not to be found in the Revolutionary history of any capitalist country.⁵¹

The character and position of the United Front changes during the period of civil war and during the period of national aggression. During the war of national aggression imperialism becomes the principal contradiction vis a vis the large masses. In the context of civil war mobilizing the masses against the landlords, bureaucrats and civil gentry, establishing alternative bases of political power and effective agrarian revolution becomes crucial; at the stage of national aggression mobilizing the masses, to fight for national independence becomes the principal task. The distinction between these two stages of the Chinese revolution is extremely crucial and we find Mao emphasizing it repeatedly. It is a policy of uniting with all those that can be united, including a

51. Mao-Tse-Tung, Introducing the Communist, SW Vol. II pp 286-87 opcit.

section of the landlords and compradore bourgeoisie who have not capitulated to the principal aggressor, while maintaining the independence of the communist party, its army and that of its policies. Therefore, the composition of the class bloc represented in the United Front undergoes changes according to the principal enemy in the concrete conditions without however, changing the role of the leading class and its principal allies as the main revolutionary forces. The unity in the united front does not preclude struggle among classes united in this front. But the struggle is consciously directed not to upset the unit and divert the attention from the main enemy. The policy of united front with Kuomintang during the anti-Japanese struggle does not mean that the compradore bourgeoisie has changed its class character. But due to the inter-imperialist contradiction which are reflected within the compradore bourgeoisie, it was possible to win over a section to the side of the united front.⁵² In the rural areas under the

52. Mao Tse Tung: 'Role of Communist Party' S.W. Vol 2 P.250, For a brilliant application of this approach we have Lenin's treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Further in the 8th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', Marx deploras the inability of the proletariat to utilize the contradictions within the ruling classes which finally makes possible the emergence of Louis Bonaparte to supreme power.

control of the communist party this policy resulted in stepping back from the policy of confiscating the land of the landlords and distributing this land among the peasants as was done during the civil war but replacing it with the more limited one of rent and interest reduction.

This united front cannot but be led by the proletariat both during civil war and national war of independence. Mao points out that only under its leadership can a resolute aggression be carried out and national liberation be brought about. The weak bourgeoisie of China naturally tend to conciliate with the enemy. The leadership of the Proletariat also provides the key link from the New Democratic Revolution to the Socialist Revolution.⁵³ "Today whoever can lead the people in driving out Japanese imperialism and introducing democratic government will be saviours of the people. History has proved that the Chinese bourgeoisie cannot fulfil this responsibility, which inevitably falls upon the shoulders of the proletariat".⁵⁴

53. See Mao Tse Tung, New Democracy, S.W. Vol2 p 349 opcit.

54. Ibid pp 350

The Primacy of the Masses in Revolution

The policy of the revolutionary class bloc constituted in the united front has close correspondence with the concept of masses and the strategy of mass-line advocated in the Chinese Revolution.

The concept 'masses' has definite significance in Mao. It includes the proletariat and all the oppressed sections at any particular stage of the class-struggle. It is a dialectical concept which asserts the leadership of the proletariat. There are contradictions within the masses but these contradictions can be resolved by the method of criticism and self criticism. But the masses have basic common interests against the common enemy who subjects them to exploitation in varying degrees. Therefore, the precise connotation of the concept masses varies with changes in the principal enemy itself bringing about transformations in class-relations.⁵⁵

Mao emphasized continuously that Revolution is not the making of the Communist Party or the Army but really due to the direct and active participation of the masses. We continuously hear the refrain

55. See Mao Tse Tung: On the People's Democratic Dictatorship', in S.W. Vol. IV, p 417, PIP Peking, 1975.

it is the masses who make history.⁵⁶ To arouse the masses, to learn from them and direct them to revolutionary action it is necessary to apply the mass line.⁵⁷ Mao continuously emphasized that communist party will win because it has the support of the masses. The Kuomintang and the Japanese aggressors will lose, even though temporarily they might be very strong because they do not enjoy the support of the masses. It is necessary that the self activity of the masses brings about revolutionary changes and not the patriarchal concern of the party or government.

56. See the Parallel in Lenin: The April Thesis SW Vol. II pg. 29-33.

57. The mass line was formulated by Mao as follows:
 "In all the practical work of our party all correct leadership is necessary from the masses to the masses. This means, take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study through them into concentrated and systematic ideas) then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them on their own, hold fast to them, and translate them into action and list 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 preserved 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.

(Mao Tse Tung: Some Questions Concerning the Methods of Leadership; Selected Writings, Vol. 3 p 119, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1975)

During the anti Japanese war, in the campaign for rent and interest reduction we find Mao saying: "Rent reduction is a mass struggle by the peasants. Party directives and government decrees (of the government in base areas) should guide and help instead of trying to bestow favours on the masses."⁵⁸

The Chinese military line also known as the line of People's war, was rooted in the basic fact that revolutionary war depends on the action of the masses of people and can only succeed on the basis that it enjoys the support of the people and enlists them actively, in the struggle against the common enemy. This self-activity of the masses cannot be duplicated by any other factor. Writing during the anti Japanese War, Mao was to say that mobilisation of the common people throughout the country will create the condition that will make up for our inferiority in arms and other things and create the prerequisites for overcoming every difficulty in the war. It is not weapons which decide ultimately the outcome of the war but the support enjoyed from the masses.

58. Mao Tse Tung: 'Spread the Campaign to Reduce Rent, Increase Production and Support the Government and Cherish the People in Base Areas'/ Selected Writings. Vol 3, p131, op.cit.

From this approach it resulted that the party must command the gun, because the party was the representative and vanguard of the masses. The army must never be allowed to become at the same time the political leading force of the revolution, or a force independent of the party. Linked to this was the famous slogan: 'Man, not weapons is decisive in war-far

Method of solving the contradictions among the masses and between the party and the masses

The masses who constitute the united front have also contradictions among themselves. These contradictions cannot be eliminated by a decree. They can be resolved themselves only in the course of their development. These contradictions among the people⁶⁰ can be

59. Quoted in Avakian Bob: 'Immortal Comrade Mao' p 42 RCP Publication, Chicago

60. The contradiction between the enemy and the working masses is an antagonistic contradiction. The contradiction between the national bourgeoisie (wing of the masses) and the working masses has an antagonistic as well as a non antagonistic aspect to it (See Mao's 'Handling of Contradictions: SRWMT op

fully through the method of unity-criticism-self-criticism, unity. It does not preclude struggle but the struggle is aimed to consolidate unity rather than break it. The contradiction between the enemy and the people can be resolved only by the overthrow of the enemy. The democratic method of solving the contradiction is put in the cryptic phrase: "learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient".⁶¹ This method was especially applied to the rectification campaign of 1942-1945,

The same method was also applied in resolving the contraction between the party and the masses. A directive of the CC of CPC of February 22, 1948, points out "the adoption of the (open meeting) method for reorganizing and purifying the ranks of the party.. will, on one hand, enable participating nonparty masses unreservedly to criticize and examine the party members and cadres whom they oppose or approve and enable them to feel that they have linked up with the party of Mao Tse Tung. On the other hand the leaders, of the party can, according to the opinion of the masses and the situation within the

61. Ibid p 440

party, consider the question from all sides and distinguish right from wrong, the degrees of seriousness and meet out justly the punishment and reward so that both party and non-party masses will feel satisfied."⁶² To cut off heads changes nothing.....it is what is inside the head which has to be changed, argued Mao against the repression techniques of Wang Ming in 1942-45.⁶³

Character of the Revolution: New Democracy.

Having examined the specific conditions of China, analysed the nature of basic requisites and approaches for revolutionary power as also the class character of the revolutionary bloc whose interests this power is to uphold, we can now analyse the nature of their new state power.

Mao sharply posed the question - whether the revolution effected during the period of civil war and war of national liberation was bourgeois demo-

62. Quoted in William Hinton: FANSHEN, A documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village, p 332, Vintage Books, New York, 1966: See the following chapter for a graphic working out of the method.

63. Han Suiyan: Wind in the tower: Mao-Tse-Tung and the Chinese Revolution, p 84, Panther, 1978

cratic or socialist evolution and himself answered that it was not the latter but the former.⁶⁴

This revolution is not the classical type of bourgeois democratic revolution when the upcoming bourgeoisie is able to mobilize the masses against feudalism. The present historical stage imprisons its own specificity on the revolution. Briefly the revolutionary epoch has the following features:

1. At the stage of imperialism and proletarian Revolution the October Revolution has already broken the chain of capitalism and ushered in the socialist era.

2. In this epoch the bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi colonies have lost their power to mobilize the masses throughly against feudalism and imperialism and carry through the agrarian revolution to satisfy the demands of the vast masses of the peasantry. A section of the bourgeoisie in these countries has actively sided with imperialism and feudalism as compradore bourgeoisie.

64. Mao-Tse-Tung: 8 Chinese Revolution and Communist Party! SW Vol. II pp 326-327 op.cit.

3. The revolutionary era is characterised by the existence of a proletarian power in Soviet Union which is prepared to extend support to the national liberation movements.

4. Due to the betrayal and vacillating nature of bourgeoisie the mantle of leadership has fallen on the proletariat which alone can be the most throughgoing class in this revolution.

5. This situation is not merely confined to China but is developing in all colonial and semi-colonial countries.

6. Due to these specific features this new type of bourgeois revolution is part of the international proletarian rather than part of the bourgeois democratic revolutions.

Mao characterized such a stage of Revolution as New Democratic and defines it as follows.

"In present China the bourgeois democratic revolution is no longer the old general type, which is now obsolete, but one of a new special type. We call this type the new democratic revolution and it is developing in all other colonial and semi

colonial countries as well as in China. The new democratic revolution is part of the world proletarian socialist revolution for it resolutely opposes imperialism, i.e. international capitalism. Politically, it strives for the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary classes over the imperialist traitors and reactionaries and opposes the transformation of Chinese society into a society under bourgeois dictatorship. Economically it aims at the nationalization of all big enterprises and capital of the imperialists traitors and reactionaries and distribution among the peasants of the land held by the landlords, eliminating the rich peasant economy. Thus the new type of democratic revolution clears the way for capitalism on the one hand and creates the prerequisites for socialism on the other...."⁶⁵

In his work 'New Democracy', Mao analyses how this democracy is going to effect basic changes in the sphere of the economy, politics and culture. Besides the "New Democratic System" is basically the transitional form of state to be adopted in the revolutions of the colonial and semi-colonial countries."⁶⁶

65. Mao Tse Tung: "The Chinese Revolution and Chinese Communist Party," S W Vol. II pp 326-327 op.cit.

66. Mao Tse Tung: "On New Democracy", Ibid p35!
See Marx's concept of Permanent Revolution and Lenin's "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and peasantry" in the previous chapters.

It asserts that the programme of New Democracy is both the fulfilment of the three principles.⁶⁷ and going beyond it.

When the war against Chiang Kai Shek had decisively moved in favour of the Communists, just before the final victory in 1949, in the second plenary session of the Seventh Central Committee of CPC a major debate erupts between Mao-Tse-Tung on the one hand and Liu-Shoo-Chi on the other. Liu-Shuo-Chi argued that after liberation consolidation of New Democracy was the prime task which may last for several decades. Mao on the other hand argued that consolidation of New Democracy is a contradiction in terms. The consolidation of New Democracy meant nothing other than consolidation of the bourgeoisie. The character of new democracy as a transitional form, as part of socialist revolution precisely implies the move towards socialism.⁶⁸

67. There were the three old principles: Nationalism, Democracy and Peoples livelihood which after 1924 he changes into the new three principles: Friendship with the Soviet Union, Friendship with the Communist Party and Help to Workers and Peasants.
68. See for intense debate which had tremendous bearing during the process after the revolution, Mao-Tse-Tung 'Report to the II Plenary Session of the 7th Central Committee' of the CPC March 5, 1949 in S.W. Vol.V.

Mao further reiterated this in 'On the peoples democratic dictatorship' " We must wholeheartedly rely on the working class, unite with the rest of the labouring masses, win over the intellectuals and win over to our side as many of the national bourgeoisie elements as possible.....or neutralize themOur present policy is to regulate capitalism, not to destroy it but the national bourgeoisie cannot be the leader of the revolution, nor should it have the chief role in state power,⁶⁹ and the long term task is precisely to create conditions for the abolition of all classes and the withering away of the state."⁷⁰

The character of this transitional power is what Mao called 'the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class and based upon the alliance of workers and peasants. This dictatorship was to unite as one with the international revolutionary forces.'⁷¹ It is democracy for people and dictatorship of the people over its enemies.

 69. Mao Tse Tung, "On the people's democratic dictatorship" S.W. Vol. IV = Pg. 421 op.cit.

70. Ibid pp 411-12

71. Ibid p. 422

It is not enough if revolutionary masses under the leadership of the proletariat capture political power. The capture of political power must not only bring about basic changes in the economic process but bring about fundamental changes in the ideological sphere by giving rise to the dominance of the proletariat in the ideological sphere.

Here Mao was to challenge the mechanistic conceptions inherent in analysing the relationship between the base and superstructure.

Base Superstructure Relationship

We have already seen how in the historical development of Marxism an evolutionist view, which takes various forms, begins to prevail. Leninist struggle at the philosophical level was basically aimed to struggle against this 'evolutionism' manifest in the second international. In the later years of his life during the period of NEP he called for relentless struggle against a number of tendencies which identified the revolution with the mere increase in production. In his letter to Joseph Block Engels had asserted the relative autonomy of the superstructure

and sometimes even assuming dominant form in the historical struggle even though the economic level is ultimately determining factor.⁷² Marx in a comment which emphasized the creative role of the proletariat in revolutionising all the existing relations had commented: "The social revolution of the nineteenth century (Marx means the proletarian revolution) cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future..... Earlier revolutions required recollections of past history in order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead".⁷³

We find in Mao a great emphasis laid on revolutionizing the superstructure. He maintained that under socialism the role of the superstructure assumes even greater importance and the struggle in the superstructure becomes more acute and complex. He wrote in 1957, "In the ideological field, the question of who will win out, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, has not yet been settled. We still have a long and protracted struggle against bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie ideology."⁷⁴

72. Engels: Engels to Joseph Block in Koningsburg in MESC, pp 394-395 op.cit

73. Marx: "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Luis Bonaparte" in selected works, Vol. I pg. 400 op.cit.

74. Mao-Tse-Tung: "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party National Conference on Propaganda Work," SW Vol.5 p 434 op.cot

This realization and the need to wage struggle to change the superstructure was part and parcel of the struggle during the long period of the Chinese revolution. The method was the same: following the mass line, boldly arousing the masses to express their creativity and initiative, struggle against bureaucracy and elitism, dissuading from following the beaten tracks and old ways but making the past to serve the present and foreign things serve the Chinese. These struggles were closely linked up with immediate political struggles of furthering the revolution and consolidating the new relations. The cultural sphere although has its specific autonomy, it is intimately related with political struggles. Therefore, it is necessary to wage struggles in the sphere of culture to revolutionise the existing class-relations, and develop a proletarian culture.

"Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution."⁷⁵

75. Mao Tse Tung: "On New Democracy", S.W. Vol.2, p 340 op.cit.

In his talks at Yenan forum of art, Mao stresses that the new culture must take a definite proletarian stand. Every class begets its own culture and attempts to spread its ideological hegemony. Even at the New Democratic stage the new culture can be the only one based on and expressing the class interests of the proletariat as it is the most revolutionary class. The New Democratic culture is not produced to satisfy the task of the superior people but to improve the cultural standards of the masses who can use the culture as a weapon in their struggle.

Mao staunchly opposed the debasement which goes in the name of culture which is nothing but political pamphleteering. It looks at the masses scornfully. Culture has its own autonomy. Therefore, "...life reflected in works of literature and art can and ought to be in a higher plane, more intense more concentrated, more typical, nearer the ideal and therefore must be universal than actual everyday life."⁷⁶

Many of these themes that were thrown up on the superstructure were to be the crucial themes that left their impact during the process of transition in China after 1949.

76: Mao Tse Tung: "Talks at the Yenan forum on Literature" and art' S.W.Vol.2 pp 81-82, op.cit

The Period of Transition: Debate on New Democracy or Socialism

At the close of the civil war in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party possessed the rich experience gathered in the period of national liberation war and especially the experience of the new democratic changes effected at the Yenhan base area, apart from the theoretical summing up of the class struggle effected in Marxism-Leninism⁷⁷ and the practical experience of Socialist transition in Soviet Union. After countrywide victory two basic contradictions will still last in China, said Mao in March 1949. The first is internal, i.e. the contradiction between the working class and bourgeoisie, the second is external, i.e. with imperialism.⁷⁸ We have already stated how the second plenum of the seventh congress was deeply divided on the question whether the policy should be to move towards socialism or consolidate new democracy. Mao argued for the first and Liu Sho Chi for the second. The line of Liu Sho Chi basically boiled down to giving a full reign to the national bourgeoisie and in agriculture to the rich peasantry in the interests of increasing production. Although the plenum passed resolutions that state economy and not private economy would assume leadership and that agriculture would be gradually led from individual operation to collective development, the differing positions expressed in the plenum were continued to

77. See, Lenin - State & Revolution, p. 65. FLP, Peking, 1970.

78. Mao Tse-tung, Report to Second Session of Seventh Central Committee, vol. 4, p. 369.

be pursued in practice as well as in ideological struggles. For Mao, however, the objective during the period of transition was to move towards a society where classes, state power and parties become extinct. For him, the Communists 'lean to one side' because given the circumstances in China, one leaned either to the side of imperialism or socialism. The character of the state power in the transitional period is the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasant. The national bourgeoisie will not be expropriated but definitely be regulated.⁷⁹ The debate engendered by this analysis led to two differing perspectives regarding the policy to be adopted in the transitional period. These perspectives were to be reflected in each and every measure adopted during the period. The Debate revolved around concrete questions.

(a) One position while admitting the necessity of land reforms insisted that no requisitioning of the land and property of rich peasants will be done. The forces in the countryside after land reforms must have their free play in order to increase production - i.e. free markets and pricing and freedom to buy and sell land, to hire tenants, to select crops to plant. Only when the conditions are mature for the extensive application of mechanized farming, for the organization of collective farms

79. See Mao Tse-tung: 'On the People's Democratic Dictatorship' in SRWMT, p. 371-389, op.cit.

and for the socialist reform of the rural areas will the need for a rich peasant economy cease. This argument was mainly represented by Liu Shao Chi.

(b) The other view argued that the principal task is not the consolidation of the rich peasant in the name of increasing production, but encouraging the forces in the countryside building towards socialization, i.e., not only mobilise the landless labour and poor peasantry towards the land reforms but towards cooperative organisation of agriculture. The State must increasingly come to the support of these cooperative organizations. Rural collectivization will change the relations existing in the countryside and increase productive forces: Mao representing this approach was to say that given the conditions of agriculture, cooperation must precede the use of big machinery. Socialist industrialization cannot be carried out in isolation from agricultural cooperation.

What was at stake in these arguments apparently clouded in still unformulated language, were major theoretical issues, that were discussed in the second and the fourth congress of Comintern as well as the decade long debate in Soviet Union during the period of industrialization.⁸⁰ The effect of the first view in practice boiled down to this: In colonies and semi-colonies after national liberation, the first task is to develop capitalism. Only when productive forces are sufficiently

80. See the Debate on Industrialization in Soviet Union in the previous chapter.

developed can socialist transition can be undertaken. For the development of agriculture industrial development must precede. To undertake this industrial development resources have to be found. These resources can be found by two ways. Either through external aid, i.e. Soviet Union or the Western Capitalist countries, or by increasing agricultural productivity, undervaluing agricultural commodities and transferring⁸¹ the surplus to industry. Therefore, it is necessary to restrain the landless labour and poor peasantry from demanding drastic changes in the existing relations in the countryside. It was also at the same time a plea to follow the model of Soviet Union, with regard to collectivization.

The other view rested on the following arguments: The second congress of the comintern had clearly stated that it is possible for the colonies and semi-colonies directly to pass to the socialist transition without mediated by capitalism. Lenin in his last works - 'On cooperation', 'Our Revolution' and 'Better fewer but Better' had strongly⁸² argued for a political alliance with the peasantry. Besides, the revolution had bred tremendous hopes and initiative among the landless labour and poor peasantry in China. Allowances to the free play of the forces in the countryside meant actually allowing the free play of the rich peasantry.

81. Ibid.

82. See Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 33, pp.467-69 and p. 474.

The increase in the role of the rich peasant and the curbing of the revolutionary initiative of the poor peasantry by the communist party is sure to drive the landless labour and poor peasants into the hold of the rich peasant who will be able to dictate terms to the new State. If the peasantry is not to be squeezed to provide surplus to industrialisation then the new state has to base itself more and more on foreign aid bringing in from the backdoor imperialism thus reducing the new state to a compradore status.

From this view, which Mao insisted earlier, the crucial alternative before China was either to lean towards Socialism or Imperialism.⁸³ Besides, landless labour and poor peasantry⁸⁴ was becoming more and more receptive to collectivization. The only conclusion to Mao was to give full support to this movement.

The struggle between these two lines was to go on till 1953, when the movement for cooperatives also picked up momentum. Only in October 1953, the general line for the period of transition to socialism passed by the Central

83. Mao - "On the Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry" - SRWMT, p. 376.

84. See the analysis 'On the question of agricultural cooperation', Ibid., p. 389.

85

Committee affirmed collectivization and cooperatives.

The strategy that was followed was to unite the poor and middle peasants in the cooperatives, to let the state extend all support to their organization and then persuade the rich peasantry to join these cooperatives. Most of this work was accomplished through persuasion, although there were also a few violent clashes but nothing to compare with that of the Soviet Union in 1930-31. The leadership role of the working class was to be maintained during the process but they were to advance together with the peasantry.

85. The cooperative movement was to progress through various stages: Mutual and working groups and ploughing teams, based on individual farming were formed by peasants in the Red areas for a better organization of labour power during the second revolutionary civil war period (1945-1949). On the principle of voluntary participation and mutual benefit, the members did an equal amount of work for each other or if one could not give another as much help as he received he made up the difference in cash. There were temporary mutual-aid-teams, the all year round mutual-aid-team and the agricultural producers cooperatives characterised by the pooling of land as shares.

Semi socialist cooperatives made unified use of land and rational use of farm implements, carried on collective labour and practised distribution according to work, and had a fair amount of common property. On the other hand, the members still retained their private ownership of land and other means of production and revised dividends on their land shares and interim payments for the pooling of their farm tools and draught animals (See Note in Mao Tse Tung: On the Question of Agricultural Cooperation in SRWMT, p. 419). From these early forms the fully developed cooperatives were to be formed.

86. See Lenin, C.W., Vol. 33, p. 326.

In 1955 Mao warned those who feared that the drive towards collectivization is going to turn the peasantry against the state: 'Some comrades have found in the history of communist party of Soviet Union grounds for criticizing what they call impetuosity and rashness in our present work of agricultural cooperation ... but on no account should we allow these comrades to use the Soviet experience as a cover for their idea of moving at a snails pace.'⁸⁷

The two line struggle concerning changing the conditions in industry was to take a different dimension. In industry the one man management was retained. It was subjected to heavy attack and a change occurred officially only in the eighth congress of CCP in 1956, when a new system called factory manager responsibility under the collective leadership of the factory Party Committee was made official. The trade unions basically followed the soviet model.

In the industrial sector in the initial phases the policy basically followed was that of the Soviet Union with primacy accorded to heavy industry. A system of individual worker responsibility, piecework, bonuses, wage incentives and a vertical hierarchy of organization was practiced, characterised by the division of labour.

The first five year plan adopted in 1953 basically took the soviet planning as the guide. It put too much

87. Mao Tse Tung, 'On Agricultural Cooperation', SRWMT, op.cit., p. 407.

emphasis on the development of heavy industry at the expense of light industry and on highly centralized planning at the expense of local initiative. The economic model that was practiced increased the power of the bureaucracy in Peking enormously.

In spite of struggles against this model at a number of industrial centres, it was to continue as the predominant form. It was quite in contrast with the experience of production in the liberated areas, where reliance on the masses, releasing mass initiative, self reliance, crucial rôle of agriculture combating elitism and bureacratism were stressed.⁸⁸

From 1955 onwards a serious critique of the model dominant in the first few years of transition was to evolve in entirely new directions, rejecting the dominant Soviet model of development as bequeathed in 1949. Mao articulated this new approach in a speech given to the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee in April 1956 called 'On the Ten Major Relationships'. In it he criticized the policy of giving one sided priority to industry. Light industry and agriculture bring about faster accumulation and ensure the long term growth of industry. This was expressed in the concept 'Agriculture was the foundation of China's economy and industry the leading factor. Here Mao

88. See Mao Tse Tung: 'Get Organized', S.W. Vol.3, p. 154.

explicitly criticized the policy followed in Soviet Union for primitive accumulation by squeezing agriculture. He said 'this method of capital accumulation has seriously dampened the peasants' enthusiasm for production. You want the hen to lay more eggs and yet you don't feed it, you want the horse to run fast and yet you don't let it graze. What kind of logic is that!⁸⁹ In the same way Mao criticized the thrust of giving priority to defence at the expense of economic construction, and to centralization at the expense of local initiatives. He criticized the tendency to concentrate development in a few zones rather than develop it uniformly; the vast expenditure on training experts and leaving the masses, semi-literate and the gulf between mental and manual labour. He asserted that there is a contradiction between the individual producer, the productive units and the state given the stage of transition that China was in. The theses presented in 'The Ten Major Relationships', as Mao rightly pointed out was an attempt to break from the Soviet model and to chalk a new path towards socialist transition.⁹⁰ It was openly admitted that in this process of transition, imbalances and contradictions in the economy and among the people continued to survive.

89. Mao Tse Tung: 'On Ten Major Relationships', S.W., Vol. 5, p. 291. op.cit.

90. Mao Tse Tung: 'Talks at the Chengtu Conference, Talk of March 1858', in Stuart Schram (ed), Chairman Mao Talks to the People, p. 101, New York, Pantheon, 1972.

By 1956 the completion of socialization of the means of production both in agriculture and industry was effected. In the 8th Congress of CPC, however, Liu-Sho-Chi proposed the line that the principal contradiction in China was 'between the advanced socialist system and the backward social productive forces' which was to be adopted by the Congress. It was the same definition that Stalin had provided of the socialist system: That after the ownership of the means of production was socialised the main struggle rested in terms of developing the productive forces. For Liu therefore the lines of revolutionary storms and tides were over. New relations of production have been set up, and the aim of the struggle is changed into one of safeguarding the successful development of the productive forces of society; a corresponding change in the methods of struggle will consequently have to follow.⁹¹

However, Mao's investigation of the situation and his assessment of the class relations in China were to convince him that "the class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie

91. Liu Sho Chi, The Political Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the 8th National Congress of the Party in 8th national congress of CPC, Vol. 1, Documents p. 82, FLP, Peking 1956.

in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet"⁹² and he would declare against the official revolution of the eighth party congress that 'the basic contradictions in socialist society are still those between the relations of production - on and productive forces, and that between the superstructure and the economic base.⁹³

It, therefore, proclaimed the primacy of classstruggle to change the relations of production, in order to augment productive forces themselves. It presupposed struggles against the bureaucracy, state organs and other instruments of power and revolutionizing the culture in order to create new socialist relations and improve production. This was once again asserting the mass line strongly. Mao felt that behind the Stalinist theory of productive forces⁹⁴ there was a profound distrust of the masses. "Stalin emphasized only technology, technical cadre. He wanted nothing but technology, nothing but cadre;⁹⁵ no politics, no masses".

92. Mao Tse Tung: On the Correct Handling of Contradiction Among People, S.W., Vol. 5, p. 409. op.cit.

93. Ibid., p. 390.

94. Mao Tse Tung: A Critique of Soviet Economies, p. 135, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1977.

95. Ibid., p. 129.

Steps in the direction of Alternative Strategies
for Transition
The Hundred Flowers Blossom Campaign

The Hundred Flowers movement began in May 1956. After the liberation due to the growth of bureaucracy in the party and of state machinery, industrial enterprises and cooperatives, mass criticism, mass initiatives was getting suppressed. The San Fuon (three anti) and Wu Fun (Five anti) movements, ⁹⁶ immediately after liberation although had raised mass initiative to counter bureaucratism and class enemies making the party cadres accountable to people it was to be merely a temporary respite. Rules, directives and the existing cultural apparatuses gave only a limited expression to this initiative. If mass initiative had to be generated, if the gradually declining initiative of the masses to be fostered it was necessary that the masses express themselves. Besides if there were classes in China then only through their class expressions would prevailing tendencies come to surface and then analysed and acted upon. Therefore, Mao said, 'letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the policy for promoting the progress of the arts and the sciences and a flourishing socialist culture. For arts and science to develop free

96. The San Fan movement was against the party cadres to counter the three evils of corruption, waste and bureaucracy. The 'Wu Fan' movement was against capitalists to counter bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on Government contracts and stealing of economic information. See Mao-Tse-Tung: 'On the Struggle against the Three Evils and five evils: in S.W., Vol. 5, p. 69, op.cit.

discussion is necessary and hasty actions should be avoided. Mao maintained that even Marxism can be criticised. If Marxism is the scientific doctrine it has to prove itself. Besides Marxism can develop itself only through struggle. Wrong ideas can be challenged not dogmatically but by a process of serious investigation, discussion, criticism, and reasoning. ⁹⁷

The movement expressed that there were strong class contradictions in Chinese society at all levels. The big character posters (tatzepao) make their appearance during this period. The bourgeoisie and their intellectual representatives launched a strong counter offensive attacking even the communist party and the socialist road. Only then a campaign against the rightists was launched. But it was a first experiment to show that the party is not an idealist instrument, ⁹⁸ but must be subjected to criticism. The anti rightists campaign emboldened the workers to criticize the administrative elite. Big posters were written on it. ⁹⁹ As a result of this campaign the factory administration was altered drastically. A tripple alliance of administrative cadres, technicians and workers was organized. The first two categories had to participate in worker's labour at

97. As portrayed by Liu Shao Chi in 'How to be a Good Communist!

98. In the Factory Walls, Mao Tse-Tung wrote this poem:
 "Only in wind and thunder can the country show its vigor
 Alas, the ten thousand horses are all muted
 O Heaven, bestir yourself, I beseech you
 And send down men of many talents"
 See Han Suyin, op.cit.

99. See Han Suiyan, op.cit., p. 148.

least twice a week. Workers' committees in factories were organized.

b) The People's Commune and Great Leap Forward

Both these movements were integral to each other. The resolution on the great leap forward stated its aim as 'to carry out the technological and cultural revolution simultaneously with the socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts; to develop industry and agriculture simultaneously with priority development to industry; to develop central and local industries simultaneously under central leadership, overall planning and in coordination; and to develop large, medium and small enterprises simultaneously. To build socialism, foster, better and more economically by exerting efforts to the utmost and pressing ahead consistently'. In these movements the scope of land-ownership was raised to a higher level through the combination of the cooperatives. The commune came to be the basic unit of production, developed as a largely self-sufficient unit through the development of agriculture, commerce, health, military affairs, industry, education and culture integrally through the mobilization of the large peasant masses. It was aimed to narrow down the differences between town and country, workers and peasants, mental and manual labour, and production carried out on a self-reliant basis. It was during this period that the general line for socialist

construction, 'The three red banners was developed, i.e. going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economic results in building socialism. This movement was directly in opposition to the model articulated by another section of the Party, i.e. dependence upon advanced technology of the foreign countries and centralized mechanism to ensure development. Here the conscious role of the masses in increasing production and building socialism was stressed. Marx had earlier said that the revolutionary class is the greatest force in production.

The great leap forward was to effect a profound change in the entire social map of China and subject to a thorough-going critic the accepted model of socialist construction provided by Soviet Union. Due to this movement the whole of China was to be dotted with small and medium level industries, larger irrigation projects and the peasantry was to acquire technical and organization skills. Large scale experiments on improving productivity and productive power of labour were to be undertaken. Education and Technology came to be closely linked up with production and mass control. New socialist relations were forged by establishing joint bodies of workers, technicians and party cadres. The division between mental and manual labour was to be minimised by persuading the intellectuals to put in certain hours of manual work and establishing special training programmes for

peasants and workers. The workers were to assume their
 great role as educators by moving out to the countryside. ¹⁰⁰
 Commenting on it one writer says: "Whatever its mistakes
 and mishaps, (in the great leap) by an immense effort, one
 quarter of humanity was making a two millenia leap from
 Confucian China to modern China, from prescientific thought
 to scientific thought breaking all barriers and questioning
 all accepted values, creating a new economic frame work and
 new societal relations, a new way of thinking and living". ¹⁰¹

Of course there were a lot of mistakes and illusions.
 There was the illusion of making a straight transition to
 communism. In the enthusiasm, disequilibrium was created
 in a number of sectors of the economy, statistics were
 bolstered up. Wrong plan projections were made.

The opposition led by Peng-Teh-Huai, the defence minister
 was to make capital from the mistakes and excesses demanding
 a return to the earlier model. They accused Mao for exaggerat-
 ing man's conscious dynamic role. ¹⁰²

100. The slogans which plastered the whole of China during
 the period give an inkling of the initiative: 'Push
 out the withered; Take in the new; Walk on two legs;
 Turn over your life; Don't crawl behind others at a
 snail's pace; Down with all foreign frameworks;
 Self-reliance; Strike the iron while hot; Better get
 it done in one stroke than drag on' (Ibid. p. 153).

101. Ibid., p. 162.

102. See 'Three Major Struggles in China's Philosophical
 Front', op.cit., p. 5.

Mao takes responsibility for the large scale chaos that had taken place. But compared the great leap forward with that of Paris commune and points out how Marx inspite of its short time existence took a long term view of it. The great leap cannot be assessed in terms of its short term economic results, Mao insisted but in terms of its impact in resolving the contradictions of the transition.¹⁰³

It was during this period that Liu Shao Chi and others were to come out with 70 articles for the regulation of industry. They reasserted the centralized planning and shut down a number of concerns established during the great leap as uneconomic.¹⁰⁴ But we find Mao reflecting on the great leap forward in terms of socialist innovations and as a stage in the uninterrupted revolutionary transformation during socialism.¹⁰⁵ In 1962, Mao was to issue his call again 'never forget class struggle' against the notion of the dying out of class struggle. 'Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period. In this historical period of socialism there are still classes, class struggle; there is the struggle between the capitalist road and socialist road and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist

103. Schram: 'Speech at the Lushan Conference', op.cit., p.146.

104. Avakian, Bob; op.cit., p. 116.

105. See Mao Tse-tung: Critique of Soviet Economics, op.cit., pp. 115-134.

education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate and a capitalist restoration will take place. ¹⁰⁶ This was totally opposed to Liu's standpoint published in 'The Triumph of Marxism- Leninism in China' where he argued of the dying out of class struggle echoing Khrushchev in the 21st Congress of CPSU. ¹⁰⁷

The Sino-Soviet Conflict - Diverging Conceptions of revolution

In order to understand the further course undertaken to carry forward the revolution in China we need to see briefly how the Chinese party viewed ideologically its split with the Soviet Union. We will not be able to focuss on the entire range of ideological issues involved in this dispute. Only the major aspects are highlighted. It must also be mentioned that the intensification of ideological conflict with Soviet Union went hand in hand with the struggles between the two lines in China.

In the 20th Congress of CPSU, Khrushchev made two crucial speeches: The one - the condemnation of Stalin - and the other - the line of peaceful transition to socialism and peaceful coexistence. In the latter Khrushchev argued that

106. Mao Tse tung, quoted in "Report to the Ninth National Congress of the CPC", by Lin Piao, pp. 22-23, FLP, Peking, 1969.

107. Liu Shao Chi, Problems of Peace and Socialism, New International Review, September 14, 1959.

due to the strength of the Socialist camp and of the peace loving forces of the world it is possible to move over peacefully towards socialism. Peaceful coexistence of states with differing social systems and constant strengthening of the socialist system through economic competitions is possible. Besides due to the nuclear weapons a policy of war must be relegated.

In the 'Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', which was the first response of the Chinese party to this line, it was asserted that a socialist society is not free from class struggle and contradictions. It was asserted that it is not merely enough to denounce Stalin but also show his positive contributions. In addition, in December 1956, in the article 'More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' the Chinese Communist Party asserted, that the principle contradiction in the world is between imperialism and socialism and calls for the need of socialist countries and the oppressed nations and people to fight against the common enemy - imperialism. The conference of 64 countries that gathers in Moscow in 1959 does not bridge the ideological gap, but puts forward just an eclectic document which consisted of irreconcilable positions. The main arguments from CPC that questioned the innovation of Khrushchev and had a tremendous bearing on revolutionary strategies are as follows:

1. Imperialism by its nature is aggressive. As long as imperialism exists there will be soil for wars of aggression. The war designs of imperialism can be fought only by boldly arousing the masses against imperialism and revisionism and fully supporting the struggle of national liberation movements and working class struggles in imperialist countries.
2. The talk of 'mutual conciliation', 'concessions', 'accommodation' hides the character of imperialism, deceives the people and does not provide full support to national liberation struggles and the struggles of the oppressed.
3. The national liberation wars as integral part of socialist revolution have to be supported as they weaken imperialism and strengthen the socialist camp. Giving primacy to peaceful coexistence and world peace will is tantamount to opposing revolution by oppressed nations and people.
4. The emergence of nuclear weapons do not change the character of war as continuation of politics. It has not changed the nature of imperialism. There are still just wars and unjust wars. While one should struggle for a complete ban on nuclear weapons this should be done by mobilizing the people rather than compromising with imperialism.
5. In war we should strategically despise the enemy, though tactically take him seriously. This is possible only through reliance on the masses.

6. The principle of peaceful coexistence can apply only to relations between countries with different social systems, not to relations between oppressor and oppressed nations, nor to relations between oppressed and oppressing classes.

Whenever the possibility of peaceful transition appears in a country the communists must support it. But there cannot be compromises on fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism.

One needs to distinguish between wish and reality.¹⁰⁸

7. The independence and equality of parties based on Marxism-Leninism must be respected.¹⁰⁹

8. Neo-colonialism is a more pernicious and sinister form of colonialism.¹¹⁰

9. The socialist countries must become the base areas for supporting and developing the revolution of the oppressed nations and people's throughout the world, form the closest alliance with them and carry the proletarian world revolution through to completion.¹¹¹

10. Antagonistic classes and class struggle continue to exist under socialism generally and that therefore the reversion from working class rule to bourgeois dictatorship and the restoration of capitalism in a socialist country is possible not only through armed capitalist intervention but also when

108. See "The Differences between Comrade Togliatti and US" People's Daily Editorial, 31 December 1962.

109. "Workers of all Countries Unite, Oppose our Common Enemy", Ibid., 15 December 1962.

110. See "Apologists for New Colonialism", FLP, Peking 1963.

111. Ibid., p. 35.

the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat takes the road of revisionism of the road of peaceful evolution as a result of the degeneration of the leadership of the party and state. The formulations - 'The peaceful dying out of classes' or the 'state of the whole people' as outlined in the 21st and 22nd Congress of CPSU are nothing but anti-Marxist-Leninist.

11. Before Khrushchev, the new bourgeois elements had not occupied ruling positions in Soviet society. With Khrushchev's usurpation of party and state power these elements have risen to ruling class positions,¹¹ which accounts for changing the conception of world revolution yet dominant in socialist parties. The bureaucrat class in power in Soviet Union on the one hand and the working class together with the poor and lower-middle peasants on the other are two classes sharply antagonistic to each other.

In 'apologists of new-colonialism' Khrushchev was denounced as a lackey of imperialism. On March 1964, in 'The Proletarian Revolution and Khrushchev's Revisionism', Khrushchev was called as the greatest capitulationist in history and a call to overthrow Khrushchev was issued to the CPSU. The breach between CPSU and CPC was complete.

See Khrushchev's phoney Communism and its Historical Lesson for the world', p. 61, FLP, Peking 1964.

(c) The Cultural Revolution

Before we proceed to deal with the issue of cultural revolution it is necessary to state that in the mid-'60s crucial issues were at stake regarding the Marxist concept of revolution, continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat; the role of imperialism; the nature of revisionism and the means to tackle it; the role of the communist parties; the character of national liberation and anti-colonial struggles. The two line struggle in China at the ideological plane, the struggles of the late fifties in building socialism through continued revolution and the ideological debates with Soviet Union touched at the core of some of these major issues. But the dispute over the reality or non reality of these issues isolated from practice was a purely scholastic question. ¹¹² Therefore, the cultural revolution for Mao had its object 'to solve the problem of world outlook and eradicate revisionism ... to strengthen the capability to resist revisionism at any time'. ¹¹³ It was supposed to be an instrument at the stage and under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie and move forward to communism. We will have to briefly see how consonant were the practices with the ultimate objective and in what forms the proletariat were to re seize the power.

112. Marx: "Thesis on Feurbach", in German Ideology, p. 651, op.cit.

113. Mao Tse tung: quoted in 'People's China', Milton and Schurman, (ed.) pp. 263-64.

The two-line struggle taking place in China and the division of the socialist camp into two ideologically polar lines and their differing perception of the revolutionary process has already been dealt with. Therefore, in 1964, we find Mao asking the question: 'What is Revolution' and answer that 'Revolution is the proletariat overthrowing the capitalists, the peasants overthrowing the landlords and afterwards setting up a workers' and peasants political power and moreover to continue to consolidate it. At present, the task of the revolution is not completed. It has not been finally determined who in the end will overthrow whom. In the Soviet Union, is not Khrushchev in power, is not the bourgeoisie in power? We too have cases in which political power is in the grip of the bourgeoisie".¹¹⁴

Who were these new bourgeoisie? Till 1964, this question was answered by more or less repeating Lenin who referred to revisionist influence as stemming from the influence exerted by the overthrown exploiters still active at various layers of the society,¹¹⁵ due to the small commodity producers¹¹⁶ the

114. Schram (ed.) 'Talks with Mao, Yuan Hsin in 'Chairman Mao Speaks', op.cit., p. 243.

115. "The class exploiters, the landowners and capitalists have not disappeared and cannot disappear all at once under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The exploiters have been smashed, but not destroyed. They still have an international base in the form of international capital, of which they are a branch. They still retain certain means of production in part, they still have money, they still have vast social connections, because they have been defeated, the energy of their resistance has increased a hundred and thousand fold. The art of State, Military and Economic administration gives them a superiority and a very great superiority so that

(contd....)

existence of capitalism on a wide scale and due to the super-structures of the earlier ruling classes manifest in habit and tradition. The new bourgeoisie continuously emerge from the very ground that is once cleared as long as bourgeois relations last.¹¹⁷

It was in late 1964, that Mao was to declare where the heart of the new revisionism lie. "The main target of the present movement are those party persons in power following the capitalist road".¹¹⁸ This was true not only regarding the Soviet Union but also China. The revisionism in Soviet Union and the revisionism in China were inextricably bound. Revisionism is not merely a phenomenon in China but an international phenomenon.¹¹⁹ The fitting answer to Revisionism lie only in Revolution, by overthrowing the present apparatus which is dominated by the party bureaucracy. It is the masses

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115. their importance is incomparably greater than their numerical proportion of the population".
(Lenin: "Economic and Politics in the era of dictatorship of the proletariat," C.W., Vol. 30, p. 115.)
116. Small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale", Lenin, "Left Wing Communism an infantile disorder", in SW, vol.3, p. 293, op.cit.
117. "Yes by overthrowing the landowners and bourgeoisie we cleared the way but we did not build the edifice of socialism. On the ground cleared of one bourgeois generation, new generations continuously appear in history, as long as the ground gives rise to them and it does give rise to any number of bourgeoisie. As for those who look at the victory over the capitalists in the way that the petty proprietors look at it - they grabbed, let me have a go too - indeed every one of them is the source of a new generation of bourgeoisie".
Lenin, "Report on the Immediate Task of the Soviet Government," C.W., vol. 27, p. 300.

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through their struggle who have to overthrow the apparatus and establish new revolutionary institutions and create new socialist relations. This can be done by fighting those who under the name of socialism, occupy the top party position but carry on bourgeois practices.¹²⁰ The rise to power of¹²¹ revisionism means the rise to power of the bourgeoisie.

The socialist education movement from 1962 had created an ideological climate all over China; The existence of classes class struggle and necessity to continue the struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat was already announced.

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118. Quoted in the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Documents), (9th Party Congress Report) p. 25, FLP, Peking, 1969.
119. Lenin: 'Marxism and Revisionism', in SW, vol.1, p.55, op.cit., This phrase was often quoted in China.
120. Engels comments regarding the struggle they waged against socialists are extremely enlightening: 'The development of the proletariat proceeds everywhere amidst internal struggle And when like Marx and myself, one has fought harder all one's life long against the alleged socialists than against anyone else (for we only regarded the bourgeoisie as a class and hardly involved ourselves in conflicts with individual bourgeoisie) one cannot greatly grive that the inevitable struggle has broken out (Fredrick Engels 'Letter to August Bebel, October 28, 1882, MESC, p. 333).
121. Mao Tse-tung. Quoted in Report on the Revision of the Party Constitution by Wang-Hung Wen in 'Mao Makes five' Mao Tse tung's last great battle, Raymond Lotta (ed.), p. 96. Banner Press, Chicago, 1978.

The debates against revisionism both internally and externally had generated a different atmosphere.. On the plane of economic practice, after the great leap forward Centralization and bureaucratism had already occurred. Rules and regulation was the guide to production rather than conscious motivation. The commodity system and the eight grade wage system still existed. There were the two types of production units: the cooperatives and the State sector. Resorting to material incentives, putting profit in command, handing out bonuses to promote production were the dominant practices. The political system was highly centralized and bureaucratized, which flourished by keeping the masses apathetic. The relationship between the intellectuals and working masses which was established during the great leap forward as an effort to tackle the problem of the mental and manual division of labour was totally dissociated. Above all the literary and art field still fostered a world view imbued with confucianism which fostered reaction.¹²² The cultural revolution, therefore, was a struggle aimed to basically alter all these relationsh to wage bitter struggle against revisionism and educate the revisionists on Marxism on the principle 'cure the sickness, save the patient'. Therefore, the cultural revolution was basically political in character, as Wang Hung Wan said in his

122. See, Chang Chun Chiao, 'On exercising all round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie', Peking Review, April 4, 1975.

123. See, Chu Lan: 'A Decade of Revolution in Peking Opera' Peking Review, August 2, 1974.

report on the revision of the Party constitution during the ninth congress of CPC. "The great proletarian cultural revolution is a great political revolution carried out under the conditions of socialism, by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes, and it is also a deep going party consolidation movement.¹²⁴

The immediate starting point of the cultural revolution was an article by Yao Wen Yuan on Wu Han's play, 'The dismissal of Hai Jui'. Yao criticized Wu Han (vice Mayor of Peking) for holding on and propagating bourgeois views. The official Peking Press was to block this article. Hectic debates on Art and literature, condemning the present policy as bourgeois were to appear now. On April 16, 1966, the socialist cultural revolution later to be named the great proletarian cultural revolution was officially launched. The movement beginning with the campaign to spread art and culture, spread to the universities and picks up momentum among the workers. The red guards as the youthful wing of this revolution were to emerge right from the beginning. In August 1966, the cultural committee of CPC was to issue the guidelines ensuring the cultural revolution known as the 16 points. It emphasizes:

1. The need to boldly arouse the masses as the problem of revisionism can be tackled and the establishment of socialist relations can be ensured only on that basis. The outcome of

¹²⁴. Wang Hung Wen: in 'And Mao Makes Five', op.cit., p. 95.

the cultural revolution depends upon how much the party is capable of doing it.

2. The masses have to liberate themselves through their own self-conscious activity. This self-activity cannot be replaced or subjugated to constraint.

3. The target of the movement are those in authority within the party and taking the capitalist road.

4. It gave guidance to correctly handle contradiction among people, the question of cadres, and policy towards scientists and technicians.

5. It established the relationship between revolution and production. Revolution was asserted as a great motive force to increase production.

6. It applauds the new organization created by the masses in the process of the revolution like revolutionary groups, committees and congresses in the factories, mines, enterprises in the various quarters of the cities, in villages, in the state organizations and in educational establishments. It recommends that a system of election like that of the Paris commune should be established from these organizations, through struggle, criticism, transformation whereby the masses educate themselves and form organs of power of the proletarian cultural revolution.

7. The party members must submit themselves to the criticism of the masses. But this criticism should be made in a spirit of unity.

8. The necessity of transforming education, literature, art, etc. was strongly emphasized which should should half in consolidating socialist relations. The tatzepao movement was to be encouraged.
9. The main forces of revolution were the workers, peasant soldiers - masses and the revolutionary intelligentsia.
10. The method of the movement was debate, reasoning things out, persuasion through reasoning and not by force. The minority should be protected because sometimes 'the truth lies with the minority'.
11. Old ideas, culture, customs, habits of the exploiting classes still mold public opinion, offering just ground for restoration of the past. In order to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat the mental outlook must be transformed and new values created.

The support extended by the Central Committee gave added boost to the movement. The big character posters, public mass criticism of persons in power, the organization of brigades called red guards were to multiply further. Mao himself was to put up the tatzepao 'Bombard the Headquarters'. Shortly Liu Shao Chi was to be subjected to mass criticism. The Cultural revolution was to initiate profound transformation at all levels of Chinese society: in industry and agriculture and this mutual relationship, between the working class and

125. See 'Decision of the Chinese Communist Party concerning the Great Proletarian, Cultural Revolution', FLP, Peking, 1966.

peasantry, the intellectuals and the working masses, in the party, state apparatuses, art and culture. It sought to bring the party, state apparatus, industries, agricultural and ideological organizations under mass criticism and control. It attempted to alter the relations existing among the various sectors and within the sectors to consolidate socialist relations. For this purpose it threw up new revolutionary organizations and new leadership. The attempt was to found class alliances on a new basis, training the masses directly to participate in economic, political and cultural processes struggle against revisionism and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat by making the working class to exercise their all round leadership.¹²⁶

The Cultural revolution as manifest in 1966-69 was to show some of the most creative aspects of mass initiative and dynamism and working class leadership but also show the ugliest aspects a la fasism.¹²⁷ It was to show how deep rooted was the bourgeoisie and feudal tendencies and values. It was also to manifest weaknesses of a party structure in power really to provide revolutionary leadership. However, Mao was to give the call to learn from negative example and consolidate the gains of the cultural revolution and carry forward the revolution

126. For details see, K.S. Karol: The Second Chinese Revolution, London, Jonathan Cafe, 1975; William Hinton: 'Turning Point in China' - An essay on the Cultural Revolution', New York, 1972.
 Charles Bettelheim: The Cultural Revolution and industrial organization in China; Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974.
 Joan Robinson: The Cultural Revolution in China, London, 1973.

127. contd...)

under the dictatorship of the proletariat. 'Apparently we could not do without the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. For our base was not solid. From my observations, I am afraid that in a fairly large majority of factories leadership was not in the hands of real Marxists and the masses of workers'.¹²⁸

Engels had defined in his letter to J. Block that the economy is the ultimate determinant. The superstructure-politics and culture, History, traditions, values - exert their influence on human consciousness and the latter further act on the entire social spectrum. The cultural revolution was a great effort to confront and face this issue. The problems posed by the cultural revolution and the possibilities of their solution would have emerged only through a long contradictory process. Therefore, for Mao, the only guarantee to establish a new world outlook and move towards communist society was to constantly pursue the path of cultural revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. "a world outlook cannot be imposed on anyone, and ideological remolding represents

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127. See Han Suyin: op.cit., p. 238 ff. One must be careful in using this term. Fascism after all is a distinct form of state powers that emerges only under certain conditions in the capitalist mode of production. It is not a general category, abstracted from specific socio-historical conditions applicable anywhere at any time.
128. Mao Tse tung - quoted by Chang Chun Chiao - 'On exercising all round leadership over the bourgeoisie', in 'And Mao makes five', op.cit., p. 213.

external factors, acting on internal factors, with the latter playing the primary role. If world outlook is not replaced, then although two thousand capitalists are removed in the current great proletarian cultural revolution, four thousand others may appear the next time. We are paying a very high price in the current great revolution. The struggle between the two classes and the two lines cannot be settled in one, two, three or four cultural revolutions, but the results of the current great cultural revolution must be consolidated for at least fifteen years - two or three revolutions should be carried out every hundred years, so we must, keep in mind the uprooting of revisionism and strengthen our capacity to resist revisionism at any time.

Mao was to further assert that in spite of these efforts and many more that final victory of communism cannot be achieved in one country. The final victory of a socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad masses of the people at home, but also involves the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man over the whole globe, upon which all mankind will be emancipated.

Some of the achievements of the cultural revolution were to be registered in the 9th party congress of the CPC,

129. Mao Tse tung: Quoted in 'People's China', Milton and Shurmann (ed.), pp. 263-64.

130. Ninth Party Congress Report, pp. 64-65, op.cit.

which brought in new life to the party politically and organizationally by bringing in the militants thrown up by the cultural revolution. The unity of the party was asserted. Immediately after the congress attempts were made to consolidate the party at the various levels. This was a challenge to the power, the PLA yielded. Mao was to reassert that the party commands the gun and not vice versa. Although the ninth congress asserted the need of keeping politics in command while going all out to increase production, Lin Piao, now that he was nearly at the pinnacle of power was to assert the line of order, that the great chaos must be part of the past, the basic duty is to increase production. From late 1969, Lin was continuously under attack. At the same time a myth was building around him. Before the mass criticism against him could rise into a tornado, he attempted to seize the opportunity to capture power through a coup but failed.

Lin Piao had almost come to identify himself with the cultural revolution. Therefore, the Lin Piao coup attempt resulted in two reactions:

1. The cultural revolution created and mystified a conspirator and power hungry person like Lin Piao who made use of the ignorance of the masses and the division among people, made use of the state institutions to instal himself as the dictator. Therefore, no more attempts like cultural revolution; go back to the earlier stable and orderly equilibrium.

131. See Huan Suyin: op.cit1, pp. 387-402.

132. Similar arguments were thrown with regard to facism in Germany and Italy that it was the militant working class revolts that gave rise to Hitler and Mussolini.

(2) It is not the cultural revolution which gave rise to Lin Piao. In the disequilibrium created in the process of the cultural revolution, a schemer like Lin Piao made use of the contradictions among people, gave slogans, 'apparently' the slogans of the revolution, but only to buttress his own power. On the other hand, he tried to impose a new authority on the masses combining traditional authority and values with revolutionary slogans. The roots of Lin Piao lie in the dominant cultural ethos of China on the one hand and bourgeoisie practices prevalent in the society. The answer to this power hunger lies in furthering the class struggle and consolidating the gains of the cultural revolution. The answer to the Lin Piao treachery is 'Practice Marxism, and not revisionism; unite and don't split, be open and above board; and don't intrigue and conspire'.¹³³ It was asserted at the tenth congress of CPC how one tendency covers another. How Lin Shao Chi's revisionism coincided with that of Lin Piao. Both of them did not believe in arousing the masses and relying on the conscious masses to create their own organs of self rule. Therefore, the revised constitution of the party at the 10th Congress in 1973 was to uphold the cultural revolution. To counter revisionism a thorough study of Marxism-Leninism was emphasized.

133. Mao Tse tung: Quoted in the Tenth National Congress of CPC (Documents), FLP, Peking, 1974.

The criticism of the masses and their supervision over the party was stressed.¹³⁴

In the wake of the tenth congress a major movement to criticise Confucianism, the dominant ethos of China for centuries was launched. The Lin Piao conspiracy was essentially connected to this ethos. Therefore if Lin Piao was to be thoroughly rooted out the very roots of his revisionism, that lie in confucianism have to be rooted out.¹³⁵ This movement made large masses of China reflect upon their own history, unearth their own past and reevaluate it in terms of the present. 'To learn from the past to serve the present' was Mao's slogan. It was asserted that the 'philosophy of the communist party is the philosophy of struggle'. It was totally opposed to the confucian philosophy of 'chung yung' (the doctrine of the mean) i.e., 'not leaning to either side (chung) 'being unchangeable' (yung), which is basically a reactionary and restorationist philosophy.¹³⁶ The campaign indirectly also attacked those within the party who wanted to restore the past in the name of

134. See Report on the Revision of Party Constitution by Wang Hung Wen, in "And Mao makes five", pp. 94-102.

135. See Peking Review, February 8, 1974: 'Carry the Struggle and Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius through to the end'. Also, Liang Hsiao: 'Study the historical experience of the struggle between the confucian and legalist schools'. Peking Review, January 10, 1975.

136. See Chiang Yu Ping: 'The Philosophy of the Communist Party is the philosophy of Struggle: Refuting Lin Piao for peddling Confucius' doctrine of the mean: Peking Review, March 22, 1974.

stability. The struggle in the cultural front too heated up considerably in late 1973 and early 1974.

However, following Lin Piao's betrayal and the need of unity within the party, 'the right' within the party made all attempts to bring those back to power who had been criticized during the cultural revolution. In April 1973, Teng Hsiao Ping was brought back. There were attempts to restore education to the pre-cultural revolutionary elitist framework. Rules and regulations and economic incentives also attempted to be restored in Industry.¹³⁷ This faction within the communist party denounced Lin Piao to denounce the cultural revolution.¹³⁸

The 4th National People's Congress that took place in January 1975 was still to assert the outstanding contributions in criticizing Lin Piao and confucianism to forestall the possibility of restoration. Lin piao was really a revisionist walking in the garb of a revolutionary. Mao was to say that if people like Lin Piao came to power it will be easier for them to dig up the capitalist system since in the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road and there is the danger of

137. See for the struggle against this line of economism and advocating politics in command, reliance on the masses and self-reliance; Kung Hsiao Wen; Chinese Economic Studies, Summer, 1976.

138. Raymond Lotta in "And Mao Makes Five", op.cit., p. 19.

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capitalist restoration. This restoration is possible because even though 'China is a socialist country even now she practices an eight grade wage system, distribution according to work and exchange through money and in all this differs by only little from the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has been changed ... Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted"¹⁴⁰.

Explanation for Revisionism during the Period of Transition

The phenomenon of Lin Piao's attempts to restoration and rise of revisionism was explained by this section of the communist party as follows: The socialist society as it emerges from the capitalist society is in every respect, economically morally and intellectually, still stamped by Birth marks of the old society.¹⁴¹ There are still the defeated classes of capitalists and landlords, who do not reconcile themselves to the defeat but with greater force attempt a comeback. There is the two kinds of ownership: socialist and collective which determine the practice of commodity system, a capitalist relation. There are differences between workers and peasants,

139. See Report on the revision of the constitution delivered by Chang Chun Chiao: Documents of the 4th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China (FLP, Peking, 1975).
140. Mao Tse tung, quoted in Yao-Wen Yuan "On the Social basis of the Lin Piao Anty Party Clique", Peking Review, March 7, 1975.
141. K. Marx: 'Critique of gotha Programme', in Marx and Engels Selected Works, vol. 3, p. 17.

between town and country, between manual and mental labour and the discrepancies of wage scales at various levels. If a continuous attempt is not made by the conscious struggle of the masses to restrict these rights, narrow down the differences instead of strengthening bourgeois right the outcome would be polarization i.e., in the matter of distribution, a small number of people will be able to appropriate increasing amount of commodities and money through legal and illegal ways. Capitalist ideas will be further strengthened. The existence of imperialism provides the moral atmosphere to it. As a result, a small number of new bourgeoisie elements and upstarts who have given up the class point will emerge from the party members, workers, well-to-do peasants and personnel of state and other organs. When their economic strength and political status has grown, they will demand the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist system and actively work towards it by strengthening capitalist relations and imposing all out rules and regulations to suppress the initiative of the masses which Marx called as Factory Despotism¹⁴². These handful of new bourgeoisie elements monopolizing the means of production will at the same time monopolize the power of distributing consumer goods and other products, restoring an ideology and culture alien to the interests of the

142. K. Marx. He says further that this discipline will become superfluous under a social system in which the labourers work for their own account. (See Capital, Vol. III, p. 83, Moscow, FLP, 1969).

proletariat. The only guarantee against this was to continue the dictatorship of the proletariat, restrict bourgeois right by asserting the control of the worker continuously, fight against inequality, against the wage system, minimize the differences between mental and manual labour, worker and peasants, town and country imbibe the scientific doctrines of Marxism-Leninism on the sphere of politics, ideology and culture by exercising the overall control of the proletariat in all spheres of life. The approach was succinctly put in 'Make revolution, promote production'.

Modernization or Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The right agreed that China, if it has to survive as a socialist country and develop, must take to speedy modernization,¹⁴³ which basically repeated the Soviet model. It was to concretize its programme in 'On the general programme of work for the whole party and the whole nation'; 'some problems in accelerating industrial development' and 'on some problems¹⁴⁴ in the fields of science and technology'. The restoration of a whole section of those, who were criticized during the cultural revolution, now replaced in their former position was to confer special advantage on these people to drive these programmes of modernization. Internationally this section was

143. Modernization of Industry, National defence, science and technology.

144. Translated in the Case of the Gang Four, Cosmos Books, Hong Kong, 1977.

to propound the 'three world theory' which is nothing but a refurbished version of peaceful coexistence, which has nothing to do with Lenin's theory of imperialism or has no foundation in Mao's published works.¹⁴⁵

The campaign for increase of production let loose by the right was to be answered by Mao and the left by the campaign to study the dictatorship of the proletariat: "Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? It is essential to get this question clear; lack of clarity on the question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation. The campaign found expression in new practices and experiences to criticize and limit bourgeois right.¹⁴⁶ Mao was to call attention during the period to the following issues:

(1) The system of ownership has been basically socialised. But not fully. There are still the two types of ownership: 'Ownership of the whole people' and the 'collective ownership'. Therefore bourgeois right still exists in this realm. The disappearance of bourgeois right in the realm of the system of ownership in a socialist society as conceived by Marx and Lenin, implies the conversion of all the means of production into common property of the whole society. Clearly we have not yet

145. See Charles Bettelheim 'The Great Leap Backward', p. 114, and note 70 in p. 129, op.cit., Also see Raymond Lotta, op.cit., p. 33.

146. 146. See Chang-Chun-Chiao, op.cit. Also see 'Socialist Big Fair is Good', An investigation of transformation in rural trade fair in Haerhtao Commune Chang wu county, Liaoning Province, People's daily, May 9, 1976.

reached that stage. Neither in theory nor in practice should we overlook the very arduous tasks that lie ahead for the dictatorship of the proletariat in this respect.¹⁴⁷

(2) More important, the relations of production in terms of the relations among people in the process of production and the relations among people in the process of production and the relations of distribution have to be examined. A continuous restriction has to be placed on bourgeois right, in the stage of socialism.

(3) Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. When one discusses issues of ownership and relations of production, one should be able to distinguish between the form and the true essence. Whether the ideological and political line is correct and which class holds the leadership decides which class exercise real control over production.

(4) Given the contradictions in socialist society it is always easy for a new bourgeoisie to emerge. But the bourgeoisie as it is discredited in the revolution and in the successive process of transformation cannot come up by parading its own slogans and its organization. As the main function of coordination of the entire country and its economic, political, and cultural life rests with the party, the revisionist line can emerge only through the party, which makes use of the prestige the party enjoys among the people, to put forward its own programmes hiding under Marxist slogans. Therefore, Mao was

¹⁴⁷. See Chang Chun Chiao, op.cit., pp. 8-9.

to say, 'you want to make the revolution, and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the communist party - those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road.'¹⁴⁸

(5) The degeneration of earlier revolutionaries is explained through this way: During the democratic revolution a lot of people join the party with the aspiration of fighting imperialism and feudalism. But they are just satisfied with the democratic revolution and would not like to proceed further. Therefore, they put up all hindrances in the furtherance of the revolution.

"After the democratic revolution the workers and the poor and lower middle peasants did not stand still, they want revolution. On the other hand a number of party members do not want to go forward. Some have moved backward and opposed the revolution. Why? Because they have become high officials and want to protect the interests of the high officials."¹⁴⁹

With the socialist revolution they themselves come under fire and therefore revolt against it. This analysis was to lead to wage a great struggle against the capitalist roaders from the latter half 1975 and after the Tien An Men incident in 1976, was to lead to the expulsion of Ten Hsiao from all party and government posts.

148. Mao Tse-tung. quoted in "Capitalist roaders are representatives of capitalist relations", Peking Review, March 12, 1976.

149. 'And Mao makes Five, pp. 272-273.

However the right was to consolidate its position from the later half of 1975 although in the ideological sphere they could not match themselves. But they actually knew where their strength lay. Control over the party, state, ^{apparatuses.} army, education, industry and agriculture would give them tremendous power in the fight against the left. Besides unlike the others Teng openly articulated his positions and attempted to provide an alternative ideological framework to the right at this juncture.

The criticism against the right and their policies of economism through widespread also resulted in violent clashes and strikes in a number of places. These clashes were basically to help the right who under the name of unity, and accusing others of disruption of production and quoting Mao profusely, could easily manage to obtain the support of the silent masses. There were contradictions within the right but vis-a-vis the revolutionaries they were all a united bloc.

This debate was to come to an end both ideologically and politically to a great extent by the arrest of the four: Chiang Ching, Chang Chum Chiao, Wang Hung Wen and Yao Wen Yuan, On October 6, 1976, through the use of the army, and the brutal ¹⁶⁰ suppression of revolts of workers in Shanghai and elsewhere. The new regime that came to power headed by Hua Kuo fung was to progressively dominate the entire organization and ideological 150. See Raymond Lotta, op.cit., p. 48.

positions that had emerged from 1966-1976. The old guard who had been criticised and dethroned was to be recalled. The emphasis remained on the 'four modernisations'. The constitution of the party and national people's congress were to be drastically altered. Initially the cultural revolution, the great leap and Mao were not openly criticised, but progressively the first two periods were to be termed as the dark periods of China and Mao just reduced to a hero in the period of the national liberation struggle.¹⁵¹

The sharp divisions of opinions among Marxists whether the new leadership after the arrest of the 'Gang of Four' were really continuators of Revolutionary policies or not has already been answered by the passage of time.¹⁵²

Conclusion

We have already discussed the conception of revolution in Marx and Engels and the Revolutionary conception of Lenin. The great lessons of the class struggle in China, amidst its twists and turns applying the lessons of class struggles of the past, especially as articulated in Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin and applying it to the conditions of China and at various stages of the revolution were to immensely enrich this conception and nature of the class struggle. The greatest contribution of these class struggles is in showing up the problems of transition, the specific nature of revisionism in

151. See the 7th National Congress of PRC Documents, FLP, Peking.

152. See for the debate: Monthly Review, July-August 1978 and May 1979.

a socialist regime and the nature of class struggle that is called for, against it, as manifest in the cultural revolution.

The question whether cultural revolution succeeded from stopping revisionism from strengthening its hold over the party and state is already answered by theoretical reflections on the struggle that were made by Mao and other revolutionaries, during the process itself. What forces exactly contributed in installing revisionism at that particular conjuncture definitively to power cannot be answered here. But the cultural revolution helped in peeping into this process and establishing a perspective on it. Some of these have been elaborated already from the mouth of the participants themselves.

1. The entire history of the Chinese revolution both during the period of the National Revolution and socialist transition - is the history of united front. The contradictions in this united front were basically the expression of the class struggle in Chinese social formation, immediately and class struggle throughout the world indirectly. In this united front when the leadership was in the hands of classes representing other than the proletariat, the revolution suffered. There is sufficient evidence to prove that Hua Kuo Feng who was presiding over the coup in 1976 October, did not go fully¹⁵³ with the cultural revolution. As the class struggle was getting intensified, like Ching Kai Shek in 1927, Huo Kuo Feng turns his

153. See Raymond Lotta, op.cit., p. 37.

guns on the socialists' line. Like Chiang Kai Shek the control over the army that Hua managed to wield helps him tremendously. As Chiang Kai Shek falls more and more for support on the reactionaries,¹⁵⁴ Hua Kuo Feng falls more and more for support on those very elements discredited by the cultural revolution or opposed to it.

2. To what extent the cultural revolution seriously affected production, has to be still ascertained.¹⁵⁵ In fact the cultural revolution was, as one of its aims precisely directed, it removing those hurdles which did not allow the productive forces to grow. There was definitely disequilibrium that was created in a number of sectors and in certain sectors production was definitely impaired. But if impairing of production was to be the criterion of a revolution, no revolution can justify itself. But Hua Kuo Feng and later Teng Hsiao Ping were precisely to use these arguments to beat back the class struggle. Given the relative development of China, these arguments, appealing to and strengthening economism, were to find a large audience even among workers and the peasantry.

3. A large section of functionaries of the party, state, army, industry, agriculture, intellectuals and technicians although they went with the revolution during the cultural revolution, albeit, unwillingly, were people who switched their

154. Lenin had earlier said that the resistance of the latter increases ten fold, after their fall. See Lenin 'Economics and Politics in the era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', in CW, vol. 30, p. 115.

155. See Bettelheim: 'The great leap backward,' op.cit.

loyalties immediately when a favourable situation promising earlier stability was confronted. They still maintained their identity as supporters of the cultural revolution and were in positions of influence or control over the workers. The intensification of the socialist revolution would have affected their position by bringing them more and more under the control of the masses.

4. The cultural revolution had to a great extent strengthened the class positions and class consciousness, as every revolution does. It was as much true for the proletariat but more true regarding the defeated classes and class fractions. These defeated classes making use of the Lin Piao coup were fairly successful in spreading a strong villifying campaign against the cultural revolution itself.

5. The socialist revolutionaries had to base themselves on the same party, state or propaganda machinery. They did not have independent channels to arouse the masses or to counter a coup. The Shanghai commune within a short spell of its emergence was to be reduced to impotence.

6. As in the previous revolution, the proletariat of China was not able to obtain any support from the international working class, although the revisionists managed to obtain it, quickly from the western capitalist countries.

7. The leaders of the revisionist coup were to appeal to Chinese nationalism, through its Three World Theory', which had

given the division of the proletariat into nation-states were to find quite an appeal in China itself.

8. The centralization of authority and power which cultural revolution was not able to decentralize much inspite of the efforts were to be immensely in favour of the revisionists, who already controlled it.

9. At the ideological level the revisionists leaders were to still pay homage to Mao and to the cultural revolution as Lin Piao did earlier. Therefore, it was quite possible for the masses to see it as a sort of a 'palaces coup'. Besides the 'gang of four' who to a great extent, along with Mao headed the cultural revolution did not have the same revolutionary legitimacy as a number of revisionist leaders had in the long process of national liberation struggle.

10. The major concentration of the socialist revolutionaries was still in the working class. The peasantry which was to solidly stand behind Mao, did not do so behind the revolutionaries during the coup. It was a tragedy to be repeated by the Paris Commune, by the communist party in the wake of the coup of Chiang Kai Shek in 1927 and by the Socialist revolutionaries in 1976.

Therefore, October 6, 1976 was to be the reversal of the ingenuity of a great revolutionary process; a reversal which still portrays the strength of capital, the strength of the past over the future. However, the reversal by its negative lessons, which still have to be unearthed through the concrete analysis of the class struggles in China has taught a great deal to the proletariat to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

CHAPTER V

Concluding Remarks

Marx and Engels were to evolve a few crucial facts of the conception of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, based on the analysis of the bourgeois socio-economic formation and the experience of the proletarian movement available to them, by applying the method of materialist dialectics. It made it possible to grasp certain dominant features of the social reality, its processes and dynamics to devise appropriate strategies to change this reality. However this conception had to be enriched by the analysis of the dynamics of capitalism and by the experience of the working class movement at every stage and by analysing other facts of social reality not dealt by them or inaccessible to them in order to bring to the knowledge of the proletariat their situation and task in the concrete conditions.

The socialist parties which inherited the legacy of this revolutionary conception of the proletariat were to be confronted with this task. However, they assimilated the marxist concepts and method quite unevenly. Besides being part of the arena of class struggle made them susceptible to the economic, political and ideological influences of the dominant order. To develop the Marxist revolutionary conception, they had to analyse these influences as well as these processes and enriched by it continuously evolve appropriate strategies to struggle against them. However, we saw how Marxism in the period of the second international begins to be dominated by the bourgeois ideology.

The socialist parties were rooted among the workers and other oppressed sections. The dominant classes exercised their political and ideological dominance over the latter. Besides, the economic processes of capitalism by a great expansion of the division of labour both in the production unit and globally were to give rise to an inner hierarchy among the workers themselves. The disparate sectional cleavages that these processes engendered with the further reproduction and expansion of capital were not favourable to the building of unity among workers. At the same time the trade union leadership was continuously susceptible to the economic, political and ideological influences of the dominant classes. When the socialist parties failed in their role it was much easier for the trade union leadership to confine the movement merely in its economistic and legal limits.

The struggle of the workers against capital was thus conditioned by the changing nature of the production process itself, the political and ideological hegemony of the dominant classes, the extent to which the organizations of the proletariat get confined within the bourgeois order and the ability of the socialist parties to take into stock all these factors and develop appropriate revolutionary strategies in the concrete conditions.

However, the socialist parties by being dominated by the bourgeois ideologies precisely fail in this task. It is the revolutionary practice and ideological struggles of the

Bolshevik party led by Lenin which explain in a comprehensive way the grounds for this failure and its effect on the revolutionary movement of the proletariat of helping them take effective steps towards a revolutionary strategy in the context of the dynamics of capital in general and the Russian social formation in particular. Lenin holds on to the method and basic concepts developed by Marx and Engels, explains them in the present context, enriches them by bringing to bear within those concepts the dynamics of the reality inaccessible to Marx and Engels evolves a few new concepts necessary to seize a further dimension of the social reality in order to devise appropriate revolutionary strategies thereby enriching the revolutionary politics of Marxism.

But the Leninist advance on the Marxist conception of revolutionary strategies, while provided concepts and tools for the practice of revolutionary politics and to recognise the dangers of revisionism in Marxist politics, did not mean that the same dangers that beset the second international are not confronted by the revolutionary working class parties, in different conditions and in different forms. In fact, if we admit the materialist understanding, revisionism is a constant danger to pursue revolutionary politics as long as capitalist relations, its ideologies, political processes and apparatuses survive and reproduce. Lenin tried to minimise their influence through the conception of the Party as the ideological organization of the working class. But he himself was aware of the danger and was to call attention to it continuously.

After the seizure of the political power by the proletariat, in Russia, the Bolshevik party was called upon to play a crucial role in the exercise of proletarian state power. Due to the contradictory nature of this power, the influence of bourgeois ideologies on the party continues to assert itself. As the dominant section of the second international was not able to perceive its own mistakes and held on to a revisionist conception proclaiming it as revolutionary, so too the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat while proclaiming to be revolutionary may succumb to revisionism, giving rise to a contradiction between the revolutionary perspective of the working class and the institutions representing and reproducing its interests. The 'Russian Experience' shows how it can happen and the ideological struggle in which it can be reflected.

Although Lenin developed the revolutionary politics of Marxism, the specific forms in which revisionism emerges during the dictatorship of the proletariat and the appropriate strategies to struggle against it were to be shown in the experience of the Chinese Revolution. Here Mao's contribution is unique, apart from his effort to develop an effective revolutionary strategy for national liberation struggles in the conditions of colonies and semi-colonies. The Chinese experience shows how the dictatorship of the proletariat can get degenerated into bourgeois power and how this contradiction can be resolved and new socialist relations can be consolidated.

It is interesting to note that Gramsci reacts like Lenin to the Marxism of the dominant section of the Second International. But Gramsci's response is unlike that of Lenin. Gramsci recognises the innovations and development brought about by Lenin in the revolutionary conception but reflects these innovations in the concrete conditions of developed capitalist formations. Gramsci also opens up a number of perspectives thrown up by Mao-Tse-Tung, but evolves alternative strategies to tackle them.

The response of Gramsci to the revisionism of the second international consists in the factory councils. He tries to resolve the contradiction engendered by revisionism in working class political practice by advocating the formation of these councils. This was an attempt to locate the revolutionary nuclei not in the party or in the trade unions but in the institutions organic to the working class' which could be further developed as effective counterweights to bourgeois dominance. As bourgeois dominance has its curtiality in production, the factories become the focal point of Gramsci's attention. Gramsci's attitude towards the Socialist party and the trade unions at this stage is extremely dualistic. On the one hand he recognizes their necessity and on the other finds that they are a hinderance to the growth of the revolutionary power of the proletariat represented in the factory councils.² The defeat of the factory councils, the new light thrown by Lenin's elaboration of the conception of Revolution and the failures of the revolutionary

 1 Antonio Gramsci, Selections from Prison Writings, 1910-20, p.65, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1977.

2 See Ibid, p.98-103 and p.142-146

strategy modelled on the Russian revolution forms the practical context of Gramsci's problematic.

Gramsci interposes the concept of the 'civil society' to explain a fact of the social reality in developed capitalist social formations in order to explain the setback of the revolutionary movement in them. On the one hand the struggle of this civil society contains the militant action of the working class as manifest in the factory council movement and does not provide room for revolutionary strategies demonstrated in Russia and on the other the strength of this civil society was able to integrate the leaders of the trade unions and socialist party within its boundaries, through the ideological apparatuses of the state that constitute the civil society. To explain this process Gramsci uses the concept of 'Hegemony'. Hegemony concretely manifests itself by the consent displayed by the dominated classes to the rule of the dominant classes that keeps the elements of coercion on a low key.³ Since hegemony at the same time signifies the unity that holds the ruling classes together in a class bloc both by consent and coercion over the dominated classes, Gramsci uses this concept in a generic sense as including both the aspects of consent and coercion and sometimes in the specific sense of it as generating consent, identified with civil society while relegating the function of coercion to state apparatuses.⁴ Given this hegemony enjoyed by the ruling classes and expressed specifically in the civil society the struggle for capture of state power cannot become successful

3 SEE A Gramsci; 'Selections from Prison Notebooks, p.80, International Publishers, New York, 1971.

4 See Ibid, p.207-208.

unless the proletariat also attempts to capture hegemony in the society.⁵

The predominance enjoyed by the 'civil society' relative to the state and the hegemony displayed by the dominant classes that generates consent makes the revolutionary strategies to be adopted in the developed capitalist formations unlike those in the east. In the east since the state is almost everything and the civil society is weak,⁶ a conjunctural crisis, which sets the masses into independent action makes severe dents in the state power and therefore a strategy of sudden uprising and capture of state power becomes possible. Gramsci terms it as the strategy of 'war of manoeuvre'. On the contrary in the west, the civil society is strong and forms a strong barricade for an armed assault. It contains the formation of the independent action of the masses and does not let the crisis make strong dents into the state power.⁷ Here enemies are well balanced and have to settle down to a long period of trench warfare - What Gramsci terms as 'The war of position'.

How can the proletariat make itself the ruling power in such social formations? Here Gramsci had no doubts about accepting the innovations made by Lenin. But Gramsci elaborates them further. In this elaboration the role of the intellectuals become crucial. The intellectuals are precisely the functionaries of the hegemonic institutions and values of civil society.⁸ To capture state power the apparatus

⁵ Ibid, p. 184

⁶ Ibid, p. 238

⁷ Ibid, p. 243

⁸ Ibid, p. 12

of hegemony of the bourgeois society has to be captured. This can be done only by developing organic intellectuals of the proletariat to meet this purpose.⁹ They as functionaries of the proletarian ideological hegemony challenge the hegemony of the organic intellectuals of the dominant classes and thereby challenge the ideological apparatuses of the ruling class, manifest in civil society.

Gramsci refuses to accept that a mere conjunctural crisis can precipitate revolutionary situation in the west in which the proletariat by applying the strategy of 'war of manoeuvre' can capture state power. The 'conjunctural crisis' can capture state power. The 'conjunctural crisis' can be brought to an 'organic crisis' only by the strategy of war of position conducted through the instrumentality of the organic intellectuals. The factory councils failed and a revolution did not occur in Italy precisely because of the lack of the organic intellectuals. It is the party, as the collective intellectuals, that has to fulfil this role.

The hegemonic role of the proletariat demands that it forms a 'historic bloc' with other oppressed classes¹⁰. In the concrete conditions of Italy, he identifies the peasantry in Southern Italy as constitution of the largest oppressed class, making it imperative on the part of the proletariat to provide leadership to it and to bring it within its hegemonic bloc.

9 Ibid, pp.10

10 See PN: pp.161

It is by making use of the above mentioned concepts that Gramsci attempts to analyse the reality of fascism. He sees fascism as a 'catastrophic equilibrium'¹¹ between social forces, in a situation in which social forces 'balance each other in such a way that a continuation of the conflict can only terminate in their reciprocal distinction. The ruling classes given the relation between class forces are unable to assert their hegemonic role. At the same time the proletariat is not prepared to rule since it has neither established its hegemony nor possesses the instruments to assert this hegemony. In this situation those particular classes and sections of classes in capitalist society who are dis-satisfied with the dominant classes on the one hand, and unprepared for the hegemony of the proletariat on the other assert themselves politically through the state apparatuses of the capitalist state. It's specific characteristic consists in constituting a mass organisation of the petty bourgeoisie for the first time in history.¹² But it is incapable of overcoming bourgeois relations of production and suppressing bourgeois property relations and operates the bourgeois state apparatuses to subserve the economic interests of the dominant classes. Being deprived of the ideological state apparatuses of the dominant classes and given the 'catastrophic equilibrium' between classes, instead of suppressing class antagonisms it makes them more acute. Therefore, the fascist form of state power, in the longer run is detrimental

 11 See Ibid, pp.219

12 See J.Joll: Gramsci, p.57, London, 1917.

to the interests of the bourgeoisie themselves.

These concepts developed by Gramsci and falling within the sphere of revolutionary politics are extremely useful in critically examining the revolutionary strategies as demonstrated through the experience of Revolutions in both Soviet Union and China and as attempted to be applied by the Euro-communist parties. But then it leads us beyond the scope of this study.

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