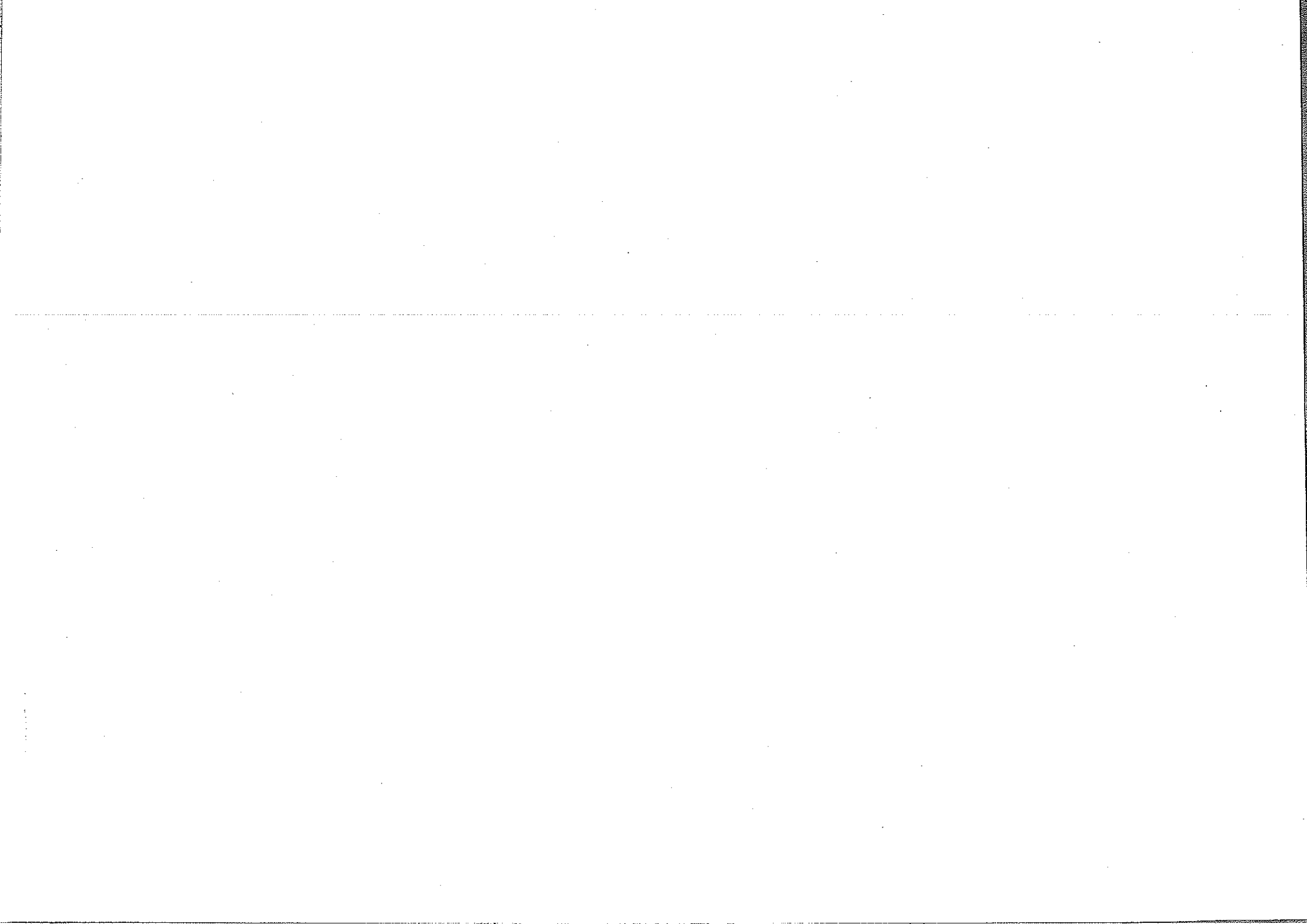


**Philosophical
Problems of
Revolution**

K. VENU

Vijayan Book Stall

1982



K. Venu (b. 1946) joined the revolutionary movement in the late '60s. In 1970 he launched **INQUILAB**, one of the first Marxist-Leninist theoretical journals in Malayalam to uphold the path of Naxalbari peasant uprising. He was arrested in 1970 on false charges and kept in jail till acquittal in 1975. He was arrested again in 1976 and spent three more years in prison till his release in 1979. At present, he is the Secretary of the Central Reorganisation Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).

Philosophical Problems of Revolution

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Though publication of the present edition took more time than expected, grave defects in translation and editing could not be avoided. What prompted us, then, to rush through its publication even in such a shape was the urgency felt for encouraging as wide a discussion as possible of the subjects it deals with.

In the absence of competent translators, translation had to be done by novices in the field who were not even proficient in English. As a result foreign readers may find its language extremely clumsy. Even grammatical errors have crept in profusely. We hope to avoid these defects in future editions for which the help of every reader is earnestly sought.

Preface to the English Edition

The first edition of this book was published in Malayalam in November 1979 and the present English edition has been prepared without any basic alteration.

This work is the result of the need felt by a Marxist-Leninist party cadre to respond actively to the philosophical and theoretical issues recently raised within the international communist movement. And as such, it is mainly addressed to party activists facing these issues and engaged in seeking out solutions. Obviously this has influenced its style which is far removed from the method and style of a philosophical work of academic nature, and I must advise the reader against great expectations.

My quest in two directions have converged in making this book what it is. On the one hand, I had tried much earlier to unravel the basis of mechanism existing in all disciplines focusing on the relationship between freedom and necessity. Analysis of the dialectical relation between necessity and chance and particularly of the controversy among scientists and philosophers based on advances in quantum mechanics and molecular biology had shed some light on existing mechanical views on natural laws which were related to the concepts of necessity. However, I could not make much progress with this analysis alone.

With the breaking out of ideological struggle in the context of capitalist restoration in China, this study gained new content. The theory of productive forces put forward by both the Chinese and the Russian capitalist roaders is

rooted in mechanicism. And as experience teaches us, it was easy for them to cloak this theory in the garb of classical Marxism. Hence, the counter-revolutionary nature of the theory of productive forces in given conditions can be recognised only if one has a correct grasp of the dialectical relation of productive forces and production relations. Since mechanicism has exerted tremendous influence in the history of the international communist movement its roots have to be sought out through deep, historical analysis. Even more necessarily, to smash the all-embracing grip of mechanicism and establish the predominance of dialectics, a correct grasp of the struggle it has waged against mechanicism and of its development, is a must.

Thus this work attempts to unravel the emergence and development of dialectics and expose mechanicism which forms the philosophical basis of revisionism and through it of capitalist restoration. Attacking and refuting mechanical views of necessity have a vital role in this struggle to smash the domination of mechanicism in philosophy. This obviously raises the need of correctly defining the dialectical relationship between necessity and chance, which again leads us to gaining a correct grasp of the relation between necessity and freedom. Thus, this approach helps us to seek out the diverse concrete forms taken on by basic philosophical questions faced by us in our road to communism through consistent struggle against revisionism. The basic philosophical question put forward by the communist movement is that of method, that is, the question of dialectical method. The history of the international communist movement has repeatedly shown us that deviations from this dialectical method have always led to setbacks. Hence, the struggle against revisionism espoused by Khrushchev, Teng and Hoxha is as much a struggle to establish the dialectical method in the realm of philosophy.

So far as the Indian communist movement is concerned one can safely say that its founders had made no effort to lead the movement grasping the dialectical method. The leadership, which generally functioned as an

offshoot of the British Communist Party, proved their worth by blindly following the British leadership in their philosophical and political ventures. Obviously, it could never produce any serious study of Marxist philosophy, but remained content with even more oversimplified and vulgar plagiarisms of the textbook Marxism of British philosophers. Contemporary revisionist theoreticians still follow the same old rut.

Though the movement split in 1964, it soon became evident that this was not prompted by the ideological polemics of the '60s. The ideological struggle led by Charu Mazumdar broke out within the movement after this split, and the armed revolt at Naxalbari was a direct result of this struggle against revisionism, both in theory and in practice. With this the struggle against revisionism deepened. The revolutionaries adhering to the path of Naxalbari, tried to grasp Mao Tsetung's philosophical contributions in order to analyse the concrete conditions of India and formulate a programme. The Naxalbari struggle and the upsurge it led to are concrete indicators of their success. However, the leadership failed to correctly grasp the essence of Mao's dialectical outlook, and this led the struggle against revisionism into left sectarianism. Similarly, though there were efforts to grasp the importance of the Cultural Revolution, here too, it was defective. Thus the movement once again faced setbacks leading to a long spell of stagnation and disintegration.

The setback in China following Mao's death in 1976 found the major section of the adherents of Naxalbari at a loss to correctly analyse the turn of events and join the struggle against neo-revisionism. Their unconditional support for Teng Hsiao-ping reflected the superficiality of their struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism and was striking proof of the fact that they had yet to liberate themselves from the clutches of mechanicism entrenched within the Indian communist movement from the very days of its inception. Only a small minority had taken the pains to gain a deeper grasp and closely follow the lessons of the

Cultural Revolution and the nature of the two-line struggle in China. They were the only ones to take a correct stand against the Tengist neo-revisionists in China and Hoxha's brand of revisionism, upholding the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Of course, it is gratifying to see that more have started taking correct positions within the past two years.

This book was written while I was in jail after being arrested for the second time in 1976 during the period of national emergency. Those were days of lively polemics among party activists, both within and outside the jails, centring on international developments. In 1977, after the revocation of emergency, we were able to overcome the hurdles of censorship and get a number of Marxist-Leninist journals and documents from all over the world, thus livening up our polemics even more. It can rightly be said that the present work took shape through these polemics, especially those in jail. In a sense my role as author is limited, since I certainly could not have ventured this endeavour in the absence of such intense ideological struggles.

Though I could collect and go through a fairly large amount of material, restrictions of prison life had imposed limits on going through all books and documents necessary for preparing such a work. For instance, this made a comprehensive study of diverse philosophical trends within the international communist movement impossible. I could obtain only some of the works of Maurice Cornforth, Gramsci, Althusser and Bettelheim, exponents of some of the more important trends. Hence a deep examination of all the issues they have raised, which is obviously required, is absent in this work, and instead, it gives only glancing references to the trends they represent. Again, though the major portion of this work was completed while I was in jail, it had to be done within brief gaps in between incessant trips for court hearings, and plans to prune out awkward constructions through a thorough editing after my release, never materialised. I had hoped it could be done at the

time of preparing the English edition. Moreover, I had plans to include a number of new issues which have been thrown up by the polemics in the international movement. But being an active member of an underground organisation I found it impossible.

Thus, the present edition comes to you with all these imperfections and limitations. Yet the firm belief that such a work with all its imperfections has an important role to play in the Indian communist movement has prompted speedy publication. The critical reader ought to judge its limitations keeping in mind the fact that it is a maiden venture in so far as the Indian communist movement is concerned.

June 1982

K. VENU

PART I

**Marxian Philosophy
and Revisionism**

The history of the development of Marxian philosophy is a history of the struggle between Marxism and revisionism on the philosophical front. Marxian dialectics, the very founding stone of this philosophy, is fundamentally distinct from Hegelian dialectics, inspite of being inseparably related to it. Dialectical materialism emerged in the course of its struggle against idealism and mechanical materialism, the two faces of bourgeois ideology. It was, again, through another relentless struggle against revisionist philosophy that first Lenin and later Mao-Tsetung could nurture and develop dialectical materialism. The first part of this book is an attempt at tracing the history of this incessant struggle that went into the making of dialectical materialism, the world outlook of the proletariat.

Chapter 1

Freedom and Revolution

Freedom and revolution have always existed as complementary riddles in human history. Every honest search for freedom has ultimately led to revolution or some sort of revolutionary changes. Conversely, every move towards revolution has elevated freedom to higher levels. Where there is revolution, freedom ceases to be a mirage; it becomes realisable in actual life. Where there is an honest pursuit of freedom, revolution ceases to be an idle dream; there it is the very marrow of life itself. However, the relation between freedom and revolution does not lend easily to such simple definitions. We are face to face with a host of philosophical questions the moment we attempt at an investigation into the minute details of these relations.

In the present world situation, characterised by the restoration of capitalism, first, in the Soviet Union and later, in China, these philosophical problems do not remain mere theoretical issues; but are related to practical questions of immediate significance. Against this background of a general setback suffered by the international communist movement, an ideological struggle of unprecedented magnitude is taking place. This struggle involves not only issues of urgent political importance, but also a close examination of the very basic ideological tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

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As a concept, communism is as old as man himself, it being reflection of his social consciousness. But it was

left to Marx and Engels to transform communism from a romantic yearning to a practically realisable goal. However, Marx and Engels, in their lifetime, did not have to confront the concrete problems of transition to communism posed by a victorious proletarian revolution. Naturally, they did not make any categorical assertions on the subject, but only offered a number of valuable guidelines for probing deep into such fundamental issues the future generations were to face. Intense efforts to resolve the concrete problems of socialism, the period of transition to communism, were, no doubt, made in the Soviet Union, East Europe and China. All these efforts have temporarily failed, throwing up serious challenges and posing many important questions which remain to be taken up and answered by the international communist movement.

Leaders of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere claim they are advancing towards socialism and communism. The new bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union quote Marx, Engels and Lenin to claim they are practising communism. They do so even as they preside over a more formidable fascist set up than the imperialist states including the American imperialism. To buttress their claims of having laid the material basis for communism, the Soviet social imperialists tell us that development of productive forces in the Soviet Union today match that of the imperialist powers. For them the determining factor in the transition to communism is the development of productive forces. How far have the productive forces developed in the Soviet Union is itself a moot question. But what is more significant is the audacity of the claim made on the strength of this theory of productive forces that the stifling air of fascist terror that pervade Soviet society is the very acme of communist freedom.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM

Revisionist philosophers in the Soviet Union and elsewhere are trying to preserve this theory of productive forces

by dressing it up in a philosophical garb. They quote Marx, Lenin and others for this purpose. Making use of the basic tenet that, in general, the development of productive forces play the determining role in social development, these revisionist philosophers try to propound that the development of productive forces and the advance towards communism are one and the same. In support of their argument they bring in Marx from the final section of the 3rd Volume of *Capital*: "In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane consideration ceases; thus in the very nature of things, it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must be so in all social formations and all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regularising their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite."¹

Here is an excellent exposition of the dialectical relation between necessity and freedom. Man, like every other phenomenon, exists and grows only subject to the necessary laws of nature. He can never completely liberate himself from this realm of necessity. According to Marx,

1. K. Marx, 'Capital', Vol. 3, Moscow 1977, p. 820.

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only by basing himself on the realm of necessity can man hope to enter the realm of freedom which lay beyond. Marx visualised that such a realm would blossom forth under communism. Marx points out that the realm of necessity wherein the laws of development of productive forces lead to a shortening of the working day was an essential precondition to the blossoming of this realm of freedom. But this does not mean that man can realise freedom if he confines himself to the realm of necessity alone. Only when man transcends this realm of necessity can he hope to enjoy true freedom. Failure to understand this dialectical relation between the realms of necessity and freedom would seriously hamper the progress of revolution.

Marx's statement, that the shortening of the working day is a prerequisite for entering the realm of freedom, is one-sidedly interpreted by the revisionists to mean that mere emphasis on the development of productive forces would by itself lead to the realization of freedom. Maurice Cornforth, a leading revisionist theoretician, says: "The invention of technological means and the subduing of natural forces for human ends provides the basis and the greater the technological proficiency of men the greater the scope of the freedom attainable by individuals...Although upto the present modern industry has tied people to machines, it is by its productivity the agency of freedom. Its fullest development and use provides for fullest individual freedom."² Here Cornforth is trying to suggest that development of technology and man's march towards freedom are one and the same, thereby preparing the theoretical ground to reinforce the argument that the determining factor in the transition to communism is nothing but the development of technology and productive forces.

This approach is contrary to Marx's concept of freedom. Marx had stated clearly that man's increasing wants and corresponding growth in productive forces

belong to the realm of necessity. Thus to claim that freedom could be realized through development of productive forces which is situated in the realm of necessity is to go against Marx. Basic transformations have to be accomplished in the relations of production, superstructure and the sphere of ideas—based, of course, on the development of productive forces—before we can reach beyond the realm of necessity and realize "that development of human energy which is an end in itself." Revisionists by one-sidedly emphasising the realm of necessity based on the development of productive forces, ignore this very decisive factor in the transition to communism.

What we see here is not merely a philosophical error. It was this philosophy that worked behind the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. Revisionists first engender the illusion that technological development and increased production constitute the royal road to communism. Then comes the argument that it is right to accept any method to develop technology and increase production. Incessant changes in relations of production and uninterrupted revolution in the superstructure that have to be carried out are ignored under the cover of this slogan of increasing production. Consequently, it is not long before economic laws of capitalism comes into operation in the name of increasing production. In the absence of any ideological struggles in the political field, these laws soon dominate the stage. The inevitable result is the replacement of the prevailing socialist mode of production by capitalist mode of production. Moreover, the return to capitalism is followed by the foisting on of a fascist rule atop this mode of capitalist production. This was what happened in the Soviet Union. The revolutionary advance of the Soviet people, inspired by the loftiest dreams of freedom, thus, ended up in a more severe bondage. Today the happenings in China tell the same story. What these experiences make abundantly clear is that mistaken philosophical concepts of freedom and communism have played a crucial role in reversing revolution.

2. Maurice Cornforth, 'Marxism and Linguistic Philosophy,' London, 1967, pp 346-47.

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process of transforming necessity, in turn comes to be inseparably linked to revolution. Thus freedom and revolution always emerge as eternal companions. In the complex course of their relation are located several questions which demand a closer examination.

Chapter 2

The Philosophical Divide

In its tortuous history of more than a century, the international communist movement has also gone through many divisions and deviations. Behind the political storms and ideological conflicts, that rocked the movement, were strong philosophical undercurrents. Against the background of these philosophical undercurrents we are able to clearly observe that what surfaced outside as apparently different and contradictory political tendencies had, in fact, a common philosophical basis. This would also enable us, in turn, to better understand the real meaning of the present ideological struggle in the international communist movement and distinguish the true essence of the Marxist world outlook and uphold its vitality even in the midst of today's muddled political alignments.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CAPITALISM

Mechanical materialism and idealism were the two philosophical trends that dominated the first half of the 19th century western world. They were both products of capitalist social formation. The industrial revolution in its triumphant march smashing the feudal mode of production made modern science omnipotent and the belief in the inevitability of scientific laws gave mechanical materialism the force of a powerful philosophy. The thinking, that the past, the present and the future of all phenomena in the

universe could be correctly determined by applying the Newtonian laws of motion, serves as the foundation for the mechanical materialist theory. Almost parallel to this, ground was being laid for idealism by the individualist thinking that was engendered by the new capitalist relations of production. The thinking, that it is isolated individuals and not collective social practice that determines the course of history, is the basis for idealism. The argument that man's existence is determined by his consciousness is as old as the separation of manual and mental labour which took place in antiquity, but it gained the strength of a cohesive theory only with the advent of the capitalist social system. Mechanical materialism and idealism might give one the impression that they are contradictory theories but in fact they are two different faces of a single social class: the bourgeoisie. They have in reality a complementary existence.

Marxist world outlook, dialectical materialism, emerged struggling against both these theories right in their heydays. By establishing that "it is not the consciousness of men that determine their existence but their social existence that determine their consciousness"¹ Marx exploded the basis of idealism. And by proving that continuous and onward historical development on the basis of the law of unity and struggle of opposites was the fundamental character of nature and human society, Marx also demolished the mechanical materialists' claim that all that took place in nature was mechanical repetition of various phenomena on a predetermined course. The Marxist world outlook was thus shaped by Marx and Engels in their uncompromising struggle against mechanical materialism and idealism, represented by Feuerbach and Hegel respectively.

1. K. Marx, 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,' Moscow, 1970, P. 21.

MARXIST WORLD OUTLOOK

One of the most distinctive features of Marxist world outlook is that it never presents a foreclosed picture of the world. It proclaims infinite possibilities of evolution for the eternally changing world. Marxist world outlook points out that the picture of the world that man is able to conceive at any given historical age could only be a relative one, conforming to the fundamental characteristics of that period. Marxism itself is no exception to this principle. It bears the birth marks of its historical age. It is also relative in character. The world outlook that Marx and Engels presented had all the limitations and incompleteness of the historical age in which they lived. But this world outlook has another characteristic too. By refusing to present a static and perfect picture of the world, it is able to grow and advance along with history. Because it sets forth the historical laws of the world's development, Marxism is bound to develop itself with the development of history. This is the reason why Marxism has not degenerated into a dogma like every other philosophy and is able to advance as the guide to world history which is constantly developing.

The defeat suffered by mechanical materialism and idealism at the hands of Marxism however did not mark their extinction, because, the common source of the two theories, viz., the bourgeoisie, had not disappeared. Marxism emerged as the world outlook of the proletariat only when it recognised its historical position and task and thus became a class-for-itself.

The bourgeoisie does not cease to exist simply because the working class has asserted its existence. Only through a fierce struggle lasting for a long historical period can the working class destroy the bourgeoisie and eventually cease itself as a class. During this entire period, an uncompromising struggle between the Marxist world outlook and the bourgeois world outlook is inevitable. This struggle is more than a century old now. In the

course of this struggle there have been efforts under the influence of mechanical materialism and idealism to distort in different ways the Marxist world outlook. And on many occasions deviations did take place. But what we have before us today is the history of Marxism surviving these attempts at distortion and deviation and every kind of opposition, and triumphantly marching ahead.

The infallibility gained by science in the 18th and the 19th centuries had its influence on every current of thought of that period. Marxism was also not free from this influence. One characteristic which distinguished Marxism from all other sciences, was its capacity to tame science itself. It established that every science existed in relation to its respective historical epoch and it had an existence corresponding to that epoch. There was no science which could be described as impartial and eternal, Marxism asserted. If science were to faithfully reconstruct the dialectical movement of Nature it should have a dialectical outlook. Any science which does not come within the framework of such an outlook only presents a mechanical view. It fails to discharge its responsibilities as science. Engels has drawn the pathetic picture of 19th century science: "But the materialists who have learned to think dialectically are few and far between and this conflict of the results of discovery with preconceived modes of thinking explained the endless confusions now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike."² This shows that the founders of the Marxist world outlook did not harbour any illusion about science or scientists of the 19th century. But after the time of Marx and Engels, concerted attempts were made in the name of science to reduce Marxism into mechanical materialism. The revisionists who had managed to get into the leadership of the Second International in the last part of the 19th

2. F. Engels, 'Anti-Duhring', Moscow, 1975, p. 31

and early 20th centuries, adopted the mechanical viewpoint as the philosophical basis of their revisionism. Under the cover of the infallibility of science, the revisionist leaders Bernstein and Kautsky tried to enshrine mechanical materialism in the place of dialectical materialism. They even tried to debase Darwin's theory of evolution, which was upheld by Marx as an ideal model of dialectical outlook, into an example of mechanical determinism. For a short while these revisionists even succeeded in forcing the working class to carry around as its own the bourgeois world outlook. Coming, as it did, from the revisionist leaders of the West, who felt no qualms about surrendering a growing working class movement at the feet of monopoly capital, this should not surprise us.

Lenin leading the Bolshevik party in an uncompromising and successful struggle against the theory and practice of the above revisionists regained the vitality of Marxism and upheld its essence. Lenin's works like *What Is To Be Done* struck mortal blows against idealism and mechanical materialism in the theoretical field. The crisis in science at the beginning of the 20th century, served as a cover for idealism and mechanical materialism to come together and launch a crusade against the Marxist world outlook. But Lenin exposed the attempts of Ernst Mach and others to strengthen the base of idealism by exaggerating the crisis that science faced.³ He also delivered heavy blows against the mechanical outlook, which the revisionists had smuggled into Marxism, correctly evaluating Hegel's contribution to the development of Marxism and by stressing the crucial role of the science of dialectics.⁴ Lenin could correctly evaluate imperialism in the conditions of First World War and could raise Marxism to a new stage mainly because he was

3. See V. I. Lenin, 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism'.

4. See V. I. Lenin, 'Philosophical Note Books' 'Collected Works', Vol. 38.

able to re-establish correct dialectical outlook at the theoretical level. Utilising fully the vitality of the dialectical outlook in every sense, Lenin made Marxism in effect the philosophy of practice.

Lenin could perceive and apply Marxism as the comprehensive world outlook as formulated by Marx and Engels. He recognised the fact that it was against the background of the general outlook on the universe that Marxism could comprehend human history and formulate the programme for bringing about its transformation. He was not interested in wasteful hair-splitting exercises over matters like the so-called differences that supposedly exist between the approaches of Marx and Engels.

For a time the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Stalin was successful in following the tradition set by Lenin, but gradually many of the essential aspects of the dialectical outlook practised by Lenin came to be lost and mechanical materialism managed to occupy their place. Consequently, the bureaucratic tendencies and other manifestations of mechanical outlook created fertile soil for the growth of revisionism. Only Stalin's unflinching political opposition to the bourgeoisie and capitalist roaders prevented revisionism from raising its head. But there is no doubt that capitalist roaders did exist in the Soviet Union as a powerful force during Stalin's time itself. Otherwise it would have been impossible for the capitalist roaders to capture, as they did, the entire leadership of the movement so soon after the death of Stalin.

The deviation in the international communist movement after Stalin was not an accident. Though Stalin took overtly revolutionary political positions, he committed serious philosophical deviations. And even his political positions could not remain totally free from the influence of these deviations. Later Mao Tsetung was to evaluate Stalin's deviation: "Stalin had a fair amount

of metaphysics in him and he taught many people to follow metaphysics."⁵

Mao is criticising here Stalin's inability to correctly grasp the essence and importance of the dialectical world outlook.

Citing examples, Mao points out that the principle of the unity and struggle of opposites often escaped Stalin.

Mechanical materialism which was already in existence during Stalin's time, later came to dominate the stage in the Soviet Union, and with the arrival of Khrushchev, no facet of life in the country was free from the sway of mechanical materialism.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND NEW PROBLEMS

Parallel to these unhealthy developments in the Soviet Union, Marxism was also registering development in the correct direction. The two works of Mao Tsetung published in 1937, *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, were important landmarks in this development. In these articles Mao adopted the dialectical method, struggling against mechanical materialism on the one side and on the other ensuring that this struggle did not fall into idealism. The first article analyses the dialectical relation between theory and practice, while the second one discusses in detail the dialectical law of the unity and struggle of opposites. In the years that followed, Marxist-Leninists the world over made use of these works to defeat mechanical materialism and to uphold dialectical materialism. Today these articles by Mao have relevance more than ever before.

Making a departure from the Hegelian method of drawing a simplified picture of the principle of the unity and struggle of opposites, Mao Tsetung defined the Marxist position which recognised innumerable contradictions at work in complex processes with one of these

5. Mao Tsetung, 'Selected Works' Vol. V, Peking, p. 367.

contradictions playing the principal role. Besides, Mao pointed out that in any given stage, one of the two aspects of a contradiction would be the principal aspect, which determines the character of that stage. Mao also explained the process of the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction transforming themselves into each other. He showed further how contradictions develop from non-antagonistic to antagonistic state. Thus Mao scored significant successes in giving a definite form to the laws of dialectics. The two articles by Mao were not mere theoretical works. They contain principles which were repeatedly tested and confirmed in the diverse spheres of the Chinese revolution. These articles are a storehouse of lessons Mao learnt from complex experiences of the Chinese revolution, from every sphere of revolution, be it building up of the party, inner party struggle, war, or mass struggles.

The Chinese Communist Party could oppose from the very beginning Khrushchev's revisionism and also correctly evaluate Stalin's deviations because the party under Mao had grasped and practised in every field the world outlook of dialectical materialism. More over, the CPC was able to understand and analyse the process of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union which had no historical precedents. In the light of these experiences, Mao correctly put forward the need for continuing class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat and also evolved a new method for it—the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The theory and practice of continuing the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat is today an important milestone in the forward march of the international communist movement.

It was in the course of his struggle against revisionists and dogmatists who had existed in China from the early days of the revolution, that Mao formulated these correct positions regarding dialectics. Even in the midst of fierce class struggle during the great proletarian cultural revolution, the struggle waged against mechanical materialism

and idealism by dialectical materialism did not receive any respite. Instead, it assumed the form of the struggle between socialist and capitalist roaders. Mao Tsetung had asserted that this struggle might have to be continued for a long period and that the possibility of the capitalist roaders gaining temporary successes during this period could not be ruled out. And that was what exactly happened. Utilizing the circumstances following Mao's death, the capitalist roaders captured power in China. The new leadership there is, no doubt, continuing to mouth empty rhetoric about dialectical materialism but practising mechanical materialism and idealism. The revisionists in China are putting into practice their theories much faster than their Soviet counterparts Khrushchev and company. This does not mean that class struggle is over in China. The socialist roaders who have suffered a temporary set back are continuing their struggle.

The present crisis in the international communist movement is made more complex by another tendency which has surfaced recently. The Albanian communist party under Enver Hoxa which had fought Khrushchev's revisionism along with Mao Tsetung and the CPC has today emerged on the scene as opponents of Mao Tsetung and his thought. It is clear now that what had earlier existed between the two parties was only a superficial unity on political issues and the Albanians were in no agreement with the dialectical positions of Mao on basic theoretical issues. It is in the name of Stalin that the Albanians have unleashed their struggle against Mao, but in their approach they are more mechanical than Stalin at his worst. They oppose the two line struggle inside the party. Two line struggle had existed at the time of Lenin and Stalin, and Mao Tsetung had only given it a correct definition. The Albanian stand that inside the party there is only one line is contrary to the dialectical outlook. The Albanian approach to other basic issues are equally mechanical. Though they are using Stalin's name as a cover to propagate their international line, the approach to various

issues is Trotskyist, a tendency Stalin himself had fought and defeated.

The Albanians proclaim in public that they are struggling against every variety of revisionism. But with mechanical materialism having come to serve as the philosophical basis for their approach to issues, the Albanian leadership has degenerated themselves into another variety of revisionists.

In short, Soviet model revisionism, Eurocommunism, the revisionism of the new CPC leadership and Albanian opportunism are all rooted in the same philosophical foundation of mechanical materialism although outwardly these tendencies might appear like so many different things. The international communist movement can advance only by struggling against all these forms of revisionism. The only path that we have before us in this struggle is the one shown by Mao Tsetung Thought. However, it would be wrong to imagine that all the issues before us would be resolved overnight. Mao Tsetung Thought is only a guide to us in today's complex circumstances and can only set us on the right course.

To go ahead on this course, opening up new paths which remain uncleared, is a responsibility which Marxist Leninists all over the world have to take up today. It is with such a view that the following chapters take a look at the philosophical basis of Marxist world outlook—a foundation laid by Marx and Engels and developed by Lenin and Mao Tsetung through their original contributions—and the problems it presents.

Chapter 3

Hegel and Marxism

THE QUESTION OF METHODOLOGY

An investigation into the history of development of the world communist movement warrants definitive criteria for evaluating the works and theories of the founder leaders and other authoritative spokesmen of the movement. Can it be said that all the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao and every one of the ideas set forth in those works retain the same relevance today as always? How are we to determine which all ideas are to be accepted and which all to be discarded? Without finding a correct solution to this problem, we shall not be able to make any headway in our investigation.

It has never been the case that every word of those who formulated historically important theories and made revolutionary discoveries, become historically important. Even as the scientific world has increasingly come to recognise today the veracity of vital discoveries of men like Darwin and Einstein, history has thrown overboard as irrelevant a great number of their ideas. But, in the case of the exponents of Marxism the problem is a little different. Unlike the scientists who arrive at theories related to the limited field of their research, Marxism propounds a comprehensive world view. So it demands greater cohesion and interconnection. Yet it would be wrong to take all their ideas as complete and flawless.

Only a theory that identifies itself with its own historical period can successfully survive the rigorous tests of history, while innumerable theories and ideas developed in response to countless temporary phenomena and trends of particular historical epoch turn irrelevant with time. Although the basic Marxist doctrines have survived the tests of history and emerged today more powerful and enriched, a number of theories and conclusions drawn by Marx and Engels had only contemporary relevance. Marxism emerged in the era when capitalism was in the stage of 'free competition'. The growth of capitalism into imperialism could not be envisaged in the first stage itself. So the conclusions of the founder leaders that revolutions would first take place in the European countries, especially where capitalism was most developed, turned out to be misplaced. Several assessments and inferences drawn by Engels on problems in the realm of science have today become irrelevant or even patently absurd. The above fact applies not only to the founder leaders but also to Lenin, Stalin and Mao. In its totality a whole lot of their conclusions and evaluations drawn up on the basis of contemporary situations and events may even seem contradictory. The technique of divorcing such statements from their context and quoting them in isolation as if they were authoritative theses will not help us in the least in resolving the problems we face. Our task is to distinguish such theories and ideas which have outlived their respective historical periods.

HEGELIAN DIALECTICS: A BACKGROUND

There have been efforts to discover the principles governing human thought in the course of the development of philosophy. Ancient Greek thinkers, especially Aristotle, sought to give shape to a science of thinking or logic. However, its goal remained rather limited and its field too narrow. It confined itself to the spheres of grammar and

rhetoric. Though the Greek philosophers had also formulated certain rudiments of dialectics, it did not register any vigorous development. During the fairly long medieval age that followed the Greek civilization, Aristotelian logic was on the decline and was converted into a mere device for verbal debates. This 'logic' instead of helping to invigorate thought and formulate broader conceptions of the Universe, in fact, stunted the growth of thought.

The Renaissance in Europe, which coincided with the birth of capitalism, had its impact on philosophy. Certain attempts at reforming Aristotelian logic were carried out. But it hardly developed beyond a set of rules for proper usage of words and signs; so formal logic with its growth thus stunted could not really develop into a science of thinking. On the other hand with the growth of bourgeois philosophy a coherent science of logic became indispensable. Innumerable problems of science and philosophy gave rise to great complexities. The traditional logic, however, could not be helpful in unravelling these problems.

Among those who deeply felt the need for a genuine logic and who took certain decisive steps in that direction, Immanuel Kant of Germany was the most outstanding. In the field of the theory of knowledge, Kant was an idealist, in the sense that he regarded the external world as an unknowable *thing-in-itself*. Yet he was able to understand how the method of the old, formal logic had become untenable. The traditional logic used to approach ideas only from an analytical angle. But Kant found that new ideas are born through the process of a synthesis of diverse ideas, and that logic—the Science of thinking—ought, in fact, to be made to serve the study of this process. Besides he found that the chief subject matter of logic was categories related to objects and phenomena in the external world. With this, the narrow range of the formal logic gave way and all the vast fields of the universe came within the purview of logic.¹

1. E. V. Ilyenkov, 'Dialectical Logic,' Moscow, 1977.

While it was a big step forward to have made categories of the objective world the subject matter of logic, Kant's attempts to confine these categories within the framework of the traditional logic only helped to add to the complexities. The two basic laws of formal logic are the Law of Identity and the Principle of Contradiction. The Law of Identity enjoins that an object is always itself and can never become another. The Principle of Contradiction teaches that two mutually contradictory things can never coexist and that one of them should be rejected. But these laws created unresolvable problems when they were employed in the study of categories. The method of the formal logic was totally inadequate in understanding categories which were full of unresolvable contradictions like, finite and infinite, cause and effect, necessity and chance, etc. What Kant did was to try and establish such contradictions as unresolvable. He called them Antinomies.

Even though Kant's logic was thus caught up in the complexity of these contradictions, it is an undeniable fact that Kant had developed the emancipated and narrow Aristotelian formal logic into a qualitatively new stage where it could be really termed the science of thinking. It was with these efforts of Kant that the basic problems of dialectics became the subject matter of logic. True, Kant could not get the right answers to these problems. But certainly he brought those problems to the fore.²

In Kant's view what happens in the realm of ideas is the conflict between irreconcilable contradictions. It is impossible to tell which of the opposite aspects of these contradictions is right and which wrong. Kant landed philosophers in a helpless predicament where objective truth could never be discovered from among contradictory ideas. Several thinkers strove to come out of this quagmire. In the process some of them slipped completely into the mire of idealism. As Lenin pointed out Kant's philosophy had both a materialistic and an idealistic

2. Ibid, p. 112-13.

side.³ Kant comes close to materialism when he says that our ideas correspond to the *thing-in-itself* of the outside world. But, when he asserts that we can never know the thing-in-itself he is an idealist. It is this very fundamental discrepancy of Kant's which is reflected in his ideas on logic.

HEGEL'S ACHIEVEMENT

The attempts of Fichte, Schelling and such idealist thinkers to come out of the complex situation wrought by Kant were unsuccessful. It was left to Hegel to take one of the crucial steps in the history of philosophical thought: he liberated the science of thinking from Kantian complexities. On the antinomies presented by Kant as unresolvable contradictions as well as on Kant's suggestions for their solution, Hegel said: "The Kantian solution, namely through the so-called transcendental ideality of the world of perception, has no other result than to make the so-called conflict into something *subjective*, in which of course it remains still the same illusion, that is, is as unresolved as before. Its genuine solution can only be this: two opposed determinations which belong necessarily to one and the same Notion cannot be valid each on its own in its one-sidedness; on the contrary, they are true only as sublated, only in the unity of this Notion.

"The Kantian antinomies on closer inspection contain nothing more than quite simple categorical assertion of *each* of the two opposed moments of a determination, each being taken on its own in isolation from the other..."⁴

Categories are formed when processes actually occurring in nature get reflected in man's thought and are generalized as universal principles. But Kant, who had discovered that such categories represented unresolvable

3. V.I Lenin, 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,' Moscow, 1970, p. 185.

4. Hegel, 'Science of Logic,' Tr. A. V. Miller, p. 191-2

contradictions, had left them as such, saying they were characteristic of the transcendental world. The reason why he fell into such an impasse was that he could not break out of the framework of the old logic, although he had grasped the fact that that framework was insufficient. But Hegel on the other hand cast aside this old framework of logic and built in its place a totally new edifice fully deserving the name of "science of thinking." The study of the categories started by Kant became the main subject matter of this science of thinking.

The subject matter of the traditional logic was in the main words and signs. It had carried on under the assumption that the thought-process was manifested only through words and signs. The subject matter of Hegel's logic also is thought itself. But it is not through words and signs alone that man's thought becomes manifest. In every one of man's actions his thinking is reflected man's battles with nature and the products of these battles are forms of reflections of man's thought. Hence, all things related to man's historical development including nature with which he is in constant contact are in fact objects of his thought. In short, the whole of nature which is reflected through man's thought can not but be the subject of any science connected with the thought process. So the sphere of the science of thinking breaks out of the narrow bound of words and signs, and encompasses the processes of nature in its entirety. Categories resulting from the encounter between man and nature are not products of subjective thought; they are products of the universal ideas generated by social practice and exchange of ideas.

The matter does not end here. The subject matter of the science of thinking is not merely the outward forms of thought; it encompasses content also. Of this standpoint of Hegel, which gives entire new dimensions to the science of thinking, Lenin wrote: "contemplative thought" should include content as well as the "external form."

"With this introduction of content into logical consideration, the subject becomes not things, but the essence, the concept of things [not things, but laws of their movement, materialistically.]"⁵

Thus the form and content of science of thinking acquire new dimensions, in the process preparing the ground for resolving Kantian antinomies. For, these contradictions now no longer reside in the transcendental realm, as Kant holds, but fall within the ambit of human thought. These contradictions which show up in the realm of thought exist in the objective world; and hence are real. They can not be wished away. To safeguard its arbitrary and narrow laws, formal logic ignored the realities of the objective world. This was the reason for formal logic becoming stunted. Having recognized the external world as the subject of science of thinking, Hegel could hardly ignore objective realities. The contradictions pointed out by Kant really exist in the objective world; but these can not be studied using the law of identity and the principle of contradiction of the formal logic. That was why Kant was helpless. Of course there are limited domains even now in which the laws of formal logic operate. They are indispensable for constructing rational chains of thought. But these laws have absolutely no place when it comes to handling complex processes of nature and of history. Here the new logic and its new laws must take the floor.

The laws of the new logic are those which conform to the laws of transformation of nature and history. According to the principle of contradiction of the formal logic two contradictory aspects can never coexist. But such contradictions do exist everywhere in the objective world. Hence, what we need is to discover how the contradictions of the objective world operate. Such an investigation will reveal that the contradictions discovered by Kant are in no way unnatural and that the existence of

5. V. I. Lenin 'Philosophical Note Books' Collected Works 38 p. 94

such contradictions is the basic law of nature. The opposites in every contradiction are interdependent; one cannot exist in isolation from the other. It is the unity and struggle of these opposites which is the basis of change and development of all processes in nature. Kant isolated such opposites from each other and examined them one-sidedly. Therefore the very existence of contradictions appeared to him as unresolvable discrepancies. Hegel established that in each and every process of nature contradictions exist and that the unity and struggle of these opposites of contradictions is the basic character of nature. This law operates alike in nature and human history as well as in the realm of human thought. And this law is the corner-stone of the Hegelian dialectics. Also, this is the basic law of logic that Hegel propounded. That is, in Hegel's hands logic and dialectics converged into a single entity.

When we are able to grasp this dialectical point of view, we are also able to see the world in a wholly new perspective. According to this new viewpoint, the world is not a complex of static *objects*, on the contrary it is a complex of *processes* subject to continuous change. Nothing is eternal there. Everything comes into being, develops and perishes. Nature is an unending stream of ceaseless transformations. Once we recognize this, the quest for ultimate truths and solutions come to a permanent halt. We are able to comprehend that the knowledge acquired by man, however vast it might be, is inevitably limited and relative. We realize that any knowledge must have been shaped by particular circumstances and that it will undergo change with the change in circumstances. Elaborating on the character of this new perspective offered by Hegel's dialectics Engels said: "On the other hand, one no longer permits oneself to be imposed upon by the antithesis, insuperable for the still common old metaphysics, between true and false, good and bad, identical and different, necessary and accidental. One knows that these antitheses have only a relative validity;

that that which is recognised now as true has also its latent false side which will later manifest itself, just as that which is now regarded as false has also its true side by virtue of which it could previously be regarded as true. One knows that what is maintained to be necessary is composed of sheer accidents and that the so-called accidental is the form behind which necessity hides itself—and so on."⁶

HEGEL'S IDEALISM

Till now we have been talking about the revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy. This philosophy also has an extremely pernicious reactionary side. It was on the foundation of idealism that Hegel erected the entire edifice of his dialectics. As mentioned earlier Hegel included the processes of the external world in the study of logic since they were the objects of thought. But along with it he took a big step backward. Thought, for him, is not the reflection of the external world; on the contrary, the external world is the reflection of thought. He could not conceive "thought" as the thought of human beings with a material existence. Instead he posited the Absolute Idea at the apex of everything else, and maintained that nature, history, human thought and everything else evolved from it. And it was to elucidate the evolution of the Absolute Idea that Hegel made use of his dialectics.

Hegel became an objectivist by recognising the existence of the external world. Yet by subjugating the external world itself to the Absolute Idea, he had in fact laid the basis for an idealism far surpassing that objectivity. That is why he is called an objective idealist. He has to be seen apart from absolute subjective idealists, who do not recognise the existence of an objective world at all.

6. F. Engels, 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy', Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 363.

Here is manifested the contradiction between Hegel's philosophical system and his method. Hegel's philosophical system attempts to establish firmly the Absolute Idea and absolute truth. All attempts at reaching ultimate truths end up in conservatism and reaction. Hegel's attempt too ended up exactly there. His attempt to establish the hegemony of the Absolute Idea through his philosophical system finally led him to justify and protect the reactionary regime of the day. But the dialectical method he developed was one that smashes all such absolute ideas and ultimate truths. One who accepts the dialectical method can never recognise as eternal any reactionary system. Yet this manifest contradiction between Hegel's philosophical system and his dialectical method existed throughout. Regarding this contradiction, Engels said: "In this way, however, the whole dogmatic content of the Hegelian system is declared to be absolute truth, in contradiction to his dialectical method, which dissolves all dogmatism."⁷

Feuerbach played an important role in opposing Hegel's idealism. But the greatest weakness of Feuerbach was that he could not grasp at all the dialectical method. For that very reason he could not adopt a historical approach. Feuerbach continued to be under the grip of the old mechanical materialism which held sway in the 18th and the 19th centuries. Hence he failed either to apprehend and uphold the good in Hegelian methodology or to make a proper exposure of Hegelian idealism.

It is in this historical context that Marx and Engels took up the task of opposing and defeating the reactionary side of Hegelian philosophy and carrying forward its revolutionary side. Engels wrote: "Hegel was not simply put aside. On the contrary, one started out from his revolutionary side, described above, from the dialectical method. But in its Hegelian form this method was unusable. According to Hegel, dialectics is the self-development of the concept... This ideological perversion had to be done

7. Ibid, p. 340.

away with. We comprehended the concepts in our heads once more materialistically—as images [*Abbilder*] of real things instead of regarding the real things as images of this or that stage of the absolute concept... Thereby the dialectic of concepts itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world and thus the dialectic of Hegel was placed up on its head; or rather turned off its head, on which it was standing, and placed upon its feet."⁸

8. Ibid, pp. 361-62.

Chapter 4

Marxian Dialectics

Attempts to shackle the Marxist world outlook within the narrow confines of textbooks is an old business. It is still with us through innumerable textbooks on Marxism in various languages. The producers of these textbooks set out to codify the laws of dialectical materialism by quoting Engels where he singled out Hegel's three laws of dialectics (unity and struggle of opposites, leap from quantity to quality, and the negation of negation). To this is added on the materialist principle that matter in perpetual motion is the basis of the universe. The 'Marxist' textbooks, published in the Soviet Union and other revisionist countries and those authored by revisionist philosophers like Maurice Cornforth, all follow the same pattern. Such attempts to simplify and contain the Marxist world outlook within a mechanical framework had helped to prepare the ground for the dominance of revisionism.

Lenin and Mao who strove hard to enrich and develop the Marxist world outlook through their unique contributions never tried to present the laws of dialectics in textbook style. Hegel had codified all the problems relating to his dialectics in *Science of Logic*. But we do not have before us any such work on Marxian dialectics. Marx had thought of writing a book codifying dialectics, but it did not materialise. So Lenin said: "If Marx did not leave behind him a "Logic" (with a capital letter) he did leave the *logic of Capital*, and this ought to be utilized to the full in this question. In *Capital* Marx applied to a single

science logic, dialectics and the theory of knowledge of materialism [three words are not needed: it is one and the same thing] which has taken everything valuable in Hegel and developed it further."¹ In short, to understand Marxian dialectics one has to find out how Marx applied it in *Capital*. This is no easy task. But, Engels, Lenin and Mao have given us very useful guidelines in this regard.

Lenin has enumerated several points of attention in studying the laws of dialectics. We shall take them up in a later chapter. Here we shall examine his criticism of Plekhanov as well as Engels on not having paid sufficient attention to the question of identity of opposites, which is the kernel of dialectics. Plekhanov and Engels had treated it as the sum total of a set of examples. Lenin did exonerate Engels by stating that he did this in the "interests of popularisation."² But this is no excuse for the present day 'Marxist' textbook writers who refuse to be corrected by Lenin's observations and are repeating the shortcomings of Engels and Plekhanov in a more vulgarised fashion. At present it is not a matter of any temporary oversight nor inability in perception, but is an anti-Marxist trend which has to be fought and defeated.

It shows how dangerous it is in our days to present Marxian dialectics in textbook fashion. We have to discover through a thorough investigation the characteristics of Marxian dialectics, especially those which differentiate it from Hegelian dialectics. Only then can we arrive at correct positions in the current international ideological struggle and defeat the erroneous trends.

HEGEL STANDING ON HIS HEAD

Marx himself has explained the difference between his dialectics and that of Hegel. He said: "My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its

1. V. I. Lenin 'Philosophical Notebooks' Collected Works, 38, p. 319.

2. Ibid, p. 359.

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direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, *i.e.*, the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea", he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea". With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought...The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell."³

Though this is a very lucid explanation giving no room for doubt, thinkers like Louis Althusser have stirred up a noisy controversy on this question. They contend that Hegelian dialectics standing on its head would not become Marxian dialectics by being simply put back on its feet and that Marx's statement is only metaphorical. By mere inversion a thing does not undergo any basic structural change; so we would be forced to infer that the dialectical method of Marx and Hegel are identical once the idealist basis of the latter is removed. This, Althusser says, is not the fact. His attempt is to establish that Marx's dialectical method is fundamentally different from Hegel's. He also questions Engel's characterisation of Hegel's philosophical system as idealistic and his dialectical method as revolutionary. In short, in the opinion of people like Althusser, the Marxist world outlook is fundamentally different from Hegel's dialectics and the essence of Marxist world outlook can be grasped only by completely rejecting all Hegelian influences.⁴

As Marx himself said his dialectics is not only different from, but also opposite to, Hegelian dialectics. It is clear that Marx is not talking of turning upside down in a mere

mechanical sense. But revisionist thinkers in general hold the view that if Hegelian dialectics is mechanically turned upside down it would become Marxian dialectics. That is why they as such incorporate all the laws of Hegelian dialectics into Marxian dialectics. They ignore the metamorphosis these laws had undergone in Marxian dialectics.

On the otherhand, it is not true, as Althusser and others are at pains to establish, that Marxian dialectics is in no way connected to Hegel's. As Marx himself pointed out, however obscure Hegelian dialectics might be, the credit goes to Hegel for having been the first to formulate a comprehensive and rational science of dialectics. Marxian dialectics had evolved not by merely taking out the inner kernel of Hegelian dialectics, but after a thorough rectification. The revisionists totally ignore this process of rectification. Those like Althusser, on the other hand, reject Hegel making rectification irrelevant.

Neither Lenin nor Mao was for a total rejection of Hegelian heritage. Lenin said: "It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital* and especially its first chapter without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's *Logic*. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!"⁵ This may seem to be an overstatement. What Lenin says is that no Marxist, including himself, had correctly understood Marx for half a century till 1914-16 when he took up the study of Hegel's *Logic*. But even his early works testify to his profound grasp of the dialectical method. Still, we can not ignore his stress on the necessity of studying Hegel for understanding Marxian dialectics.

At the same time, Marxism is not confined to a mere rectification of the laws of Hegelian dialectics. It is essentially a philosophy of practice, a fact that puts it on a higher plane than and distinguishes it from Hegelian philosophy as well as mechanical materialism.

3. K. Marx, 'Capital', Vol. 1, Moscow, 1977, p. 29.

4. See L. Althusser, 'For Marx'.

5. V. I. Lenin, 'Philosophical Note books' Collected Works, 3rd p. 180.

THE DIALECTICAL METHOD OF MARX

As Lenin observed, Marx did not write a *Logic* on his dialectical method, we have to discover it in his *Capital* in which he had thoroughly applied it. It is evident in his earlier work *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* published eight years earlier as a prelude to *Capital*.

When Marx and Engels were attempting this critique, the dominant trends were mechanical materialism and Hegel's idealist method. Kant and Hegel had smashed mechanical materialism. But Hegelian method was of no use in its existing form. It is one which comes "to nothingness through nothingness from nothingness," as it itself claims. But one can proceed toward the construction of a new dialectical method only from Hegel's discoveries. Marx and Engels did it after a thoroughgoing critique of the Hegelian method.

Hegel could set forth a historical approach, and show that historical events were not a matter of pure chance. They have an underlying interconnection and history undergoes evolution. But Hegel's basic defect lay in his positing "the Idea" as the starting point for all these things. Of freeing the dialectical method from Hegel's idealist obscurity Engels says: "Marx was and is the only one who could undertake the work of extracting from the Hegelian logic the nucleus containing Hegel's real discoveries in this field, and of establishing the dialectical method, divested of its idealist wrappings, in the simple form in which it becomes the only correct mode of conceptual evolution. The working out of the method which underlies Marx's critique of political economy is, we think, a result hardly less significant than the basic materialist conception."⁶

In an unpublished introduction to the above work, Marx said about the difference between Hegel's method

and his own: "Hegel accordingly conceived the illusory idea that the real world is the result of thinking which causes its own synthesis, its own deepening and its own movement, whereas the method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is simply the way in which thinking assimilates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete mental category."⁷ Marx adopted the latter one. Past thinkers in fields like economics used to start their enquiry from manifest forms such as society, state, population, etc. But, unable to find correct answers, they were forced to examine simple abstract concepts. Marx adopted the correct approach of starting from simple abstractions such as labour, commodity, and value, and arriving at complex systems such as state, society and international market.

In economics, two methods can be adopted, one, the historical, and the other, logical. If we make the examination solely relying on the course of history, more importance will have to be given to the details of historical events at the cost of sacrificing their interrelation and continuity. What is required for solving problems of economics is to find out the links in the chain of seemingly unconnected historical events. For this the logical method, *i.e.*, the method of the science of thinking, is more appropriate. In effect this too is a historical approach. What we do is to avoid the excessive importance given to chance events in history and to discover their inherent connections. The starting point of such an investigation is the starting point of history itself. Then, the next step would be an investigation of the course of history in an abstract and logical form.

The science of economics begins from the most elementary and simple relations in history. The search in this direction led Marx to *commodities* constituting the most elementary relations in economic history. The first commodities were the products first exchanged between individuals, or primitive societies. A product is in itself

6. F. Engels, 'Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', Moscow, 1970, p. 224-26.

7. K. Marx, 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', Moscow, 1970, p. 206.

not a commodity; it is only a thing. It becomes a commodity when it turns into a link, a relation, connecting the producer and the consumer. Therefore, commodity is an abstraction the basis of which is not the product but the *relation* between men exchanging it. So the subject-matter of economics is not things, but, this relation. In short, Marx established that economics is the analysis of the relation between men, between classes. This is the historic discovery Marx made by using the dialectical method.

It was Hegel's discovery of the law of the unity and struggle of opposites that helped Marx to a great degree in this field. In Marx's hands this law of dialectics became a most powerful instrument. Any relation would be a relation between two sides, and it constitutes a contradiction. The characteristic feature of that contradiction is the identity and struggle existing in the relation behind commodity brings out the contradiction between production and consumption, and so on. It does not end there, but takes us to the basic contradiction in social mode of production, the contradiction between productive forces and production relations, in turn, opening up the way for its resolution. It was this dialectical approach that led Marx to a materialistic conception of history.

Instead of adopting as such Hegel's law of the unity and struggle of opposites, Marx got rid of its idealist wrappings. Hegel had looked upon historical events as products of "the Idea" and his law was confined to the sphere of imagination. Therefore, he dealt with the problem in such a simple manner as the unity and struggle of a single pair of opposites. But as soon as Marx began using this law in his investigation of material realities it ceased to be simple. In the real material world any relations, however trivial it may seem to be, is, in fact, extremely complex. In every phenomenon and every process in nature innumerable contradictions are at work.

On the complex character of the concrete concepts under consideration, Marx said: "The concrete concept is concrete because it is a synthesis of many definitions, thus representing the unity of diverse aspects. It appears therefore in reasoning as a summing-up, a result, and not as the starting point, although it is the real point of origin and thus also the point of origin of perception and imagination."⁸ Hegel's simple formulas can not be employed in the study of these concrete concepts, since each concept contains extreme complexities. That is why the dialectical method of Marx, that sifts out the principal aspect from the complexities of innumerable contradictions and thus arrives at its resolution, is basically different from the Hegelian method.

The distinctive feature of Marxian dialectics can be seen here. For Marx the starting points of inquiry for the science of logic are the concrete concepts that are the sum total of varied complex aspects. The starting points, like commodity, exchange value, labour etc., are not sheer sensuous objects, they are sum total of complex relations. They are not the concrete objects taken as the starting points of scientific observation by empiricists. It is not such concrete objects that Marx takes as the starting point of his dialectical method. On the contrary, for him, the starting points are the elementary generalisations. Commodity, labour etc., are generalised definitions. These abstractions have a concrete content. But, in Marxian dialectical method they become starting points not as concrete objects but as generalisations having a concrete content. This dialectical method is not formed by a mere inversion of Hegelian dialectics. Instead of Hegelian "Idea", Marx took the real world as basis. With that Hegel's simplifications became impractical and the complexities of the real world became the basis of his dialectical method. It was these complexities behind concrete concepts that created the conditions for Marxian dialectics

8. Ibid, p. 206.

to begin its study from primary abstractions, from abstract definitions. Compared to Hegelian dialectics, this characteristic of Marxian dialectic has immense importance.

LOGIC OF CAPITAL

The analysis of bourgeois society first taken up in *A Critique* finds its completed form in *Capital*. Here we get Marxian dialectic fully applied in the field of economics. Lenin wrote: "In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz., the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (*both* growth *and* movement) of these contradictions and of this society the summation of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end."⁹

Marx viewed economics as any other branch of science. But, it had, as compared to other sciences, several limitations which caused simple truths to appear unresolvable for a very long time. He said: "The value-form, whose fully developed shape is the money-form, is very elementary and simple. Nevertheless, the human mind has for more than 2,000 years sought in vain to get to the bottom of it, whilst on the other hand, to the successful analysis of much more composite and complex forms, there has been at least an approximation. Why? Because the body, as an organic whole, is more easy of study than are the cell of that body. In the analysis of economic forms, moreover, neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of use. The force of abstraction must replace both. But in bourgeois society the commodity-form of the product of

9. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 360-61.

labour—or the value-form of the commodity—is the economic cell-form."¹⁰

The value-form of commodity had escaped the grasp of bourgeois economics. The laws of formal logic was incapable of resolving these problems. Therefore, the real character of the concrete contradictions existing in the realm of economics could not be discovered and this led to unresolvable logical contradictions, like the Kantian antinomies. Being unable to answer these questions, bourgeois economics itself was moving towards a collapse. Marx could discover the nature of this crisis through the dialectical method and overcome the hurdles.

Let us take here for instance a crucial problem posed by bourgeois economics. David Ricardo, a prominent bourgeois economist, propounded two laws: the law of value and the law of average rate of profit, which were mutually inconsistent.

According to Ricardo's law of value, labour is the sole source of value. All value created and exchanged in society is created solely through labour. That is, the value contained in a commodity is determined by the quantity of labour embodied in it. This discovery became a decisive step in the development of economics. Today nobody questions the validity of this law. But Ricardo formulated another law also, the law of profit. It is profit that determines the very life of bourgeois society. It is generally observed that profit increases in proportion to the increase in capital investment. Ricardo attempted to establish an objective relation between the rate of capital and the average rate of profit.

These two laws were at odds with each other, for, so long as profit is also value, it is labour that creates profit also. But the bourgeois society sees profit as a new value created in the process of exchange. If value is created only through labour, the question arises as to whose labour created the new value of profit. The bourgeois

10. K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 19.

economists had no answer. Moreover, the capitalist system wanted to legitimise profit in order to prove that capitalists do not exploit the workers. Wage, the capitalist argues, is the rightful and just remuneration given to the worker. Since the value of any commodity is determined by the labour embodied in it, the value of the commodity, labour power of the worker, can also be determined in accordance with that law. This value is equal to the labour required to produce and maintain his labour power. That is to say, the value of labour power is the average cost needed to meet the basic necessities of the worker. This value is given to him as wage, and as such the capitalist does not exploit the worker.

On the face of it, there is nothing wrong in this argument of the bourgeois economists. But, their own theory of profit demolishes the very foundation of their argument. When a commodity is produced, it is the labour that the worker expends on it that determines its value. Therefore, since the worker is the creator of the value contained in a commodity, he is entitled to its full value. The capitalist contends that, since the worker has been paid the value of his labour power, the worker has absolutely no right on the commodity he produced. Yet, when the product is exchanged the capitalist gets profit. The bourgeois economists say that this profit is the just right of the capitalist as the investor of capital. But it is at odds with the law of value. This inconsistency have been discovered by bourgeois economists even before Marx. They tried various ways to overcome this inconsistency by using the laws of formal logic itself.

According to the principle of contradiction of the formal logic such an inconsistency is impermissible. If the law of value and the law of profit are mutually inconsistent, it will have to be deemed that one of them is wrong. The capitalist system, then, is compelled to defend the law of profit and reject the law of value. Many economists did that. Marx said: "This error persists with Ricardo and all his disciples. Here arise... a series of

inconsistencies, unresolved contradictions and fatuities, which the Ricardians... attempt to solve with phrases in a scholastic way. Crass empiricism turns into false metaphysics, scholasticism which toils painfully to deduce undeniable empirical phenomena by simple formal abstraction directly from the general law, or to show by cunning argument that they are in accordance with that law."¹¹

Those who rely on formal logic make yet another futile attempt. The law of value and the law of profit, they say, act in different domains and so there is no need for these laws to be consistent and interrelated. These arguments based on sheer empiricism, in fact, degenerate into expediency and opportunism.

Marx approached the problem in an entirely different way. He began his analysis from commodity, the cell of bourgeois society, and brought out the contradiction contained in the value of commodity. When a product is transformed into a commodity, there arises a contradiction between its use value and exchange value. In all spheres where commodities are exchanged, this contradiction manifests itself in different forms. For instance, the contradiction between producer and consumer is the manifestation of this contradiction. This contradiction is not imaginary. It had come into being from relations of production actually existing in society. Logical acrobatics can not eliminate it.

Marx analysed how the contradiction between the law of value and the law of profit had originated. Ricardo's thesis that labour is the source of all value is absolutely correct. So also the definition of wage as the value of his labour power. But the basic mistake lies in saying that wage is equal to the value created by the worker on expenditure of his labour power for a given period of time. Wage is only the exchange value of labour power. But the use value of this particular commodity is of a unique nature. The capitalist who bought labour power utilizes

11. K. Marx, 'Theories of Surplus Value, Part I', Moscow, 1969, p. 89.

it to create new value. The only commodity capable of creating new value is human labour power. In the production process labour power creates new value. It will be greater than the exchange value paid for it as wage. This value created in excess of the paid wage, i. e., surplus value, is the basis of capitalist's profit. In fact, the surplus value is the result of labour itself. The capitalist divides and appropriates the surplus value in varied forms like profit, interest, ground, rent etc. Capital is accumulation of surplus value produced in the ceaseless production process. This discovery of Marx resolves all the contradictions created by Ricardo's law of value. These contradictions do not simply disappear. On the contrary, what Marx did was to make clear that these contradictions are the reflection of the contradiction in the relations of production actually existing in society.

Marx established that Ricardo's thesis that all value is the result of labour is absolutely correct. But Marx did not view value in the same way as Ricardo did. By adopting the dialectical method of analysis he could discover the contradictory nature of value, and how capitalist's profit is formed. The discovery, that it is surplus value resulting from labour that turns into profit, undermined the very foundation of bourgeois economics, and the capitalist system itself. The contradictions arising out of the process of commodity production are not resolved logically. Neither are they logical contradictions. On the contrary, only with the elimination of the system of commodity production, i. e., only with the advent of communism, that this contradiction is going to be resolved in the real world.

Ricardo was not at all mistaken. What he presented through the contradiction of the law of value and the law of profit was the real contradictions existing in capitalist society. Marx analysed these contradictions in the light of objective facts. We saw, in the last chapter, how Hegel resolved the Kantian antinomies. In a similar manner Ricardian antinomies were resolved by Marx. Marx's *Capital* is the best proof of his use of Hegelian dialectic in analysing the objective realities of society.

Chapter 5

Philosophy that Transforms the World

What distinguishes the Marxist world outlook from all other philosophical systems is the fact that it is a philosophy of practice, which is not conveyed by simplified definitions of Marxism such as, "it is a guide to practice", or "a correct unity of theory and practice". This deserves our serious study.

The Theses on Feuerbach—short notes hurriedly written by Marx in 1845—deals with this crucial aspect of the Marxist world view. That Marx could not expand and develop these notes into a comprehensive viewpoint has proved to be a great loss to succeeding generations. The fact that the notes were written at a time when Marx had just given shape to his philosophy in the struggle against Feuerbach and Hegel, has led many thinkers to doubt if the thesis represented the fully developed Marxist world outlook. But finding out what exact stage the Theses represents in the growth of Marxism is a matter of secondary importance. What is more important is to decide how far the perspective offered by these notes is acceptable to us today. And with more than a century of experience behind us, we are certainly in a position to assess the significance of the ideas Marx's Theses represent. On the Theses on Feuerbach, Engels commented: "These are notes hurriedly scribbled down for later elaboration; absolutely not intended for publication, but invaluable as the

first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook."¹

The first thesis says: "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* [*Objekt*] or of *contemplation* [*Anschauung*], but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the *active* side, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed by idealism—but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really differentiated from the thought objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as *objective* [*gegenstandliche*] activity. Hence in the *Essence of Christianity*, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in its dirty-judaical form of appearance. Hence he does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary", of "practical-critical", activity."²

Here in a few words is presented the most important characteristic of the Marxist world outlook. There is no room here for doubt; trying to detect in these words obscurity or incompleteness could only be a misconceived endeavour. The idea that is expressed in this first thesis finds elaboration in almost all the later works of Marx. Moreover all through these years these notes by Marx had come to serve as a powerful weapon of Marxism in its struggle against mechanical materialism and idealism. These notes had thus contributed greatly to the defeat of the bourgeois outlook on the philosophical plane. The charge that Marx's philosophy of practice only takes a centrist position between mechanical materialism and idealism in the struggle against the two bourgeois philosophies is ill-motivated. It was by opposing mechanical materialism and idealism and sweeping them both away

1. F. Engels, 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy' Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1977, p. 339.

2. K. Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', Ibid, Vol. I, p. 13.

that Marxism or dialectical materialism raised itself to higher levels. Very often the struggle against idealism had become a struggle against mechanical materialism and vice versa, because both these philosophical schools are two faces of the same bourgeois philosophy. Marx's philosophy of practice is a powerful weapon capable of delivering deadly blows at both simultaneously. To ignore its potential, to use Marx's philosophy of practice solely against either of the two faces of bourgeois philosophy, tantamounts to reducing this weapon into another tool of bourgeois philosophy; a crime committed by various types of revisionists. Through one-sided interpretation, draining it of all dialectical character, the revisionists have made this most powerful weapon of Marxist world outlook an easy target for the bourgeoisie in its struggle against dialectical materialism. This is a service to the bourgeoisie the revisionists continue to render even today.

AGAINST MECHANICAL MATERIALISM

In trying to settle scores with Feuerbach on the philosophical plane, Marx and Engels were in effect performing the last rites of mechanical materialism which had grown and strengthened during the 18th and the 19th centuries. Certainly, due to historical reasons mechanical materialism did survive and continues to survive. But today it exists only as a shadow of its former self: a mere spectre, philosophically lifeless. To imagine that this spectre could be laid to rest as long as social classes continue to exist would be an illusion. Therefore, our task is to continue our uncompromising struggle against it.

The relation between thought and body or between idea and matter had always been the central point of dispute in the struggle between idealism and materialism. The idealists argued that thought or idea was more important

while the materialists claimed importance for body or matter. There were also those who took positions in between but in the final analysis they always belonged to either of the two camps. Kant was one who tried to take a middle road. He tried to recognise equally the existence of mind and the external world as two unconnected things. In effect this attempt turned out to be another variety of idealism. But Kantian dualism was the target of attack both by pure idealists and materialists from opposing sides. In the process both camps gave shape to their own respective variety of monist philosophy.

Hegel's answer to the question raised by Kant came by way of giving "Idea" primacy over everything else. In the idealist monism of Hegel, the external world or nature was merely the creation of the Absolute Idea. It was in direct opposition to this trend that Feuerbach came to the fore. Like all materialists, he argued that material object or nature was all important and that mind and idea were only its products. Thus it was by establishing and strengthening the identity of being and thought that Feuerbach and others tried to build their materialist monism. While Hegel and his followers reduced man and nature to mere manifestations of idea, Feuerbach reduced man, thought and idea into mere material objects. They viewed thinking and idea as problems of physiology; and tried to reduce thought and idea into mere physiological processes of the human body, especially the human brain. These materialists considered man, his thought, and culture, as the creation of material objects and material circumstances; according to them man can never free himself from the materiality of his existence, he is only a slave of circumstances. Like the idealists who see no deliverance for man from the fate decreed by the Absolute Idea and God, these materialists argued that man can only submit himself to necessity of material circumstances which he is incapable of transcending. According to them man is the slave of necessary laws which are mechanically repeating in nature, a proposition far more fatalist than the one propounded by idealism,

It is this mechanical materialism which comes under the attack of Marx in the Theses on Feuerbach. And through the attack Marx is highlighting the active role of man in the relation between nature and man. The relation between man and outside world is not a mere subject-object relation as the mechanical materialists argue. The mechanical materialist perspective leads one to consider external reality, nature, solely as the object of man's sensuousness and thought. The fundamental flaw of mechanical materialism is also located here. In reality what constitutes the relation between man and nature is constant active human practice. It is by way of practice that man relates to nature through his senses and all his practice is directed towards transforming nature. Man's relation to nature is never passive. He relates to nature through conscious practice in order to transform it. Nature becomes the object of man's thought only by way of this practice. The basic flaw in mechanical materialism is that it ignores this active relation between man and nature. As a result, the mechanical materialists were unable to see man's subjective role in this relation. Not only that; they are not able to grasp that man's practice is itself an objective reality. It is no wonder then that the importance of man's revolutionary practice was totally beyond their understanding. The third thesis on Feuerbach says: "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and the educator himself needs educating. Hence, this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to society (in Robert Owen for example)."³ That existing objective circumstances always determine man's subjective circumstances is considered a basic tenet of Marxism. Here are Marx's own words oft-quoted in support, "It is not consciousness of men that determines their

3. Ibid, p. 13.

existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness." It is quite natural to think that it contradicts the third thesis on Feuerbach. Since Marxism is basically materialism, the materialistic approach of giving determining importance to material conditions is its basic principle. But mechanical materialism and dialectical materialism treat it from diametrically opposed ways. Mechanical materialism one-sidedly imposes the importance of material circumstances over subjective circumstances. This one-sidedness is its fundamental weakness. On the contrary, dialectical materialism even while recognising the determining role of objective circumstances, gives importance to the fact that subjective circumstances do react on the objective circumstances. Eventhough in the final analysis the objective circumstances play the determining role, the subjective circumstances have an important part in transforming the objective circumstances itself; in some special situations the role of subjective circumstances becomes the determining one as well. This dialectical relation between objective and subjective circumstances is the very life-breath of the Marxist world outlook. Concealing or distorting this central aspect of the Marxist world outlook is the practice of present-day revisionists of different types as it was of the mechanical materialists of the past.

There are people who argue that the theses on Feuerbach were written before Marx himself had become a Marxist or while he was still in the process of becoming one and therefore these notes are not free from idealistic influences. These people, therefore, want them to be assessed in the light of the fact that in his later works Marx had adopted an approach of giving added importance to objective circumstances. Engels had answered these arguments. In his famous letter to Bloch, Engels had pointed out that, eventhough ultimately it is the economic base that determines the superstructure, it would be a serious mistake to ignore the influence—at times determining influence—the superstructure in turn exerts over it.

He also admitted that many were led to lay emphasis on the economic aspect, because they themselves (Marx and Engels) under the pressure of circumstances had emphasised one side and in the process left ambiguous the importance of the other. But in all important works of Marx and Engels, the dialectical relation between subjective and objective factors based on their interaction have been adequately emphasised. The third thesis on Feuerbach expresses in clear language the same dialectical relation.

Still, this gives rise to an apparently unresolvable contradiction. It might appear that the law which says that objective circumstances determine man's subjective circumstance and the statement that these circumstances can be transformed by man or subjective circumstances presents us a Kantian antinomy. This contradiction can be resolved only in the fashion the Kantian antinomies were resolved. These contradictory processes have a complementary existence. The dialectical relation between objective and subjective factors is one of the main motive forces of social progress. Marx pointed out how the contradiction between the two manifests and gets resolved. Having found old materialism at fault for forgetting that circumstances themselves could be transformed, Marx went on: "The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary practice*."⁴

The sentence expresses in unmistakable terms the unique characteristic of man that distinguishes him from all other beings in nature. "Revolutionary practice" is here enshrined as a link connecting man and circumstances in his own characteristic way. With this the issue rises to a new level. We are now able to comprehend, as pointed out in the first chapter, the real meaning of Marx's statement that our aim is not to interpret but transform the world. For the first time, man realises that his duty lies in

4. Ibid, p. 14.

transforming the world through "revolutionary practice", the link connecting him with the objective surroundings.

Marx discovered that the essence of human existence itself was nothing but this revolutionary practice. It is revolutionary practice which opens man's road to real freedom. Marxism became a philosophy of practice because revolutionary practice constituted the essence of its world outlook.

Practice, for man, is always social practice. Only in relation to man's social existence can human practice be understood. It was only natural that Feuerbach who failed to see human practice as a process of transforming nature, should also have failed to form any social or historical perspective of man. He could see man only as isolated individuals—a failure of all materialists prior to Marx.

On this ahistorical outlook of Feuerbach who was a representative of the pre-Marxist materialists, Marx had the following comment to make: "But apart from the fact that he only conceives him as an "object of the senses", not as "sensuous activity", because he still remains in the realm of the theory and conceives of men not in their given social connection, not under their existing conditions of life, which have made them what they are, he never arrives at the really existing active men, but stops at the abstraction "men"..."⁵

Trapped in an individualistic and asocial outlook, Feuerbach tried to convert religious essence into human essence. Marx said: "But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."⁶

All practical activities of man are based on his social relations. There he relates to nature not in any direct way but through society or social relations. Feuerbach who could not view human essence as an ensemble of social relations, misunderstood that man relates to nature as isolated individuals. The social basis of Feuerbach's

5. Ibid, p. 29.

6. Ibid, p. 14.

individualistic thinking was the social relations founded on individual private property in the capitalist society. Like all other mechanical materialists Feuerbach was not able to liberate himself from the clutches of capitalist society. It should not surprise us then that an individualistic and asocial thinking served as foundation for their philosophy.

The present-day mechanical materialists who don the cloak of Marxism would however claim they possess historical perspective and social consciousness. But in effect they stand exactly where Feuerbach stood, because all types of revisionists under one pretext or another, are always trying to hinder, reverse or deflect revolutionary practice. In discarding the crucial aspect of the Marxist world outlook, i.e., revolutionary practice, they are as much prisoners of individualist thinking as Feuerbach. Whatever they might profess, this basic character is shared by all types of revisionists.

AGAINST IDEALISM

The philosophy of practice does not spare idealism even when it demolishes mechanical materialism. If mechanical materialists had ignored man's active role in his relation between nature, the idealists held it aloft, in a one-sided and abstract manner. From the beginning of division of labour—especially from the time of division into mental and manual labour—those engaged in mental labour had turned out to be the spokesmen of idealism. Since the division into mental and physical labour is a fundamental division in class society, idealism can survive till classes disappear. Therefore, it was only natural that the polarisation of class divisions in the capitalist society should have led to a strengthening of idealism. Hegel, the leading spokesman of idealism, had assigned to practice a role in the process of cognition. But in his view the process of cognition was an inverted process. On this, Lenin commented, "...undoubtedly, in Hegel practice serves as a

link in the analysis of the process of cognition, and indeed as the transition to objective "absolute", (according to Hegel) truth. Marx, consequently, clearly sides with Hegel in introducing the criterion of practice into the theory of knowledge: see the Theses on Feuerbach," Lenin continues: "Alias: Men's consciousness not only reflects the objective world but creates it."⁷

Hegel who argues that the objective world itself is a creation of consciousness, uses practice only as criterion for examining whether the objective world has in fact been created in accordance with consciousness. For Hegel, the process of cognition is a process in which everything starts from consciousness or idea and after having established the objective world through practice, returns back to consciousness. For him even the idea at the beginning is not something formed in human brain but is "the Absolute Idea" which is said to reside eternally as the foundation for all universe. Nature, man and man's ideas are all creation of this Absolute Idea. In Hegel's view practice is only a method to verify how far the physical universe matches the Absolute Idea as its reflection. Here practice becomes a purely abstract and unreal concept.

The Marxian concept of practice is in direct contradiction to this. Here all ideas originate from practice. The Marxist world outlook establishes that social practice is the only source of ideas. The objective existence of nature, man and society is the precondition for this practice. Labour or production is the starting point of social practice. What man does through labour or production is to transform nature and outside objects and turn them into his commodities. To carry on production in this fashion, social relations are inevitable. And ideas are the inevitable products of social relations. Social practice creates ideas and these ideas in turn lead to social practice. This is repeated. However, they don't repeat in a mechanical manner. From social practice invariably ever new ideas

7. V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 212.

are produced, and these ideas form the basis for ever higher forms of social practice. Practice-idea-practice; human society progresses through a constantly repeating dialectical process.

Idealism and mechanical materialism share similarity in approach. Whatever may be their claims, both consider thought and physical universe as unrelated phenomena. That was why they failed to discover the source of thought. Of this failure Engels wrote: "Natural science, like philosophy, has hitherto entirely neglected the influence of man's activity on their thought; both know only nature on the one hand and thought on the other. But it is precisely *the alteration of nature by man*, not solely nature as such, which is the most essential and immediate basis of human thought, and it is in the measure that man has learned to change nature that his intelligence has increased."⁸

The question of the relative importance of idea or matter was handled by philosophers in a futile fashion. Many saw it as an endless controversy. Since such type of questions and issues were being raised in the realm of ideas, it was easy for those who had accepted the method of formal logic to establish that idea was paramount. Hegel could demolish formal logic but he was unable to liberate human thought from the hold of idealism. Hence Hegelian philosophical system reached a dead end.

It was at this juncture that Marx presented the new world outlook. He said in the second thesis on Feuerbach: "The question of whether objective [*gegenstandliche*] truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness [*Diesseitigkeit*] of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question."⁹ It sets to rest the dust and din raised by the idealists. It becomes

8. F. Engels, 'Dialectics of Nature', Moscow, 1974, p. 231.

9. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol 1, p. 13.

easy to find out the objectivity of any idea. Any idea that emerges successful from the test of man's social practice turns out to be objective truth. On the other hand, all ideas that cannot be subjected to this kind of test and those ideas which have no chance of success in such a test, become unreal. Thus the old scholastic question of whether thought or matter is important, assume a new meaning in the testhouse of social practice.

Thought and objective world cease to be two unrelated phenomena. Here they find their origin in social practice which transforms the objective world and here they test and prove themselves in the furnace of social practice. The reality of thought stands unveiled. Besides, human thought now assumes the form of a powerful weapon which dialectically reflects the objective world through social practice and plays an active part in transforming that world. The important achievement of the philosophy of practice is this unveiling of the dialectical relationship between thought and objective reality.

This dialectical outlook was also the world view of the international proletariat. In the hands of the working class which was historically bound to be the creators of a classless society, this dialectical outlook emerged as a powerful weapon. Human history entered a qualitatively new stage when the working class armed with this new weapon emerged on the scene. With it a new epoch began: an epoch of the man who has discovered for himself his role and his task in nature. What had begun with the philosophy of practice was the history of man who, on his own, was convinced that he was not merely bound to submit to natural laws, but was bound as a social being to transform nature itself. Marx was thus inaugurating a new epoch of the man who was bound to realise for himself his freedom by transforming nature. Revolutionary practice is the most powerful slogan of this new man.

Revisionists—in reality mechanical materialists or idealists beneath their Marxist disguise—are trying to blunt the edge of this slogan of revolutionary practice. Under

the cover of historical necessity of domination of the economic base over superstructure, mechanical materialists attempt to hinder conscious revolutionary practice aimed at transforming necessity and circumstance. On the other hand, idealists through one-sided emphasis on the influence of subjective factors on objective reality reduce revolutionary practice into an abstract concept. They misinterpret the struggle waged against mechanical materialism by Marx and Engels. Marx's comment, that the chief error with mechanical materialists was that they did not see reality subjectively as human practice, is misinterpreted by these idealists to argue that to recognise objective reality which is outside and independent of man is mechanical materialism. This is a highly dangerous idealist nonsense because the recognition of an outside world which does not depend on man or man's consciousness is the common basis for all materialist philosophies including dialectical materialism. Mechanical materialism ignores man's subjective role in his relation with nature. Hence its error lies in perceiving the relation between man and nature and evaluating it. And here mechanical materialism reduces man into a mere object. Marx is criticising this. This question came up only after man emerged, i.e., after he had acquired the capacity to think. It is dangerous to mix it up with the question of the objective reality of nature. Those who use the "philosophy of practice" to argue against the existence of objective reality independent of man are incorrigible idealists. "Revolutionary practice" can advance only if such idealist misinterpretations are defeated.

The idealist interpretation of the philosophy of practice leads one soon into individualist philosophic positions. Idealist subjectivism, which gives more importance to subjective factors than objective factors is the end result of any denial of the objective existence of nature outside and independent of man. Anything which ultimately gives importance to subjective factors over objective factors can not be dialectical materialism. Though it might create

the impression of being revolutionary by its demonstrative opposition to mechanical materialism, the above outlook ends up in subjective concepts of revolution which are not in tune with objective reality. Such subjective outlook manifest in different forms of individualism. It is not an accidents that many who had come on to the stage claiming that they were upholding the philosophy of practice and were uncompromisingly opposing mechanical materialism, have become spokesmen of "Eurocommunism" which is today nothing more than the political expression of bourgeois individualist philosophies. This is the inevitable plight of all those who oppose mechanical materialism from the idealist standpoint because both mechanical materialism and idealism have their origin in bourgeois individualism. It only shows that many of those who claim today that they are upholding the philosophy of practice are not free from the influence of idealism and mechanical materialism. It also makes clear how important it is to grasp the revolutionary essence of the philosophy of practice, i.e., dialectical materialist outlook.

Chapter 6

Lenin and Marxist World Outlook

In the fourth chapter we referred to Lenin's opinion that one cannot understand Marx without studying Hegel's "Logic." This remark was made during 1914-16, when he was painstakingly studying Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Lenin also pointed out that this meant that no Marxist had understood Marx properly even after half a century. Does this imply that Lenin also had not understood Marx till he read Hegel's *Logic*? To answer this we will have to examine the extent to which the philosophical essence of Marxist world outlook is manifested in Lenin's theoretical and practical work.

Revisionism had emerged during the last decade of the 19th century as a trend which opposed Marxism from within. Bernstein, who had reached the leadership of the Second International gave it an international form. And genuine Marxism could develop only by struggling against this revisionism which was gaining strength in the theoretical and practical fields. Lenin was the first to unleash an allround attack against revisionism which dominated the European worker's movement. He upheld the essence of Marxism, struggling against revisionism which had infiltrated into the nascent proletarian movement in Russia. *What Is To Be Done?*—the most important of his early works, testifies to this struggle.

Economism is a powerful weapon of revisionism. Revisionists said that workers should struggle only for economic demands such as wage increases and it was not their job to wage political struggles. Lenin exposed the hollowness of this argument. He made it clear that the basic duty of the proletariat was to lead political struggles with the ultimate goal of capturing political power. Confining workers to narrow practical activity in order to keep them away from political struggles is yet another tactic of the revisionists. Thus they completely neglected the importance of ideological struggle and activity. Exposing the counter-revolutionary character of this outlook, Lenin said: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity... At this point, we wish to state only that the *role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.*"¹

The revisionists never adopt such a path. They hinder it by all possible means. The inherent class consciousness of the workers can only give rise to trade union consciousness and enthusiasm for economic struggles. Socialist consciousness on the necessity of political revolution for the liberation of the entire masses is received by them from outside. And the proletariat can develop this consciousness only through conscious effort under the leadership of a revolutionary party. "The history of all countries," Lenin said, "shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness... The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves

1. V. I. Lenin, 'What Is To Be Done?'

belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working class movement."²

Here we do not intend to go into the details of the struggle Lenin led against revisionism. The basis of revisionism is the mechanical approach of denying man's conscious role in changing history. Economism, the theory of spontaneity and narrow practical activity, is the manifestation of this approach. Lenin was able to see the danger posed by this trend and establish that the task of the working class is to transform the world through its conscious efforts. This proves that Lenin could grasp fully the essence of Marxist world outlook right from the beginning.

In his major philosophical work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* written in 1908, Lenin mainly took up the task of exposing idealism that emerged in a new form in the context of new discoveries and crisis in the field of physical sciences by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Though under a new garb provided by modern science, the new idealist trend led by the famous scientist, Ernst Mach, followed the same tradition of Hume and Kant. Lenin stood firmly on the side of materialism and uncompromisingly exposed this idealism.

In this struggle also, Lenin took the Marxist position that practice is the decisive criterion in the realm of the theory of knowledge. Lenin said categorically, "The stand point of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge. And it inevitably leads to materialism, sweeping aside the endless fabrication of professorial scholasticism. Of course, we must not forget that the criterion of practice can never, in the nature of things, either confirm or refute any human idea completely."³

2. Ibid.

3. V. I. Lenin, 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism', Moscow, 1970, p. 129.

However, in the context of the struggle against idealism, Lenin did not take up in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* fight against mechanical materialism as an important task. But this alone should not lead us to the assumption that Lenin fought idealism from the standpoint of old materialism. Is this a reflection of Lenin's weakness in not having deeply studied Hegel's *Logic*, as he himself remarked? Not at all. On the contrary, even before getting a sufficient grasp of Hegel, Lenin had clearly understood and precisely defined the basic defects of old materialism.

In 1913, in an article on Karl Marx, Lenin summed it up thus: "(1) this materialism was 'predominantly mechanical,' failing to take account of the 'latest developments in chemistry and biology (today it would be necessary to add: and in the electrical theory of matter); (2) the old materialism was non-historical and non-dialectical (metaphysical in the meaning of anti-dialectical); and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the standpoint of development, (3) it regarded the 'human essence' in the abstract, not as the 'complex of all' (concretely and historically determined) 'social relations', and therefore merely 'interpreted' the world, whereas it was a question of 'changing' it, i.e., it did not understand the importance of 'revolutionary practical activity.'"⁴

Even without a thorough study of Hegel, Lenin could grasp the real essence of Marxist world outlook. This was possible because of the fundamental difference between Hegelian and Marxian world outlooks. Marxian world outlook is integrally free so as to be understood without the help of Hegel. If so, what is the relevance of a deep study of Hegel, about which Lenin talks? Marx made full use of Hegel's dialectical method. He not only used it for entirely different aims, but in the process thoroughly revised it too. By adopting "revolutionary practice" as the foundation of his world outlook, Marx made a big leap from Hegel.

4. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21.

What Lenin implied then was that even as there existed this basic difference between Hegel and Marx, it would be useful to have a thorough knowledge of Hegelian dialectics. It would be helpful both to understand the method Marx used and facilitate our efforts to solve problems. The notes Lenin prepared while studying Hegel's *Logic* and a small essay *On the Question of Dialectics* are extremely valuable. These studies, done during 1914-16, are essential documents for serious students of dialectics and Marxism. We shall touch on some of the important questions Lenin raised in these works.

UNITY OF OPPOSITES

On the Question of Dialectics begins thus: "The splitting 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. That is precisely how Hegel, too, puts the matter."⁵ But Lenin points out that this aspect of dialectics is generally ignored. He clarifies that this is true not only of Plekhanov but of Engels also. "The correctness of this aspect of the content of dialectics must be tested by the history of science. This aspect of dialectics (e.g., in Plekhanov) usually receives inadequate attention: the identity of opposites is taken as the sum-total of *examples* ["for example, a seed", "for example, primitive communism". The same is true of Engels. But, it is in the interest of popularisation...] and not as a *law of cognition* (and as a law of the objective world)"⁶

What does it mean? Dialectics has two aspects. One is as an existing law in the objective world. The struggle of opposites in the objective world is reflected in man's thinking and as a result emerges the dialectical law which guides man's thoughts. This differentiation has been

5. V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, *Collected Works*, 38, p. 359.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 359.

clearly pointed out by Engels himself: "Dialectics, so-called *objective* dialectics, prevails throughout nature and so-called subjective dialectics, dialectical thought, is only the reflection of motion through the opposites..."⁷

Dialectical laws of the objective world are unveiled by the respective branches of science engaged in studying specific fields. And a branch which is unable to understand dialectics as logic cannot transform the laws discovered in its own field into consistent general laws. Thus, using dialectics, Marx could resolve all the problems raised by economic laws discovered by bourgeois economists. Such problems are common in all branches of science. And their solution is possible only by using dialectical method. Only then will the dialectical laws of the objective world reflect dialectically in man's thought. Otherwise, our understanding of the laws of the objective world would be mechanical as, for Ricardo, in the case of the law of value and profit. Viewing the laws of dialectics as an agglomerate of isolated phenomena in different spheres of the objective world would lead us to a mechanical world outlook. We would never break out from the sphere of old materialism. Objective dialectics takes form when we are able to formulate general laws from phenomena in various spheres of the objective world using dialectical method of logic. This will not be an agglomerate of isolated examples, but basically different. Thus as objective dialectics takes shape and develops, subjective dialectics, or the law of cognition, too develops and gets enriched. The law of identity of opposites which is the essence of dialectics must not be taken as a collective description of the working of opposites in numerous isolated phenomena, but must be applied as the law of cognition, and the general laws of the objective world should be revealed. It is in this sense that Lenin points out the inadequacy of Plekhanov's and Engels' attempts to explain the law of dialectics through a series of examples.

7. F. Engels, 'Dialectics of Nature', p. 211.

The function of dialectics is not merely to make use of the laws discovered in natural sciences, or political economy as illustrations, because, nothing new is added to our knowledge in that process. But as Marx did in *Capital*, dialectics raises these discoveries to new heights of knowledge and thus reveals their inner relations. Only then does it become a law of cognition. This does not mean that certain laws arbitrarily discovered by logic are forced upon the objective world. The laws of dialectics are formed, basically, out of the laws of the objective world itself. But, since man understands nature through the process of transforming it and not in any mechanical way, there is active interaction between the law of logic and the laws of the objective world. That is why the laws of logic do not become a mechanical reflection of the laws of the objective world. Lenin stressed this active role of the law of cognition.

In the above article Lenin explained further: "The identity of opposites (it would be more correct, perhaps, to say their "unity",—although the difference between the terms identity and unity is not particularly important here. In a certain sense both are correct) is recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and society). The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their "self-movement", in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the "struggle" of opposites."⁸

Lenin points out that there are basically two different views on development or transformation. One holds that all changes are only an increase or decrease in quantity and are repetitions of the same kind. According to this view the motive force of change is more or less external while for the other which is diametrically opposed to this, development is due to things splitting into opposites and

8. V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 369-70.

interacting with each other. The motive forces for any growth and development is, basically, inner self-movement. And the source of this inner movement is the interaction of opposites.

On analysing these views Lenin says: "The first conception is lifeless, pale and dry. The second is living. The second *alone* furnishes the key to the "self-movement" of everything existing; it 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."⁹ The first view includes all mechanical views of both idealists and materialists. And the second represents the dialectical outlook. "The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute."¹⁰ This is the most important thing about the unity and struggle of opposites.

While saying that the struggle between opposites is absolute and unity relative, we must remember that, for dialectics, the relation between absolute and relative itself is relative, because, dialectics teaches that there is absolute in relative and relative in absolute.

Marx had fully utilized these basic principles of dialectics in *Capital*. Starting from the analysis of commodity, the "cell" of bourgeois society, Marx revealed all the contradictions of that society. That is to say, he started from the particular and reached the universal. This evolution from the individual to the universal is dialectical. Lenin said, "...the individual exists only in the connection that leads to the universal. The universal exists only in the individual and through the individual. Every individual is (in one way or another) a universal. Every universal is (a fragment, or an aspect, or the essence of) an individual. Every universal only approximately embraces all the

9. Ibid, p. 360.

10. Ibid, p. 360.

individual objects. Every individual enters incompletely into the universal, etc, etc. Every individual is connected by thousands of transitions with other kinds of individuals."¹¹ The inevitable interactions in nature take shape from these innumerable relations. Through these are revealed the relation between chance and necessity, and form and content.

Lenin points out that just as all contradictions in capitalist society are visible in its "cell", the commodity, all aspects of dialectics can be revealed through the analysis of any statement, and "thereby show that dialectics is a property of all human knowledge in general."¹² Moreover, "And natural science shows us (and here again it must be demonstrated in *any* simple instance) objective nature with the same qualities, the transformation of the individual into the universal, or the contingent into the necessary, transitions, modulations, and the reciprocal connection of opposites."¹³

Dialectics reveals the basic laws working in the objective world. But this process of revealing takes place through man's practical activity to transform nature. Thus man's knowledge becomes capable of reflecting natural laws as closely as possible to reality. In this process, dialectics is the most useful weapon. It is Marxism that made dialectics such a powerful weapon in man's hands. That was why Lenin said, "Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism."¹⁴

Here is one of Lenin's best definitions of dialectics: "*Dialectics* is the teaching which shows how *opposites* can be and how they happen to be (how they become) *identical*,—under what conditions they are identical, becoming transformed into one another,—why the human mind should grasp these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, becoming transformed into one another."¹⁵

11. Ibid, p. 361.

12. Ibid, p. 362.

13. Ibid, p. 362.

14. Ibid, p. 362.

15. Ibid, p. 109.

HEGEL AND LENIN

Lenin had said that Marx did not give us a 'logic,' but only the logic of *Capital*. However, Lenin too did not give us a logic, but only left a few comments that may help in formulating a Marxist logic. Such are the notes he prepared while studying Hegel's logic. No doubt, all important ideological works of Lenin are ideal models of applying Marxian dialectics. But they by themselves do not constitute dialectics.

Lenin pointed out how to evaluate Hegel and what all can be accepted from him. Referring to Hegel's nonsense about the Absolute Idea etc, Lenin said, "I am in general trying to read Hegel materialistically. Hegel is materialism which has been stood on its head (according to Engels)—that is to say, I cast aside for the most part God, the Absolute, the Pure Idea, etc."¹⁶

Lenin undertakes the difficult task of salvaging materialist and dialectical ideas from the rubbish heap of Hegel's idealism, and these notes bear evidence as to how efficiently he did it.

Lenin has brought out excellently the relation between Hegel and Marx. The principle of inner "self-movement" in all phenomena put forward by Hegel is the most crucial. Marx and Engels taking this inner kernel out of the idealist rubbish purified and revealed it. Lenin said, "The idea of universal movement and change (1813, Logic) was conjectured before its application to life and society. In regard to society it was proclaimed earlier (1847) than it was demonstrated in application to man (1859)."¹⁷ Here Lenin is referring to the publication of Hegel's *Science of Logic* in 1813, *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, and Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. The inner thread of incessant growth, development and evolution of nature, man, and society connects these three works.

Criticising Hegel's attempt at obscuring and distorting

16. Ibid, p. 104.
17. Ibid, p. 141

the relation between man and nature under the cover of his concept of the Absolute Idea, Lenin clearly defined the inner essence of materialist dialectics. Here he gives the most precise definition of the dialectical relation between man and nature: "The laws of the external world, of nature, which are divided into *mechanical* and *chemical* (this is very important) are the bases of man's *purposive* activity. In his practical activity, man is confronted with the objective world, is dependent on it, and determines his activity by it. From this aspect, from the aspect of the practical (purposive) activity of man, the mechanical (and chemical) causality of the world (of nature) appears as something though *external*, as though something secondary, as though something hidden. Two forms of the *objective* process: nature (mechanical and chemical) and the *purposive* activity of man. The mutual relation of these forms.¹⁸ On the one side, is the objective nature with its inevitable laws. On the other, is man capable of purposive activity, though depending on and determined by nature. Man faces nature not as a passive slave, but as one capable of transforming it through his purposive activity. This interaction between nature and man is the subject-matter of materialist dialectics.

The concluding part of Hegel's *Logic* deals with the Absolute Idea. On the chapter titled 'Absolute Idea' Lenin says that there is nothing in it that is specifically idealism and that its main content is the dialectical method. "The sum-tota, the last word and essence of Hegel's logic is the *dialectical method*—this is extremely noteworthy. And one thing more: in this *most idealistic* of Hegel's works there is the *least* idealism and the *most materialism*. "Contradictory," but a fact!"¹⁹

Lenin's high esteem for Hegel's dialectical method is evident. This is the background against which he opined that Marxists had not understood Marx even after half a century, because they had not thoroughly studied Hegel.

18. Ibid, p. 187

19. Ibid, p. 234.

Moreover, with this understanding he has evaluated anew the methods adopted by Marxists including Plekhanov while criticising idealism during the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. After explaining how far Hegel had gone forward in comparison to Immanuel Kant, Lenin pointed out two things: "1. Plekhanov criticises Kantianism (and agnosticism in general) more from a vulgar-materialistic standpoint than from a dialectical-materialistic standpoint, *insofar as* he merely rejects their views from the threshold, but does not *correct* them (as Hegel corrected Kant), deepening, generalising and extending them, showing the *connection* and *transitions* of each and every concept. 2. Marxists criticised (at the beginning of the twentieth century) the Kantians and Humists more in the manner of Feuerbach (and Buchner) than of Hegel."²⁰

TRANSFORMATION AND 'LAW'

Mechanical materialism holds that, laws of nature are eternally unchangeable mechanical necessities. All branches of science engaged in revealing the laws of nature also have the same mechanical understanding. Such an understanding persists to a greater or lesser extent even today. Idealists like Hegel tended to reject laws discovered by science as mere manifestations of mechanical materialism. Lenin critically evaluated this problem and clearly indicated the dialectical stand to be adopted in dealing with it.

Hegel had tried to interpret law by abstract and obscure arguments such as—appearance is unity of semblance and existence and the unity is the law of appearance and so law itself is the link which connects the appearance. But Lenin tries to extract the rational inner kernel from them. Commenting on Hegel's idealistic approach, Lenin said: "Here in general utter obscurity. But there is a vital

20. *Ibid*, p. 179

thought, evidently: the concept of *law* is one of the stages of the cognition by man of *unity* and *connection*, of the reciprocal dependence and totality of the world process. The "treatment" and twisting of words and concepts to which Hegel devotes himself here is a struggle against making the concept of *law* absolute, against simplifying it, against making a fetish of it. N B for modern physics!!"²¹ The concept of "law" exists as a reflection of unity and interconnection clearly discernible in world processes complex with infinite interrelations. Hegel's achievement was that in the background of ever changing world process he could visualise law as a link connecting them. While mechanical materialists were turning law into an absolute and simplifying it, Hegel was resisting such immutable ideas. Lenin upheld this.

Lenin accepted Hegel's statement that law represents the similarities existing amidst variegated and complex appearances. Lenin points out that Hegel's statement "...the realm of laws is the *quiescent* reflection of the existing or appearing world..."²² is quite correct. He interprets it as a materialistic assessment worth mentioning. Especially the usage *quiescent* is most appropriate. Lenin says. "'Law' takes the *quiescent*—and therefore law, every law, is narrow, incomplete, approximate."²³ This definition is very important. It shakes the very foundation of mechanical materialism. With this, all attempts to bestow completeness, sanctity and absoluteness to laws crash to the ground.

This is not to belittle the importance of the concept of 'law' in the development of human knowledge. Here our attempt is to find the real place of law in world processes. Lenin says: "Ergo, *law* and *essence* are concepts of the same kind (of the same order), or rather, of the same degree, expressing the deepening of man's knowledge of phenomena, the world, etc." "Law is the reflection of the

21. *Ibid*, pp. 150-51

22. *Ibid*, p. 151

23. *Ibid*, p. 151

essential in the movement of the universe..."²⁴ These definitions further clarify the question. Man developed his understanding of natural laws through his efforts to discover the basic relations and essence of ceaselessly changing nature. That is why Lenin says that law and essence are similar concepts. Thus it is clear that the concept of law plays an important role in the development of human knowledge. But we should be vigilant about the attempts of mechanical materialists to establish 'law' as absolute and complete on this pretext.

The concept of the relation between cause and effect or causal law is the basis of the concept of law. The generally accepted method for revealing the laws of nature is to find out the cause-effect relation behind all universal processes. Quoting Hegel's statement, "Effect contains nothing whatever which cause does not contain...", Lenin explains: "Cause and effect, ergo, are merely moments of universal reciprocal dependence, of (universal) connection, of the reciprocal concatenation of events, merely links in the chain of the development of matter." Lenin further defines the place of the law of causality in nature, "The all-sidedness and all-embracing character of the interconnection of the world, which is only one-sidedly, fragmentarily and incompletely expressed by causality."²⁵ He then explains this law so as not to lead to misunderstanding: "Causality, as usually understood by us, is only a small particle of universal interconnection, but (a materialist extension) a particle not of the subjective, but of the objectively real interconnection."²⁶

This is how causal laws and laws of nature in general are to be viewed. They are only moments and small links in the complex universal motion going on on the basis of endless interrelations. Under given conditions every moment and every link will have stable characteristics. But it would be foolish to consider that if moments and links

24. Ibid, p. 152

25. Ibid, p. 154

26. Ibid, p. 160

were to join up, they would form an absolute law and a motionless, stable nature. This was the error of mechanical outlooks. Following Hegel's dialectical method, Lenin warns against this danger.

While conducting a critical survey of Hegel's logic, Lenin sums up the fundamental principles of dialectics thus: "1) The determination of the concept out of itself [the thing *itself* must be considered in its relations and in its development]; 2) the contradictory nature of the thing itself (the other of itself) the contradictory forces and tendencies in each phenomenon; 3) the union of analysis and synthesis."²⁷

He, then, examines these basic principles in detail. Stress is to be given primarily to the objectivity of a thing under consideration using dialectical method. It is the essence that is to be examined, not examples or exceptions. All its variegated relations with other objects should be considered in totality. It is this object's or phenomenon's own motion, its own life and development that is to be examined. The internal opposing trends and aspects of every phenomenon should be considered, that is, as unity of opposites. We can see then the picture of the struggle of these opposites taking shape. Examine different aspects of each phenomenon separately, and then combine them to form a total picture, that is, analysis and synthesis. There exists not only unity of opposites, but each aspect transforms into its opposites, i.e., form and content always struggle against each other, as a result form is discarded and content transformed. Change in quantity leads to change in quality and vice versa. Thus the process of discovering new aspects and new relations in each phenomenon goes on infinitely. Along with this, man's knowledge about things, phenomena and processes becomes deep and the process of developing from perceptual knowledge to the knowledge of the essence also goes on infinitely. This process does not take place through

27. Ibid, p. 221

mechanical repetitions. On the contrary it develops from the lower to the higher, from superficial to deep. Thus Lenin explains the developmental process of the objective world and logic, revealed by the dialectical method.²⁸

Finally Lenin sums up: "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This embodies the essence of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development."²⁹ The task of further explanations and development was left to posterity.

It can be seen that Lenin utilized this deep study of the details of dialectics through Hegel's *Logic* in his later ideological and practical work. One of the best examples of utilizing dialectics in the ideological field is his study of imperialism, which prepared the ground for October revolution. He evaluated how capitalism grew from the stage of free competition to that of monopoly and the new contradictions inherent in it. Through this he arrived at totally new conclusions on revolutionary situations different from those of Marx's time. Instead of revolution taking place in all developed capitalist countries almost simultaneously, Lenin found that in the age of imperialism, there was the possibility of revolution in one or more countries which were the weakest links in the imperialist chain.

Lenin used the dialectical method not merely to analyse things but as a guide to change through revolutionary practice the conditions in Russia borne out of imperialist and internal contradictions. Thus, by correctly evaluating the rapidly changing revolutionary situations, standing in their midst, and consciously leading them to pre-determined aims Lenin proved the practical value of Marxian dialectics.

28. Ibid, p. 221-22

29. Ibid, p. 223

Chapter 7

Mao Tsetung and Dialectics

Mao takes up the elaboration of the principles of dialectics from where Lenin had left off. Lenin declared that the essence of dialectics is the unity of opposites and that this has to be further elaborated and developed. Mao attempted the fulfilment of this task.

The essays *On Practice* and *On Contradiction* are Mao's first major philosophical works. These were speeches made at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College at Yen-an in 1937; as part of the struggle against dogmatism within the Chinese Communist Party. Mao had occasion to revert to philosophical questions at many important party meetings later. Among them his 1957 speech, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* is very important. The philosophical stand adopted by Mao in these speeches has influenced the policy formulations of the Chinese party under his leadership to a great extent. In our study of Marxist world outlook we will be examining these philosophical positions of Mao Tsetung.

UNIVERSALITY AND PARTICULARITY OF CONTRADICTION

Mao summarises the basic principles of dialectics in a very simple style in his work *On Contradiction*. First, like Lenin, he explains the basic difference between

mechanical and dialectical outlooks. Then, he goes on to show how universality and particularity of contradictions exist interconnected.

While dialectics holds that the fundamental cause of change in all fields, objects and phenomena of nature, is contradiction inherent in each of them, mechanical materialism gives importance to external causes. True, external causes operate together with internal ones. But, the direction of change and basic features of each phenomenon are determined by internal causes, as compared to external ones.

Contradiction or the unity and struggle of opposites exists everywhere, in nature, society and man's thinking—this is what is meant by universality of contradiction. Besides, this also means that contradiction exists from the beginning to the end of all processes. Even while recognising that contradictions exist in all objects and processes, some hold that they appear only at a particular juncture in the growth of each process and that there are only differences between different elements within it till then. Mao takes up this question referring to Deborin's philosophical school in the USSR. They had tried to establish that the contradictions between kulaks and peasants in the Soviet Union were only differences and not contradictions. The question of the contradiction between the proletariat and the peasantry was also presented in a similar manner. It was wrong to think that since firm unity had been forged between them, especially in the Soviet Union, contradiction had ceased to exist. It is true that antagonistic contradictions do not exist between these basic classes. But, so long as their mode of labour is different, one cannot overlook the fact that there is contradiction between them. At different stages and in different circumstances the character of contradictions may change. Their intensity may increase or decrease or non-antagonistic contradictions may become antagonistic or vice versa. The question here is not one of absence or presence of contradiction. What is to be examined is the

change effected in the character of this contradiction, which exists from the beginning to the end of the process.

The character of each process and phenomenon is determined by the character of its inherent contradiction. A particular contradiction may emerge and may die out after passing through different stages. But with this a new contradiction emerges and the character of the object or phenomenon undergoes a change, it becomes something entirely different from the old. Thus, by universality of contradiction we mean that though there may be rise and fall or changes in the forms of contradiction, nowhere and at no time will there be a condition where contradiction does not exist at all.

The universality of contradiction leads us to another fact. Contradictions which exist in processes and phenomena of nature and society, exhibiting infinite variety, are based on their particularity. Particularity manifests itself not only in contradictions of different processes, but also in the different stages of each process. It is in this particularity of contradiction that its universality exists; it manifests itself through this. Hence more emphasis has to be given to the study of particularity of contradiction. Generally, though there is widespread understanding of the universality of contradiction, the fact is that a correct understanding of its particularity is lacking even among those who uphold Marxism.

Man's knowledge of nature or matter is the knowledge of its motion. Different kinds of motion of objects and phenomena give them their variety. Motion itself is a basic contradiction and different modes of motion create different contradictions. Differences in the basic contradiction inherent in each object and phenomenon demarcates it from others. Common characteristics of objects and phenomenon of different fields reflect common characteristics of their motion. Branches of science which study different fields deal with different modes of motion or contradiction. Thus, action and reaction in mechanics, positive and negative charges in physics, class struggle or the struggle

between productive forces and relations of production in social sciences, the struggle between materialism and idealism or metaphysics and dialectics in philosophy, are some examples. In short, to study different objects and fields, a study of their particular contradiction should be made.

However, just understanding the particularity of each contradiction won't do. "Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods."¹ The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be resolved only through socialist revolution. The contradiction within the Communist party can be resolved only through the method of criticism and self-criticism. Similarly, the contradiction between society and nature can be resolved only through the development of productive forces. When a certain kind of contradiction is resolved a new one emerges in its place. And different methods have to be used to resolve this new contradiction. Dogmatists who refuse to study the particularity of contradictions continue applying the same method, without understanding that contradictions change.

"There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing."² This statement of Mao Tsetung is highly important. For, through this he demarcates Marxian dialectics from Hegelian dialectics. Hegelian dialectics always considers simple contradictions. All processes are presented as simple contradictions containing two opposites. This approach is a result of its starting from the abstract world of ideas rather than from objective reality. But conditions in the real world are entirely different. Here there are no such simple phenomena. In every object and phenomenon there will be many contradictions. In the objective world phenomena exist as complex systems with innumerable contradictions. And

1. Mao Tsetung, 'On Contradiction', Selected Works, Vol. 1, Peking, p. 321.

2. Ibid, p. 322.

society, which is Mao's main subject of study, always exists as a complex phenomenon. At every juncture in society, many contradictions will be operating and the particularity of each contradiction has to be understood and different methods have to be adopted to resolve them. This is what Lenin meant when he said that the essence of Marxism is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

Another aspect to be paid attention to, while studying the particularity of contradiction, is that both the aspects of each contradiction, analysed at each stage, should be studied. Dogmatists always commit the subjective error of seeing only one aspect in a contradiction and ignoring the other. This malady of one-sidedness occurs because the dialectical outlook is not grasped correctly. Ignoring counter revolution while studying about revolutionary forces; overlooking the bourgeoisie while considering the proletariat; seeing only favourable conditions and not considering unfavourable conditions; while overlooking achievements exaggerating shortcomings; refuting legal revolutionary work while emphasising illegal work; thus go the examples of one-sidedness given by Mao. One-sidedness occurs because each contradiction is not grasped in its totality and interconnection.

The basic contradiction of any process will exist throughout it. However in the course of its development different situations may emerge. This can happen due to a change in the intensity of the basic contradiction. Moreover, while the basic contradiction exists without change many other contradictions determined by it may change. The development of capitalism from free competition to the imperialist stage is a good example of this, where the basic contradiction of capitalism, that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, remains the same. Though the basic contradiction has not changed, as its conditions have undergone a thorough change, the method of resolving it will also change. Leninism emerged as the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution to handle the contradiction of this new stage. In

Stalin's study of Leninism, he explained the universality of contradiction in the imperialist stage and by analysing the particularity of Czarist Russia in the context of this universal contradiction, showed how Leninism emerged.

All this goes to show that particularity and universality of contradiction exist in everything. This is so because universality is contained in all particularities. So when we study a subject we should study the particularity and universality contained in it separately and also discover their interconnection.

Summing up what is meant by the study of particularity, Mao says: "...in studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction the contradiction in each form of motion of matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage—in studying the particularity of all these contradictions, we must not be subjective and arbitrary but must analyse it concretely. Without concrete analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity of any contradiction. We must always remember Lenin's words, "the concrete analysis of concrete conditions."³

PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION AND PRINCIPAL ASPECT OF A CONTRADICTION

Mao takes up the question of principal contradiction as part of the analysis of the particularity of contradictions.

This is what he says: "There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions."⁴

3. Ibid, p. 328.

4. Ibid, p. 331.

This formulation is something completely new in the development of dialectics. It is true that this idea was put to use when Marx analysed capitalism and later when Lenin and Stalin analysed imperialism. However, they did this mainly in the course of applying dialectics in practice and did not formulate or put forward the question of principal contradiction as a basic principle of dialectics. Mao was the first to give a correct formulation and it remains one of his major contributions to the development of Marxist world outlook.

Mao expounds this law on speaking about the development of a 'complex thing'. We can see that this law is applicable in any phenomenon having more than one contradiction. Along with this another factor to be taken into account is that, in any phenomenon, however simple it may seem to be, not just more than one but innumerable contradictions will always be present. The Hegelian concept of phenomena, each containing only one contradiction with two opposites, goes against reality. Thus, Mao's formulation is applicable to all phenomena and processes of nature and society.

However complex a process may be, by discovering the principal contradiction and resolving it, conditions for resolving all other contradictions are created. With the resolution of the principal contradiction, a qualitative change takes place in the process, and a new principal contradiction emerges. In capitalist society the bourgeoisie and the proletariat form the principal contradiction, and a fundamental change in society can be effected only by resolving this contradiction. Several other contradictions which exist, such as the contradiction between remnants of feudalism and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and peasantry are determined by this principal contradiction. As in pre-revolutionary China, the situation is far more complicated in semi-colonial countries such as India. In such countries, the principal contradiction will change according to different conditions of direct imperialist aggression or indirect exploitation and repression. When

imperialism launches a war of aggression against a semi-colony, the principal contradiction will be between the imperialist aggressor and this country. But, in another situation, when instead of open aggression, imperialism uses indirect methods of exploitation and oppression, internal contradictions like that between feudalism and the broad masses become principal. This does not mean that all other contradictions have no role at all. They may have different roles according to concrete conditions. However, the decisive role will be that of the principal contradiction.

The study of particularity of contradiction does not end just by finding out the principal contradiction and secondary contradictions in a process. The two aspects of a contradiction, principal or secondary, will not develop evenly and will not be of equal importance. "In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven."⁵ Of the two aspects of a contradiction, one will always be principal. And with the development of the contradiction the principal aspect also will change, that which was principal will become secondary and vice versa. The new supersedes the old through the mutual change of position of principal and secondary aspects of a contradiction. The fundamental character of a contradiction is determined by its principal aspect. So, when the principal aspect of a contradiction becomes secondary and what was secondary becomes principal the fundamental character of the process which contains it itself undergoes a basic change. In feudalism, feudalist forces were principal and the developing bourgeoisie was secondary. Moreover, feudalists were reactionary, and the bourgeoisie progressive. However, the bourgeoisie gradually grew from its secondary role into the principal, grew powerful, pushed down the feudalists into a secondary position. With that the nature of the old society changed; capitalism gained dominance over feudalism. But in capitalism, the prole-

5. Ibid, p. 333.

tariat, the force antagonistic to the bourgeoisie, grows up step by step, gains strength and coming from its secondary position forces out the bourgeoisie and captures the dominant position. The bourgeoisie, a progressive force during feudalism, now degenerates into a reactionary force. The nature of society again undergoes a change with the proletariat becoming the dominant force—socialism replaces capitalism.

Similarly, the principal and secondary aspects of contradictions at all levels transform themselves into each other. Thus, at times during revolutionary struggles, difficulties and favourable conditions interchange one after the other into principal and secondary aspects. This interchange one after the other into principal and secondary aspects. This interchange of a contradiction is one of the most important laws revealed by dialectics. And it is the kernel of dialectics. Without grasping this the essence of dialectics cannot be understood. Mechanical materialists never accept this. Elaborating the problem Mao says: "Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect, and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production, plays the principal and decisive role. The creation and

advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognise that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also—and indeed must—recognise the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism."⁶

This rather long quotation from Mao is given here because a very important aspect of Marxist world outlook is elaborated in it. It deals a heavy blow to mechanical materialism trying to get a foothold in different fields under the guise of Marxism. Earlier we had indicated how Engels pointed out the danger of giving importance only to the economic base and ignoring the reaction of the superstructure. But Engels had not given a precise definition of the relation between the economic base and the superstructure applying dialectics; he had only touched on the question. Again, though both Lenin and Stalin had repeatedly stressed this point in their struggle against revisionism, they too did not arrive at a definition. Lenin had already shown that in the relation between theory and practice, theory would become decisive under certain conditions. Similarly, Stalin had pointed out how, in the relationship between forces of production and relations of production the latter

6. Ibid, pp. 335-36.

plays a decisive role under certain circumstances. But none of them gave a precise definition of the relationship between these opposites. So, revisionists of all hues gaining strength with the support of mechanical materialism, continued to spread the wrong notion that economic base, practice and productive forces always play a principal role. However, Mao's definition which states that such a view is mere mechanical materialism and only that view which recognizes the important and decisive role of superstructure, theory and relations of production under certain conditions is dialectical materialism, unmasked all revisionists. With this they tried to launch a counter-attack saying that Mao's definition was idealistic. Today, in all fields, mechanical materialism and dialectical materialism are locked in an intense ideological struggle centring around this definition put forward by Mao while closely adhering to the dialectical method. This question has a decisive role in contemporary ideological struggle within the world communist movement.

As a result of his study of the principal and secondary contradictions in a process and the principal and secondary aspects of a contradiction, Mao arrives at the law of uneven development. "The distinctive character or particularity of these two facets of contradiction represents the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium."⁷ This is another factor differentiating Marxian dialectics from Hegelian dialectics. Marxian dialectics, which deals with complex contradictions of the concrete world, instead of Hegel's simplistic contradictions could not but formulate the law of uneven development. However, it should be noted that Mao was the first to precisely formulate this law.

7. Ibid, p. 336.

DEFINITION OF IDENTITY

Earlier we saw how Lenin precisely defined the question of unity and struggle of opposites in a contradiction. Marx had made clear, in the first preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* written in 1857, what Marxian dialectics meant by identity. Mao has followed the same definition, "Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation—all these different terms mean the same thing and refer to the following two points: first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of the development of a thing presupposes the existence of the other aspect and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity."⁸

The first thing is that opposites are mutually dependent. Mao cites a good number of examples, no death without life; no life without death; no proletariat without a bourgeoisie, and vice versa; no colonies or semi-colonies without imperialist oppression; and no imperialist oppression without colonies and semi-colonies. This is the case with all opposites. They are always contradictory; but at the same time mutually dependent.

As far as identity is concerned, what is more important than dependence of opposites on each other is that they can transform into each other. The most important thing to be noted is that this mutual transformation takes place only in given conditions. This does not mean that each aspect always changes into its opposite. It only indicates that the possibility for such a change prevails. It also does not mean that the proletariat will directly become a capitalist. The proletariat who was one-time ruled will become the ruler. The capitalist rulers will become the ruled. This

8. Ibid, p. 337.

transformation can be analysed just as the interchange of position between the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction was described earlier. The important thing is that only opposites of the respective contradictions can transform like this.

Lenin himself had categorically stated that while unity or identity was temporary and relative, the struggle between opposites was absolute.

Mao Tsetung differentiates between the two forms of struggle between opposites—antagonistic and non-antagonistic. The struggle between the opposites will become antagonistic and reach a point of explosion only under given conditions. It is in such conditions that class contradictions become intense leading to revolution. It is usual for non-antagonistic contradiction to change into antagonistic and vice versa. The antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions existing in a socialist society and the methods of handling them are given by Mao in his essay, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*. The contradiction between the masses and the enemy classes are antagonistic; they are to be handled accordingly. At the same time, contradictions between different classes and sections of the people are non-antagonistic. If handled correctly, these contradictions can be resolved without antagonistic clashes. If non-antagonistic contradictions are not handled correctly they themselves may turn into antagonistic ones.

Among the three dialectical laws seen in Marxist text books, we have dealt with only one. Both Lenin and Mao have not said much about the other two laws, viz, the development from quantitative to qualitative change and the negation of negation. They dealt with the subject taking unity and struggle of opposites as the central question of dialectics. Speaking on the reason for adopting such a stand, Mao says: "Engels talked about the three categories, but as for me I don't believe in two of those categories. (The unity of opposites is the most basic law, the transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity

of the opposites quality and quantity, and the negation of negation does not exist at all.) The juxtaposition, on the same level, of the transformation of quality and quantity into one another, the negation of negation, and the law of the unity of opposites is 'triplism', not monism. The most basic thing is the unity of opposites... There is no such thing as the negation of negation. Affirmation, negation, affirmation, negation... in the development of things, every link in the chain of events is both affirmation and negation...⁹

Fundamentally Lenin also had taken such a view, but did not elaborate it in particular. However, Mao made it clear without any shade of doubt. All basic philosophical categories operate connected to the fundamental law of unity and struggle of opposites. Such fundamental opposites as quantity and quality are opposites similar to finite and infinite, necessity and freedom, form and essence, positive and negative, possibility and reality, etc. Their intertransformation and interactions operate through the law of the unity and struggle of opposites. Hence, Mao points out, it is not correct to pick out the law of interaction between quantity and quality separately.

Each negation arrives at an affirmation which again is negated. The rise of feudalism was the negation of slavery. But as far as capitalism is concerned the rise of feudalism was not a negation but an affirmation. In this way each negation becomes an affirmation also. This process is to be looked at as a dialectical reaction between negation and affirmation. Moreover it is a reflection of the operation of the law of the unity and struggle of opposites. So Mao points out that to accord negation of negation a status as a law equal to this fundamental law would be wrong. Such an evaluation of the laws of dialectics greatly helps the development of dialectics.

9. Mao Tsetung, 'Talk on Philosophy,' in Mao Tsetung Unrehearsed, Ed. Stuart Schram, 1974, p. 226.

PRACTICE AND THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Marxist world outlook is fundamentally a philosophy of practice. From the Marxist standpoint that it is meaningless to conceive of thought divorced from practice, Mao in his article *On Practice* is examining how human knowledge is formed and developed.

The source of human knowledge is social practice. Productive activity, class struggle, political work, scientific and artistic pursuits, all come under social practice. Basically it can be divided into (1) productive activity; (2) class struggle; and (3) scientific research. Human knowledge is formed and further developed through social practice in these fields. Marxist world outlook holds that practice is principal in the contradiction between theory and practice. That is the materialistic basis of the theory of knowledge. However by establishing that practice is the source of knowledge, it does not mean that knowledge stands on an equal footing with practice. From the level of practical knowledge it grows into theoretical knowledge. This in turn influences practice. Dialectical outlook on knowledge is formed only when this aspect also is taken into account.

The development of the process of cognition goes on dialectically. Ideas are formed in human mind by coming into contact with the external world through sense organs, i.e., through some sort of practice. Knowledge thus formed is called perceptual knowledge. At this stage it is external and superficial. Yet Marxists recognise that the source of all kinds of knowledge is this human experience. This is the thing that differentiates the Marxist theory of knowledge from idealism. Those, who do not recognise this, are idealists. There are people who believe that human knowledge is limited to sense perceptions and that it cannot develop outside this limit. They are empiricists who do not grasp the dialectical outlook and try to turn Marxism into empiricism, since Marxism gives pre-eminence to practice. The essential part of cognition is the accumulation of perceptual

knowledge and the "leap" taking place in human mind as a result of the thought process. The superficial knowledge attained through the perceptual knowledge is transformed into the knowledge of the essence of things and phenomena when rational knowledge, theoretical knowledge, is thus formed. Only then can we understand the internal relation of phenomena taking place in the external world. Mao said: "Knowledge begins with experience—this is the materialism of the theory of knowledge. The second point is that knowledge needs to be deepened, that the perceptual stage of knowledge needs to be developed to the rational stage—this is the dialectics of the theory of knowledge."¹⁰ On the one hand it struggles against idealism, and on the other it smashes the dogmatism of empiricists. It shows that Marxist theory of knowledge develops through the struggle against idealism and mechanical materialism.

The process of cognition is not completed with the development from the stage of perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge. This is only half the way, and comparatively less important half. "Marxist philosophy", says Mao, "holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world."¹¹ Marxist world outlook gives utmost importance to the leap from the stage of rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. It is in this stage that rational knowledge is tested. Its truth or falsehood is determined on the basis of its utility in changing reality. Usually rational knowledge does not reflect objective reality completely.

Only by correcting its defects through practice can it be made to conform to reality. The knowledge that is not thus ratified through practice is thoroughly discarded. Thus rational knowledge formed earlier is rectified through practice and becomes still higher one. It is again tested in

10. Mao Tsetung, 'On Practice', Selected Works, Vol. 1, Peking, p. 303.

11. Ibid, p. 303.

practice. Thus the cyclic process of practice, theory, again practice goes on infinitely and at each stage knowledge rises to new heights. Marxist theory of knowledge holds that human knowledge continuously develops through this endless process.

Here there is a movement from particular to general. Perceptual knowledge begins from particular, and with rational knowledge it becomes general. This development from particular to general does not end here. In practice it is coming back to particular. This process of cognition is thus through a constant cyclical movement from particular to general and general to particular.

As a result of this transformation of practice into theory and theory into practice, material reality becomes ideas and ideas become material reality. Herein lies their identity. Their relation is a relation of identity where one transforms into the other. But it is idealistic to think that they are one and the same. The idealists' attempt is to establish thought itself as material reality. But the identity of material reality and thought revealed by dialectical outlook is entirely different from this. Here their relation is one between opposites. They are the two aspects of a contradiction. That is why they are mutually dependent and transform into each other. The basis of this identity is not their similarity.

In his article *Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?* written in 1963, Mao sums up the Marxian views on the theory of knowledge. It also was written as a reply to the confusion created by mechanical materialists on the question of identity of thought and existence. Mechanical materialists argue that it is idealistic to hold that existence and thought are identical. They say that idea is only a mechanical reflection of existence or material reality and so it cannot in turn become material reality. Mao said: "Often, correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical theory of knowledge.

Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the source of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles, they consider the question strange and cannot answer it. Nor do they comprehend that matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter, although such leaps are phenomena of everyday life."¹²

Not only that the material world creates ideas, but also ideas transform the material world—this is the keystone of Marxist world outlook. The mechanical concept of viewing ideas as a mere mechanical reflection of the material world and incapable of changing the material world is one that denies revolutionary practice. Thus it serves as an effective weapon in the hands of the revisionists in preventing revolutionary practice. That is why Mao waged an uncompromising struggle against the mechanical outlook.

STALIN'S METAPHYSICS

In the development of Marxist philosophy, Stalin has not made any outstanding contribution. None of his works clarifies or sheds new light on dialectics. Moreover, there are serious defects when he sums up the principles of dialectics in the *History of the CPSU (B), A Short Course*. Lenin had criticised Plekhanov and Engels for presenting the laws of dialectics as the sum-total of a few examples. Stalin also follows Engels while dealing with dialectics, and in the process he left out some essential things about dialectics. Mao Tsetung pinpointed these defects.

In this context, the role played by the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tsetung in evaluating Stalin's achievements as well as defects is to be mentioned. In 1956 when Khrushchev came out to demolish Stalin by raising false allegations, Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist Party resolutely exposed the true colour of Khrushchev and upheld Stalin as a great Marxist-Leninist. At the same time Mao did not cover up Stalin's

mistakes. In its document *On the Historical Lessons of the Proletarian Dictatorship* the CPC clarified its views on Stalin. While mistakes were quite natural in the absence of any previous experience in dealing with the complex problems in socialist reconstruction, some were avoidable. Stalin's achievements in leading the Soviet Union along socialist path and in smashing fascism and in giving leadership to the world proletariat tower over his mistakes.

While the international proletariat is duty-bound to uphold Stalin's achievements as a great revolutionary, any attempt to cover up his mistakes in ideological and practical fields would only harm the communist movement. Mao Tsetung took up this task in a meeting of secretaries of Party Committees in January 1957. While speaking on the policy of 'Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom, Hundred Schools of Thought Contend' Mao said: "Stalin had a fair amount of metaphysics in him and he taught many people to follow metaphysics. In the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, Stalin says that Marxist dialectics has four principal features. As the first feature he talks of the interconnection of things, as if all things happened to be interconnected for no reasons at all. What then are the things that are interconnected? It is the two contradictory aspects of a thing that are interconnected. Everything has two contradictory aspects. As the fourth feature he talks of the internal contradiction in all things, but then he deals only with the struggle of opposites without mentioning their unity... Stalin's viewpoint is reflected in the entry on "identity" in the *Shorter Dictionary of Philosophy*, fourth edition, compiled in the Soviet Union. It is said there: "There can be no identity between war and peace, between bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between life and death and other such phenomena, because they are fundamentally opposed to each other and mutually exclusive." In other words, between these fundamentally opposed phenomena there is no identity in the Marxist sense; rather, they are solely mutually exclusive, not interconnected, and incapable of

12. Mao Tsetung, *Selected Readings*, Peking, p. 503.

transforming themselves into each other under given conditions. This interpretation is utterly wrong."¹³

From the standpoint of dialectics these are serious mistakes. This definition contains the same mechanical approach of the traditional logic prior to Hegel on 'identity.' It has nothing to do with dialectics. See what Mao says in 1957 itself about the situation that arose in the Soviet Union as a result of these wrong philosophical premises: "Now in the Soviet Union they will have nothing to do with such "pairs" but are going in only for "singles", asserting that only fragrant flowers, but not poisonous weeds, grow there, and denying the existence of idealism and metaphysics in a socialist country. As a matter of fact, idealism, metaphysics and poisonous weeds, are found in every country. In the Soviet Union many of the poisonous weeds appear in the name of fragrant flowers, and many absurd statements bear the label of materialism or socialist realism. We openly recognise the struggle between materialism and idealism, between dialectics and metaphysics and between fragrant flowers and poisonous weeds. This struggle will go on for ever and will move a step forward at every stage."¹⁴

The mechanical materialistic approach followed in the Soviet Union during Stalin's time prepared the ground for the free growth of idealism and metaphysics and such poisonous weeds. As their existence itself was denied no struggle could be consciously led, nor could they be defeated. And dangerous consequences followed leading to the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union.

The 'policy of a hundred flowers' was formulated by Mao Tsetung in order to allow the divergent ideas to freely contend among themselves, so that a capitalist restoration can be prevented in China. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution evolved out of this policy and was its political reflection. It is how Mao's contributions in the political and philosophical fronts are interconnected.

13. Mao Tsetung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, Peking, 1977, pp. 367-68.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 366-67.

Chapter 8

The Struggle Against Mechanical Materialism

In its fight against idealism and mechanical materialism, more often, it was mechanical materialism that came out as the principal opponent of Marxism. Especially during the time of Marx and Engels, it served as the mainstay of nascent revisionist tendencies. In the revolutionary political front as well as in the philosophical front mechanical materialism overtly and covertly continued its attack on Marxism. That is why all those who tried to uphold the revolutionary essence of Marxism had to wage uncompromising struggle against it. It will be helpful for the present struggle against mechanical materialism in the international level to examine its nature from the time of Marx and Engels.

The most important contribution of Marxist world outlook was in clearly defining the course of social development and discovering how to change the existing social system accordingly. But it is in related subjects that most of the mechanical falsifications have been done. It is a fact that there is not as much stress for the struggle against mechanical materialism in the later works of Marx and Engels as it had been in their earlier works, especially, the *Theses on Feuerbach*. For that reason their adversaries could easily misinterpret most of the fundamental principles of Marxism on social development. For instance, Marx had said, "Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change

their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord, the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist."¹ This statement can be interpreted to mean that the decisive factor in social development is machinery and instruments of production. Marx uses here the changes in machinery to differentiate feudal and capitalist societies.

This provides the basis for misinterpretation by mechanical materialists. But Marx never belittled the importance of man, who created these machines, in changing the social systems. Moreover, he has explained unequivocally that it is man who is the decisive factor in social transformations. Marx said: "Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself."²

All means of production, hand-mill, steam-mill and all, are mere instruments in the hands of the revolutionary classes. In the absence of a labouring people, these instruments are mere lifeless things. They cannot play any part in the social transformation. But mechanical materialists magnify the role of means of production and neglect the role of revolutionary classes.

One can pick out numerous such statements from the works of Marx and Engels which can be easily distorted. Marx and Engels had given more stress to the material factor in the context of exposing bourgeois idealist theories existing in the sphere of history and economics and establishing the principles of historical materialism. Though the dialectical relation between productive forces and productive relations and between the economic base and superstructure is well brought out in all their works, there are certain premises to help establish that it is the productive forces and economic base that are always decisive.

Engels, in a letter to Joseph Bloch, later admitted that

1. K. Marx, 'The Poverty of Philosophy', Moscow, 1973, p. 95.

2. Ibid. p. 151.

the responsibility for such distortions lay with Marx and himself. He said, "According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining factor in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic factor is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its results, such as constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and especially the reflections of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, further developments into systems of dogmas—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their *form* in particular...Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasise the main principle *vis-a-vis* our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to give their due to the other factors involved in the interaction..."³ No doubt, Engels explains things in very clear terms. But it has to be pointed out that he failed in precisely defining the relation between economic base and superstructure on the basis of the dialectical principle of the unity and struggle of opposites. It is understandable in the context of the then stage of historical development. And Engels' fears proved true. The tendency of turning Marxism into meaningless phrasemongering became powerful in the international working class movement, and after Engels' time it captured the leadership of the Second International itself. This mechanical outlook of giving prime importance to the economic element became the philosophical base of revisionism under Bernstein and Kautsky.

3. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 3, pp. 487-88.

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Under the pretext of giving importance to economic base and productive forces they aimed at checking the growth of revolutionary forces. They argued that productive forces in Russia are not sufficiently matured for socialism. Rejecting such nonsenses of the Second International Lenin said: "You say that civilization is necessary for building of socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites of civilization in our country as the expulsion of the landowners and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards socialism? Where, in what books, have you read that such variations of the customary historical sequence of events are impermissible or impossible?"⁴ Russian revolution would not have become victorious had not Lenin smashed the theory of productive forces based on mechanical materialism. World revolution itself would have been hindered.

Lenin continued the fight against mechanical materialism to the end. There developed in post-revolutionary Russia a mechanistic theory that importance be given not to politics but to economics. The leadership was provided by mechanical materialists like Bukharin. Replying to Bukharin, Lenin said: "Politics must take precedence over economics, to argue otherwise is to forget the ABC of Marxism."⁵ This may confuse those who mechanically understand the fundamental Marxist theory that it is the economic base which determines the "superstructure" and it is economics that controls politics. Such people blinded by mechanism cannot see how economic base is influenced by politics, which is the concentrated form of superstructure.

IDEALISTIC DEVIATIONS

Mechanical materialism, widely propagated all over Europe under the leadership of the Second International,

4. V. I. Lenin, 'Our Revolution', Collected Works, Vol. 33.

5. V. I. Lenin, 'Once Again on the Trade Unions' CW, Vol. 32.

was attacked from various quarters. And there were many attempts to defeat it at the theoretical level itself. But most of these attempts deviated into idealistic positions and degenerated into different varieties of revisionism.

Here mention should be made of Georg Lukacs who became the foremost critic of mechanical materialism in the first half of the 20th century, but in due course turned into a spokesman of revisionism. In his *History and Class Consciousness* published in 1922 he tried to trace the roots of mechanical materialism represented by the leaders of the Second International. In the first decades of the 20th century there had developed a tendency, of which Lukacs was an adherent, that totally rejected natural sciences by characterising them as mere bourgeois world outlook. This was a reaction to the attempts by Bernstein and Kautsky to replace Marxism with mechanical materialism in the name of upholding science. Lukacs argued that Marxism was only a philosophy dealing with society. But later, in an introduction to his earlier work in 1967, he admitted that this trend had failed to grasp the essence of Marxist world outlook, that Marxism embraced nature in its totality, inclusive of human society.⁶

But, by the time Lukacs corrected his mistakes he had already become the spokesman of revisionism at the international level. So his self-criticism need not be considered seriously. It was mentioned here just to show how struggle against mechanical materialism goes astray. By adopting such an approach of considering society in isolation from nature, the attempt made by Lukacs and others to fight mechanical materialism in fact led to idealism. They could not fully imbibe the philosophy of practice embodied in the Theses on Feurbach. Practice is basically the process by which man transforms nature. But he confronts nature as a social being, i.e., through social relations. This inseparable relation between nature, society and man is the fundamen-

6. See G. Lukacs, 'History and Class Consciousness' 1967 Preface, p. XVII.

tal undercurrent of Marxist world outlook. Because Lukacs could not understand this all his arguments about the philosophy of practice turned out to be empty phrase-mongering; his analysis of the objectification created by bourgeois society and related alienation became baseless. His attempt at resolving the contradiction between necessity and freedom manifested in natural laws culminated in individualistic and subjective idealism.

The Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci waged an ideological battle against mechanical materialism through his philosophical notes written in Mussolini's prison. The Marxist theory of the inevitability of transition to socialism and communism is easily susceptible for mechanistic and fatalistic interpretations. Gramsci pointed out that this fatalistic factor plays a positive role in history when people lose initiative in their struggle and suffer setbacks. It is this fatalistic belief in "ultimate victory" that keeps up their morale and determination. It acts like a religious belief. Such a condition develops when people remain incapable of taking initiative and remain passive. The situation changes when people become conscious about it and are capable of transforming their circumstances. Gramsci says that even though this mechanistic has its role to play as the primitive philosophy of the people, when it becomes a conscious and coherent philosophy in the hands of intellectuals it causes fatal passivity and indifference. This is an absolutely correct assessment. It is on this basis that Gramsci says that this fatalistic understanding of Marxism should be buried with all honours as it had fulfilled its historical role.⁷

Even though the *Prison Notebooks* does not present a coherent philosophical system, it shows that he could grasp the essence of Marxian philosophy as philosophy of practice. He says: "Thus Man does not enter into relations within the natural world just by being himself part of the

7. See A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of*, 1976, New York, pp. 336-42.

natural world, but actively, by means of work and technique. Further; these relations are not mechanical. They are active and conscious. They correspond to the greater or lesser degree of understanding that each man has of them. So one could say that each one of us changes himself, modifies himself to the extent that he changes and modifies the complex relations of which he is the hub."⁸ While taking such a correct attitude, his statements to the effect that it is the political worker alone who takes part in the activity of changing circumstances show his confusion. It seems that he neglects that fact that those who take part in production and scientific research are also agents in changing conditions.

In his enthusiasm in the struggle against mechanistic materialism Gramsci commits serious mistakes. He criticises Lukacs as idealist for taking Marxism as the philosophy of society alone and not that of nature. But contrary to his own subjective wishes Gramsci also commits the same mistakes. In his enthusiasm for exposing Bukharin's mechanistic materialism he even denies the existence of an objective reality, independent of man. True, Bukharin was propagating pure mechanistic materialism under the guise of Marxism, and Gramsci's effort to expose it is commendable indeed. But if that effort ends up in idealism, it is of no use.

Gramsci says: "The idea of "objective" in metaphysical materialism would appear to mean an objectivity that exists even apart from man; but when one affirms that a reality would exist even if man did not, one is either speaking metaphysically or one is falling into a form of mysticism. We know reality only in relation to man, and since man is historical becoming, knowledge and reality are also a becoming and so is objectivity, etc."⁹ In effect this is negation of an objective world independent of man. It is a fact that man understands nature through his living contacts with it. However, it is through this contact itself

8. *Ibid*, p.352.

9. *Ibid*, p.446.

that he comes to know that nature existed prior to his birth. But to say that we cannot recognise a nature independent of man since he comes to know of a nature independent of him through his activity alone is a Machist stand which had been severely criticised by Lenin. Machists had even theorised that nature existed at that time through the consciousness of then existing living beings. Gramsci tends to take a similar attitude.

This mistake occurs because of not accurately defining the boundary between idealism and dialectical materialism. Any philosophy which does not recognise objective world independent of man is idealistic. It does not become mechanistic by merely recognising the objective world. Dialectical materialism, recognising this objective world, emphasises the importance of man's active participation in his relations with nature.

This deviation takes Gramsci to more dangerous conclusions. He says that generally Marxism studies 'matter' not in the manner of natural sciences but only in its relation with human history. "The various physical (chemical, mechanical, etc.) properties of matter which together constitute matter itself (unless one is to fall back on a conception of the Kantian noumenon) should be considered, but only to the extent that they become a productive "economic element." Matter as such therefore is not our subject but how it is socially and historically organised for production, and natural science should be seen correspondingly as essentially an historical category, a human relation."¹⁰ Matter as such is the subject-matter of natural science, not that of Marxism. Marxism needs to consider any matter in nature only in its relation to human history, production. This is Gramsci's stand. He criticised Lukacs' attempt to segregate natural science from social science and the view that the subject-matter of Marxism was only social science and said that both should not be considered in isolation from each other. But what Gramsci did was simply reducing

10. Ibid, p. 465-66.

nature also as a subject of social science. This shortcut reminds us of Hegel who in order to resolve the contradiction between matter and idea presented matter as transformed idea. In effect Gramsci also reaches Lukacs' standpoint.

The natural laws revealed by natural sciences have an existence independent of man. These laws are not creations of man; regardless of whether man discovers them or not, they will be at work. Of course, the methodology of discovering these laws and their interpretation depends on the stages of development of human history. What is involved in it is only his relation to the natural laws working independent of him. Man's relation to nature can be understood only in relation with human history. But it does not mean that man has created nature or that nature has no existence without man. There is no doubt that natural science is a matter of human relation, a matter of history, because natural science is the sum-total of man's knowledge about nature. And so there is no existence for natural science independent of human history. But nature and natural science are not one and the same. Nature is the subject-matter of natural science. Nature will exist without natural science. The path to ideological confusion is opened up by the stand that nature and natural science are one.

The main characteristic of mechanicism in the sphere of historical materialism is that it always considers economic factors the principal aspect and neglects interaction of superstructure. Gramsci outwits even the mechanicians who propogate mechanicism in the name of Marxism when he says that Marxism can consider the whole external world that is not directly involved in social process only as an "economic factor". He is here extending the dominance of economic factor over to nature also. Thus Gramsci, who set out to fight mechanicism, piunged headlong into the most vulgar mechanicism.

MARXISM AND SCIENCE

The theory of productive forces which served as the basis for capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union is the typical manifestation of mechanical materialism. In the sphere of philosophy mechanical outlook presents itself in another form. Those who uphold the theory of productive forces naturally trumpet the independence and infallibility of science and sow the misunderstanding that science and Marxism are identical. This view is the culmination of a perverted perspective which sees the role of science and technology in the development of productive forces as the determining factor in social development. This is how they try to establish the independent existence of science: "Science or employment of scientific method, is self-supporting, self-justificatory, autonomous. It does not need any independent philosophical foundation, by reference to any collection of first principles or axioms carrying a supposedly more authoritative assurance with them than belongs to science itself."¹¹ This statement about the autonomous existence of science which might appear true is proved totally incorrect when it is examined against the background of the Marxist world outlook. It is true that scientific research in any particular field of science enjoys a certain independence. As a result of the extreme specialization in the field of science today these areas of independent research are being divided up into innumerable compartments. 'Independent' research is carried out in these specific fields of a partial and one-sided nature so that the formulation of a comprehensive outlook on anything is impossible through them. One cannot dispute the facts and laws which are discovered through such independent research, but the discoveries in various branches of science when put together do not constitute a world outlook. Empirical science, especially, is incapable of this.

11. M. Cornforth, 'Marxism and the Linguistic Philosophy', London, 1967, p. 271.

Even by the yardsticks of empirical science, each separate branch of science has neither the capacity nor the right to say anything beyond the discoveries being made in its own extremely limited sphere. There does not exist anything like a 'general science' which covers all the various branches of science. Any move towards such a generalisation would mean a crossing over to the realm of philosophy. Formulating a scientific world outlook is the job of philosophy and not of science. The realm of scientific world outlook and the realm of empirical sciences where objective research is conducted are separate; they represent two different realms. While the latter can claim distinct existence in respective spheres the former cannot. Any world outlook is closely related to ideological positions of the existing classes and consequently neither independent nor impartial. A 'general science' can exist only in relation to a given world outlook. Therefore, we would be going against the Marxist world outlook if we were to speak generally of the independence of science.

Marxist world outlook, dialectical materialism, is not an empirical science. It is not the result of empirical research conducted in a limited sphere. Fruits of research carried out in different spheres of science serve as raw material for the Marxist world outlook but the process of interconnecting them and formulating general laws from them takes place at the level of philosophy. As a result the laws of the world outlook thus formulated cannot be verified in the same form as they are done at the level of empirical science. For example, the law of dialectical materialism which states that the unity and struggle of opposites is operating in all the processes in the universe cannot be proved at the level of empirical science. Whether this law of dialectical materialism operates in any particular branch of science can be examined and found out by that particular branch. But no branch of science can say that it is a law applicable to the whole universe. And there exists no 'general science' which encompasses within the limits of its field of research the whole of the universe. Thus, the

law of the unity and struggle of opposites, the cornerstone of Marxist world outlook, is never proved completely at the level of science. There is nothing surprising in this, since the Marxist world outlook is formed at the level of philosophy. Confusion is only for those who mix up the Marxist world outlook with empirical science.

The thinking, that only ideas formed in the realm of empirical science constitute real knowledge and whatever lies beyond is mere metaphysical rubbish, has of late gained strength among bourgeois philosophers and scientists. Marxist world outlook cannot be proved in the realm of empirical science, therefore, is metaphysical, so runs the argument of these bourgeois philosophers and scientists. Answering Karl Popper, one of their leaders, Maurice Cornforth, the revisionist thinker, explained that laws of dialectical materialism are category statements and therefore cannot be proved in the realm of empirical science.¹² But at the same time, such revisionist thinkers draw comparisons between science and Marxism at the same level as if there existed no basic difference between the two. The correct standpoint for us would be to recognise that using the method of empirical science we would never be able to form a comprehensive world outlook even though it provides the best method to discover truth. We can grasp the essence of the Marxist world outlook only if we comprehend the basic difference between the realms of philosophy and science and establish a healthy dialectical relation between the two.

The crisis in the physical science at the beginning of the 20th century provided an occasion for many Marxists and pseudo-Marxists to question the materialist concept of matter. Lenin correctly explained the difference between science and philosophy in his reply to such questions. Defining matter "as a philosophic category denoting objective reality",¹³ Lenin pointed out that all things con-

12. See M. Cornforth, 'The Open Philosophy and the Open Society',

13. V. I. Lenin, 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,' p. 117,

nected with the composition of matter is the subject for science and only in the sense of an objective external reality, 'matter' became a subject for philosophy. But revisionist philosophers of various hues are trying to create confusion on this question by upholding the infallibility of science and thus attempting to replace Marxism with a mechanical outlook.

SARTRE'S ATTEMPT

What Jean Paul Sartre presented by way of criticism and improvement of Marxian dialectics was another idealistic perspective. Sartre argued, "Materialist monism has successfully eliminated the dualism of thought and being in favour of total Being which is thereby grasped in its materiality. But the effect of this has only been to re-establish as an antinomy—at least an apparent one—the dualism of being and truth."¹⁴

Materialist monism is Sartre's name for dialectical materialism. According to Sartre, when dialectical materialism eliminates the dualism between thought and being by accenting on being, it is only creating a new unresolvable dualism of being and truth. "This gigantic and as we shall see abortive attempt to allow the world to unfold itself by itself and to no one, we shall call transcendental, dialectical materialism."¹⁵

Dialectical materialism which had taken shape as the laws behind the transformations in Universe as a whole is defined by Sartre as external to man. He speaks more lucidly at another point: "In short if there is to be any such thing as dialectical materialism, it must be a historical materialism from within; it must be one and the same thing to produce it and to have it imposed on one, to live it and to know it. Consequently, this materialism if it exists can

14. See J. P. Sartre, 'Critique of Dialectical Reason',

15. Ibid,

be true only within the limits of our social universe."¹⁶

Sartre is telling us that dialectical materialism has existence only in relation to human history. This is only another form of the argument which Gramsci and others advanced. But Sartre does not stop here. His idealistic thinking has its logical evolution. "If we do not wish the dialectic to become a divine law again, a metaphysical fate, it must proceed from individual and not from some kind of supra-individual ensemble."¹⁷

For Sartre, individual existence is the determining factor and everything has to start out from it, a position which is nothing less than a fundamental negation of historical materialism and a head long plunge into idealism.

THE CONCEPT OF OVERDETERMINATION

It was as part of the struggle against mechanism to uphold the true essence of Marxist world outlook that the French thinker, Althusser introduces the concept of "overdetermination". This thesis has been put forward also as an important characteristic of Marxian dialectics to distinguish it from Hegelian dialectics. Althusser deserves attention by the fact that unlike other revisionist philosophers he seriously evaluates Mao's contributions to dialectics. Moreover, for the concept of overdetermination he seeks the help of Mao's contributions also. But it should be noted how dangerous his concept is when he discovers that in the Soviet Union the stage of proletarian dictatorship is over and transition to communism has begun. While recognising that throughout his approach there is this distorted vision, we have to examine whether there is anything new or acceptable in his concept.

Althusser explains the complex nature of the contradictions which prepared the ground for Russian revolution. Lenin could adequately utilise the revolutionary situation because he could correctly assess it. It is this complex

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

union of contradictions which ultimately decides the future of revolution. Althusser names this complex process "overdetermination". Such complex situations have developed in 1848-50 revolutions, 1871 Paris Commune, 1905-1917 Russian revolution and 1918 in Germany. All revolutions except 1917 failed in the absence of such a complex situation. It is a general principle that revolutionary situation develops as a result of the union of a number of contradictions that work in all these cases.

This question of "overdetermination" arises because Marxian dialectics deals with the contradictions of real material world. Whereas Hegel, confining even material world to the sphere of ideas, deals with them as single contradictions at the level of imagination. In fact, this difference arises because Hegel stands on his head in the world of ideas.

In support of the concept of "overdetermination" Althusser utilises Engels' letter to Bloch. Eventhough the ultimate determining factor is economic factor Engels says that an important role is played by the interaction of the various factors in the superstructure. He also reminds that it is a most dangerous tendency to consider that economic factor alone determines the whole of social life. This is what Althusser means by "overdetermination".

Althusser also advances in support of his concept Mao's important formulations that in any complex phenomenon there will be a number of contradictions and one of them would be principal and in a contradiction one aspect will be principal and the other non-principal. These formulations of Mao are important landmarks in the field of dialectics. Althusser does not go an inch forward with the concept of "overdetermination". He only brings out the complex nature of contradictions through this artificial usage. It was Mao Tsetung who found solution to that complex situation through formulating the question of principal contradiction. In short, in the fight against mechanical materialism Althusser could contribute nothing but this fictitious usage of "overdetermination."

Philosophical Base of Revisionism

What is known as revisionism is the anti-Marxist trend which grew within the international proletarian movement in the name of Marxism. Of its historic roots, Lenin said: "But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less integral doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines began to seek other channels. The forms and causes of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half-century of Marxism began (in the nineties) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself."¹ This trend associated with the name of Bernstein tried to revise the basic tenets of Marxism and consequently came to be called revisionism.

Lenin further states the specific features of revisionism on the philosophical plane: "In the sphere of philosophy revisionism followed in the wake of bourgeois professional 'science'. The professors went 'back to Kant'—and revisionism dragged along after the neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the platitudes that priests have uttered a thousand times against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling indulgently, mumbled (word for word, after the latest *Handbuch*) that materialism had been 'refuted' long ago. The professors treated Hegel as a 'dead dog' and while themselves preaching idealism, only

1. V. I. Lenin, 'Marxism and Revisionism', Collected Works, Vol. 15,

an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and the revisionists floundered after them into the swamp of philosophical vulgarisation of science, replacing "artful" (and revolutionary) dialectics by "simple" (and tranquil) "evolution". The professors earned their official salaries by adjusting both their idealist and then "critical" systems to the dominant medieval "philosophy" (i.e., to theology)—and the revisionists drew close to them, trying to make religion a "private affair", not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the advanced class."²

Here Lenin very precisely explains the philosophical base of revisionism that took birth at the end of the 19th century. Revisionism abandons completely the dialectics of Hegel and at the same time spreads an idealism far inferior to Hegelian idealism; it abandons the dialectical character of science and vulgarises it into mere mechanical materialism and then goes on to rely on it. Thus, from the very beginning, revisionism chose primitive idealism and a science which was vulgarised into mechanical materialism, as its philosophical base. After this, revisionism has undergone very many transformations. However, its philosophical base has not changed in essence. In the days of the Second International, revisionism took shape mainly as the ideology of those parties which had not yet captured power—even though in certain contexts these parties had the opportunity to share the crumbs of power with other bourgeois parties. But the revisionism that confronts us today, is one that has come to possess dreadful state power capable of competing, both politically and economically, with the most powerful imperialist powers of the world. Even though it also has, in essence, the very same philosophical base of old revisionism, in details revisionism has acquired many new forms and contents.

With the growth and development of Marxist world

2. Ibid.

outlook, many changes have taken place in revisionism also. The entire history of these transformations is not examined here. The attempt here is only to glance at the specific features of the revisionism that we confront today in its dreadful form, a revisionism which after the death of Stalin had come into the scene under the leadership of Khrushchev, and has today casting off all of its masks transformed itself into a dreadful power with the ambition of reigning over the whole world. It is under the protection of this revisionism which has transformed into social imperialism that the various revisionist trends, hitherto only haltingly and hesitantly surfaced on a world scale, have today come to flourish.

The political problems and numerous associated philosophical problems created by the dominant international revisionist trend under the leadership of Soviet rulers, are examined in detail in the second part. Here we examine the approach of revisionism towards the basic tenets of dialectics.

REVISIONIST ATTACK ON DIALECTICS

It has earlier been made clear that the articles of Mao Tsetung in 1937 represent a decisive stage in the development of dialectics. In the beginning these articles did not receive sufficient international attention. But with the ideological struggle against Soviet revisionism waged by the Chinese Communist Party under Mao's leadership and by other Marxist-Leninists from 1956 onwards taking an international dimension the contributions made by Mao in the field of dialectics turned into powerful weapons in that struggle and along with it became the immediate duty of the entire revisionist camp to attack the essence of dialectics developed by Mao. And through such attacks against dialectics, the revisionists exposed the poverty of their philosophy too.

The law of dialectics, defined by Mao, that among the

innumerable contradictions in any phenomenon one will always be the main contradiction and that between the two opposites of a contradiction, one will always be the principal aspect, became the headache of all sorts of revisionists. What Mao Tsetung has done is not only just defining a general law. Through the analysis of concrete process Mao has explained beyond all doubt as to how, in given conditions, the opposites of each contradiction mutually change places from principal to non-principal and vice versa. Not only that, he also pointed out as to how mechanical materialists distort this dialectics. The differentiation between dialectical materialism and mechanical materialism contained in the precise definition of Mao Tsetung disarmed all sorts of revisionists.

Mao showed clearly how the standpoint of dialectical materialism can be firmly established without allowing it to slip into idealism on the one hand and into mechanical materialism on the other. Therefore, the revisionists could criticize the standpoint of Mao only by presenting it in a distorted manner. In order to cover up the poverty of their mechanical standpoint they attempted to prove that the standpoint of Mao was idealistic. A Soviet book which critically analyses the philosophical viewpoints of Mao Tsetung resorts to such an attempt. It says: "If we examine Maoism from this point of view, we shall find that it takes its departure from the primacy of the subjective factor: 'subjective activity', politics and ideas. This is expressed in such premises as the following: productive relations and not productive forces play the major role in the socialist mode of production; politics and not economics are the ruling factor in socialist society; moral impulses and not material interest are the main factor in building socialism; men and not weapons decide the outcome of a war."³ What follows is their further appraisal of Mao's standpoint: "In the final analysis, all such premises are reducible to the

3. M. Altaisky and V. Georgiyev, 'The Philosophical Views of Mao Tsetung', Moscow, 1971, p. 66.

thesis that subjective activity, falsely interpreted, is the decisive factor in socialist society, which really amounts to an attempt to subject the objective laws of socialist construction to the subjective activities of the leadership and provide a theoretical justification for subjectivism, voluntarism and adventurism in home and foreign policy."⁴

These criticisms may appear to be logical. But when they are examined in accordance with the laws of dialectics, they could be found misplaced. Firstly, Mao has made it clear beyond all doubt that it is the aspects representing the objective factors that are usually the principal aspects of the above mentioned opposites. But he also says that in given conditions, this state will change and that this earlier non-principal factors will occupy principal position. The point is how to determine what these given conditions are. In socialism, the period of transition from capitalism to communism, it is the rapid transformation in productive relations that pave the way for further development of productive forces. The transition period of socialism is one of those periods of social relations about which Marx mentioned. In that period the change in the relations of production become inevitable as a result of the transformation of productive forces till that period. The resolution of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production that emerged under capitalism is possible only in communism. Therefore, in the entire transition period in between them, it is the change in the relations of production that is important. In the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production, the period of socialist transformation comes within those *certain given conditions*, where, as Mao said, the non-principal aspect becomes the principal aspect. It is, therefore, absurd to say that Mao always gives importance to relations of production. Not only that, it is also baseless to differentiate productive forces and relations of production as objective and subjective factors. These two

are nothing but the objective factors of the economic base. The actions of both of them take place in accordance with the objective laws.

It is quite natural that the revisionists oppose the standpoint that in a socialist society the decisive factor is not economics but politics. It does not mean that decisive role the economic laws played in history disappears. When Marxism says that the transformation from capitalism to communism is inevitable, it does not mean that the transformation is predetermined and will take place without the proletariat consciously leading that process. It is a reality that the proletariat take up the task due to the necessity of the historical laws themselves. The conscious action of the proletariat itself is due to the result of the action of the objective laws. In the period of transition from capitalism to communism it is the conscious action of the proletariat that is reflected in proletarian politics. The proletariat can not give leadership to this transformation without this politics as its guide. The proletariat act by fully understanding the economic laws operating in society. The politics of the proletariat take shape only on the basis of understanding these laws. That is why it is said that politics is the concentrated form of economics. The task of the proletariat is not only to recognise necessary economic laws. Its main duty is to change society in accordance with that recognition. It is through proletarian politics that the task is fulfilled. The revisionists contend that, without the conscious intervention of the proletariat, communism will be realised as a result of the objective economic laws acting mechanically. Marxism-Leninism is in direct opposition to it. What the Marxist-Leninists mean by political action is leading the objective economic laws to specific ends through conscious control. It was in this sense that Lenin said: "Politics cannot but have priority over economics; to argue otherwise is to forget the alphabets of Marxism." It is in the same sense that Mao spoke of putting "politics in command". It is of utmost importance to revisionists to discard this commanding position

4. Ibid, p. 66-67.

of politics and to give primary importance to economics in the socialist transition period. This is inevitable for the revisionists in order to depoliticise the people and thus to clear the obstacles on their road to capitalist restoration. In a socialist society where the proletarian politics has the commanding position, capitalist restoration will not be that easy. The philosophical base that works behind this approach is the mechanical materialistic viewpoint of always giving unconditional importance to economics.

On the problem of the contradiction between economic base and superstructure also, the revisionists take the very same standpoint. The revisionists question Mao's definition that in given conditions transformation in superstructure plays an important role in social progress. Thereby the revisionists take a mechanical materialistic standpoint that the economic base will always be principal. The very same defect which Engels pointed out in his letter to Bloch, i.e., the very same mechanical approach which makes the Marxist world outlook meaningless by its contention that the economic factor is the only decisive factor is repeated even today by the revisionists. In the very beginning of socialist transformation, the transformation in the economic base proceeds very fast. But the revolution in the superstructure will not keep pace with that. It is not easy to change old ideas and customs in the same way as changing the economic structure. Therefore, in order to consolidate and develop further the changes taking place in the socialist economy an intense struggle in the superstructure is essential. That is why Mao said that in order to prevent capitalist restoration, a very important place is to be given to revolution in superstructure in the entire historic period of socialism. It is on the basis of this new discovery that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was started in China, and Mao repeatedly reminded that it will have to be repeated many more times. But the Cultural Revolution is a nightmare to all sorts of revisionists. The Chinese experiences proved that the Cultural Revolution can find out and smash them and their attempts by the revisionists

at capitalist restoration. Therefore revisionists everywhere contend that the economic base is always of paramount importance and that once the base has been transformed, the superstructure will mechanically transform by itself. The result will be that there will not only be any change in the superstructure, but the superstructure that remains unchanged will reverse the changes in the economic base also and will restore it to the old position.

Reliance on material incentives for increasing production is the inevitable consequence of this mechanical approach of the revisionists. A Soviet philosophical dictionary defines material incentives as "the basic principle of socialist economy."⁵ Criticizing the viewpoint of a book on Soviet economics which says that material incentives are "a powerful motive power in developing socialist production," Mao Tsetung said: "To treat in this way, the anxiety for individual material interests as an absolute principle will certainly create the dangerous tendency of encouraging individualism."⁶ The practice of giving material incentive to people to increase production is basically a capitalist method. The aim behind this principle is to instigate the tendency of private property that has been existing in man for centuries and the tendency of individualism which emerges from it. This is the cornerstone of the capitalist system. It is impossible to march forward to communism without overcoming this. Even though in the initial stage of socialism material incentives will have to be resorted to, what the Marxist-Leninists adopt is the system of gradually controlling and reducing the material interests and bringing in its place moral incentives. It can be done only by adopting the approach of giving primary importance to changes in relations of production, revolution in the superstructure and politics. The basis of moral incentive is to aim at production in the interests of society and not

5. A Dictionary of Philosophy, Ed. M. Rosenthal and P. Yudin, Moscow, 1967, p. 272.

6. Mao Tsetung, A Critique of Soviet Economics, MR Press.

narrow individual interests, by developing higher political consciousness. This moral interest can be developed only through constant class struggles by putting politics in command. This is impossible for revisionists who resort to mechanical approach. Therefore, they adopt the path of material interests and make capitalist restoration easier.

The revisionists complain that Mao always gives supreme importance to man in all fields. They have also discovered that Mao resorts to this approach because of the standpoint he has adopted against mechanical materialism. Another Soviet philosophic work says: "Mao's exaggeration of man's role in production is closely connected with his erroneous view of the relationship between the productive forces and the relations of production, between the basis and the superstructure."⁷ Mao has never exaggerated the role of man in an unprincipled fashion. This standpoint of opposing mechanical materialism is quite in accordance with the laws of dialectics. The revisionists' complaint is that, on all problems, Mao gives supreme importance to the role of man or to the subjective factor and that he neglects the other factors. Mao has never ignored other factors. He has always precisely defined as to which is primary and which secondary. *Hsin-Chian She*, the organ of the Department of Philosophy of the Science Academy of People's China says: "Although instruments of labour in production, the objects of labour, weapons in war, etc., are extremely important, and although they are, undoubtedly an important factor in production and war, nevertheless, they occupy a place of secondary importance compared to man. Wherever it may be, in the production struggle or the class struggle, it is man and not material that plays the decisive role."⁸

Mao Tsetung has himself made this thing clear: "Weapons are an important factor in war, but not a deci-

7. A Group of Authors, 'A Critique of Mao Tsetung's Theoretical Conceptions', Moscow, 1972, p. 54.

8. Hsin-Chian She, 1965, No. 7, quoted in 'The Philosophical Views of Mao Tsetung', p. 69,

sive one. It is man not material that counts."⁹ At no point Mao gave undue exclusive importance to man, discarding all other factors. On the contrary, it is by giving the other factors due importance that Mao places man in the commanding position. Mao has defined that in the normal course, the productive forces are principal in the contradiction between productive forces and productive relations and that only in certain circumstances do productive relations become principal. But, in the relation between man and instruments of production which are two components within the productive forces, man is the primary factor in the normal course. But here too, dialectics does realise the other possibility taking place under certain circumstances. This is the case in the relation between man and weapon in war, where, in the normal course, man is the primary factor. It was in the light of this viewpoint that Mao said that atom bomb is a paper tiger. It was only natural that the revisionists should attack Mao's approach when Khrushchev's own brandishment of the atom bomb failed to intimidate Mao Tsetung.

INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION AND REVISIONISTS

It is the basic tenet of Marxism-Leninism that man is the primary factor in productive forces. This was what Mao also repeatedly asserted. But the revisionists always give pre-eminence to instruments of production and not to man, though some of them may engage in phrasemongering about the primary position of man. But the revisionists are not just satisfied with their contention that the productive forces occupy always and unconditionally the primary position vis-a-vis the relations of production. They succeed in their efforts only when the instruments of production are brought to the forefront after the role

9. Mao Tsetung, Selected Works, Vol. 2, Peking, p. 92.

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of man in productive forces is pushed back into a position of unimportance. Only then does the theory of productive forces, which is the most powerful weapon of the revisionists, gain its dominance completely.

In the Soviet Union and in other revisionist countries this theory had come into practice much earlier. Now, in China, too, this is being put into practice. Let us see how Maurice Cornforth, one of the philosophers who play a leading role in fabricating a philosophical outfit to Soviet fascism, explains this theory. He ordains science and technology pivotal position among productive forces. His new discovery is that the development of science and technology has already introduced such far-reaching changes as to bring about total changes in class relations. With the advent of automation, including the computer, the definition of Marx about machines has to be amended. Automatic systems take away the direct participation of worker in the labour process, thus changing totally the relation between man and labour, he argues. He says: "What therefore becomes necessary is for man to agree amongst themselves on the purpose to be served by production, and co-operate to design, build and supervise the instruments which will carry out our purpose. This purpose can only be the satisfaction of human needs. To achieve it, everyone must work to the best of his ability to help with the design and maintenance of the productive system.

"The guiding principle of a Communist society thus turns out to be no unworldly ideal, but the statement of how human relations will have to be arranged to adapt to the uses of a very highly automated system of production. To build such a system is not a problem of building utopia, but a problem of engineering."¹⁰ This is the most natural consequence of the theory of productive forces. At last communism has become a question of technology and engineering. Marx's aim was to liberate man from the

10. M. Cornforth, 'The Open Philosophy and the Open Society', p. 352.

sphere of necessity where man degenerates into a mere instrument in the midst of machines, and to take him into the realm of freedom. But the communism of Cornforth is in direct opposition to this Marxian concept. A machine system that grows out beyond the will of man, and men who become compelled to regulate the relations among themselves in accordance with that complex machine system—this is what is there in the Communism of Cornforth. It has no relation with the Communism of Marx. Here man gets chained in the sphere of necessity without any outlet for escape. This is the inevitable fate of man who trails behind the instruments of production. But Cornforth says: "If technology could be developed and put straight into full use without check, it would probably not be unrealistic to say that a condition of world communism could be established within fifty years."¹¹ On further thought, this gentleman calculates that at the most it will take a hundred and fifty years for establishing communism. It does not surprise us to come from one who says that world communism will be realised if the trade unions of capitalist countries bring the economy of those countries under democratic control.

CHINESE REVISIONISTS

Interestingly, the struggle between Marxist-Leninists and revisionists inside the Chinese Communist movement was from the very beginning not confined to the political sphere; it was fought at the philosophical level too. After the victory of the revolution, this struggle attained new forms and content and became intense. Like the Soviet revisionists, the revisionists in China also made use of the very same theory of productive forces as their most powerful weapon for capitalist restoration. The Chinese revisionists also raised the very same arguments of the Soviet revisionists which have been examined above. When trying

11. Ibid, p. 358.

to criticize Mao philosophically the Soviet revisionists at the same time do not forget to uphold the attempts of their Chinese comrades also. Because of the specific feature of the two-line struggle that was going on in the Chinese Communist Party from the very beginning, the struggle between the Marxist line and the revisionist line on various problems manifested more and more openly. The socialist readers openly opposed and defeated, then and there, the capitalist readers who appeared covertly and overtly.

From the 1930s itself, the struggle against mechanical materialism has been going on constantly within the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tsetung. Mao's important contributions to dialectics form part of that struggle. The struggle against mechanical materialism also played a prominent role in the approach towards class struggle that goes on under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The revisionists rejected on several pretexts the class struggle under socialism. The capitalist restoration that was taking place in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Khrushchev provided valuable experience to the true Marxist-Leninists led by Mao. It was in the light of these experiences that Mao Tsetung could precisely formulate the theory and practice of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was by opposing and defeating the theory of productive forces put forth by the capitalist readers under the leadership of Liu Shao-chi and Peng Teh-huai that Mao gave shape to his viewpoint. The Cultural Revolution was the consequent result of this struggle. The theory and practice of class struggle taking place under the dictatorship of the proletariat evolved through the Cultural Revolution. It was only a beginning of the struggle taking place in that sphere. Even after the Cultural Revolution was initiated, the capitalist readers appeared on the scene in new forms. These capitalist readers, with Lin Piao and Teng Hsiao-ping as their leaders, were also the spokesmen of the theory of productive forces. And we have seen earlier that the theory of productive forces grows out of the philosophical base of mechanical

materialism.

The capitalist readers, who, under the leadership of Teng Hsiao-ping, captured power in China after the death of Mao, are also none else than the followers of Lin Shao-chi and company. By terminating the Cultural Revolution, they have abandoned the revolution in the superstructure and are putting into practice the theory of productive forces effectively.

In the 1950s and the '60s it was the philosopher, Yang Hsien-chen who appeared as the philosopher-representative of revisionists in China. He was also a prominent party leader. His work was preparing the philosophical base for the standpoints of Liu Shao-chi and the other revisionists. He fabricated a theory of "composite economic base" in order to justify the theory of productive forces. His basic approach was metaphysical. In all these, his ignorance of dialectics stood out in strong relief. He tried to handle all complex contradictions employing the method of formal logic. By examining a single example we can see the philosophical base of Yang Hsien-chen's approach.

Like the Soviet revisionists, his criticism was also that Mao Tsetung gave undue importance to man and to subjective factor. In order to establish this, he tried to prove that Mao's standpoint on the identity of being and thinking was idealistic. About the three major struggles that took place in the philosophical front in China, an article written by the Revolutionary Mass Criticism Writing Group discusses the problem thus: "Materialist dialectics teaches us that the law of the unity of opposites is universal. The identity of opposites, that is, their mutual dependence for existence, is undoubtedly applicable to the relationship between thinking and being. By denying the identity between thinking and being, Yang Hsien-chen was denying that the two opposite aspects of the contradiction, thinking and being, depended on each other for their existence and could transform themselves into each other in given conditions. If Yang Hsien-chen's assertions were true, the law of the unity of opposites as taught by dialectics would not

be universal."¹²

Yang's argument is that thought is a reflection of matter and that only as much does thought have relation to matter and to say that there is identity between them is idealistic. The question here is how the dialectic category of identity is being looked into. According to the law of identity of formal logic, it is the relation between two identical objects that is called identity, and opposites can never be identical. Opposites of all basic contradictions are absolute-opposites which can never be identical. In terms of this logic, to say that thinking and being are identical means that two are similar, or that two are one and the same. Then one will reach the idealistic standpoint that thinking is being, i.e., matter. But in dialectics this is not what is meant by identity. Identity is the mutual dependence of opposites and the possibility for transforming themselves into each other in certain conditions. Such opposites will not be similar. Therefore, when it is said that thinking and being are identical, it is not meant that they are one and the same. It means that they are mutually depending opposites and capable of transforming themselves into each other in certain conditions. Having failed to understand this Yang discovered idealism in it.

In reply to this metaphysical criticism Mao said, "matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter."¹³ The mutual transformation of consciousness and matter takes place through practice. Ideas taking shape in the brain change into objective reality through practice; consciousness becomes matter. This in turn gives birth to new ideas; matter transforms into consciousness. It is this mutual dependence and mutual transformation of matter and consciousness that are the basis of their identity, a fact the metaphysical revisionists could not grasp.

12. Three Major Struggles on China's Philosophical Front (1949-64), Peking, 1976, p. 6.

13. Mao Tsetung, 'Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?' Selected Readings, p. 503.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ALBANIAN REVISIONISM

The Party of Labour of Albania contributed considerably to the development of world communist movement during a crucial period of its growth by adopting an entirely revolutionary stand. When Khrushchevite revisionism surfaced, the Albanian communists, though numerically small, made history by uncompromisingly opposing and fighting it along with the Chinese comrades. Marxist-Leninists and revolutionaries the world over praised their revolutionary courage and determination. Also in overcoming the crisis faced by the world communist movement in the last two decades—the period of the advent and growth of social imperialism—the PLA under the leadership of Enver Hoxha played a historically important role side by side the CPC under the leadership of Mao. Outliving the strong setback caused by world revisionism, the world communist movement did make a great leap in theory and practice. In that growth the Albanian communists, too, made their contribution.

When such a party came out, after Mao's death, with their criticism against the three-world theory, many people thought that it was based on a revolutionary stand. But very soon it became clear that the attack was against all the correct standpoints upheld by Mao and it was an attack against Mao Tsetung Thought itself. Afterwards the Albanian leadership admitted this openly. Of course, the Albanian volte-face created confusion among Marxist-Leninists the world over, as it came from a party that gave unstinted support to the CPC and Mao Tsetung for two decades. In order to understand this erroneous standpoint an in-depth study is needed. An inquiry into the philosophical base of revisionism becomes relevant in this context.

METAPHYSICS

In order to discover the correct meaning of the present standpoint of the Albanian leaders, a bit of old history has to be examined. Even though in the fight against Khrushchevite revisionism both the CPC and the PLA fought together, there were many differences of opinion between the two parties which did not manifest then. Among them, a very important one was on the question of evaluating Stalin. Mao and the CPC took correct positions on the merits and the demerits of Stalin. This we saw in the seventh chapter.

But while the CPC took such a correct standpoint, the PLA did not take a clear position on this question. Though they agreed that Stalin committed certain mistakes, they did neither make clear what those mistakes were nor what lessons were to be learnt from them. At the same time an impression was created that on the whole they agreed with the Chinese evaluation. Both the parties agreed on the point that Stalin's merits outweighed his mistakes and that he was fundamentally a great Marxist-Leninist. Therefore, the differences of opinion on the details of the question did not manifest outwardly.

But it is clear from Mao's 1957 January speech—see page 95 of this volume—that his evaluation of Stalin is more deep and that it is related to fundamental philosophical problems. Mao puts forth the basic tenets of dialectics while explaining the policy of "Let hundred flowers blossom". He pointed out that as a result of recognising only struggle, not unity, between the opposites and following the approach of pre-Hegelian formal logic on the question of the unity of opposites, mechanical standpoint manifested in many of the Soviet policies formulated under the leadership of Stalin.

It was due to this metaphysical standpoint that Stalin declared that class struggle and antagonistic classes had ceased to exist in the Soviet Union with the collectivization of agriculture. This standpoint led to grave political consequences.

Stalin could have avoided many mistakes if he had grasped the dialectical approach about the unity and struggle of opposites, because he was able to take many correct political standpoints though the philosophical base was erroneous. At times, Stalin said that class struggle had ended but corrected that standpoint later and recognised the existence of class struggle. Moreover, even when officially class struggle was not recognised, Stalin suppressed the antagonistic classes by giving leadership to the proletariat; though there were mistakes in the means adopted for it. The enmity shown towards Stalin by the spokesmen of capitalism under the leadership of Khrushchev is the best proof that Stalin stood firm by the side of the proletariat even when these mistakes were being committed.

When Mao Tsetung, in contradistinction to the policies of Stalin, recognises the existence of classes and class struggle in the entire socialist period and says that anti-Marxist ideas and philosophies exist, he does not give free rein to them. Class struggle is recognised in order not to underestimate the antagonistic classes but to unleash fierce struggle against them and defeat them. Likewise the existence of erroneous trends and anti-Marxist ideas are recognised in order to struggle against them and defeat them. Denying or banning these opposites is a subjective approach. Those who resort to such a metaphysical approach without recognising the reality entangle themselves in idealistic illusions and become incapable of changing reality.

Enver Hoxha has now discovered that the basic criticisms of Mao against Stalin are all out of place. Hoxha's evaluation is that it was to justify their anti-Marxist stand that Mao and others unleashed criticism against Stalin. He says, "Just as the other revisionists, Mao Tsetung used the criticisms against Stalin in order to justify his deviation from the Marxist-Leninist principles which Stalin consistently defended and further enriched."¹⁴

14. E. Hoxha 'Imperialism and the Revolution', pp. 438-39.

Hoxha evaluates that Stalin did not deviate at all from the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism; that is, according to him, the metaphysical standpoints of Stalin were correct. In essence, he, too, follows the very same metaphysics of Stalin. The mistakes Hoxha & Co. commit here cannot be considered trivial. Many of Stalin's mistakes were unavoidable due to historical reasons. But the wrong Hoxha has done to the world revolutionary movement by obstinately following the same mistakes is not trivial.

But if Stalin's metaphysics is to be upheld as Marxism-Leninism, Mao has to be tarnished. Hoxha evaluates Mao's 'Hundred Flowers' policy as revisionist. Hoxha's misinterpretation of Mao's stand against banning opposing schools of thought goes on thus, "From this Mao Tsetung draws the conclusion that idealism, metaphysics and the bourgeois ideology will exist eternally, therefore not only must they not be prohibited, but they must be given the possibility to blossom, to come out in the open and contend. This conciliatory stand towards everything reactionary goes so far as to call disturbances in socialist society inevitable and the prohibition of enemy activity mistaken."¹⁵ This shows that Hoxha does not hesitate to misinterpret and distort Mao's standpoint in his eagerness to justify Stalin's metaphysical standpoint. Mao has asserted that all counter-revolutionary activities of the enemy class ought to be suppressed forcibly. He has also pointed out how contradiction between the enemy and the people and that among the people are to be handled. Incorrect ideas must not be suppressed but have to be fought in ideological struggle, this is Mao's stand. It is not surprising that Hoxha, who justifies and carries out the policy of suppressing ideas opposed to the official line by bureaucratic means, cannot digest Mao's stand.

Another discovery of Hoxha is that Mao's definitions of contradictions are mechanical. "It is true that in many of his writings, Mao Tsetung frequently speaks about

15. Ibid, p. 411.

opposites, contradictions, the unity of opposites, and even uses Marxist quotations and phrases, but, nevertheless, he is far from the dialectical materialist understanding of these problems. In dealing with contradictions, he does not proceed from the Marxist theses, but from those of ancient Chinese philosophers, sees the opposites in a mechanical way, as external phenomena, and imagines the transformation of the opposites as a simple change of places between them."¹⁶ Hoxha proceeds further to say that Mao's is a jugglery of using certain external opposites in ancient philosophy, such as above and below, right and left, etc., etc., and that he denies internal contradictions, does not see that as a result of the transformation of the opposites qualitative change takes place and contradictions are resolved, and so on.

Before examining the validity of these criticisms, it is necessary to take into consideration criticisms of similar nature raised against Mao from certain other quarters. One is the British revisionist philosopher, Maurice Cornforth. He says, "...in very ancient Chinese philosophy the world and everything in it was said to be the product of the action and conflict of eternally opposite forces or principles manifesting themselves in all the particular oppositions to be found in the universe...Something of the sort has, indeed, recently been repeated by Mao Tsetung and his followers in China. For this way of thinking, the existence of opposites and their inseparable connection is the fundamental fact of the universe. It is an ultimate mystery for which there is no accounting. It just *is* so."¹⁷ Further, just like Hoxha, Cornforth also raises such criticisms against Mao that his approach is mechanical, not dialectical, etc.

Let us see the nature of the criticism levelled by Soviet revisionists also on this subject. After quoting a list of universally common opposites enumerated by Mao, they say, "Even if we ignore the fact this is practically word for

16. Ibid, pp. 414-15.

17. M. Cornforth, 'The Open Philosophy and the Open Society', New York, 1970, p. 101.

word repetitions of one of Lao Tzu's theses, we must still note that Mao is treating contradictions as a mechanistic contrast between outward opposites."¹⁸ Here also, there is the criticism that Mao does not see the internal relation between the opposites, etc.

Is it a mere accident that the criticisms raised by Hoxha, Cornforth and the Soviet revisionists bear unique resemblance between them? Never. They resemble each other because all of them adopt basically similar standpoints against Mao. It is true that Mao used to mention many of the universally common opposites in daily life as examples. Such references may be found in ancient philosophy too. But it is childishness to say, because of this alone, that Mao repeats ancient philosophy. The dialectical character of nature is universal. This has been noticed by the ancient philosophers as well as by the common folk. It is from this that references about opposites have become universally common in ancient philosophy and in the language of the masses. The presence of opposites in all spheres is a reality. They do not cease to be opposites just because they are presented in ordinary language. Those who oppose the use of such examples are those who consider that the subject dealt with by dialectics is incomprehensible to the common man and that it is not related to daily life. Their attempt is to turn dialectics into an instrument of phrasemongering for a set of intellectuals.

It is true that ancient philosophers and common men viewed these simple opposites mechanically. But we have to understand as to how Mao dealt with them. Mao has precisely explained that the development of each phenomenon is determined mainly by their internal contradictions. He has also defined the problem of discovering the principal contradiction from among the innumerable contradictions in each phenomenon and of discovering the principal and non-principal aspects within a contradiction. Those, who accuse Mao of seeing the opposites mechanically,

18. M. Altaisky and V. Georgiyev, 'The Philosophical Views of Mao Tsetung', p. 99.

betray only their ignorance of even the ABC of dialectics. Those, who say that Mao, who has precisely defined as to what is meant by the unity of opposites, sees the transformation of opposites as a mere mechanical change of places, are only deluding themselves. The coterie of critics from Hoxha to the Soviet revisionists are not deliberately indulging in this false game. The fact is that they are not able to grasp the basic laws of dialectics. These people caught up within the four walls of the pre-Hegelian logic have been blinded by metaphysics.

THE QUESTION OF TWO-LINE STRUGGLE

The two-line struggle within the party is one of the spheres where the metaphysics of Enver Hoxha is most clearly manifested. He had said much earlier, "A Marxist-Leninist Party which is respected as such cannot tolerate the existence of two lines in the Party; it can, therefore, not tolerate the existence of a faction or many factions. If a thing of this kind is manifested the Party cannot and should not tolerate its existence, not even for a short period of time."¹⁹ It is clear from this that he considers the two-line struggle as a subjective thing created or destroyed at the will and pleasure of the party. According to the CPC, two-line struggle has been going on within the Party from the very beginning. The Tenth Party Congress in 1973 declared that ten important two-line struggles had taken place in the history of the Party. Mao viewed the two-line struggle as a sign of active existence and growth of the party. It is a reflection of the class struggle in society. It is by struggling against the wrong line that the correct line takes shape, grows and exists. The correct line cannot exist without struggling against the wrong line. The stand of the Albanian leadership that the correct line will grow by itself and exist without struggling against the wrong line is metaphysical. The essence of this argument is that the unity

19. E. Hoxha, Speeches 1967-68, Tirana, 1974, p.36.

and struggle of opposites are not relevant as far as the line of the party is concerned.

The Albanian leadership attempts to justify philosophically this metaphysical stand about the two-line struggle thus, "The struggle between two roads should not be confused with the struggle between two lines. The struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road of development, which include the struggle between the proletarian ideology and the revisionist ideology, is an objective law, whereas the struggle between opposing political lines is a subjective phenomenon, which emerges and develops only in certain conditions, when the party allows factional trends and anti-Marxist lines to be created in its ranks. Such opposing revisionist trends and lines usually manage to crystallize when the party of the working class does not wage a correct, determined and consistent class struggle within its ranks all the time."²⁰ It is a strange argument to say that the struggle between two roads and between two ideologies is an objective law, and that the struggle between two lines alone constitutes a subjective phenomenon. If the class struggle outside the party is an objective law, then, its reflection, the two line struggle must also be an objective law. It takes place whether the leadership desires it or not. If the leadership puts into practice the illusion that the two-line struggle can be eliminated on the basis of its subjective decision, the result will be the strengthening of party bureaucracy detrimental to democracy. In the CPSU, such a situation arose at the time of Stalin. Though the two-line struggle did not take place openly, the spokesmen of the line opposed to the line of the party leadership were organising themselves in the disguise of the followers of the party line. History has proved that Khrushchev and Co., who were supporting the leadership entirely during the time of Stalin, were hidden bourgeois agents. If two-line struggle is not allowed to take place by resorting to subjective orders, the consequence would be as dreadful as

20. Ndreçi Plasari, 'The Class Struggle within the Party', Albania Today, No. 1, 1978, p. 13.

what happened in the Soviet Union. The consequence of the policy being put into practice in Albania would naturally be the same.

Hoxha in his new criticism says, "The class struggle in the ranks of the party, as a reflection of the class struggle going on outside the party, has nothing in common with Mao Tsetung's concept as the "two lines in the party".²¹ Then, in which form does the class struggle within the party take place? Hoxha and Co. do not explain this. They say that individuals, opposing the line put forward by the party leadership, can express their opinion, but it will not be allowed to develop into an opposite line. If even an individual puts forward a different idea opposed to the existing line, then it will constitute a different line. It is childishness to think that it becomes a line only if it comes from some people in an organised way. When it is raised thus it becomes a sectarian trend. Such trends have to be controlled according to the principle of democratic centralism. The two-line struggle is the ideological struggle waged on each question coming up inside the party by a struggle waged within the framework of the discipline of democratic centralism. Only thing is that, in certain periods, it becomes more manifest. To say, that only in such instances does it become a two-line struggle, is due to the distorted concept about contradictions. They are metaphysicians who do not recognise the universal law of contradiction, that contradiction exists in each phenomenon from the beginning to the end. Deborin of the Soviet Union was one such person who raised such an argument. Mao criticises this standpoint in his article on contradiction. Deborin says that only a difference exists in the beginning and only when the development of the phenomenon reaches a definite stage does it become a contradiction. Mao contended that it was not correct and that contradiction existed even from the very beginning in whatever primary form it may be. It is the metaphysical standpoint of Deborin that

21. E. Hoxha, 'Imperialism and the Revolution', p. 400.

Hoxha & Co. have adopted. Hoxha becomes a disciple of Deborin when he says that the differences of opinion, etc., manifesting in the beginning of the class struggle taking place within the party cannot be considered a contradiction between two opposite lines and that they become a contradiction between two lines only when they develop and reach a definite stage. It is from such a metaphysical standpoint that he makes a vain attempt of unleashing an attack on Mao.

The fact that Hoxha is able to wear the Marxist-Leninist label and that nobody in the PLA is prepared to expose his metaphysics indicates the real state of that party. Since the two-line struggle is not allowed, those who can expose Hoxha's metaphysics keep quiet; the two-line struggle takes place behind the curtain. If this state of affairs is continued, the consequences in the long run will be much more terrible than the apparent discipline now prevailing in the Party.

The Albanian leadership sees in the decline of the CPC, liberalism of adopting two lines and in the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, bureaucracy. It views bureaucracy and liberalism as subjective phenomena that can be controlled by the party leadership. This vulgar outlook prevents them from seeing the laws of class struggle that worked behind the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China. It hopes to prevent capitalist restoration in Albania through a subjective decision of the leadership. This approach has rendered it incapable of detecting capitalist restoration, even if that takes place. In effect, it will be providing leadership to capitalist restoration.

It can be seen how the revisionist trends of Hoxha, Khrushchev and Teng are inter-related, however different they may appear, through a common metaphysical, mechanical philosophical base. This similarity in the philosophical plane, beneath the external differences in political standpoints, brings out the common nature of all sorts of revisionists, helping us to further intensify the struggle against revisionism.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EUROCOMMUNISM

Eurocommunism is the continuation and the natural result of Khrushchevite revisionism. When Khrushchev first put forward his principle of peaceful coexistence, the Italian revisionist Togliatti pointed out the necessity of further developing it. The revisionist leaders of Italy, France and Spain have, now, fulfilled that mission. As a result, revisionism has come out in its true colour. The Khrushchevite revisionists even now try to put on the cloak of Marxism-Leninism. But the Eurocommunists have even done away with that futile attempt. They have openly denounced the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

The spokesmen of Eurocommunism themselves say that its philosophical base is the idealistic bourgeois point of view about democracy and freedom. The joint communique, issued by the Italian and French Communist Parties in Rome on 15 November 1975, says, "The Italian and French communists hold that the march towards socialism and the building of a socialist society, which they propose as the prospect for their countries, must be achieved within the frame work of a continuous democratization of economic, social and political life. Socialism will constitute a higher phase of democracy and freedom: democracy realized in the most complete manner."²²

The Spanish leader, Santiago Carrillo, the most eloquent spokesman of Eurocommunism, presents the same problem in a different manner. According to him, socialism should take up the responsibility of protecting democracy which capitalism is not prepared to protect. He says that these are the things Eurocommunism has to prove before the people in the context of the present crisis of democracy, "That democracy is not only consubstantial with capitalism, but that its defence and development require the overthrow of that social system; that in the historical con-

22. Quoted in 'Eurocommunism--An Analytical Study' by Ajit Roy, p. 71.

ditions of today, capitalism tends to reduce and in the end destroy democracy, which is why democracy must proceed to a new dimension with a socialist regime."²³

Even if all the theoretical explanations of Carrillo and others are examined, it can be seen that they do not move an inch beyond the limit of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois concept of freedom. According to them, the most important feature of democracy is universal franchise. The political framework wherein different political parties can freely work is to them the foundation of democracy. They look forward to a confederation of different political parties and organisations. In essence this is nothing but a variety of the existing bourgeois democratic system.

Carrillo questions Lenin's conclusion that democracy is a form of state and that when state itself withers away in communism, democracy will also disappear. He accuses Lenin of underestimating the basic nature of democracy and equating it with bourgeois state in his attempt to deal with the revisionists who upheld bourgeois democracy.²⁴ He claims a new perspective of democracy for those who have passed through the experiences of post-October revolution, especially of "Stalinist degeneration". For them democracy is an important factor of socialism and communism.

Carrillo & Co. are repeating, in the name of changed situations, the very same revisionist arguments fiercely criticized by Lenin in *The State and Revolution* and *The Proletarian Revolution and The Renegade Kautsky*. They are too cheap to deserve any consideration in the present situation of the development of world communist movement.

These people have grasped not even an iota of Marxist viewpoint about freedom. What they value most is such things as the so-called freedom of expression permitted under bourgeois democracy. The bourgeois concept of freedom, arose as the philosophy of laissez-faire capitalism,

23. S. Carrillo, 'Eurocommunism and the State'. London, p. 40.

24. See *ibid.* p. 90.

based itself on individualistic idealism suited to the needs of the production relations at that time. Today, the Eurocommunists plead for democracy and freedom standing on the same philosophical base of idealism and liberalism.

As a close companion of this idealism, mechanicism, the essential component of bourgeois philosophy, can also be seen in the views of Eurocommunists. Further developing Khrushchev's theory of peaceful transformation, they conclude that revolutions through armed uprising, like the October Revolution, are not possible in any of the developed capitalist countries; alternate ways are to be sought. Carrillo says, "They have to be roads in which democratic mass action is combined with action by the representative democratic institutions..."²⁵ The discovery of the Eurocommunists is that in developed capitalist countries only such activities confined to the four walls of bourgeois democracy are possible, because of the growth in productive forces and unprecedented increase in the armed might of the state.

It is a fact that due to the development of productive forces capitalist production has been extremely socialised. But the conclusion of Carrillo that, "socialist society has matured in the womb of developed capitalist society",²⁶ is absolutely baseless. Though production is getting more and more socialised, it is basically the capitalist relations of production that leads production. Only those ignorant of the ABC of Marxism-Leninism can say that a socialist society based on socialist relations of production has matured within the capitalist society. The attempt to establish socialist relations of production can be commenced only after breaking the entrenched capitalist relations of production, and that is possible only by a total revolution. And the socialist relations of production can be firmly established only as a result of continuous revolutions taking place in the realm of relations of production. This is the experience of all the past revolutions. Ignoring these realities,

25. *Ibid.* p. 51.

26. *Ibid.* p. 48.

the Eurocommunists have resorted to the standpoint of mechanical materialism, equating the development of productive forces to changes in relations of production. This is another form of the theory of productive forces put forward by Maurice Cornforth and others. This mechanicism gives rise to the standpoint that all problems have been solved with the development of productive forces and hereafter no revolution is needed. It is not surprising that the Eurocommunists, who have replaced revolution with bourgeois reformism, have become eloquent spokesmen of this mechanical outlook.

Another factor, according to Eurocommunists, against revolution is the rapid growth in weapons, especially nuclear weapons. These arch revisionists see, not men, but weapons. They cannot realise that atom bomb is a mere paper-tiger in the hands of a revolutionary people. This mechanical approach of giving importance to weapons over man is the common nature of all sorts of revisionists.

It is quite natural that they have abandoned proletarian dictatorship. The Eurocommunists cannot accept the Marxist-Leninist stand that the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential for establishing proletarian democracy in the place of bourgeois democracy. The reason is clear. What they want to establish is, not proletarian democracy, but bourgeois democracy.

Having adopted mechanical standpoint in all basic questions, the Eurocommunists try to create the impression that they give stress to transformations in the superstructure and ideological sphere; thereby, present themselves as fighting against mechanicism. But the reality is just the opposite. The transformation in production relations can be led forward through a continuous revolution in the superstructure only after a beginning has been made for a thorough change in production relations by a revolutionary transformation. But, instead of making revolution in production relations, the Eurocommunist stand of giving stress to the process of democratization in the superstructure is a mechanical approach totally against revolution, as, in

effect, it prevents revolution in production relations and thereby revolution in the superstructure, too.

In short, it can be seen that there is a fundamental agreement between the standpoint of Eurocommunists and that of Khrushchev and Teng Hsiao-ping.

Chapter 10

Necessity and Freedom

An intimate scrutiny of the history of dialectical materialism to date reveals mechanical materialism to have been its most active opponent. Even further: it has, in its practical revisionist forms, often dominated the scene, masquerading as dialectical materialism. How could mechanical materialism, that had lost its philosophical base with the very advent of materialist dialectics, hold on with such tenacity for so long? On what philosophical base did it flourish safe all these years? Answering these questions has become crucial to our struggle against mechanicism to further the cause of the Marxist world view.

The solid base for mechanical materialism was provided by the great leap in science that accompanied the growth of capitalism in the 18th and the 19th centuries. The philosophy of that epoch was dominated by the belief in the infallibility of science. All the questions handled so far by philosophy were declared to have been answered by science once and for all. The unflinching self-confidence of the 19th century science and mechanical materialism can well be read in these words of the scientist Laplace, "We must thus envisage the present state of the universe as the effect of its previous state, and as the cause of that which will follow. An intelligence that could know, at a given instant, all the forces governing the natural world, and the respective positions of the entities which compose it, if in addition it was great enough to analyse all this information

would be able to embrace in a single formula the movement of the largest bodies in the universe and those of the lightest atoms, nothing would be uncertain for it, and the future, like the past, would be directly present to its observation."¹

This statement reflects in full the mechanical understanding of the universe characteristic of the 19th century science. Laplace claims that the movements of all objects in the universe right from the atoms to the galaxies can be determined as perfectly as the Newtonian laws of motion can determine the direction and destination of an object. This neat conception of the universe allows for no uncertainties. Everything goes on being repeated never for once deviating from the predetermined laws of necessity. The necessary laws discovered by science are deemed inviolable. The science of the 18th and the 19th centuries was founded on the notion of the necessity of natural laws. Every natural law was thought a necessity; nature thus was controlled by a cumulative necessary law that emerged from many similar laws. This conception gave rise to the rigid picture of the universe mechanical materialism presents. It is interesting to observe that this deterministic concept of the universe presented by science was not fundamentally different from the fatalism of spiritualists. In fact, many of the new discoveries being made in different sciences were enough to shake to the core the belief in an unchangeable natural law; yet science continued to be in the grip of the concept of necessity.

NECESSITY: THE DIALECTICAL POINT OF VIEW

Mechanical materialism bases itself on the concept of necessity formulated in the name of natural laws. The notion of necessity should, of course, bring forward, too, its opposite, the problem of chance. But the relation

1. P. S. Laplace, "Essei Philosophique Sur les Probabilitis" quoted in *The Philosophy of Science* by Peter Caws, 1965, p. 300.

between chance and necessity was handled one-sidedly in the age of mechanical materialism. Engels considered chance and necessity fundamentally opposed to each other like cause and effect or identity and difference.²

Engels explains how the problem of the relation between chance and necessity had been a riddle for the majority of the 19th century scientists with their mechanical outlook. A section of them considered chance and necessity two mutually exclusive and totally unrelated thought determinations. According to them, both exist side by side in nature. They assumed the decisive specific characters of phenomena to be necessary, and the casual and non-specific characters, accidental. They believed that necessity alone was the subject-matter of science, while chance was external to it. In short, they treated as necessity the things that could be brought under a general law, and the rest, as chance. Thus they left out of science everything that is unknown or inexplicable; everything it could not explain was ascribed to God.³

Another section of the scientists Engels terms 'determinists' disposed of chance by denying it altogether. They argued that only simple, direct necessity prevailed in nature. Everything written off by the above-mentioned scientists as being casual, non-specific and thus belonging to the realm of chance was now brought over to the realm of necessity. In effect, this outlook also led to God. If everything in nature is necessary, everything is fate; and it foreshadows Providence. This view leaves everything to fate, and thus amounts to saying that everything is chance. It was this mechanical outlook looking upon chance and necessity as mutually unrelated that reigned supreme in the world of science in the 18th and the 19th centuries.⁴

Engels, after pointing out these two false conceptions, explains the correct stand: "In contrast to both concep-

2. F. Engels, 'Dialectics of Nature', p. 216.

3. Ibid, p. 218.

4. Ibid, p. 219.

tions, Hegel came forward with the hitherto quite unheard-of propositions that the accidental has a cause because it is accidental; and as just as much also has no cause because it is accidental; that the accidental is necessary, that necessity determines itself as chance, and on the other hand, this chance is rather absolute necessity. (Logik II, Book III, 2: 'Reality') Natural science has simply ignored these propositions as paradoxical trifling as self-contradictory nonsense, and, as regards theory, has persisted on the one hand in the barrenness of the thought of Wolffian metaphysics, according to which a thing is *either* accidental *or* necessary, but not both at once; on the other hand, in the hardly less thoughtless mechanical determinism which in words denies chance in general only to recognise it in practice in each particular case."⁵

The Hegelian interpretation quoted here by Engels may appear ambiguous on account of the mistake in Hegel's general approach. Hegel's argument was that chance and necessity are mutually dependent and identical; it was their dialectical relationship that he established. This is precisely what the natural scientists of the day failed to grasp.

Engels explains further how Darwin neatly expounded the dialectical relationship between chance and necessity in his historic book on evolution; during the same period in which natural science got enmeshed in mechanical materialism. Engels comments on the Darwinian theory, "The Darwinian theory has to be demonstrated as the practical proof of Hegel's account of the inner-connection between necessity and chance."⁶

Marx also approved of this evaluation by Engels. In a letter to Engels on 19 December 1860, immediately after the publication of Darwin's work on organic evolution, he said, "This is the book which provides the natural historic basis for our concept."⁷ This statement shows how Marx connected his world view with natural science.

5. Ibid, p. 220.

6. Ibid, p. 306.

7. Ibid, p. 7.

FROM MECHANICAL DETERMINISM TO MECHANICAL INDETERMINISM

Engels had demonstrated how natural science went forward with its mechanical outlook despite the Hegelian definition of the dialectical relationship between chance and necessity; Engels' comments also could not change the course of natural science. Mechanical determinism continued to hold sway over natural science upto the end of the 19th century. The view that all things in nature are subject to the pre-determined necessary laws held on unimpeded.

But the situation changed by the end of the 19th century. True, Darwinism had offered a strong challenge to mechanical determinism, but its foundations began to shake only when the inadequacy of Newtonian mechanics was demonstrated by the new advances in physical science in the last decade of the 19th century. It was realised that the basic tenets of Newtonian mechanics were applicable only to limited areas and that new laws had to be propounded for the broader areas in the study of universe. This led to the outcry that natural science on the whole was in the grip of a profound crisis. Confusion prevailed in natural sciences at the beginning of the 20th century. The chaos inspired several forms of idealistic philosophy. Many self-styled 'Marxists' also used the crisis in science to put forward entirely strange and distorted versions of 'philosophy'. Lenin exposed the hollowness of these ideas while explaining the crisis in science, "Modern physics is in travail; it is giving birth to dialectical materialism. The process of childbirth is painful. And in addition to a living healthy being, there are bound to be produced certain dead products, refuse, fit only for the garbage heap."⁸ As Lenin points out, the growth of science from mechanical to dialectical materialism will happen "not directly but by zigzags".

8. V. I. Lenin, 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism', Moscow, 1970, p. 302.

sometimes even with its back turned to it. An examination of the history of dialectical materialism during the one century and a quarter since its inception proves the truth of this judgement.

The theory of relativity and quantum mechanics that originated at the beginning of our century dealt fatal blows to mechanical materialism; and thus were significant steps towards a dialectics of science. But such an immediate advance is impossible for science subject as it is to the cruel intrigues of capitalism. It is moving forward in the manner in which Lenin envisaged its growth, 'groping' and 'by zigzags.' The theory of relativity and quantum mechanics together dethroned mechanical determinism only to replace it by mechanical indeterminism.

The theory of relativity destroyed all the absolute theorisings of Newtonian science. Quantum mechanics gave it a more severe blow. The fine finitude of cause and effect does not exist in the microcosm of the basic particles of nature. The motion of those infinitesimal particles is entirely unpredictable; the Newtonian laws of motion are irrelevant to this process—these conclusions of quantum mechanics smashed the foundations of Newtonian science. The indeterminism of the microuniverse put forward by quantum mechanics now took the place of the universal determinism of old science. In their eagerness to blow up the theory of indeterminism beyond all proportions, philosophers overstepped the very facts discovered by quantum mechanics. They said that the laws hitherto discovered were incompatible with the basic characteristics of nature. Laws of cause and effect, and of necessity were now written off as mere figments of fancy. Such were the formulations of the new indeterminism that entered the arena challenging mechanical materialism.

Only a real comprehension of the dialectical character of natural laws can help us discover the shortcomings of both mechanical determinism and indeterminism. The question of the laws of nature is primarily one of necessity.

THE QUESTIONS OF CHANGING NECESSITY

We have to examine the common features of dialectical laws in order to understand correctly the laws of nature and necessity. Philosophical categories evolved as definitive steps in the development of human thought. But they were reflections of the laws about nature and man. Here is Lenin: "...the categories of thought are not an auxiliary tool of man, but an expression of laws both of nature and of man."⁹ The argument put forward by some that only the laws of history come under the purview of Marxist world-view loses its base in the light of this correct Leninist formulation.

Lenin explains this further by interpreting a definition by Hegel, "Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development 'of all material, natural and spiritual things', i.e., of the development of the entire concrete content of the world and of its cognition, i.e., the sum-total, the conclusion of the *History* of knowledge of the world."¹⁰ No knowledge about universe is outside the scope of dialectics. This is why we say that Marxism is the total integrated view of all things in the universe including man.

Let us attempt to discover the basic nature of all laws including the laws of dialectics. We have already found, while examining the contribution of Lenin in the 6th chapter of this book, the importance of Lenin's comments on laws and the relationship of cause and effect. Here we are dealing with the laws working behind natural and social processes. Lenin upheld Hegel's struggles against the mechanical attempts to simplify the concept of law and deify it as an absolute; at the same time he disentangled the true essence of this concept from the mystifying interpretations of Hegel to give it a more precise definition. Laws are the particles and links that represent the mutual relations and

9. V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks, Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 91.*

10. *Ibid*, pp. 92-93.

the unity of complex universal processes subject to ceaseless change. The laws representing universal relations appear as static, stable and unchanging points since they deal with those universal processes that go on being repeated in endless, uniform patterns. Law says that anything necessary in a particular circumstance cannot but happen. In short, laws represent the necessities in the infinite processes of change in the universe. They are like motionless islands in a turbulent sea; the storm and tumult of the sea may often change their contours, dissolve some and create some anew.

Each law has its contradictory universal and particular aspects. Water boils at 100°C in a definite atmospheric pressure—this is a law of nature. This law acts as a necessity wherever the right circumstances obtain, in any corner of the universe. This is the universal character of this law. It also contains its particularity in its universality: a definite atmospheric pressure and similar conditions are required for water to boil at 100°C. So the law can act only under certain particular circumstances; its operation is strictly conditional. The law becomes meaningless and impracticable once the specificity of circumstances and the consequent conditionality are removed. This is the particular character of this law. All natural laws have such specific particularities. In the light of these facts Lenin's definition of laws acquires an added significance. The universality of each law indicates its inseparable relation with universal processes while its particularity represents the static state created by particular and specific circumstances. The law states that that process is repeated in the same manner under specific circumstances. This necessity gives the natural laws that static nature. Lenin was taking into account this particularity when he said that each law is "narrow, incomplete and approximate". But the mechanical materialists presented necessity based on this particularity as being complete and absolute. Blind to the dialectical relationship of the universality and particularity of each law, they pictured the particularity of the law as its

universality; that is, they presented the incomplete, limited and approximate necessity arising out of the particularity of each law as being complete, unconditional and absolute universality. That was how the mechanicians hoped to form a complete, unconditional and absolute picture of the universe by putting together the really incomplete, limited and approximate laws of nature. The world of science till the end of the 19th century was entirely in the grip of this maimed and mechanical concept of natural laws.

When Engels said, "The eternal laws of nature also become transformed more and more into historical ones",¹¹ he was suggesting the particularity of each natural law. No natural law can claim a validity wholly free from its circumstances or its historical conditions. The necessity of any natural law is only one that is conditioned and limited by historical circumstances.

The necessary nature of each particular natural law renders impossible a total necessity embracing the whole universe. The innumerable processes of nature working on the basis of different conditional laws go on interacting with one another. No law can operate in real life, in nature, with the accuracy with which it works in the perfectly controlled and conditioned atmosphere of a laboratory, for each law of nature has to act in the midst of various numberless and uncontrollable forces. Thus each law is in constant confrontation with the operational areas of several different laws. Hence the possibilities of the interaction among the areas of various laws are literally infinite.

The question of infinite possibilities is of particular relevance to the examination of the problem of laws and necessities. The existence, even of an atomic particle in the universe, is being influenced by all other objects in the universe. The phenomena and the processes in the universe are infinite; so the possibilities of their interaction are also equally infinite. The question of macro-infinity may appear irrelevant to the limited sphere of human experience, and

11. F. Engels, 'Dialectics of Nature', p. 238.

this feeling is not altogether improper. But even the most limited spheres are not free from the influence of unlimited circumstances.

Dialectics examines the relation between the finite and the infinite on the basis of their identity. These opposites are interdependent and interchangeable. The argument that macro-infinity has nothing to do with the finite life of man becomes baseless as we view the relation between the finite and the infinite in the manner. Infinity is contained even in that which is most finite and vice versa; similar, too, is the relation between macro-infinity and micro-infinity—they, too, depend on each other. So the interaction between macro- and micro-infinities takes place even in the most limited areas of study and experience. That is why Lenin said, "Not external power converts the finite into the infinite, but its (finite's) nature."¹²

Countless contradictions remain ever active in every phenomenon in all fields from the microcosm to the macrocosm. They also influence one another. It is not impossible for practical purposes to limit to a number the main contradictions even in the processes of the atomic world. The influence of myriads of minute contradictions acts behind the apparently few main contradictions. They in turn influence the operations of the major contradictions and the principal contradiction in different proportions. While the inner contradictions within each process thus influence and react with one another every one of them also reacts with innumerable processes outside in varying degrees. This interaction of the many internal and external contradictions of different phenomena gives rise to a very complex state of affairs. This is true of even the apparently minutest processes. This does not mean that there are no laws that govern each of these processes. Doubtless, the nature of a process is determined by the principal contradiction and its preponderant aspect; however, it is wrong to neglect

12. V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 111.

the influence of several external and internal contradictions upon the operation of this, principal, contradiction. It was this state of affairs that Althusser sought to explain by the concept of 'overdetermination'.

Let us examine the case of some complex systems. Take for example the human society. A lot of laws acting on the social level alone remain in permanent interaction within this system. Several contradictions, like the ones between productive forces and production relations, base and superstructure, mental labour and physical labour, and town and countryside, are active in a class society. An analysis of the different levels of the same society will uncover different laws related to the contradictions of qualitatively different areas. Countless laws, like the economic, historical, political, militaristic and psychological ones, act within the system of the society, influencing and fighting against one another. The activities of these countless laws and the related contradictions are confined to the framework of the social system. It is not possible in the normal course for them to act beyond the sphere of the necessary relations created by that social framework. And yet the possibilities of the interaction of these laws and contradictions within that framework itself are literally infinite. Several unforeseeable and unprecedented combinations are created by the interaction of the peculiarities of countless individuals in the society—though within the general framework of individual and society—with the laws and contradictions of various levels. Such new combinations are, usually, incapable of breaking the existing general framework. But in certain contexts, these new properties and the new laws corresponding to them shatter the existing frame of necessities and create new necessities and new laws.

It is possible for us to discover the laws of the general development and transformation of society and to predict or define the various new relations and possibilities likely to be formed during the process of that development. Even in the case of general developments, we can only grasp

their movement from one stage to another and cannot predict, by a study of the present circumstances, the future directions of the development of mankind, since in reality no one has determined them in advance. It is the infinitude of the possibilities of interaction among the complex contradictions and laws in the social process that renders an accurate prophecy impossible. New properties and combinations are constantly emerging from the interaction of circumstantial complexities. It is through this process, that entirely new properties, 'emergent properties' as they are called, are evolved in each stage of development. These 'emergent properties' always emerge by breaking the existing framework of laws and necessities. This process is going on not only in society, but in all the spheres of universe.

Marx, after a profound analysis of the circumstances at the climax of the 'laissez faire' capitalism had reached by the middle of the 19th century, came to conclude that proletarian revolution was imminent in all full-grown capitalist countries. Only such a conclusion was possible in those circumstances. But mankind's later progress took a different, yet untroudden, course. The stage of 'free competition' gave way to monopoly and capitalism grew into imperialism. The emergent property of imperialism evolved out of the complex interactions of the capitalist society. Imperialism could be correctly defined and evaluated only at the time of Lenin. Lenin foresaw the dangerous possibility of capitalist restoration even after the proletariat had seized power. Yet it was impossible in those days to prophecy how a socialist order could degenerate into social imperialism instead of progressing towards communism. History, however, did conceive such a phenomenon, and it has now appeared before us as a concrete reality. That is why we are trying today to analyse and define this new phenomenon. True, we can even now predict the inevitable progress of society towards communism; but it will be in vain to attempt to forecast all the zigzags, twists and turns in its course, and all the novel

phenomena and stages that may yet emerge on the way. The world communist movement even today entertains several obsolete concepts regarding the transition to communism only because we have not yet entirely freed ourselves from the fond illusion created by the mechanical materialists that it is possible to accurately predict the entire future course of nature and society. We are able to explain accurately, on the basis of our analysis of capitalism, why the transition to communism is necessary and inevitable; but it will be unrealistic and undialectical to try to predict the various courses this transition may take. Dialectical materialism that envisages the constant origin of emergent properties from the interaction of innumerable contradictions, is opposed to all concepts of a predetermined or predestined path of development. It opens up before us infinite possibilities for the emergence of new properties, and new courses of development that have not yet come into existence anywhere in the society or in the universe.

So far we have examined only the laws that act within one system—society. But several natural laws outside the periphery of social laws too exert their direct or indirect influence on the operation of different social laws. Take the case of the human body, a system belonging to a different sphere. As an individual, man is an inseparable part of society and subject to its laws, but his physiological functions are controlled not by social laws, but by biological laws that are basically different from them. Human body itself appears as an extremely complicated system from a biological point of view. That system itself is a conglomeration of various different systems like the nervous system or the circulatory system, each of which has its own laws. The structural framework of the system called the human body emerges as the sum-total of the complex interactions of these different subsystems. The difference in the physical structures of various individuals comes from the difference emerging from the complex interactions of a variety of factors within the general

framework of the human body. The physical and mental peculiarities of individuals borne out of these differences further complicate the operation of social laws. Thus the biological laws working within the human body directly or indirectly influence the active manifestation of social laws.

Similarly, the different spheres subject to the operation of natural laws influence biological as well as social laws in the interaction between man and nature. The interactions of such various spheres and the new properties likely to emerge from them are too complicated to allow precise definitions and anticipations. The mechanical concept entertained by scientists like Laplace that the developments and directions of all the objects in the universe can be defined accurately in advance is only a fanciful delusion.

This is equally true of the complexity in the interactions of contradictions at all levels in all the systems and processes of the universe, right from the atoms to the constellations. The Marxist worldview takes into account these complexities in their entirety and thus throws off all mechanical points of view. We shall presently discuss the question of analysing these complex interactions.

THE ROLE OF CHANCE

We have already dealt with the role of necessity in the interactions of the numerous contradictions in each field and the laws emerging therefrom. Chance, the opposite of necessity, also plays a significant role in such interactions. Even though necessity and chance are the two opposites of the same contradiction, the mechanical materialists of the 19th century and the revisionists who followed them had accorded unlimited importance to necessity at the expense of chance. Even the self-styled Marxists of our time follow the same stand adopted by the scientists of the 19th century so thoroughly criticised by Engels with regard to the

relation between necessity and chance. They think that science is the study of necessity only and that chance is the very synonym of man's ignorance. We have already seen how Engels explained, on the basis of Hegel, that the dialectical point of view altogether rejects such a stand. Yet, deep confusion still prevails on this issue in philosophical circles. In effect, it is the mechanical approach that has exerted wide influence in this matter.

According to mechanical materialists, 'chance' denotes things whose cause is yet unknown; hence it will disappear when the progress of science reveals the causality behind all things. This new mechanism differs from the old in that it denies the cause-effect relation in nature altogether and holds that chance occurrences with no cause are what happen everywhere in nature.

Dialectical materialism maintains that cause-effect relation is common to all natural occurrences. This is, of course, different from the mechanical law of causality which claims that when two things happen repeatedly, one after the other, they have a cause-effect relationship and that the former is the cause and the latter, its effect. The modern mechanists, on the other hand, argue that two things can never repeat so that the law of causality has no validity in the universe. They first reduce causality to a narrow mechanical definition and then denounce it claiming that such mechanical occurrences do not happen in reality. The fact is that no event repeats itself in an exactly similar, mechanical, fashion; at the same time events do repeat in nature. Each incident preserves its essence on repetition, undergoing, at the same time, changes in details. This is not mechanical repetition, but is dialectical repetition. This is the kind of repetition going on in nature and serves as the basis of the concept of causality envisaged by Marxism.

We call an event 'accidental' not often because it is causeless nor because we are ignorant of its cause. Look at this example from daily life. 'A' has reserved a seat in a train for a long journey; he sets out by car to the railway

station. On the way, the car breaks down, he is late and the journey does not take place. After a few hours he receives the shocking news that a terrible accident has befallen the train and all passengers in the reserved bogie died on the spot. 'A' now gloats over his luck and understands that it is the trouble of the car-engine, he has been cursing, that saved him. His escape is a prima facie case of chance occurrence. Why do we call it 'chance'? Is it because we are ignorant of its cause, or because it has no cause at all? Neither, obviously. A's escape has a definite reason; we know it too. The break-down of his car has a cause; that was why he missed the train. The railway authorities say that the train accident also had certain definite reasons. Thus all the different events in this incident have their causes; nor are we ignorant of them. Yet we hold that A's escape was accidental.

The breakdown of the car and the train accident are the two major events in the story. They have no direct relation with, nor have they influenced, each other. The train accident happened not because of the trouble of the car; nor was there trouble with the car because it foreknew the accident. These two mutually unrelated events conjoined in an individual called 'A' which made possible his escape. 'Chances' emerge where mutually unrelated events conjoin as in this instance.

In order not to consider the escape of 'A' as an instance of chance, one will have to prove the relationship between the breakdown of the car and the train accident. One will then have to say that the car's breakdown was a premeditated step designed to save 'A' from the anticipated train accident. Such a control can be exercised only by some supernatural agency that foresees all things in nature and manages all affairs in the light of that foreknowledge. For those who believe in such an agency, the escape of 'A' is not accidental; it is only the enactment of divine judgement. But for those who refuse to entertain such superstitions and who attempt a scientific understanding of nature, it is an instance of 'chance'.

Similar accidents with a recognisable cause constantly occur in all the spheres of nature. Many of these accidents that represent the chance encounters of mutually unrelated things can be avoided by planning proper control mechanisms. But accidents that originate from the fundamental characteristics of nature are inevitable. These inevitable accidents are the creation of the infinite possibilities of interaction between the laws and contradictions active in the many spheres of nature. To avoid them, one will have to control and restrict these possibilities. Such control, however, is impossible. Chance, thus, is not the illegitimate offspring of our ignorance, but a legitimate and fundamental reality of nature.

This proves that chance, like necessity, has also an independent existence. There is unity and struggle between them being the opposites of the same contradiction. How is this unity and struggle being concretely expressed? The Hegelian definition, quoted by Engels, is of little help here. In real nature phenomena exist as complex systems full of countless contradictions. Each system gets its framework of necessity from the laws which define its particular character. But several subsystems also act and react according to their own laws within this framework of necessity. This results in the emergence of numberless accidents within the same system. In the normal course, these accidents also fall within the framework of necessity and hence ultimately express the same necessity. But there are certain contexts in which the preponderance of these chance occurrences shatter the very frame work of the system. Old necessity is thus changed, but the shattering of old necessity does not lead to the uncertain reign of chance: a new necessity now replaces the old one; and the struggle is resumed with its old intensity. Only seldom does chance thus gain upperhand in the struggle between chance and necessity—only in certain decisive stages, where old necessity undergoes destruction and transformation. However, necessity soon regains its authority. Such struggle between chance and necessity can be seen in the processes of change in

every sphere of nature.

Is the process of shattering old necessity and creating a new one, really one of transforming necessity? Experience shows that though the framework of old necessity is shattered in the creation of a new one, the former still exists. For instance, in the process of emergence of a new species, as a result of changes occurring in the necessary structure of the existing species, though new necessity emerges shattering the framework of the old, old species still exists along with the new one. Similarly, though bourgeois revolution shatters the necessary laws of the feudal system in a particular country and creates new necessary laws of capitalist society, feudal laws may still exist in other countries or if the earlier situation returns. Then, one may ask, can it be said that old necessity has been transformed? Does it not show that necessity is never shattered?

What has to be noted is that necessity is absolutely conditional, and it is baseless to mention the existence of necessity without qualification and conditions. The trouble is that the concept of 'necessity' has come to imply immutability, and is mechanically understood as such. Since new necessity emerges through the struggle against old necessity and shattering its framework, it is to be understood as *the* process that changes old necessity.

Mao's definitions quoted in an earlier chapter, will help a lucid comprehension of the dialectical relation between necessity and chance. Mao pointed out that though in the contradictions between productive forces and production relation, economic base and superstructure, practice and theory, it is usually the former ones—productive forces, economic base and practice—that play the important and decisive role, in certain contexts, the situation is reversed, thereby allowing production relations, superstructure and theory, to play the decisive role. He also ascertained that it is mechanical to think that the former of these opposites invariably play the decisive role. This is also true of the contradiction between necessity and chance. As a rule, it is necessity that comes decisive in these oppo-

sites, but there are contexts in which chance becomes decisive. Not to recognise this is to commit the error of mechanicism.

NECESSITY—IN SOCIETY

The question of historical necessity naturally comes forward as we examine the laws working behind social change. To understand this question correctly, we will have to examine in some detail the definition that social changes are ultimately determined by economic factors. Before going through Engels' opinions about the reactions of the superstructure on the usually decisive economic base, we have to discuss Marx's own statements on the subject.

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in which Marx evaluated the class struggles in France in the period 1848-50, examines in detail the complexity of the developments in the superstructure and their relation to the economic base. The lectures on the Paris Commune delivered by Marx in the meetings of the International also throw light on the subject. Marx's analysis of the reasons for the failure of the Paris Commune deserves special mention. In a letter written from London to Kugelmann on 17 April 1871—during the days when Paris Commune was heading towards its collapse—Marx remarks, "World history would indeed be very easy to make if the struggle were taken up only on condition that the prospects were unmistakably favourable. It would on the other hand be of a very mystical nature, if 'accidents' played no part. These accidents naturally form part of the general course of development and are compensated by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very much dependent upon such 'accidents', including the 'accident' of the character of the people who first head the movement.

"The decisively unfavourable 'accident' this time is by no means to be sought in the general conditions of French

society, but in the presence of the Prussians in France and their position right before Paris. Of this the Parisians were well aware. But of this the bourgeois *canaille* of Versailles were also well aware. Precisely for that reason, they presented the Parisians with the alternative of either taking up the fight or succumbing without a struggle. The demonstration of the working class in the latter case would have been a far greater misfortune than the doom of any number of 'leaders'. With the struggle in Paris, the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase. Whatever the immediate outcome may be, a new point of departure of worldwide importance has been gained."¹³

The theme of the discussion here is the developments in the superstructure. The question is how those developments influence the course of history determined by the economic base, Marx says that the 'accidents' in the superstructure do influence the course of history. But the deviations created by accidents that occur as a part of the general development of history are compensated by other accidents. Accidents may help accelerate or delay historical developments: but they do not affect their general course. This is the essence of Marx's observation. In other words, the accidents in the superstructure cannot change the historical necessity determined by the economic base; they can only hasten or slow down the process a little.

This explanation by Marx calls for closer investigation. Marx says that the decisively unfavourable 'accidents' that led to the downfall of the Paris Commune was the presence of the Prussian forces at the gates of Paris. He is sure that the reason for this failure is not to be sought in the general conditions of the French society of the time, i.e., it was not occasioned by the conditions created by the economic base of the French society. "Just the reverse: it was brought about by certain accidents in the political developments, or in the superstructure." In another letter written to Kugel-

13. Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, p. 248.

mann four or five days earlier, Marx had pointed out two reasons for the failure of the Paris Commune. First, they did not make use of the opportunity to follow and to destroy immediately the reactionary forces compelled to retreat by the 'good will' of the Parisians. Second, the central committee handed over power to the Commune too soon on account of a similar good will. These mistakes were certainly avoidable. They were not 'necessary'. Even after all these mistakes Marx gave the necessary warnings to the leaders of the Commune when only ten days remained for the fall of Paris. Marx sent them the details of a secret pact made by Bismark and the French reactionaries to destroy Paris. He even tried to convince them of the need for military preparations to face the impending counter-attack. But, as Marx laments in his letter to Spencer Beesly, "If only the Commune had listened to my warnings!"¹⁴ To say that the party which headed the Paris Commune was incapable of grasping such things and acting accordingly because of the inadequacies of the economic base of France at the time would only be a gross, mechanical, simplification. Marx himself has forestalled such mechanical formulations when he said that the reason for the fall of the Commune is not to be sought in the general conditions of France.

How, in this case, did the 'accidents' in the superstructure affect historical necessity? Were they only delaying what was necessary? Or did they qualitatively change the very character of that necessity? The success of the Paris Commune would have established in France the dictatorship of the proletariat. But discussions based on such a possibility would only be a futile exercise of imagination. True, the success of the Commune would have decisively affected the future developments, but, we can also see, from a long-term point of view, that it would not have basically altered the course of world history. The Commune also, as Mao was to point out later, would have

14. Ibid, p. 251.

degenerated into a bourgeois commune. However, it is dangerous to evaluate historical events on the basis of a fatalistic and mechanical notion about a long-term necessity. It is possible indeed to discover a framework of necessity on a very broad background, but we should not deny the possibility of the formation of new frameworks of necessity from the interactions of several accidents within the old. We have to form such a view of the interactions of necessity and chance lest we should arrive at a mechanical concept of history.

THE EFFORTS OF ENGELS

We saw in an earlier chapter how Engels in a letter to Joseph Bloch admitted that Marx and he himself had not sufficiently taken into account the reaction of the superstructure on the economic base. He said that it would be foolish to consider the base to be the sole decisive factor, though it is the base that ultimately plays the decisive role. He also observed that the different constituents of the superstructure influence the course of historical struggles and determine their form. Engels goes on, "There is an interaction of all these elements in which amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent and neglect it) the economic movement is finally bound to assert itself. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree."¹⁵

According to this explanation, the result of the interaction of the various constituents of the superstructure can be neglected or considered non-existent. The necessity of economic factors asserts itself amidst these infinite yet ineffective interactions. Engels in his attempt to explain the reaction of the superstructure arrives finally at the

15. Ibid, p. 495.

practically unilateral domination of economic factors!

Engels tries to explain this question also in another fashion, "... history proceeds in such a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, and everyone of them is in turn made into what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelogram of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historical event. This may in its turn again be regarded as the product of a power which operates as a whole *unconsciously* and without volition. For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one intended. Thus history has proceeded hitherto in the manner of a natural process and is essentially subject to the same laws of motion. But from the fact that the wills of individuals—each of whom desires what he is impelled to by his physical constitution and extend, in the last resort economic, circumstances (either his own personal circumstances or those of society in general)—do not achieve what they want, but are merged into an aggregate mean, a common resultant, it must not be concluded that they are equal to zero. On the contrary, each contributes to the resultant and is to this extent included in it."¹⁶

Here Engels deals with the infinite interaction of individual wills as different from that of the constituents of the superstructure he dealt with earlier. In reality, however, this explanation is not basically different from the earlier one. Here too Engels relies on the interaction of the infinite circumstances out of which individual wills are shaped. But he concedes it is wrong to maintain that the individual wills are equal to nothing. Just because they merge into an aggregate mean as a result of these infinite interactions. The contribution made by each individual will to this resultant has its own value. However even this qualification leaves the problem unresolved. Althusser's criti-

16. Ibid, pp. 395-96.

que of these positions of Engels is very relevant to our discussion.¹⁷ According to him, Engels has adopted two kinds of approach in this explanation. The first one relies on the infinity of circumstances or accidents. This, he maintains, is, in effect, non-Marxist, virtually undifferentiated from the method of the 18th century mechanicians. This method does not help solve the problem at all; it creates only an epistemological vacuum. On the other hand, Engels is adopting the Marxist approach when he includes the general and concrete socio-economic circumstances also among the circumstantial infinities. But this also leaves the question unanswered: these factors assert themselves so that the reaction of the superstructure becomes negligible. In brief, Engels' non-Marxist stand leaves the question unanswered while his Marxist stand only leads back to the original question. This is the essence of Althusser's critique.

This criticism has to be recognised as correct, in general. The basic error in Engels is that he relies on individual wills in his attempt to discover the influence of the superstructure on history. Bourgeois philosophers had used the same criterion as Althusser would show. It is impossible to solve historical questions on the basis of individual wills. The very achievement of Marxism was that it gave up such abstract criteria and began to make use of concrete historical factors in its analysis of history. But Engels forgot this when he returned to the outdated concept of individual wills; that was why he could not move an inch towards the solution of the problem of the interaction between base and superstructure.

The problem cannot be solved merely by laying bare the reasons for Engels' errors. The question of the interaction between base and superstructure still calls for detailed study. The discovery of the right answer demands the exposure of another error in the attitude of Engels and his followers. One reason for this basic error is the mistake

17. See L. Althusser, 'For Marx', 1969, P. 117-128.

in identifying the relation between necessity and chance. Here the base is looked upon as necessity and superstructure as chance. This identification is quite unrealistic, since the interaction between necessity and chance takes place within the base itself. Chance plays considerable role in the interaction among the various systems of the economic base, and the subsystems within each of these systems. A similar dialectical relation also exists between chance and necessity in the interactions among the different spheres of the superstructure and the systems therein. Thus it is unscientific to present the base as the representative of necessity and superstructure, of chance.

Another related error is the assumption that necessity always represents the essence of objects and phenomena while chance displays their external and superficial aspects. Both these kinds of conceptual error meet in Engels' explanation that the necessity of economic factors asserts its domination over the infinite accidents of the superstructure. The suggestion here is that it is the necessity represented by economic factors that determines the essence of the laws of social development while the accidents expressed through the superstructure are no more than the external and superficial manifestations of the same necessity. This idea of necessity and chance is not different from the one entertained by the mechanical materialists of the 19th century. Engels himself, we have seen, has criticised such notions. Engels applies the same mechanical concept—that necessity always expresses the essence while chance represents the barely external and insignificant manifestations—to the sphere of social history. This is quite true, however ironical it may appear to be. We can form a dialectical notion about the interaction of base and superstructure only by moving beyond this mechanical perspective. When Mao explained that though usually the former is more important and decisive in the relation between base and superstructure, there are contexts in which the latter, that is, superstructure, comes to play the decisive role, he was actually taking the first great step towards the over-

coming of this mechanical formulation.

Another point is worthy of notice in this context. As Althusser has rightly demonstrated, the study of the phenomena of a particular realm is to be based on the elements specific to that realm. An extreme generalisation about the interaction of infinite factors as made by Engels is incapable of solving any issue. Equally useless is a broad statement about the accidents commonly manifested in the superstructure. The trouble here is not with the general concepts about chance or infinity; what is needed is an examination of the interaction of the chance-necessity relation within the specific framework of different systems in various spheres. Vague generalisations about the infinite interactions of the elements of the superstructure or the complex encounters of individual wills cannot achieve anything in the absence of such detailed studies.

The destruction of the mechanical conception that the study of necessary and finite phenomena alone is scientific is a precondition for the realistic examination of complex social processes. For this, we should recognise the fact that chance and necessity coexist in nature and society and act upon each other and so do the finite and the infinite. The influence of mechanical materialism is so strong even today that even those who formally accept dialectics refuse to actively recognise this coexistence.

INTERACTIONS IN THE ECONOMIC BASE

The intense interaction between necessity and chance takes place not only in the superstructure but also in the economic base. This is clear from the operations of economic laws in the capitalist system itself. Marx's examination of the specific character of the division of labour in the capitalist society is a case in point. Each factory under capitalist management presents the picture of strictly controlled and organised division of labour while the society outside presents the opposite picture of complete disorder

in this respect. Marx comments on this state of affairs: "While within the workshops, the iron law of proportionality subjects definite numbers of workmen to definite functions, in the society outside the workshop chance and caprice have full play in distributing the producers and their means of production among the various branches of industry. The different spheres of production, it is true, constantly tend to equilibrium..."¹⁹ Marx then explains the rigid laws working behind this movement towards equilibrium. The law of the value of commodities ultimately determines how much of its disposable working time society can expend on each particular class of commodities. This creates the constant tendency to equilibrium. This equilibrium, however, is created by highly complex interactions in various spheres. "But this constant tendency to equilibrium of the various spheres of production," says Marx, "is exercised only in the shape of a reaction against the constant upsetting of this equilibrium."²⁰ Marx was drawing the picture of the constant interaction between necessity and chance by this neat exposition of the creation and destruction of equilibrium in the sphere of production, or the economic base, of the capitalist society.

Marx spoke of the same issue in a different context in a letter to Kugelmann: "The essence of bourgeois society consists precisely in this, that *a priori* there is no conscious social regulation of production. The rational and naturally necessary asserts itself only as a blindly working average."²¹ These 'blindly working averages' are created by the interaction between necessity and chance. What Marx is trying to clarify is that this process working in nature is also working in human society, in bourgeois society in particular.

But there are some who think that such laws operating in nature cannot be applied mechanically to human society. Listen to Gramsci: "indeed in politics the assumption of the law of statistics as an essential law operating of neces-

19. K. Marx, 'Capital', Vol. 1 Moscow, 1977, p. 336.

20. Ibid, p. 336.

21. Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, p. 197.

ssity is not only a scientific error, but becomes a practical error in action. What is more, it favours mental laziness and a superficiality in political programmes. It should be observed that political action tends precisely to rouse the masses from passivity, in other words, to destroy the law of large numbers. So how can that law be considered a law of sociology?"²² These conclusions by Gramsci are the product of a serious conceptual error. It is true that social laws are not mechanically imposed on man just because man becomes conscious of these laws and begins to manage them. But, it is a dangerous mistake to assume that those social laws have come under man's government as soon as a small minority of men in society have grasped them. Man embarked on his struggle to grasp and govern social laws with the very emergence of Marxism. But he has travelled very little in this direction. Sometimes he gained considerable victories, but the laws again upset his calculations to regain dominion over him. This does not mean that man can never conquer social laws; only it requires a greater length of time. 'The blindly working averages' of which Marx spoke are a reality in the bourgeois social order that exists in the majority of the nations of the world. Political activists who have grasped these laws are trying to control them through their practical programmes; but this alone has not invalidated these laws of sociology. Gramsci's conclusions may attain validity only when man makes considerable advances towards a communist social order. At present such thoughts can only foster pernicious illusions.

The recent discoveries and formulations of quantum mechanics and molecular biology have thrown new light on the dialectical relation between necessity and chance. Even most of the bourgeois scientists now concede that the problems thrown up by modern science can be solved correctly only with the assistance of dialectics.

22. A. Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebook of, New York, 1976, p. 429.

THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM

The problem of freedom has mostly been dealt within philosophy relating it with necessity. Marx pointed out in his doctoral thesis—which is also his first philosophical work—entitled *The Difference in the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus* that Democritus was the spokesman of necessity and Epicurus, of chance, and hence it is Epicurean philosophy that is capable of handling the problem of freedom.²³ Necessity binds man in fatalistic fetters while chance liberates him from such bondages—this is what Marx suggests. This is just to indicate Marx's early standpoint though this early work is not of much philosophic import in relation to Marx's mature philosophical attitudes.

It was Spinoza who first attempted to define freedom correctly in relation to necessity in modern philosophy; Hegel carried it further forward. We have already, in the first chapter, seen Engels' interpretation of Hegel's contribution.

Hegel further elucidates his position with regard to the relation between freedom and necessity: "Necessity does not become Freedom because it vanishes, but only because its identity (as yet an inner identity) is manifested."²⁴ Hegel is here trying to logically substantiate the relationship of chance and necessity on a purely ideological plane. For Hegel, the problem is solved once he establishes their unity. He does not stop to enquire how this relation between necessity and chance comes to be formed amid the concrete problems of the actual world. This is Hegel's weakness here as elsewhere.

Hegel is really reducing freedom to the mental process of the recognition of necessity. This attitude of Hegel is yet another manifestation of the essence of the old world-view. A meaningful comment made by Gramsci on Hegel's

23. See K. Marx to F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1975, pp. 44-45.

24. Hegel, 'Science of Logic', Tr. A. V. Miller, p. 571.

definition of freedom is worth mentioning here: while prescribing a decent burial for mechanical materialism considering its historical role, he also states that the historical role of classical German philosophy that came to define freedom as the consciousness of necessity has not been any different.²⁵ According to Gramsci, this in essence is only the theory of 'Divine Will' in a novel form. However, he does not fail to see the seed of a new strain of thinking concealed behind this definition. This definition of freedom that began with Spinoza to end up in Hegel still belongs to the sphere of philosophy that interprets the world and thus is far removed from Marx's philosophy that changes the world. The major quality that distinguishes the Marxist world view from the old philosophies including the Hegelian is that it is a leap from the stage of interpretation in philosophy to that of change. Engels does not amply emphasize this difference when he deals with the question; he seems to entirely approve of Hegel's definition of freedom. At the same time, he is clear about the Marxist position that necessity is to be recognised so that man can use it for his own ends. However, his failure to demarcate the advanced Marxist stand from the old Hegelian stand led Marxists to identify the Hegelian with the Marxist definition of freedom. Even today revisionists of all hues go on interpreting the world in the name of Marxism in order to obstruct every move to change the world, under the cover of this Hegelian definition of freedom bearing the stamp of Engels' approval.

This lends added relevance to Mao's accurate formulation that freedom is the recognition as well as the transformation of necessity. Here necessity is being recognised so that it may be transformed. To recognise necessity means to understand the laws of the objective world. In order to transform the objective world, it will be necessary to break the framework of necessity existing in the form of its laws. Thus the question of the realisation of freedom

25. See A. Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks of*, p. 342.

becomes exceedingly complicated.

We have already examined the problems related to the question of transforming necessity. We found that the process of breaking the old necessities and creating new ones has been a permanent feature in nature, and that the evolutionary processes of nature result from this activity. We have also examined the role of necessity and chance in the interaction of the innumerable contradictions operating in each of these processes. The role of chance, in transforming necessity, its opposite, is of particular significance in the spontaneous evolutionary processes of nature. Necessities have been broken, and evolution has gone on uninterrupted in nature before man ever became conscious of natural laws. The laws which ordained those changes are still in active operation. So the process of transforming necessity is not a new phenomenon in nature.

But the process of man transforming nature in order to realise his freedom is an absolutely new phenomenon. As far as we know, only man has this unique ability to grasp the natural laws and change nature accordingly. Man has already covered two important stages in the process of acquiring this ability. In the first stage, man, as distinct from other animals, acquired the ability to form in his brain an anticipatory image of the thing he was going to create, and follow this image in the process of creation. This was the beginning of the process of human labour that first marked man off from the rest of the animals. This was also the beginning of his conscious attempt to transform nature. This process of labour was not originally very different from the activity of animals, he began to move faster along his own course by developing his skills step by step. That is why Engels observed, "The first men who separated themselves from the animal kingdom were in all essentials as unfree as the animals themselves, but each step forward in the field of culture was a step towards freedom."²⁶

26. F. Engels, 'Anti-Duhring', p. 183.

Thus man continued his march towards freedom through the process of transforming nature through labour; but he had not yet grasped his position in nature and the meaning of his activity in relation to nature—in other words, he was yet to discover himself. Man entered a new stage in his progress towards freedom with Marx's proclamation that man's task is not only to interpret the world, but also to change it. This was the first declaration of man's self-realisation—the earliest declaration of freedom made by man who had discovered himself.

Though man had been confronting nature for ages, he had not yet recognised the working behind that confrontation. He was ignorant of the laws behind the progress he had achieved through his own labour through thousands of years. So he had remained a passive tool in the hands of natural and social laws. Men were only mere chessmen caught in the interactions of the countless contradictions in nature and society—dumb witnesses to the decisive role often played by chance in transforming necessity, attributing everything to the will of 'God'. Those who refused to put their faith in God surrendered to the unquestionable and blind natural laws.

The emergence of Marxism brought about a tremendous qualitative change in this state of affairs. Today man knows his position in nature, he is aware too of what he is capable of. He is no more a passive tool in the hands of natural and social contradictions. He knows how to make use of chance in transforming necessity. Thus he has discovered his path towards the realisation of his freedom. He has transformed the natural contradiction between necessity and chance into the social contradiction between necessity and freedom. But man has only just discovered the road to freedom; he has not arrived at his destination. Though he has begun his journey towards that goal, he has yet to overcome several disastrous impediments and to penetrate deep zig-zag paths. Only then will man leave the realm of necessity to enter the realm of freedom.

PART II

The History of Class Struggle

The most important contribution of Marxism is its materialistic view of history. Marxist worldview serves as a framework helpful in understanding and changing the course of history. The materialistic view of history can not be separated from the general background of Marxist worldview. Yet it should not be forgotten that Marxist worldview emerged and developed inseparably connected with the development of history.

In the material world, the philosophical base of Marxism is founded on broad generalisations. Our attempt, now, will be to examine how these generalisations agree with the laws in the specific field of history. The development of history, now treated as a branch of science in the sphere of empirical sciences, is guided by laws tested and proved in the sphere of concrete facts. Marxism studies history relating it with the laws of economics and politics, the two components of science of history, which today are as much scientific disciplines as any other branch of sciences. The result of this scientific approach was the discovery that all written history is the history of class struggles. The subject-matter of the second part of this book is the complex course of these class struggles.

Chapter 11

The Materialist View of History

All sorts of revisionists misinterpret, from a mechanical and idealist standpoint, the materialist outlook of history put forward by Marxism. The mechanical view of history became a powerful weapon for capitalist restoration in revisionist countries, and in other countries, this revisionist understanding has become an effective means to stall proletarian revolution. Marxist-Leninists can carry forward the struggle against revisionism only if they are capable of distinguishing between different forms of revisionist views and the revolutionary essence of Marxian historical outlook. With this intention, an attempt is made here to glance through the basic principles of materialist outlook of history advanced by Marxism.

A comprehensive materialist view of history was first formed in *The German Ideology* coauthored by Marx and Engels in 1845, but it remained unpublished. The first published work that contained this new historical outlook in complete form is *The Poverty of Philosophy* written as a reply to the French socialist Proudhon's work *Philosophy of Poverty* and published in 1847. Later through the *Communist Manifesto* written at the end of 1847 and published in February 1848 this new world outlook was presented before the world as the concrete programme of the proletarian movement. The revolutionary struggles raged in Europe during 1848-50 became the testing grounds for this new

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outlook, when Marx and Engels effectively employed it to evaluate these intense class struggles in detail. They published separate articles and studies on many of these revolutions. The best example of how to evaluate class struggles employing the method of Marxist world outlook is *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* published in 1852. This outlook is reflected in all other articles, documents and speeches of that time.

Though the basic principles of Marxist worldview had been formed by 1845 itself, it attained maturity only by 1857-59. It is not only because of the presence of certain usages and phrases of bourgeois philosophers in his early writings, but also because two important discoveries that serve as the basis of Marxian historical outlook were made during the 1850s: one, in politics, and the other, in economics. While evaluating the revolutions of 1848-50 Marx reached the important political conclusion that what was needed was not capturing the state but smashing it. It was through these studies that Marx found out the distinction between labour and labour-power, the keystone of Marxian economics. The arguments presented by Marx in *Capital* are based on this discovery. Marx's notebooks prove that the preliminary preparations for *Capital* have been completed during 1857-59. In 1859, he published *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* considered as the first presentation of the mature Marxist historical outlook, as a prelude to *Capital*.

In the introduction to this work, Marx comprehensively and succinctly outlined the materialist outlook of history, which will serve as the starting point of our attempt to find out the revolutionary essence of Marxian historical outlook. This is how Marx sums up his conclusions: "The general conclusion at which I arrived and which once reached, became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarised as follows. In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their

material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production; which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic, or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises

only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence—but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation."¹

In this rather long passage the sum-total of the laws of development working behind the complex course of human society is summarised. This passage brims over with a number of extremely profound ideas requiring hundreds of pages to explain. Thousands of pages written by Marx and Engels are the expansion and explanation of these ideas. The true essence of Marxian historical outlook can be grasped only if the passage quoted above is understood along with these explanations.

Whereas Marx outlines here several important contradictions decisive in the process of development of human history and their complex interactions, the revisionists try to present one contradiction or a single aspect of a contradiction in isolation.

Here, Marx has pinpointed certain contradictions which serve as the motive force of historical development. Foremost among these is the contradiction between productive forces and production relations. But, the interaction between the two aspects of this contradiction is extremely complex. Production relations take shape in accordance with the stage of development of productive forces. What serves as the economic base in any social

order is the sum-total of these production relations. Social revolutions occur when, only when, the development of productive forces reach a stage of irreconcilable contradiction with the existing production relations: obsolete production relations are then smashed to create new relations. This revolution in production relations is in fact a revolution in the economic base. In any social system, apart from the economic base, there is a superstructure determined by it, which includes politics, law, religion, philosophy, art, etc., related to man's consciousness. The contradiction between economic base and superstructure also plays an important role in historical development. Though revolutionary changes in production relations will also be reflected in the superstructure, these cannot be determined with that degree of accuracy as in the case of economic base. Intense struggles take place in the superstructure also; but, they will not be a mere mechanical reflection of the struggles in the economic base. The interaction between base and superstructure is more complex. The picture is rendered still more complex by the interaction among the different elements in the superstructure and each of them with the base in numerous ways.

THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION

The architectural model of depicting social systems as base and superstructure leads to misunderstandings. Keeping in mind the picture of a building having a base and superstructure, it is not easy to think of their interaction. It only helps to form a mechanical understanding. To avoid this danger, the interaction of various elements in the base and superstructure requires detailed study.

When Marx and Engels, for the first time, presented the materialist outlook of history in *The German Ideology*, they showed that men "themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned

1. K. Marx, 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy'. Moscow, 1970, pp. 20-22.

by their physical organisation."² The details of this process of production is further investigated by Marx in *Capital*.³ This process of transforming natural objects to meet man's needs is called the process of production. Through this labour process of transforming the material world man transforms himself. Though other animals also take part in the process of transforming the external world, there is a fundamental difference between this and man's labour process. Marx says, "A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement."⁴

The transformation of man's own nature along with that of external objects is an important characteristic of the labour process.

Marx differentiates the two basic elements of the labour process as: means of production—the objective factor and labour-power—the subjective factor.

The objective factor, i.e., the means of labour comprises of two elements: 1) objects of labour, and 2) instruments of labour. The earth and all material objects on earth are objects of labour. When an object of labour which has undergone some previous labour is again subjected to another kind of labour, it is called a raw material. For a farmer, cotton is the product of his labour; but to the spinner it is a raw material, the object of his labour.

The instruments of labour has another role. The thing or complex of things that man places between himself and the object of labour and that serve as the conductor for his activity upon that object are called the instruments of

2. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 20.

3. See *Capital* Vol. 1, pp. 173-180.

4. *Ibid*, p. 174.

labour. From the wooden stick primitive man used to collect fruits to the most modern machinery all are instruments of production.

The means of production forming the objective factor in the process of production and man, the subjective factor, together constitute the productive forces. There is permanent contradiction between these objective and subjective factors. Which reflects the contradiction between nature and man. The role played by man, or the subjective factor, in the process of production is crucial. If there is no conscious involvement, man's labour cannot be distinguished from the activity of a bee. It is man's involvement that activates the productive forces; without it the other means of production can never fulfil the role of productive forces. That is why Marx explicitly said: "Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself."⁵

Man's social life prepared the ground for the development of the process of production. The growth of productive forces would never have been possible had men remained as isolated individuals. In their early writings Marx and Engels said: "This production only makes its appearance with the *increase of population*. In its turn this presupposes the *intercourse* of individuals with one another. The form of this intercourse is again determined by production."⁶

Collective life was always indispensable for man in his struggle against nature. And mutual relations in this collective life took shape in accordance with the nature of this struggle, i.e., with the nature of the process of production. Relations thus formed according to production are called production relations. It is clear that these social relations must have played a decisive role in the growth of productive forces in the beginning. Man could not have conceived a mode of production, however capable he might be, funda-

5. K. Marx, 'The Poverty of Philosophy', p. 151.

6. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 20.

mentally distinct from that of other animals had the primitive man not established relations of a collective life. But, as social life became firmly established, the productive forces expanded and corresponding production relations took shape. "The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into definite social and practical relations."⁷

The relations which take shape, according to the nature of productive activity, among the various factors in it are called production relations. The first of such relations are those between man and nature. This in effect is one between the labourer and the instruments of production. Initially, as these are not owned by anyone, the labourers do not establish relations with them. In the primitive stage, man established some kind of a permanent relation only with instruments like primitive weapons. At the sametime, relations between men involved in productive activity were also taking shape. The first among them were the relations of a collective life formed as a result of the collective productive activity in the period of primitive communism. These relations, forming the basis of tribal life, emerged from the collective productive activity. Primitive man shared among themselves the products of their collective labour. The system of distribution, however limited the products were, was compatible with the collective life they led.

Production relations basically represent three types of relations. Firstly, the relation between producers and instruments of production. History proves that this relation also underwent transformation as different types of productive systems developed. Secondly, the relation between producers. In a social system where various productive systems operate, the relations, among those who take part in production, take different forms. Thirdly, the relations which emerge as a result of the distribution of products. This relation is in effect a relation between producers and

7. Ibid. p. 24.

consumers.

The division of labour is a process taking place at the level of production relations. The transformation of the division of labour emerges in the course of its inseparable relation with the development of productive forces. The first division were the natural divisions based on sex and age. But, the real division of labour began only with the invention of new productive systems. With the emergence of agriculture and handicrafts, it became indispensable. Even though, initially, attempts were made to confine these new productive systems within the primitive communist systems of tribal society, it could not continue for long. The division between agriculture and handicrafts led to a new division between town and countryside. This accentuated the differentiation between mental and manual labour. Thus, the division of labour in various fields created conditions suitable for the emergence and growth of private property. As the division of labour became extensive it created a situation where those involved in a particular job could not fulfil all their requirements with their labour. Their products had to be exchanged. With this the products became commodities having exchange value. Those who worked in a particular field of production became owners of those products. And thus the system of private property took root. Now, ownership of means of production also becomes essential. Those who succeed in the struggle for ownership dominate the process of production. With that society divides into exploiters and the exploited. The differentiation between mental and manual labour accelerates this class division.

Marx and Engels have explained how this process of division of labour taking place in the field of productive relations is related to the development of productive forces thus: "How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried. Each new productive force, in so far as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already (known for instance

the bringing into cultivation of fresh land) causes a further development of the division of labour."⁸

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND PRODUCTION RELATIONS

Productive forces and production relations together comprise the economic base of any social system. The contradiction between them is a contradiction in the economic base. As opposites of a contradiction, their mutual relations are subject to laws of dialectics. Basically the opposites of a contradiction are mutually exclusive. Yet they remain inseparably related to each other too. This becomes all the more complex in the relation between productive forces and production relations. In Marx's definition, quoted earlier, the economic base is presented as the sum-total of production relations. Then, where do the productive forces fit in? We have seen that productive forces comprise all elements involved in the production process; and production relations are the mutual relations between these elements. The owners of the means of production, exploiters who do not participate in the production process, are also a factor in production relations. They are not part of the productive forces, but, are related to them through the domination over the means of production. The production relations are the mutual relations between the producers constituting the productive forces and the means of production, the exploiters who own the means of production, consumers and all. So it is clear that there is no sense in searching for the productive forces outside production relations. That is why it is said, without specifically mentioning the productive forces, that the economic base is the sum-total of production relations. It shows the intermingling of productive forces and relations of production.

8. *Ibid.* p. 21.

It is necessary to find out the aspect which plays the principal and decisive role in the contradiction between productive forces and production relations. Marx and Engels in their later works as well as in the early writings took the stand that it is the stage of development of productive forces that determines the nature of production relations. Is such a stand the result of a mechanical approach; and if so, what would be the dialectical approach? These are very relevant questions today.

Let us see whether production relations play a decisive role in leading to inventions which accelerate the development of productive forces. Marx points out that production relations generally play the role as 'the forms of development of productive forces'. He sees the role of production relations as a condition conducive to the development of productive forces. It is the conflict between the subjective and objective factors within the productive forces that generally leads to new inventions. That is why the productive forces are able to advance by overtaking the existing production relations. It is in such moments that the struggle between the advanced productive forces and obsolete production relations becomes intense. The development of productive forces create a situation where it becomes essential to destroy old productive relations and establish new ones. But in such circumstances what determines further development of productive forces is the changes in production relations. Then, the revolution in the realm of production relations plays the decisive role in social development.

Class struggle develops as a reflection of this struggle between productive forces and production relations. Marx and Engels say, "Thus all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse."⁹ (In the early writings, for the term 'productive relations' it is the term 'form of intercourse' that is mostly used.) Class stru-

9. *Ibid.* p. 62.

ggle emerges in the superstructure as a reflection of the conflict between productive forces and production relations in the economic base. This class struggle, in turn, helps the development of productive forces. "The very moment civilization begins," Marx says in his reply to Proudhon, "production begins to be founded on the antagonism of orders, estates, classes and finally on the antagonism of accumulated labour and actual labour. No antagonism, no progress. This is the law that civilization has followed up to our days. Till now, the productive forces have been developed by virtue of this system of class antagonisms."¹⁰

Marx has not overlooked the mutual role played by the productive forces and production relations in their development. He said, "For M. Proudhon the concentration of the instruments of labour is the negation of the division of labour. In reality we find again the reverse. As the concentration of instruments develops, the division develops also, and vice versa. This is why every big mechanical invention is followed by a greater division of labour, and each increase in the division of labour gives rise in turn to new mechanical inventions."¹¹ Invention of new machines is definitely the development of productive forces. This immediately leads to the development of division of labour or production relations. This development of production relations, in turn, paves the way for the further development of productive forces.

An overall view of human history shows that it is the productive forces that determines the nature of production relations. It is in the background of this understanding that Marx sees the windmill as the symbol of feudalism and the steam engine as the symbol of capitalism. Attempts to see the influence of mechanical approach in such statements, by taking them in isolation, is quite meaningless; because Marx, who has always maintained that revolutionary class plays the decisive role in the productive forces and that

10. K. Marx, 'The Poverty of Philosophy', p. 53,
11. Ibid, p. 121.

man participating in the productive activity while changing the external world changes himself, has been ever vigilant to stick to the dialectical approach. Though the productive forces generally play the decisive role, Marx and Engels were of the view that at certain occasions the production relations also, in turn, play the decisive role. They maintained this stand ever since they had given shape to the materialist outlook of history in 1845 till the very end.

Mao Tsetung's contribution is in redefining, sticking to the framework of dialectical logic, this stand generally adopted by Marx and Engels in their historical outlook. Mao holds that in the contradiction between productive forces and production relations, it is the productive forces that play the principal and decisive role.¹² In the light of this definition, it can be seen that the historical outlook presented by Marx and Engels has not in the least deviated from the dialectical approach.

12. See Chapter 7.

Chapter 12

The Age of Social Revolution

In this chapter we shall try to analyse in detail the significance of Marx's conclusions quoted in the last chapter. The question relates to the conflict between productive forces and production relations and the epoch of social revolution that follows; this being the most crucial aspect of historical development.

The nature of social revolution and the role played in it by productive forces and production relations and how the laws of historical development operate can be understood correctly through a study of the history of the growth of capitalism. Marx, in his *Capital*, has treated the history of this transformation process quite exhaustively, basing himself on the transformations which took place in Europe.

GUILDS AND MANUFACTURE

The capitalist mode of production had marked its advent in feudal towns where handicrafts, based on feudal production relation, were the mainstay of production. In towns work used to be carried out by guilds. Each guild consisted of a guildmaster, who was an expert in that particular trade around which the guild was organised, skilled workmen and apprentices.

Conventions and traditions passed down the generations ruled the relations within the guild, with the guildmaster resembling the patriarchal head of a family. Each

guild competed with the others and there was no question of the journeymen and apprentices of all guilds uniting against the others. Another characteristic of the guild system was that the workers were the owners of the tools. This was a production system which had remained stagnant for centuries, making all change and development impossible. There was no division of labour worth its name either within the guild or among the guilds.

An important division of labour that had evolved in the feudal stage was the separation of distribution from production. And when a new class of merchants emerged to take over the function of distribution establishing contacts between towns became easy. As a result of this, the possibility of new instruments of production invented in one town reaching other towns came up. But because of the primitiveness of the transport and communication systems, trade relations which had developed through such practice were severely limited. Quite a number of production implements developed in many places either stagnated in isolation or were destroyed by barbarians. However, division of labour between towns grew up with the development of trade relations between them, that is, some towns started concentrating on the production of some particular product only. And this specialisation helped the development of manufacture system, the initial stage of capitalist production.

The manufacture system developed from these handicrafts that had not been stunted by the narrow limits of the guild system. Weaving, a part-time occupation of farmers in villages, was among the first of those trades which came under manufacture and many weaving centres in villages grew into towns. The increased demand for cloth due to population growth and possibility for capital accumulation as a result of the spread of exchange relation were the two factors which had contributed to the development of manufacture in such towns.

The distinctive characteristic of manufacture is cooperation based on a division of labour, where many labour-

ers work under one capitalist according to a strict division of labour. The relation between the capitalist and the labourer in the manufacture system differs fundamentally from those between the guildmaster and the journeymen in the old guild system. Here all means of production are owned by the capitalists and the labourer has no claims on them. Though extensive cooperation and division of labour had come up in the initial stage of manufacture, the very process of labour itself had not achieved any fundamental progress as compared to the guilds. The same old instruments and methods were used. Elaborating on this initial stage of capitalist production Marx says, "A greater number of labourers working together, at the same time, in one place (or, if you will, in the same field of labour), in order to produce the same sort of commodity under the mastership of one capitalist, constitutes, both historically and logically, the starting-point of capitalist production. With regard to the mode of production itself, manufacture, in its strict meaning, is hardly to be distinguished, in its earliest stages, from the handicraft trades of the guilds, otherwise than by the greater number of workmen simultaneously employed by one and the same individual capital. The workshop of the medieval master craftsman is simply enlarged."¹

In short, the capitalist mode of production emerged without evolving any new instrument of production different from those of the guilds of the feudal age. What was new was the change in production relations, that is, extended cooperation based on the division of labour; which means that the decisive factor in the transformation from feudalist production to capitalist production was a change in production relations. However, Marx points out that an entirely new, qualitatively new productive force was engendered through this change. In other words, cooperation based on division of labour had given rise to an immense productive force. Commenting on this, Marx

1. K. Marx, 'Capital', Vol. I, p. 305.

says, "...the special productive power of the combined working-day is, under all circumstances, the social productive power of labour, or the productive power of social labour. This power is due to cooperation itself."² Moreover, he goes on to establish that this productive force born out of cooperation is characteristic not only of the stage of manufacture but also of the whole capitalist mode of production itself.

This rise of manufacture proceeded along differing paths. On the one hand, by centralising based on a strict division of labour performed by numerous labourers at different centres under a single capitalist; and on the other, by bringing together skilled artificers who earlier used to carry out the entire process of production of a single product, and developing division of labour to an extent where each carries out only a part of it. Marx says, "But whatever may have been its particular startingpoint, its final form is invariably the same—a productive mechanism whose parts are human beings."³ The role played by manufacture in the development of the capitalist social order can be summarised thus, "By decomposition of handicrafts, by specialisation of the instruments of labour, by the formation of detail labourers, and by grouping and combining the latter into a single mechanism, division of labour in manufacture creates a qualitative gradation, and a quantitative proportion in the social process of production; it consequently creates a definite organisation of the labour of society, and thereby develops at the same time new productive forces in the society."⁴

Manufacture had started developing in many European countries by the 14th and 15th centuries itself. However, the period from the middle of the 16th century to the later half of the 18th century, when the industrial revolution took place is known as the period of capitalist manufacture. During this period, much progress was made in developing

2. Ibid, p. 312.

3. Ibid, p. 320.

4. Ibid, p. 344.

instruments of production. Especially, since division of labour led to labourers specialising in specific operations their instruments too became highly specialised. But the division of labour and specialisation characteristic of manufacture which had evolved spontaneously and through experience took root resisting all change and continued for centuries. "Any alteration in this form, except in trivial matters, is solely owing to a revolution in the instruments of labour."⁵ On how manufacture was forced to give way to such a revolution, Marx says: "At the same time manufacture was unable, either to seize upon the production of society to its full extent, or to revolutionise that production to its very core. It towered up like an economic work of art, on the broad foundation of the town handicrafts, and of the rural domestic industries. At a given stage of its development, the narrow technical basis on which manufacture rested, came into conflict with requirements of production that were created by manufacture itself."⁶

This conflict led to a new revolution, which arose out of the circumstances created by manufacture itself. As a result of division of labour under manufacture, a particular branch of production devoted to the production of machinery that was in use came into being. And the machines produced by this branch broke up the foundations of manufacture and gave birth to capitalism based on modern industry.

Speaking about the distinction between the two stages of capitalism, i.e., manufacture and modern industry, Marx says: "In manufacture the revolution in the mode of production begins with the labour-power, in modern industry it begins with the instruments of labour."⁷ This evaluation is extremely important. What Marx calls revolution in labour-power under manufacture is the great leap forward in the development of labour-power through cooperation based on division of labour. In a sense this was a change

5. Ibid, p. 347.

6. Ibid, p. 351.

7. Ibid, p. 351.

in the realm of production relations, for the change had taken place in the relations among those who engaged in labour. Narrow production relations of the guild had been replaced by those which facilitated extensive cooperation under manufacture. On the other hand, a broader set of circumstances had facilitated cooperation based on division of labour, in spite of the absence of new instruments of labour. One of these was the development of trade relations as a result of increased transport facilities. Fundamentally, development of transportation facilities is development of productive forces. But the resultant growth in trade is a development of production relations. Likewise population growth and the possibilities of capital accumulation prepared the ground for the growth of manufacture. However all this only helped create an atmosphere conducive for the development of production process in the field of handicrafts. Internal contradictions in the production process had played a significant role in this development. The system of manufacture emerged through the smashing of the fetters of feudal production relations by productive forces within the guild especially their subjective factor, labour-power—which were entrapped and stunted by these relations. Though this liberation came about through changes in production relations it was fundamentally a revolution in the field of labour-power. And that is why Marx has emphasised this aspect.

The revolution sparked off by the manufacture system did not develop to new heights immediately and it continued unchanging for two or three centuries without any significant development either in the subjective or objective factors of the production process, that is, labour-power or instruments of production. Cooperation based on division of labour could not rise to new heights without great strides in the development of instruments of production. Hence productive process remained undeveloped after the initial leap throughout the long period of existence of the manufacture system. This stagnation was resolved and productive process made rapid strides only after the indu-

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striation revolution in the latter half of the 18th century brought out new instruments of production. This is why Marx described this revolution in instruments of production as a distinctive characteristic of modern industry.

VIOLENT CLASS STRUGGLE

Was Marx ignoring the importance of class struggle when he underlined the development of productive forces in the growth of manufacture and modern industry. Not at all. He proved in *Capital* by unveiling the history of transformation from feudalism to capitalism that the contradiction between developing productive forces and obsolete production relations manifests in society in the form of class struggle.

Manufacture had taken shape in many towns of Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries itself. Even though the new system developed within the production process that was limited to towns, it could not have remained so. The new production system could not develop without coming in conflict with the feudal mode of production prevalent in Europe. But it required, on the one hand, much larger capital than what was necessary for the guilds; and on the other, "free" workers unattached to instruments of production. Till then the serfs who ran away from feudal lords became journeymen in towns. And they were all attached to the means of production in the guilds. On the contrary, extensive growth of manufacture demanded a massive inflow of labour force into towns—men uprooted from their hearth and means of production.

Surplus value created through the exploitation of labour—power is the source of capital. In order to produce this surplus value there should be capital and exploitable labour-power. At the beginning of manufacture, there is no other way but to get both from the existing society. The history of Europe from the end of the 15th century onwards is one of untold crimes and cruelties, perpetrated

by new capitalist elements mushroomed in every town, to gather initial capital and labour-power. Marx narrates in *Capital* how the new bourgeoisie and feudal lords who were turning capitalists captured the entire lands in villages and drove the peasants to towns. In Marx's words the history of this process of capitalist takeover in the 16th and 17th century Europe is "written in letters of blood and fire." In certain cases thousands of villages were burnt. The bourgeoisie thrived by blind loot, arson and murder. Even the norms of feudal justice and laws were thrown to the winds. The whole of Europe was the scene of a bloody class struggle all these centuries. It resulted from the contradiction between new productive forces that developed in towns and obsolete production relations in villages and elsewhere. Feudalism represented the obsolete production relations while capitalism represented new productive forces. It was at the height of this struggle against feudal production relations that bourgeois democratic revolutions took place in all European countries. The bourgeoisie captured political power and formally established the capitalist system as a result of gaining dominance in the struggle between productive forces and production relations in the economic base.

Laws made during that period reflect the intense class struggle. The peasants were forced to shuttle between villages and towns; but, provisions were made to award capital punishment to wandering peasants. Similarly, when workers became a major force in towns laws were made to freeze their wages and suppress any voice of protest.

Thus examined against this background, it is clear that bourgeois democratic revolutions were only a higher form of the continuing struggle against feudal production relations. Those revolutions completed the collapse of feudal relations and accelerated the development of capitalist productive forces. The background of industrial revolution, the highest leap of capitalist productive forces, was the collapse of feudal production relations. About

this dialectical relationship of productive forces and production relations, Mao says, "To be sure, the revolution in the production relations is brought on by a certain degree of development of the productive forces, but the major development of the productive forces always comes after changes in the production relations."⁸

As pointed out earlier, Marx brings out clearly the dual nature of production relations. It is the production relations existing as a form of development of productive forces that turn at a certain stage into their own fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution to smash these fetters—and advance; naturally, this leads to a development of productive forces. As Marx relates the history of transformation from feudalism to capitalism in *Capital*, he reveals the complex relationship between productive forces and production relations and the form of social revolution that emerges as a result of that contradiction.

THE DEFECT OF BETTELHEIM'S VIEWS

As pointed out earlier⁹ the theory of productive forces has been criticised from different quarters. French Marxian economist, Charles Bettelheim, has played a prominent role in this ideological struggle. The undercurrent of his exhaustive study *Class Struggles in the USSR* is the criticism of the theory of productive forces. But his basic theoretical stand is incompatible with the dialectical outlook. In fact, such mistakes only blunt the attack against revisionism. Therefore, it is necessary to pinpoint the defects of Bettelheim's views.

Bettelheim contends that there are in the works of Marx and Engels, on the one hand, ideas representing revolutionary Marxism, and on the other, mere repetitions of old ideas.¹⁰ While in their early writings, especially

8. Mao Tsetung, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, p. 66.

9. See Chapter 9.

10. C. Bettelheim, *Class Struggle in the USSR, Second Period 1923-1930*, MR press, 1978. pp. 514-16.

those of 1846 and 1847, the approach is one of emphasising productive forces and technology, in the *Communist Manifesto* what is evident is the revolutionary, dialectical approach that upholds class struggle as the motive force of history. However, the former stand surfaces again on many occasions. In the *Preface* of 1859 and in the first volume of *Capital* this approach is evident. But in another article written in 1865, Bettelheim says, Marx again adopts a revolutionary stand totally free from these defects. In it Marx establishes that capitalist relations of production come into being without any change in the level of technology, but through a mere process of subjugating labour to capital. About this stand of Marx, Bettelheim says: "His writings which break away from the difficulties bound up with the juxtaposition of two types of formulations are those in which Marx ascribes the movement of history, and so also, the development of the productive forces and even of "technology" to the *changing of social relations and the struggles between classes.*" Then he defines revolutionary Marxism: "It is one of the distinctive features of revolutionary Marxism that it reckons with the possibility and necessity of first of all changing production relations, in order to ensure, under certain conditions, the development of the productive forces."¹²

Though one does not consider every word of Marx and Engels as representing revolutionary Marxism, we cannot agree with Bettelheim's definition of revolutionary Marxism. His discovery of Marxism only in those works giving importance to production relations and not in those emphasising productive forces is one-sided and undialectical.

Both these approaches can be seen in the works of Marx and Engels. In fact there is not much difference, in this respect, between their early writings and the later ones. But they had in 1845 itself correctly presented the

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 514-15.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 515-16.

materialist outlook of history. The very same ideas pervade their works throughout. The first theories distinguishing Marxist world outlook from mechanical materialism were formulated in the *Theses on Feurbach* in 1845. This outlook presented as the philosophy of practice always reflects in his materialist view of history; and therefore he gave importance to the subjective factor, man. All attempts to find a gap, in this respect, between Marx's early writings and his later ones, are thoroughly futile. Bettelheim's stand of seeing mechanism in the early writings and revolutionary Marxism in the later ones and that of others seeing revolutionary Marxism only in the early writings are both consequences of partial and one-sided outlook.

There is nothing unnatural in the occasional shift in emphasising productive forces and production relations. In the development of history, at certain times it is the development of productive forces that take history forward and in certain others, it is the change in production relations. *Capital* reveals this complex process involved in the transformation of feudalism into capitalism. We saw that from the guild system in feudalism to manufacture in capitalism there is no change in technology involved. On the contrary, it was the development of cooperation based on division of labour that gave birth to capitalist relations of production. But this is only a brief stage in the rather long transition period. It was pointed out earlier that Marx evaluated it as a revolution in labour-power and the reasons thereof. At the same time, Marx described the change to modern industry as a revolution in the instruments of production. Along with it Marx has also unveiled the picture of protracted class struggle. There is a dialectical relation between the development of productive forces and the change in production relations. The developmental laws of history cannot be understood without seeing these two aspects.

Bettelheim fails to see that it is the approach of Marx and Mao Tsetung that represents revolutionary Marxism.

So he stresses that changes in production relations always play the decisive role in the development of history. He does not see the development of productive forces through the internal contradiction between the subjective and objective factors in the process of production. Likewise, he ignores the fact that class struggle is the reflection of the contradiction between productive forces and production relations. In short, what is conspicuously absent in Bettelheim's views is the dialectical outlook. Such a stand only weakens the fight against the theory of productive forces.

THE DIALECTICAL APPROACH OF MARX

Marx never considered that changes in the economic base were mechanically reflected in the superstructure, on the contrary, he took into account the complex situation created by the interaction between economic base and various factors in the superstructure. He said, "men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from *the past*."¹³ Marx's dialectical outlook of history is fully reflected in it. Men make their own history; instruments of production or any other material objects do not make it for them. It shows that Marx always stressed the importance of subjective factor in historical development. But men cannot make use of their subjective abilities without at the same time being subjected to certain controls. They can act only by confronting the objective conditions. During a period of revolutionary crisis, men revolutionise both themselves and the external world; they create something new, something so far non-existent. New conditions and new course of events evolve out of this process.

13. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 398.

The sum-total of Marx's analysis of the French revolution of 1848-50 is that the political conflicts, their success and failure, etc., in the superstructure arising as a result of sharpening of the contradiction between productive forces and production relations, are not directly controlled by the economic base. Even though the ultimate determining factor is the economic base, conditions always exist for interaction among the various elements in the superstructure and giving birth to new situations. The course of historical development cannot be understood without evaluating such situations. It is in this sense that Marx said that the changes in the economic base can be studied at the level of empirical sciences, but those in the superstructure cannot be so precisely determined. But Marx could only point out, not elaborate, that superstructure in turn influences the base.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Marx said, in a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer in March 1852, "As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering either the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to demonstrate: 1) that the *existence of classes* is merely linked to *particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) that class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, 3) that this dictatorship itself, only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*."¹

Marx reached these conclusions after an analysis of of world history and the then existing capitalist society, based on the materialist outlook of history. An objective analysis of the nature of contradictions in capitalist society led him to predict the inevitability of the dictatorship of the proletariat. While formulating the materialist view of history itself Marx and Engels had found that the contradiction arising out of social nature of productive forces and individual nature of productive relations would under capitalism become intense and burst out.

1. Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, p. 64.

They said in the *Communist Manifesto*, "For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer lend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property."² And, "the proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for and insurances of, individual property."³

In the era of feudalism, private property existed based on the labour of the owner of the property itself. Though a handful of feudal lords exploited the serfs and peasants, the serfs had the right of property over their means of production. The peasant was inseparably connected to the land. With the beginning of capitalist production, these peasants were virtually uprooted from their land. Individualist private property was negated for the sake of socialised mode of production in capitalism; and capitalist private property was established. Now the highly socialised means of production came under a handful of people. Moreover, a flourishing world market created conditions for worldwide domination by capitalism. The still expanding productive forces of capitalism is getting more and more centralised. As this centralisation breaks the limits of nations and becomes international in character, exploitation and oppression becomes most acute. Such a situa-

2. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 113-14.

3. Ibid, p. 118.

tion stalls further development of productive forces. The productive forces can again develop only when capitalist production relations are smashed in a fight between the proletariat, representing new productive forces and the bourgeoisie, representing old production relations. Marx says about this contradiction that makes proletarian revolution inevitable, "The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."⁴

TRANSITION PERIOD

After the capitalist system got itself established in a firm foundation the productive forces developed very fast following industrial revolution. Consequently, the socialisation of the productive process started with manufacture spread tremendously and became a global process; and the working class, the most important factor among the productive forces, became an international force. But the bourgeois production relations based on individualist private property fetter the growth of the modern productive forces represented by the international proletariat. Unless these fetters are destroyed, the proletariat will not be able to establish its authority over the productive forces and create ground for their smooth progress. Thus, again an era of social revolution has begun. Earlier, if the struggle took place under the leadership of the bourgeoisie to destroy the feudal productive relations, now intense class struggle under the leadership of the working class to destroy the out-dated bourgeois productive relations, has begun.

The aim of the working class is to establish socialised

4. K. Marx, 'Capital', Vol. 1, p. 715.

productive relations corresponding to the socialised productive forces. Its result will be a classless society, i.e., communism. Then, communism will be the inevitable and ultimate result of the growing contradiction between the productive forces and productive relations in capitalism. The transition stage from capitalism to communism is for resolving this contradiction. In his letter to Weydemeyer, Marx had defined this stage to be the dictatorship of the proletariat. Later, he repeated this definition more precisely in the notes, written by him in 1875, criticising the Gotha Programme of the German Workers' Party. He said, "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.*"⁶

What are the tasks of the transition period. While evaluating the class struggles during 1848-50 and criticising the wrong notions of dogmatists, Marx described revolutionary socialism in clear terms, "This socialism is *the declaration of the permanence of revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionising of all the ideas that result from these social relations.*"⁷

There was no practical experience about the proletarian dictatorship when Marx reached these conclusions. The study of the contradictions in the capitalist society is the basis of these conclusions. The proletarian revolution takes place and the period of proletarian dictatorship begins when the productive forces develop so much as to make the transformation to communism inevitable. Of reaching such a situation in Europe in the second half of the 19th century itself, Engels said, "And, in fact, the abolition of classes in society presupposes a degree of histo-

6. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 32-33.

7. Ibid, Vol. I, p. 282.

rical evolution at which, the existence, not simply of this or that particular ruling class, but of any ruling class at all, and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself has become an absolute anachronism...This point is now reached."⁸

Once the development of productive forces reaches this stage, what is necessary is a change in production relations. When the productive forces develop so much as to make the transformation to communism inevitable the transition stage of proletarian dictatorship has to fulfil the task of completely eliminating the existing bourgeois production relations. That is why Marx put stress only on the change in production relations and superstructure in his definition of the socialist stage. When all capitalist production relations and capitalist social relations are eliminated and all ideas in the superstructure are revolutionised, when all obstacles which acted as fetters of productive forces are destroyed, the further development of productive forces is bound to take place. But it is a thorough transformation of productive relations that is decisive in making such a growth of productive forces possible.

The revisionists misinterpret this most important Marxian discovery and definition. They argue that according to the Marxian historical outlook productive forces play the decisive role throughout. This is denying class struggle in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, thus, in effect, strengthening the remaining capitalist relations of production and bourgeois ideology and paving the way for a capitalist restoration as has happened in the Soviet Union and China.

But the theory of productive forces cannot be defeated by taking a stand, as Bettelheim does, that change in production relations always plays the decisive role in all stages of the development of history. The development of productive forces has played a decisive role in the development of various social systems. However, it is an undeniable

8. F. Engels, 'Anti-Duhring', p. 323.

fact that in the transition stages, i.e., in the era of social revolution, it is the change in production relations which plays the decisive role. The period of dictatorship of the proletariat is such a transition stage, an era of social revolution. It is one of those *certain occasions*, as pointed out by Mao, when change in production relations plays the decisive role.

FORM OF PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels declared that the aim of Communists is to forcibly overthrow the existing social order. They did not specifically examine how to handle the problem of the state. But, Marx came to clearer conclusions while evaluating the class struggles of 1848-50. He said, "All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it,"⁹ indicating that socialist revolution aims at the destruction of the existing state and the creation of an entirely new set-up. However, even at that time there was no clear idea as to what form the new state would take.

It was the Paris Commune which provided necessary practical experiences about the concrete form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In his address to the First International evaluating the experience of the Commune, Marx said, "But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes."¹⁰ Further, on the historical significance of the Commune, "It was essentially a working-class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour...The Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class-rule. With labour emancipated, every man becomes a working man.

9. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 477.

10. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 217.

and productive labour ceases to be a class attribute."¹¹

The architects of the Commune were never under the illusion that this is an easy task. On the contrary, Marx says, the working class of Paris clearly understood that it could be achieved only by transforming both men and circumstances through protracted struggles and long historical processes.

What the Commune did as soon as it captured power was to suppress the standing army and pass orders to replace it with armed masses. Thus the most powerful base of the existing state was smashed. The Commune was formed of elected representatives on the basis of universal suffrage with the right to recall. This was the most important characteristic of democratic functioning the Commune enforced. The Commune was not a mere parliamentary body. It was a working arrangement combining both the tasks of legislature and executive. It ended the status of police being the executive arm of the central government and turned it into an instrument answerable to the Commune, subject to the right to recall. So also were all officials in the administrative set-up and the judiciary. Moreover, it put the wages of all categories of officials on par with those of the workers. These were effective steps against the growth of bureaucracy. The authority of the church which was an instrument of spiritual oppression was smashed. The sphere of education was completely liberated from the influence of the state and the church.

The Commune proved that democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat is far higher than bourgeois democracy. It serves as a guide even after a century.

In 1875, Engels criticised the programme of the German Workers' Party to establish "a free people's state" "The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. ... As, therefore, the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the

11. *Ibid.* p. 223.

struggle, in the revolution, in order to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a free people's state; so long as the proletariat still *uses* the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore propose to replace *state* everywhere by *Gemeinwesen* [community], a good old German word which can very well represent the French word "*commune*".¹²

The message of the Commune is mainly its extensive democracy. But the experiences of the Commune show that democracy cannot survive while being encircled by a callous and powerful enemy. In a letter to Kugelmann in 1871, Marx pointed out the serious mistakes of the Commune. One, was the decision not to pursue and destroy the enemies who fled to Versailles and the "Second mistake: The central committee surrendered its power too soon, to make way for the Commune."¹³ Here, Marx raises the question of centralisation. The state in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat should have not only democracy but also centralisation. It can survive only by facing the internal and external enemies. And that is not possible without a centralised organisational functioning. It is the party of the proletariat that can offer such a centralisation. Since the central committee of the party surrendered its power, the Commune lost this centralisation. But, as the experiences in the Soviet Union show, centralisation can also lead to the growth of bureaucracy. How both the aspects, centralisation and democracy, are to be harmonised remains a crucial question. We shall revert to it while discussing the Cultural Revolution.

12. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 34-35.

13. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 247.

Chapter 14

World System of Colonial Oppression

In his introduction to Marx's *Class Struggles in France*, Engels says, "If events and series of events are judged by current history, it will never be possible to go back to the *ultimate* economic causes. ... A clear survey of the economic history of a given period can never be obtained contemporaneously, but only subsequently after a collecting and sifting of the material has taken place."¹ This statement should be kept in mind wherever the materialist view of history is used to evaluate historical events. It also explains why Marx and Engels could not fully comprehend the nature of the evolution that capitalism was undergoing at the time.

Marx had, no doubt, correctly observed and defined the direction of evolution of capitalism. Capitalist production starts off on new evolutionary paths as soon as it begins to stand on its own after smashing feudal production relations, and private property of a section of the capitalists themselves gets expropriated. Marx says, "That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. Our capitalist always kills many."²

1. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 186.

2. K. Marx, 'Capital', Vol. I, p. 714.

Here Marx sketches out the process of formation of monopoly capital. Despite this, it was not possible for him to predict the ultimate result of this process and the political relations it might give rise to, at that stage, since monopoly capital was yet to attain its full growth. Further, as Engels pointed out, undercurrents of the economic world can never be fully evaluated contemporaneously.

LENIN'S DEFINITION

Lenin's analysis of monopoly capital picks up from where Marx had left off. Speaking about the ground-work done by Marx for such a study, Lenin says, "Half a century ago, when Marx was writing *'Capital'*, free competition appeared to the overwhelming majority of economists to be a "natural law". Official science tried, by a conspiracy of silence, to kill the works of Marx, who by a theoretical and historical analysis of capitalism had proved that free competition gives rise to the concentration of production, which in turn, at a certain stage of development, leads to monopoly. Today, monopoly has become a fact. Economists are writing mountains of books in which they describe the diverse manifestations of monopoly, and continue to declare in chorus that "Marxism is refuted"."³ Bourgeois economists started bringing out lengthy tomes on monopoly capital as soon as it became a reality which could no longer be ignored; whereas Marx with the insight of his historical outlook could trace out its evolution even before it had matured.

Lenin termed the highest stage of capitalism which had emerged through the growth of monopoly capital as 'imperialism' and summed up the transformation thus, "Thus, the principal stages in the history of monopolies are the following: 1) 1860-70, the highest stage, the apex of development of free competition; monopoly is in the barely discernible, embryonic stage. 2) After the

3. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works in One Volume*, Moscow, 1971, p. 180.

crisis of 1873, a lengthy period of development of cartels; but they are still the exception. They are yet durable. They are still a transitory phenomenon. 3) The boom at the end of the nineteenth century and the crisis of 1900-03. Cartels become one of the foundations of the whole of economic life. Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism."⁴ The basic features of imperialism, defined by him in his comprehensive work are: "1) The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; 2) the merging of bank capital, with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy; 3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; 4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and 5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed."⁵

Developments in technology and the resultant advances in the production process have played a crucial role in the growth of free competition to monopoly. The high concentration of production was made possible through the development of modern technology, and the concentration of capital resulting therefrom led to strengthening of bank capital which had made the shift from export of commodities to export of capital possible. In its turn, this export of capital prepared the ground for more effective exploitation of colonies. In fact, global plunder based on finance capital is the distinctive characteristic of imperialism, and the emergence of finance capital differentiates the present colonial exploitation of imperialism from that of the old colonial regimes.

Highly socialised production forms the basis of this global plunder. "Capitalism in its imperialist stage leads directly to the most comprehensive socialisation of produ-

4. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

ction; it, so to speak, drags the capitalists, against their will and consciousness, into some sort of a new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialisation."⁶ Large scale socialisation of production made free competition impossible and the bourgeoisie were compelled to establish production relations in accordance with this socialisation. Monopolies, which were established in each sphere of industry by international organisations of a few powerful capitalists in place of free competition by a number of capitalists, came up as a means by which private ownership was not abandoned totally even while the pressures of socialisation made their presence felt to a certain extent. The development of state capitalism in the 20th century, for which Keynesian economics provided a theoretical basis, was a new stage in this process. Spheres of production where socialisation had developed to a greater extent were brought under the control of the state with a view to surmount the impasse resulted from the contradiction between the increasing centralisation of production and private ownership. Today, a considerable section of production in imperialist countries is under state ownership. However, this does not signify any liking for socialisation as such on their part, but only illustrates the compulsions of the increasing social character of production.

COLONIAL OPPRESSION

The scramble for colonial possessions had already begun from the time when the capitalist mode of production had started taking firm roots in Europe. Worldwide trade relations set up to facilitate the growth of a fledgling industry finally led to the establishment of colonies in all other continents by the Europeans. The growth of capitalism in Europe was not just due to internal contradictions. While it is true that internal contradictions played the

6. Ibid, p, 184.

decisive role, the development of commerce on a global proportion and the plunder and exploitation of the colonies have helped the growth of capitalism in Europe to a considerable extent. The wealth plundered from the colonies has played an important role in accumulation of primary capital requisite for the growth of industry. In short, capitalism was developing as a global system.

Towards the end of the 19th century, with the emergence of finance capital, this global system of exploitation took a new form. The surplus capital in each capitalist country, accumulated as a result of the growth of industry, was not used for raising the living standard of the people but was exported to colonies and semi-colonies with a view to reap super profits. The profit margin of investments in such backward countries was very high, since land, labour and raw materials were available in plenty at cheaper rates. Before the advent of finance capital, raw materials from colonies used to be shipped to capitalist countries to be processed there using their own labour and the products were sold in the colonies. But with the export of capital super profits could be reaped without taking all these troubles. Speaking of the world system formed through such more effective methods of exploitation and plunder Lenin said, "Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries. And this "booty" is shared between two or three powerful world plunderers armed to teeth (America, Great Britain, Japan), who are drawing the whole world into *their* war over the division of *their* booty."⁷

Today the world is divided into a small minority of lender-countries and a large majority of borrower-countries getting further and further entangled in debts and growing poorer and poorer. And this process still goes on. As Lenin said, "Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for

7. Ibid, p. 172.

domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonism in this field. Particularly intensified become the yoke of national oppression and the striving for annexations..."⁸

The global plunder during the period of monopoly capital is far more intense than what it was during the period of free competition. And while the bourgeoisie of that period had raised the call of 'equality', 'fraternity', and 'liberty', at least in words, the bourgeoisie of monopoly capitalism have no such romantic pretensions. "The non-economic superstructure, which grows upon the basis of finance capital, its politics and its ideology, stimulates the striving for colonial conquest."⁹ The new instruments of production became effective weapons for colonial oppression. Lenin points out how even the construction of railways, usually considered to be something very progressive and civilised, turned out to be an oppressive weapon against the hundreds of millions of people in colonies and semi-colonies.

Lenin had also pointed out the fact that export of capital in order to strengthen colonial plunder and hegemony also gives rise to a process that goes diametrically against it. And from this he drew the conclusion that the export of capital throughout the world opens the way for capitalist development in the countries where it is invested. Or in other words, the global hegemony of imperialism helps the spread of the capitalist mode of production.

REVOLUTION IN ONE COUNTRY

The massive plunder of colonies enables the imperialists to bribe a section of the workers and turn them into docile supporters. "Imperialism has the tendency to create privileged sections also among the workers, and to detach

8. Ibid, p. 257.

9. Ibid, p. 230.

them from the broad masses of the proletariat."¹⁰ Lenin analysed different aspects of this tendency taking Britain as a specific example. Britain with its plunder throughout the world and domination over the world market had succeeded in the bourgeoisification of a section of its workers, while another section tailed behind those purchased by the bourgeoisie. Generally, this is true of all imperialist countries. This section of labour aristocracy provided the basis for opportunism and revisionism in proletarian movements and the new situation which with the development of imperialism created the possibility for the usurpation of leadership of the Second International by the revisionists. A natural outcome of this was that proletarian revolution would not be an immediate possibility in 'developed' countries, a situation contradictory to the predictions of Marx and Engels. Moreover, they had also envisaged the possibility of revolution taking place simultaneously in all the developed capitalist countries. However, Lenin proved that the development of imperialism had totally wiped out this possibility.

Assessing the new conditions resulting from the development of imperialism, Lenin stated in 1916, "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."¹¹ He pointed out that the proletariat, victorious in one country, would, after confiscating the wealth of the capitalists and laying the foundations of socialist production, come out vigorously against the remaining capitalist world and inspire the oppressed classes the world over. The lessons of the October Revolution totally confirm the correctness of Lenin's prediction.

Stalin explains the significance of these conclusions in his outstanding work *The Foundations of Leninism* as follows: "Where will the revolution begin? Where, in what country, can the front of capital be pierced first?"

10. Ibid, p. 246.

11. Ibid, p. 155.

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"Where industry is more developed, where the proletariat constitutes the majority, where there is more culture, where there is more democracy—that was the reply usually given formerly.

"No, objects the Leninist theory of revolution, *not necessarily where industry is more developed*, and so forth. The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link; and it may turn out that the country which has started the revolution, which has made a breach in the front of capital, is less developed in a capitalist sense than other, more developed countries, which have, however, remained within the framework of capitalism.

"In 1917 the chain of the imperialist world front proved to be weaker in Russia than in the other countries. It was there that the chain broke and provided an outlet for the proletarian revolution."¹²

A number of factors coalesced in making Russia the weakest link. The rotten government of Czar, deeply hated by the whole people, was the representative of the imperialists in Russia. Struggling against the despotic rule of the Czars, a revolutionary movement under the leadership of the organised proletariat and embracing the peasantry cruelly oppressed by feudal landlords, was growing stronger and stronger. These were the main factors that made Russia the weakest link in the imperialist chain.

Such an assessment of an emerging revolutionary situation is basically different from the earlier approach. Stalin has very clearly explained this difference, "Formerly it was the accepted thing to speak of the existence or absence of objective conditions for the proletarian revolution in individual countries or, to be more precise, in one or another developed country. Now this point of view is

12. J. V. Stalin, 'The Foundations of Leninism', Selected Works, Albanian Edition, p. 35.

no longer adequate. Now we must speak of the existence of objective conditions for the revolution in the entire system of world imperialist economy as an integral whole..."¹³

Thus here we have two different approaches, one relevant before the development of imperialism and the other after such a development. Earlier, the internal contradiction existing in developed capitalist countries determined the possibility of revolution, with the criterion of development of a capitalist country being the development of its productive forces. This was the basis for concluding that revolution would first break out in highly industrialised capitalist countries with a developed mode of production. But the development of imperialism turned this situation into its direct opposite. In the era of imperialism, the possibility of revolution first breaking out in developed capitalist countries has been reduced to a great extent, while it has increased in countries where productive forces are less developed or where capitalist development has not even started.

Why has this happened? The fact that capitalism has transformed into a global system in its imperialist stage is the crucial cause underlying this change. And in this global system the relation between the imperialist countries and the oppressed countries which have been reduced to mere colonies or semi-colonies has become an important link. Thus class struggle waged on the global level has a role of utmost importance in determining revolution. Or, in other words, in the era of imperialism, not the level of growth of productive forces in each country but production relations on the global level determine when and where revolution will break out. In short, the earlier role of productive forces in determining the stage of revolution has now been taken over by production relations on the global level. This shift in roles is a very important turning point in the development of history.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

During the period of free competition itself capitalist countries had commenced a mad rush for colonial conquests. As we had seen earlier the wealth plundered from colonies has played a very significant role in their industrial development. However, capitalism had yet to develop into a well-knit global system. This became possible with the emergence of finance capital when relations based on precise economic laws were established between the hegemonistic countries and their colonies and semi-colonies. The division of the world amongst imperialist powers was completed during this new stage of finance capital. One can see that the corner-stones of the imperialist world system are the production relations formed on a global level on the basis of finance capital. Once a country, however backward its productive forces may be, comes within the orbit of these global production relations, the low level of development of its productive forces ceases to be a decisive factor in determining the possibilities of revolution. Instead of this, its position within these global production relations becomes decisive in transforming it into a centre of revolution. The motive force of the October Revolution was not the growth of productive forces in Russia; on the contrary, imperialist production relations played the decisive role.

A proper understanding of the dialectical relationship between productive forces and production relations is a must for understanding this change. During the process of historical development one of these opposites will be decisive at any given stage. However, the possibility of a mutual interchange of such decisive positions in given conditions also exist. This is what happens during the development of capitalism from the stage of free competition to imperialism; the earlier decisive role of productive forces is now taken over by production relations.

This fundamental change in the world situation necessitated an overall change in the strategy of world revolution. For the First and the Second Internationals revolutions in developed capitalist countries were the only ones

on their agenda. But for the Third International, revolutions in colonies and semi-colonies became a live issue together with those in developed capitalist countries. This is why Lenin speaks of the growing role of the revolutionary peoples in colonies and semi-colonies in his thesis on the international alignment of class forces, where he points out that, "The masses of the working people in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, were roused to political life at the turn of the 20th century, particularly by the revolutions in Russia, Turkey, Persia and China. The imperialist war of 1914-18 and the Soviet power in Russia are completing the process of converting these masses into an active factor in world politics and in the revolutionary destruction of imperialism..."¹⁴

One of the most important contributions of Leninism was that it analysed this new world situation precisely and formulated a global strategy. Pointing this out as an important aspect of Lenin's proletarian revolutionary theory, Stalin said, "..... a coalition between the proletarian revolution in Europe and the colonial revolution in the East in a united world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism is inevitable."¹⁵ This outlook of world revolution is essentially different from the one formulated by Marx and Engels in the 19th century. The merit of Lenin's strategy of world revolution, i.e., Leninism, lies in the fact that it covers all the essential characteristics of imperialism. It is, as defined by Stalin, "Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution."¹⁶

14. V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, p. 638.

15. J. V. Stalin, Selected Works, p. 34.

16. Ibid, p. 16.

Chapter 15

Theoretical Basis of New Democratic Revolution

Evaluating the international character of the October Revolution, Stalin said, "This means that the October Revolution *has ushered in* a new era, the era of *proletarian revolutions in the countries of imperialism*."¹ The distinctive features of this new stage were explained thus: "The era of tranquil exploitation and oppression of the colonies and dependent countries *has passed away*. The era of liberating revolutions in the colonies and dependent countries, the era of the awakening of the *proletariat* in those countries, the era of its *hegemony* in the revolution *has begun*."²

"The great world-wide significance of the October Revolution," Stalin said while explaining its role in linking the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries with the world socialist revolution, "chiefly consists in the fact that:

"1) It has widened the scope of the national question and converted it from the particular question of combating national oppression in Europe into the general question of emancipating the oppressed peoples, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism;

"2) It has opened up wide possibilities for their emancipation and the right paths towards it, has thereby greatly

facilitated the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples of the West and the East, and has drawn them into the common current of the victorious struggle against imperialism;

"3) It has thereby erected a bridge between the socialist West and the enslaved East, having created a new front of revolutions *against* world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian Revolution, to the oppressed peoples of the East."³

The Second International took a totally different stand on the national question. Stalin says, "During the last two decades the national question has undergone a number of very important changes. The national question in the period of the Second International and the national question in the period of Leninism are far from being the same thing. They differ profoundly from each other, not only in their scope, but also in their intrinsic character.

"Formerly, the national question was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, "civilized" nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, and several other European nationalities—that was the circle of unequal peoples in whose destinies the leaders of the Second International were interested. The scores and hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African peoples who are suffering national oppression in its most savage and cruel form usually remained outside of their field of vision. They hesitated to put white and black, "civilized" and "uncivilized" on the same plane. Two or three meaningless, lukewarm resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of liberating the colonies—that was all the leaders of the Second International could boast of. Now we can say that this duplicity and half-heartedness in dealing with the national question has been brought to an end. Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between

1. J. V. Stalin, *Selected Works*, p. 271.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

3. J. V. Stalin, 'The October Revolution and the National Question', quoted in Mao Tsetung, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Peking, 1967, p. 345.

whites and blacks, between Europeans and Asiatics, between the "civilized" and "uncivilized" slaves of imperialism, and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies. The national question was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international problem, into a world problem of emancipating the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism."⁴

LENIN'S COLONIAL THESIS

The questions relating to revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries have come up even before it became a live issue before the international Communist movement. Revisionist leaders of the Second International had argued that the question of socialist revolution could be taken up in countries where bourgeois democratic revolution had not taken place only after they had gone through a long period after the completion of such a revolution. Lenin exposed the bankruptcy of this argument during the period of the revolution of 1905 itself. His arguments were not totally new in the sense that Marx and Engels themselves had pointed out that the impending bourgeois revolution in Germany would be a prelude to the subsequent proletarian revolution while writing the *Communist Manifesto*. Lenin stated that in the circumstances of the tremendous advance made by the working class movement in Russia; the working class should come forward to utilise the revolutionary situation of 1905 and should lead the bourgeois revolution towards proletarian revolution by allying with the peasants.

In his famous work *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin gave the line to be adopted by the working class party in order to utilise the revolut-

4. J. V. Stalin, Selected Works, p. 65-66.

ionary situation of 1905: "The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush the autocracy's resistance by force and paralyse the bourgeoisie's instability. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, allying to itself the mass of semi-proletarian elements of the population, so as to crush the bourgeoisie's resistance by force and paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie."⁵ This approach of completing bourgeois democratic revolution by allying with the peasantry and immediately transforming it into a socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie led to the success in 1917, though it failed in 1905. It was successful because the Bolshevik Party under Lenin's leadership utilised the favourable conditions created by the bourgeois democratic revolution of February 1917 to advance towards the socialist revolution without marking time; providing convincing proof of the inseparable link between bourgeois democratic revolution and socialist revolution.

Though it attempts to answer the questions raised by colonial revolution we have to recognise the fact that the question of colonial revolution is totally new and fundamentally different. As a capitalist power Russia was weak; but conditions for bourgeois democratic revolution arose because the capitalist forces capable of destroying feudalism had grown up there. Russia was actually becoming a capitalist nation, and its working class more powerful and active. Thus, the October Revolution solved the question of how a matured working class leads the bourgeois revolution to socialist revolution. But the question of revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries is different. There, the capitalist forces are not so developed as to smash feudalism; and the working class is also weak.

When the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries became a concrete issue following the October Revolution the question of linking it up with socialist

5. V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, p. 117.

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revolution came up as an immediate problem. The Third International under Lenin's leadership made intense efforts to find an answer to this question. And Lenin presented the Report of the Commission on the National and the Colonial Questions which was the result of a sharp ideological struggle, to the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920. Summing up the result of the discussion he said, "The question was posed as follows: are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to the pre-capitalist conditions, but 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 can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage."⁶

Undoubtedly, this is an important step in the development of world communist movement. But no practical moves were initiated at the time, except the beginnings of revolutionary movements in certain countries. It was the Chinese Revolution that turned out to be the testing ground of this theory; and Lenin's ideas came up all the more vigorously passing through these struggles. The theory and

6, V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, p. 605.

practice of new democratic revolution evolved out of this process.

Mao Tsetung formulated the practical and theoretical basis of new democratic revolution on the basis of the fundamental conclusions of the Communist International under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, though many suggestions of Stalin which did not conform to the objective conditions of the Chinese Revolution were rejected.

NEW DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

Under the guidance of the Communist International the Chinese Revolution was answering in practice the question of how colonial revolution is related to socialist revolution. Mao summed up these experiences to give theoretical basis to new democratic revolution in 1940.

Mao bases himself on the fact that the first imperialist war and the successful October Revolution changed the course of world history and heralded a new era. Mao describes the characteristics of this era, "It is an era in which the world capitalist front has collapsed in one part of the globe (one-sixth of the world) and has fully revealed its decadence everywhere else, in which the remaining capitalist parts cannot survive without relying more than ever on the colonies and semi-colonies, in which a socialist state has been established and has proclaimed its readiness to give active support to the liberation movement of all colonies and semi-colonies, and in which the proletariat of the capitalist countries is steadily freeing itself from the social-imperialist influence of the social-democratic parties and has proclaimed its support for the liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies. In this era, any revolution in a colony or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism, i.e., against the international bourgeoisie or international capitalism, no longer comes within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within the new category. It is no

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longer part of the old bourgeois or capitalist world revolution, but is part of the new world revolution, the proletarian socialist world revolution. Such revolutionary colonies and semi-colonies can no longer be regarded as allies of the counter-revolutionary front of world capitalism; they have become allies of the revolutionary front of world socialism."

Mao, then, describes the characteristics of the new democratic revolution, "Although such a revolution in a colonial and semi-colonial country is still fundamentally bourgeois-democratic in its social character during its first stage or first step, and although its objective mission is to clear the path for the development of capitalism, it is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and a state under bourgeois dictatorship. It belongs to the new type of revolution led by the proletariat with the aim, in the first stage, of establishing a new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes. Thus this revolution actually serves the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism. In the course of its progress, there may be a number of further sub-stages, because of changes on the enemy's side and within the ranks of our allies, but the fundamental character of the revolution remains unchanged."⁷

The essence of the new democratic revolution is that in the new era after the October Revolution, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution can be accomplished only under the leadership of the proletariat. Many had upheld the Kemalist revolution in Turkey to oppose this revolutionary stand. With the setback, in 1927, of the Chinese Revolution they argued for Kemalism. But pointing out that Kemal rose to power through a revolution of the trading bourgeoisie under the peculiar circumstances obtaining after World War I and that within a short period,

7. Mao Tsetung, 'On New Democracy', Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 343-44.

Kemalist Turkey came under the yoke of Anglo-French imperialism and soon degenerated into a semi-colony, Mao said that another Kemalist revolution is impossible in this new era, especially in a country like China. "True enough, this is the period of the final struggle of dying imperialism—imperialism is "moribund capitalism". But just because it is dying, it is all the more dependent on colonies and semi-colonies for survival and will certainly not allow any colony or semi-colony to establish anything like a capitalist society under the dictatorship of its own bourgeoisie."⁸

But this is not the only cause which renders democratic revolutions led by the bourgeoisie impossible in this new era. Socialism will not allow the bourgeoisie to do so. Another aspect established by Mao Tsetung was that the bourgeoisie would not be able to seize the leadership of the revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial countries because of the unlimited support given to them by the world proletariat and socialist forces. Besides, since the big bourgeoisie in these countries is inseparably connected to feudalism and imperialism, it would not be able to give leadership to an independent capitalist system.

The anti-imperialist national liberation struggles in colonial and semi-colonial countries have two basic characteristics: one being the civil war against the reactionary ruling classes, who, as lackeys of various imperialist forces, exploit and suppress the people, and the other, the struggle, mainly in the form of national war, against the respective imperialist forces. Quite often, new democratic revolution will be completed only after passing through the stages of civil war and national war. The history of new democratic revolution in China provides the best example. It was completed after successively waging national war in periods of direct imperialist aggression and civil war against internal enemy classes at other times.

The success of new democratic revolution leads to the

8. Ibid, p. 354.

establishment of a people's democratic dictatorship, that is, a state under the dictatorship of all revolutionary classes led by the proletariat. This state, which has defeated imperialism, completes the democratic revolution by eliminating its lackeys, feudalism and the comprador-bourgeoisie. But, as this process takes place under the leadership of the proletariat, the bourgeoisie is prevented from establishing capitalism under its leadership, even feudalism has been overturned. On the contrary, the people's democratic state advances towards socialism, eliminating the bourgeoisie step by step. Thus, as Lenin had visualised, the colonial revolution advances towards socialism through this stage of people's democracy, skipping the stage of capitalism.

SOME QUESTIONS OF THEORY

Today, the process of revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries advancing towards socialism without passing through the stage of capitalism has become a historical reality, and it poses some serious questions. Since the fact remains that productive forces in colonial or semi-colonial countries have not even developed to the extent necessary for a bourgeois democratic revolution, this reality seemingly goes against the tenets of the Marxist historical outlook. In Europe, bourgeois democratic revolutions took place at a stage when capitalist productive forces had grown up to an extent capable of destroying the feudal production relations. But, in colonial and semi-colonial countries the development of productive forces generally remains at the level of the feudal period. Yet, as we have seen, such countries have been able to complete the democratic revolution and advance towards socialism under the leadership of a proletariat which is comparatively very weak. What, then, is the relevance, in this context, of the fundamental Marxist-Leninist teaching that social revolutions take place when the contradiction between

developing productive forces and old production relations intensify?

Naturally we come to the conclusion that development of productive forces is not a decisive factor for revolution and that it can be carried out in a country, however backward it may be, by changing the production relations. Mao makes similar observations in the critical notes on Soviet economics, "Lenin says, 'The transition from capitalism to socialism will be more difficult for a country the more backward it is.' This would seem incorrect today. Actually the transition is less difficult the more backward an economy is, for the poorer they are the more the people want revolution. ...Countries of the East such as China and Russia, had been backward and poor, but now not only have their social systems moved well ahead of those of the West, but even the rate of development of their productive forces far outstrips that of the West... All revolutionary history shows that the full development of new productive forces is not the prerequisite for the transformation of backward production relations. Our revolution began with Marxist-Leninist propaganda, which served to create new public opinion in favour of the revolution. Moreover, it was possible to destroy the old production relations only after we had overthrown a backward superstructure in the course of revolution. After the old production relations had been destroyed new ones were created and these cleared the way for the development of new social productive forces."⁹

These are undeniable facts. But, how do they conform to the Marxist historical outlook? Mao said that though revolution in production relations took place as a result of the development of productive forces to a certain extent, major development of productive forces always follows changes in production relations. Such is the dialectical relation, in general, between productive forces and production relations, that works behind the develop-

9. Mao Tsetung, 'A Critique of Soviet Economics', p. 50-51,

ment of history. The development, to a certain extent, of productive forces paves way for transformation in production relations which in turn leads to big leaps in the development of productive forces. So it would be mechanistic vulgarisation of historical materialism to say that the full development of productive forces always precedes changes in production relations.

Does it mean that revolution is possible through changes in production relations even in countries where productive forces are not at all developed? That would be another variety of mechanicism. If so, how can we explain the historical fact that democratic revolution and subsequently socialist revolution have taken place in colonial and semi-colonial countries where productive forces have not developed even to the level of creating necessary conditions for bourgeois democratic revolution? It is unscientific to answer it with a general law that social transformation is possible by transforming production relations alone without taking into account the development of productive forces.

Mao raised this question, but left it unanswered saying, "Why was it that the revolution succeeded first not in the nations of the West with a high level of capitalist productivity and a numerous proletariat, but rather in the nations of the East, Russia and China for example, where the level of capitalist productivity was comparatively low and the proletariat comparatively small? This question awaits study."¹⁰

This question can be answered only if we examine whether any new objective conditions have emerged in colonial and semi-colonial countries which enable the democratic and socialist revolutions to take place even before the productive forces have sufficiently developed. In the period of imperialism the decisive factor for revolution is not the development of productive forces; on the contrary, it is the imperialist production relations on a

10. Ibid, p. 35.

global scale that play the decisive role. Lenin raised the question of discovering the weak link in this imperialist chain. But, after the October Revolution, revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries having become a concrete issue, any of these countries can become the weak link in the imperialist chain.

These conditions have given rise to a situation, as far as the colonial and semi-colonial countries are concerned, where the decisive factor for revolution is not the level of growth of their productive forces but their production relations. But such a situation was created by the development of productive forces in the capitalist countries. The productive forces in the imperialist countries correspond to the production system grown and developed in those countries. When they imposed colonial domination over Asia, Africa and Latin America to establish a world market for the survival and development of their production system, they were, in fact, preventing the natural development of the productive forces in these countries. The colonial domination became fetters on the productive forces in these countries.

Marx had pointed out that the stagnating productive forces of Indian villages would rise up with the coming of railways and steam engine following the British conquest of India. He said, "England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society and the laying of the material foundation of Western society in Asia."¹¹ Though the British had built railways in India in order to collect raw materials like cotton at cheap rate, they could not prevent the development of new instruments of production once they were introduced. It is true that the entry of the British had to a certain extent activated India's production system. But the imperialists were quick to realise the effects of such developments. They enforced strict controlling measures

11. K. Marx, 'Future Results of British Rule in India', in Marx and Engels, 'The First Indian War of Independence', Moscow, 1968, p. 31.

over all new forces. As Mao had pointed out, the imperialist powers, who realised that they could not survive unless the colonial and semi-colonial countries were brought under their yoke, took all precautionary measures to prevent the growth of independent capitalist systems in these countries. They succeeded in this global project. In fact, the economic system in colonial countries stagnated as a result of imperialist domination.

Today, the productive forces in these countries cannot develop without smashing the fetters of imperialist production relations, and hence, the struggle to transform them becomes paramount. So far as the revolutionary forces in such oppressed countries are concerned, the theory and practice of new democratic revolution equips them with the most powerful weapon for meeting the challenge posed by this specific situation born of the imperialist era. To smash the fetters of production relations, functioning as the basis of imperialist domination, and pave way for the development of productive forces, completion of the new democratic revolution and capture of political power, passing through the stages of civil war and national war in accordance with the specific conditions of each country, is a must. For example, in a semi-colonial country like India, under conditions where imperialism has not established direct domination, the new democratic revolution will advance in the initial stages through civil war; the struggle against feudalism and comprador-bureaucratic capitalism. The tentacles of imperialist production relations will be severed through smashing the economic base of semi-feudal system, still powerful in India. However, the possibility of direct aggression by imperialist powers to save their base, crumbling under the onslaught of civil war, exists and civil war gets transformed into national war. Thus, this is how the contradictions between productive forces and production relations are manifested in the era in which the entire world has been transformed into a single imperialist system. Of course, the basis for this world system is the development

of productive forces in imperialist countries. Class struggle has developed to a global level. As our analysis shows, the Marxist view of history remains the best tool both for understanding this complex situation and for transforming it.

A surge of anti-imperialist struggles, the most important characteristic of the imperialist era, started emerging distinctly in the post-World War II period. This was one in which the contradiction between imperialism on the one side and the oppressed peoples and nations on the other intensified most acutely, and hence the advance of the world revolution became inseparably linked with the growth of liberation movements in the oppressed countries. Though all sorts of revisionists refused to recognise this development, the international communist movement, which upheld the banner of Marxism-Leninism, attached great importance to it. In a document of the Chinese Communist Party in reply to the international revisionist bloc led by Khrushchev this position was clarified unambiguously: "The various types of contradictions in the contemporary world are concentrated in the vast areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America; these are the most vulnerable areas under imperialist rule and the storm centres of world revolution dealing direct blows at imperialism..... In a sense, therefore, the whole cause of the international proletarian revolution hinges on the outcome of the revolutionary struggles of the people of these areas, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the world's population."¹² As a continuation of this correct evaluation, the report of the CPC's 9th Congress gives the first place to the contradiction between the oppressed nations on the one side and imperialism and social imperialism on the other among the major contradictions in the world. Marxist-Leninists stress the fact that, in this period, the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles in the oppressed nations lead the world revolution forward.

12. CPC, 'A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement', 14 June 1963, Peking, pp. 12-13.

MARX'S APPROACH

Obviously, all sorts of revisionists refuse to accept such a revolutionary stand, and all of them, in essence, depend on the theory of productive forces. Obstinate sticking to the view that all historical developments take place through the growth of productive forces, they adopt a mechanical outlook. Since they fail to recognise the decisive role of changes in production relations in certain stages of development of history and the dialectical relation between productive forces and production relations, they reject the cardinal role of class struggle in the development of history. And this one-sided stress on the role of productive forces leads them to always see the highly advanced capitalist countries as the centre of world revolution; ignoring any decisive role to the liberation struggles in the oppressed nations. As a corollary of this mechanical approach they advance a deterministic outlook of world history. To them, the stages of historical development through primitive communism, slavery, feudalism and capitalism to socialism and communism as pointed out by Marx, remain as inviolable divine will. This is the approach of the authors of 'Marxist' text books, which has been stoutly opposed by Marx himself. In a letter replying to the Narodnik misinterpretation of *Capital*, Marx points out that the chapter on primitive accumulation of capital only gives an outline of the history of the emergence in Western Europe of the capitalist mode of production from the womb of the feudal mode. Commenting on the stand of his Narodnik critic who was opposed to applying the Marxist method to a study of Russian history he said, "He insists on transforming my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of the general path of development prescribed by fate to all nations, whatever the historical circumstances in which they find themselves, in order that they may ultimately arrive at the economic system which ensures, together with the greatest expansion of the productive

powers of social labour the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. (He is doing me too much honour and at the same time slandering me too much.)"¹³

After criticising the stand of applying a historical outline formulated on the basis of the history of Western Europe disregarding the specific conditions of different countries, Marx gives an example useful in illustrating the scientific approach to history. The free people of ancient Rome became slaves after being thrown out of their land. However, though the peasants of Rome were dispossessed of their land in a similar manner during the period of the primitive accumulation of capital in the first stages of capitalism, they ended up as slaves whereas the latter became proletarians. Marx said, "Thus events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historical surroundings led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of revolution separately and then comparing them one can easily form the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by using as one's master key a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being supra-historical."¹⁴

Marx had been quite emphatic in making it clear that his historical outlook is not a historico-philosophical theory which can be applied without qualifications in all countries irrespective of the diverse conditions in which they have developed. On the contrary, the laws of historical development Marx formulated can only be applied by giving due consideration to the objective specificities of each situation. This is something to be kept in mind while studying the history of countries like India, which have had a course of development fundamentally different from that of European history. But the revisionists, who have never been willing to assimilate Marx's scientific approach, persist in vulgarly reducing his historical outline of Western Europe to an historico-philosophical theory

13. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 293-94.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

applicable equally to all countries. As Marx had told his Russian critic, they slander him too much.

But the revisionists, blinded by a "supra-historical" "historico-philosophical theory", cannot grasp new possibilities and new situations evolving out of the interactions of unforeseen events in the complex historical conditions. So they stand perplexed at the reality of revolutionary struggles of the peoples of colonies and semi-colonies having become the storm centres of the world revolutionary movement.

Chapter 16

Lenin and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

We have seen, in an earlier chapter, that the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the rather prolonged period of the transition of society from capitalism to communism. We have also discussed the lessons of the Paris Commune regarding the form of the state during that period. The proletarian dictatorship in the USSR headed by Lenin made an earnest attempt to learn from these experiences in charting its onward course.

Lenin had formed a vivid idea of the form of the new government under proletarian dictatorship just before the October uprising which is summed up in *The State and Revolution* written during his underground days in August-September, 1917. Here, we shall first discuss the salient features of Lenin's conception of proletarian dictatorship and then attempt to measure the success of the Bolshevik Party, first under Lenin and then Stalin, in the execution of this conception.

"The state", Lenin sums up the essence of Engel's definition of the state, "is a product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are *irreconcilable*."¹ The state arises from the irreconcilable nature

1. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, p. 267.

of class antagonisms. But the bourgeois theoreticians, forced to recognise the historical reality of the origin of the state from class antagonisms, tried to establish that the state is an instrument for the reconciliation of these class antagonisms. Lenin exposed the hollowness of this argument when he said that the state arises only where such a reconciliation is objectively impossible. The state is used by a class, not to reconcile, but to oppress another class. The state is the organ of class rule standing above society and alienating itself more and more from it. The fundamental definition of state as the instrument of one class to oppress the other is applicable also to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

THE ABOLITION AND THE 'WITHERING AWAY' OF THE STATE

The 'withering away' of the state in a classless society is considered one of the noblest and unique of communist ideas. The revisionists of the Second International distorted the conceptions developed by Marx and Engels regarding this in order to present the view that the state will 'wither away' and communism come into existence through a natural process of evolution that accompanies the development of the productive forces. Lenin pointed out that this reactionary view which denies the very concept of proletarian revolution was intended only to save the bourgeois ruling classes on the verge of collapse. He explained the meaning of Engel's statement about the withering away of the state: "As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the proletarian revolution 'abolishing' the *bourgeois* state, while the words about the state withering away refer to the remnants of the *proletarian* state after the socialist revolution. According to Engels, the bourgeois state does not 'wither away' but is 'abolished' by the proletariat in the course of the revolution. What withers away

after the revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state."²

This explanation exposes alike the attitudes of anarchists as well as opportunists. The anarchists hold that no kind of state is necessary after the revolution since at that stage the state as a whole is 'abolished'. They do not recognise the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. They cherish the illusion that the revolution straightaway ushers in the stateless and classless society. Lenin gave a heavy blow to these anarchists by establishing that what is *abolished* is the bourgeois state while the proletarian state that follows only *withers away* which is a long-term process. Lenin also opposed the opportunistic view that the bourgeois state withers away automatically. He broke the backbone of the opportunists when he said that the bourgeois state can be destroyed and abolished only through a violent revolution, and what withers away is the proletarian state established in its wake.

In his attempt to clarify the issue, Lenin, basing himself on a letter addressed by Marx to Weydemeyer in which Marx claimed credit for his specific discoveries, said: "It is often said and written that the main point in Marxist theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the

2. Ibid, p. 275.

Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested."³

The opportunists of the Second International represented by Kautsky had accepted the bourgeois attitude towards class struggle. They were ready to recognise class struggle in the sphere of bourgeois relations. But they do not recognise the class struggle in the period of the proletarian dictatorship. Lenin goes on to say, "Opportunism *does not extend* recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism, of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic in *a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial in a new way (against the bourgeoisie)."⁴

The problems posed by Lenin in the course of his struggle against anarchists and opportunists are of profound and far-reaching consequence. They have, today, become crucial to the progress of the world communist movement. History has borne out the contention that the bourgeoisie can be eliminated completely only through an unprecedentedly fierce and violent class struggle championed by the proletarian dictatorship. It has proved that capitalism will be restored in socialist countries unless they fully recognise the true importance of class struggle and continue their uncompromising fight against the bourgeoisie or its remnants. Revisionists and opportunists of all hues try to hide or ignore the continuation of the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus they manage to transform proletarian dictatorship into bourgeois dictatorship. Capitalism was restored in the Soviet Union

3. Ibid, p. 287.

4. Ibid, pp. 287-88.

and the countries in the Soviet bloc, and is now being restored in China, precisely because of their rejection of the class struggle against the bourgeoisie in the post-revolutionary era. While the struggle against this revisionist trend is gathering strength at the international level, another opportunist trend forewarned by Lenin has begun to crop up. It is the tendency to emphasise class struggle unilaterally in the name of the fight against the rejection of class struggle. Here the relationship between class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat is ignored. To uphold class struggle without due emphasis on proletarian dictatorship is nothing but the bourgeois attitude condemned by Lenin. Thinkers like Charles Bettelheim who assume such a stand in the name of opposing the revisionist rejection of class struggle in effect only weaken the struggle against revisionism.

THE OVERCOMING OF DEMOCRACY

Marx upheld many of the measures adopted by the Paris Commune as major steps towards the transformation of bourgeois democracy into proletarian democracy. The introduction of the people's right to recall the elected representatives, the equalisation of the remuneration of state servants with workmen's wages, the stern measures to check bureaucratic trends—Marx upheld all these reforms as major moves in the direction of true democracy. The Paris Commune introduced the new democratic system of the majority of the population ruling over the minority of oppressors as against the old system where the minority were empowered to suppress the majority. Lenin commented thus on the issue: "And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been completely ignored!"⁵

5. Ibid, pp. 293-94.

Democracy is a form of the state; there is no 'pure democracy' which is not a form of the state. Even democracy as a form of the state can be extended to embrace the majority of the people. "To develop democracy to the utmost; to find the forms for this development, to test them by practice, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for social revolution."⁶ This extension of democracy will actually lead to the end of democracy. Broadly speaking democracy in the modern society appears to have three stages of development. The bourgeois democracy of the capitalist societies is democracy only for the affluent minority; thus it is a sham, wicked, democracy. It is the proletarian dictatorship that first provides democracy for the majority. But that democracy emerges from, and evolves through, the suppression of the exploiting minority. "Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away on its own accord."⁷

Democracy proclaims formal equality for all. Only, this formal equality can be put into practice to the utmost as we proceed from bourgeois democracy to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Communism envisages the transition from this formal equality to real equality. The stage is set for this transition under proletarian dictatorship, the period of the communist transformation of society. Lenin points out how it is impossible to prophesy the forms that will render possible this transition. But we can say for certain that such a transition is possible, and possible only through the practice of socialism.

The conception of democracy is very relevant to the present ideological struggles in the world communist movement. It has now been proved that the growth of bureaucracy under proletarian dictatorship plays a decisive role in the restoration of capitalism. Hence the struggle

6. Ibid, p. 320.

7. Ibid, p. 328.

against bureaucracy and the role of the process of democratisation in this struggle have assumed serious and significant proportions. This problem can be correctly dealt with only on the basis of the dialectical relationship between democracy and centralisation under proletarian dictatorship. The question of the nature of democratic centralism is again inextricably bound up with the complex class struggle waged under the dictatorship of the proletariat. There are some who plead for 'pure democracy' claiming that they are upholding democracy against bureaucracy. We have seen how the Trotskyites who claimed they were struggling against the bureaucracy which grew up during Stalin's time and the Eurocommunists who recently entered the ideological arena as critics of Soviet bureaucracy have both ended up as spokesmen of bourgeois democracy. The issue has been complicated further by the capitalist restoration in progress in China where the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had been launched as the most potent instrument of class struggle under proletarian dictatorship. The international ideological debate on this issue has thrown up two important opinions that contradict each other. One holds that the capitalist restoration was a product of democratic excess, while the other attributes it to the excessive restriction of the sound democratic trends set in motion in the initial stages of the cultural revolution. The clarification of this issue demands an examination of the development of class struggle and the practice of democratic centralism under the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union following the victory of the October Revolution.

BETTELHEIM'S APPROACH

Lenin was assisted only by very few lessons from the past in his discussions of proletarian dictatorship in the period that preceded the October Revolution. The situation has changed very much since then. We now have before

us the complex experiences and lessons of the prolonged period of proletarian dictatorship that followed the October Revolution; we have too, the history of its downfall. We are also guided by the efforts made in China to avoid a recurrence of the Soviet error whose lessons the Chinese had studied in detail, and the failure of those efforts. In the light of all these experiences, it is possible for us today to assess the value of Lenin's and Stalin's attempts to establish and develop proletarian dictatorship in the USSR after the revolution. Such an investigation is certain to help a deeper understanding of the recent deviations in China and the discovery of the proper means of avoiding such errors in future.

The belief that the Chinese type of cultural revolution is an effective instrument in preventing capitalist restoration as happened in the USSR was strong in the world communist movement before the present regression in China. This was the ideological context that inspired Bettelheim to attempt a reappraisal of the experiences of the Soviet Union after the October Revolution on the basis of the novel and positive experiences of class struggle under the proletarian dictatorship in China. Undoubtedly, the two volumes reviewing the Soviet developments from 1917 to 1930 are the most serious studies published to date on this topic. The basic weaknesses of Bettelheim's approach have already been pointed out in an earlier chapter. In order to oppose the theory of productive forces, Bettelheim emphasises the change in the relations of production as the key factor, and presents this proposition as a universal law. While this weakness admittedly persists and we should be critical of such mechanical generalisations, we should also admit that the change in the relations of production is decisive throughout the period of proletarian dictatorship, i.e., the period of transition from capitalism to communism. Therefore, we cannot but welcome Bettelheim's evaluations that emphasise the change in production relations under proletarian dictatorship. They gain added significance since they are concerned with the period of transition.

This is not to say that Bettelheim's studies are flawless, we do sometimes come across errors occasioned by his failure to maintain the correct balance regarding the dialectical relation between productive forces and production relations. He often arrives at wrong conclusions in his eagerness to emphasise class struggle at the expense of proletarian dictatorship. His unilateral emphasis on democracy and his neglect of the mutual relation between democracy and centralism often land him in bourgeois democracy and liberalism. In his evaluation of the Soviet developments of the 1920s in the light of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the class struggle under proletarian dictatorship, Bettelheim often ignores the fundamental difference between the objective conditions obtaining in China and the Soviet Union. Besides, a reading of the two volumes of his work on the class struggle in the Soviet Union leaves the impression that he is prejudiced against Stalin and is anxious to discover reasons to criticise him.

Despite such limitations Bettelheim's studies reveal several important facts that deserve our attention. Many of his revelations and arguments are of immense value in the global struggle against revisionism.

Bettelheim reveals, as one of the basic precepts underlying his study, the view that the tendency to mistake the legal changes in property relations for actual changes in production relations plays a considerable role in the restoration of capitalism. This approach is correct since the spokesmen of capitalist restoration always claim that the change in production relations is completed as soon as the production is brought under public ownership through laws and declarations in the period of socialist transformation. According to them, no more change is required in that sphere. These capitalist roaders hide the fact that the legal changes in ownership are only a precondition for the real change in production relations which can be established through ceaseless class struggle. The struggle against this trend is a decisive factor in the broader struggle against capitalist restoration. Bettelheim shows how the

representatives of the proletariat ignored or lost sight of this struggle during the years of the socialist transformation in the USSR. He also draws our attention to the background of the grave error committed by Stalin in this respect. We shall examine in the following chapter Stalin's role in the restoration of capitalism, as a result of his laying excessive stress on the development of productive forces.

LENIN'S ASSESSMENT

It was in the five years that immediately followed the October Revolution that Lenin directly headed the proletarian government. Those five years were the toughest and most challenging period for the proletarian government. It was a great achievement of the Bolshevik Party that they could safeguard the fragile and infantile government from the dual ills of the civil war and the imperialist attacks during its first three years. The October Revolution would have simply repeated the experience of the Paris Commune in a different manner had it not survived this stage of disorder. Many schemes like 'War Communism' implemented in Russia to face this ordeal were not in keeping with the broad democratic traditions of the Paris Commune: but it was a period which demanded more centralism than democracy. And this had resulted in an extremely centralised state.

Lenin had declared, as already mentioned, that class struggle would have to be continued relentlessly under the dictatorship of the proletariat. He summed up the experiences of two years of the revolution in *Economics and Politics in the Era of Dictatorship of the Proletariat* in October 1919 in which he said, "The class of exploiters, the land owners and capitalists, has 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 a thousand-fold. The "art" of state, military and economic administration gives them a superiority, and a very great superiority, so that their importance is incomparably greater than their numerical proportion of the population. The class struggle waged by the overthrown exploiters against the victorious vanguard of the exploited, i.e., the proletariat, has become incomparably more bitter. And it cannot be otherwise in the case of a revolution, unless this concept is replaced (as it is by all the heroes of the Second International) by reformist illusions."⁸

The developments after the revolution proved the truth of Lenin's prediction in *The State and Revolution* that the class struggle under proletarian dictatorship would be unprecedentedly violent and fierce. Lenin had repeatedly warned that not only would the struggle grow sharper, but the vanquished classes would strive ceaselessly to retrieve power.

It remains to be examined how far the October Revolution succeeded in smashing the existing reactionary state and establishing an entirely new proletarian state. Lenin observed that in spite of the tremendous progress in the destruction of the old state, it continued to threaten the new state in the form of bureaucracy. He pointed out that this bureaucracy was playing a considerable role in preparing the ground for the growth of a new bourgeoisie. He said that the new bourgeoisie was coming up from among the Soviet officials and even the working class. This new bourgeoisie was growing, according to him, in the fertile soil of the economic base of the still widespread small scale production.

Lenin reiterated time and again that this new bourgeoisie growing up within the country, government and the

8. Ibid, p. 504.

party was the gravest threat to the proletarian state. It could be met effectively only if the party of the working class could dominate the state upholding the correct Marxist revolutionary line. This requires a state machinery entirely submissive to and controlled by—and not “free” from—the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, soon after the revolution, the state had begun to drift farther and farther away from the party, the vanguard of the working class.

According to Bettelheim, Lenin was increasingly conscious of this deterioration and recognised the possibility of the Soviet state turning into an ‘ordinary bourgeois state’ as a serious threat. “Lenin then described the type of relationship which had become established (this was in 1922) between the party and the state machine: ‘If we take Moscow with its 4700 communists in responsible positions, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap, we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can truthfully be said that Communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they are not directing, they are being directed.’ He went on: ‘Communists who are put at the head of departments—and sometimes artful saboteurs deliberately put them in these positions in order to use them as a shield—are often fooled... Will the responsible Communists of the RSFSR and of the Russian Communist Party realise that they cannot administer: that they only imagine they are directing, but are, actually, being directed?’”⁹ Bettelheim narrates the history of Lenin’s warnings against the gradual alienation of the Soviet state from the working class and its party and its transformation into a “free” state entirely manipulated by bourgeois elements:

“Lenin acknowledged this situation when, addressing the Eighth Party Congress in 1919, he said that the Soviet power had been obliged, after it had “dispersed these old

9. C. Bettelheim, ‘Class Struggles in the USSR, First Period 1917-1923’, p. 296.

bureaucrats,” to “place them in new posts.” He added: “The Tsarist bureaucrats began to join the Soviet institutions and practise their bureaucratic methods, they began to assume the colouring of Communists, and, to succeed better in their careers, to procure membership cards of the Russian Communist Party. And so, they have been thrown out of the door but they creep back in through the window.”

“The “bureaucratic distortion” of which Lenin spoke in December 1920 gave a particular character to the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR, which was also connected with the place occupied by the bourgeoisie and bourgeois practices in the machinery of the dictatorship...”

“At the end of 1922, addressing the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Lenin went further in his characterization of the state administrative apparatus, which he identified with the tsarist apparatus:

“We took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortune...”

“...Down below...there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the Tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly deliberately and partly unwittingly, work against us.”

“Finally, not long before he was definitely condemned to silence by illness, Lenin delivered his most severe judgment on the “Soviet” state machine. It was nothing, he said, but the machine “which...we took over from Tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil.” And he added that “the apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us; it is a bourgeois and Tsarist hotch-potch...” Thus, right down to his last writings, Lenin denounced the process whereby the state machinery was acquiring independence, and the resurgence of an apparatus “taken over from Tsarism.” Toward the end of 1920 Lenin went so far as to say: ‘It is the task of the Soviet government to completely destroy the old machinery of state as it was destroyed in October, and to transfer power to the Soviets.’

“As we know, the reconstituted old machinery of state was never destroyed as Lenin demanded—on the contrary,

it developed and became consolidated."¹⁰

Bettelheim's conclusion based on Lenin's evaluations is essentially right. The later changes in the Bolshevik Party testify to the failure under Stalin's leadership in discovering effective methods to destroy the bureaucracy rooted in the old society.

In one of his last articles written from the sickbed, Lenin observed: "Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say wretched, that we must first think very carefully how to combat its defects, bearing in mind that these defects are rooted in the past, which, although it has been overthrown, but not yet been overcome, has not yet reached the stage of a culture that has receded into the distant past."¹¹ In this article Lenin proposed a grand scheme for organising a system called "the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection" in order to build up a real proletarian state. However, this struggle against bureaucracy only grew weaker with time. The evolution of the proletarian state in the USSR began to move in a disastrous direction as feared by Lenin.

APPROACH TO "DEMOCRATIC" PARTIES

The original plan of the Bolshevik Party was for an all-Russian congress of the Soviets—the centres of local authority formed in different areas, to be the supreme centre of political power in the Soviet Union. Though the Bolshevik-controlled Soviets had decisive majority in this congress, it also included Soviets run by the Mensheviks, the Socialist Revolutionaries, etc., who were all ready to stand by the Revolution. The Bolshevik Party was prepared to share power and form coalition government with petty bourgeois and other parties excepting a few blatantly reactionary parties like the Cadet Party. The Mensheviks

10. Ibid, pp. 330-31.

11. V. I. Lenin, 'Better Fewer, But Better', Selected Works, p. 700.

and the SRs at first cooperated in the Congress. But when they found their interests would never prevail in the Congress since they were a minority, they backed out from it. Later the Bolshevik Party offered even these parties an opportunity to return to the Congress. The leftists who had severed their ties with the SRs participated for a time in the coalition government; but they left it following differences of opinion regarding the conciliation talks with Germany. The beginning of the civil war worsened the Bolsheviks' relations with these "democratic" parties.

The Bolshevik Party's approach to the "democratic parties" was fundamentally correct throughout this period. They were allowed to have a share in the state power as long as they did not indulge in counter-revolutionary machinations meant to overthrow the power of the soviets. They were also given the right to independent functioning, work and propaganda. But when they began to indulge in counter-revolutionary activities to subvert the soviet power, they were banned and stern measures taken against them. This situation resulted not from any error in the policy of the Bolshevik Party, but the baseless illusions cherished by these "democratic" parties.

The Bolshevik Party's stand with regard to the freedom of the press was also absolutely correct. The Soviet government decided first to ban those journals representing the bourgeois economic interests or taking an open counter-revolutionary stand. At the same time, it permitted the petty bourgeois organisations and other democrats to continue their ideological propaganda. Such organisations and their publications were free to wage political struggle against the soviet system on the ideological plane. In the beginning such publications were even promised their quota of newsprint from the government though this remained unfulfilled.

When, however, the civil war broke out and many of the organisations took sides with reaction, their newspapers had to be banned. In the early stages of the civil war they managed to publish them under new titles; but as the

situation moved from bad to worse, they were deprived even of this freedom. It was the subversive activity of the "democratic" parties and the legal proceedings necessitated against them that paved the way to the suppression of their freedom of work and publication. The Bolshevik Party's plan to shape a system in which the "democratic" parties could work under the dictatorship of the proletariat was thus frustrated. Here is Bettelheim's assessment of the situation: "This failure was due mainly to the illusions entertained by these parties, which thought they could overthrow the proletarian power by means of subversive agitation, and so refused, on their own initiative, to fit into the new political relations. This attitude was certainly fostered by the mistakes of the Bolshevik Party, which often preferred to apply methods of repression instead of relying mainly on ideological struggle."¹²

This assessment is the product of a fundamentally erroneous stand. The measures which encourages the counter-revolutionary stand of the petty bourgeois parties is extremely dangerous. His argument that attempts at counter-revolution can be thwarted purely by ideological struggle arises from a bourgeois liberal attitude. Even after the proletariat's success in capturing political power, the wealth of experience and tradition earned through prolonged domination continues to favour the reactionary classes. The power of the working class is only a fresh, and hence weak, shoot. The hope that the working class at this stage can meet bourgeois ideas and counter-revolutionary trends by pure ideological confrontation is no more than a delusion. It may be possible for it to do so, once the proletarian power has attained strength and stability. But Bettelheim's suggestion that the stern measures adopted against the counter-revolutionary forces by the proletarian state are indicative of an anti-democratic trend is not supported by historical facts.

12. C. Bettelheim, *First Period*, p. 269-70.

COMMUNIST SUBBOTNIKS

The emergence of 'Communist Subbotniks' was the most noticeable event during 'War Communism' of the civil war period. It proved that communism is no idle day-dream, but is a natural state rising up from the fundamental class character of the proletariat. Lenin upheld the advent of this concept as a major historical event.

The communist workers, exhorted by the party leadership to rise to the occasion and act in a revolutionary manner, forged several instruments to meet the new challenge posed by war. The workers of Moscow-Kazan railway district decided to lengthen their work-time by an hour every day, accumulate these extra-hours and put in six extra-hours of manual work on Saturdays in order to create real values of instant worth. These days on which they worked without pay were called 'Communist Saturdays'. The project turned out to be a tremendous success. On the very first Saturday it was introduced. The productivity of labour on 'Communist Saturday' was found two to three times higher than that of a regular working day. 'Pravda' in its issue of 23 May 1919 carried a report of this development that helped spread the movement throughout the country. This communist spirit remained active till the end of the civil war. Lenin had this to say about the enormous significance of the Communist Saturdays: "Evidently, this is only a beginning, but it is a beginning of exceptionally great importance. It is the beginning of a revolution that is more difficult, more tangible, more radical and more decisive than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for it is a victory over our own conservatism, indiscipline, petty bourgeois egoism, a victory over the habits left as a heritage to the worker and peasant by accursed capitalism. Only when *this* victory is consolidated will the new social discipline, socialist discipline, be created; then and only then will a reversion to capitalism become impossible, will communism become really invincible."¹³

13. Lenin, 'A Great Beginning', *Selected Works*, p. 478.

The 'Communist Subbotniks' proved that productivity really grows with the awakening of class consciousness which persuades the people to work for the society without any interest of receiving remuneration, and that the productivity resulting from this class consciousness is the basis of communist construction. Lenin could immediately grasp and uphold its real significance. He viewed it as one of the new shoots likely to come forth in the progress towards communism. Some of these shoots will inevitably perish, but it is our duty to nurse and tend each and every shoot of the new so that life may select the fittest to survive. Lenin reminds us that we will have to try hundreds of thousands of new systems, new forms of struggle in our attempt to abolish capitalism, very much as scientists conduct repeated experiments in order to make a new discovery. Only thus can we discover and develop that which suits us most. Lenin could thus grasp the revolutionary significance of 'Communist Saturdays' thanks to his broad, dialectical approach that gave no room for dogmatism or sectarianism in any form.

'Communist Subbotniks' become revolutionary only insofar as they are born out of self-realised class consciousness. In the post-Lenin period when this voluntary enthusiasm came to subside, 'Communist Subbotniks' began to be 'manufactured' on the basis of discipline imposed from above.

Originally, 'Communist Subbotniks' were a product of the exceptional war conditions; the natural circumstances necessary for the emergence of basically communist production relations were yet to rise. That was why, the end of the war also witnessed the end of the spontaneous popular zeal. This was quite natural, and does not in the least reduce the revolutionary significance of 'Communist Saturdays'. They will continue to remain the prototype of the future communist relations of production.

These and similar circumstances of 'War Communism' created the illusion that communist relations had already appeared in the spheres of production and distribu-

tion. The majority of the members of the Bolshevik Party deluded themselves with the wishful thinking that 'War Communism' had been a leap towards real communism. They hoped in vain that commodity production and money transaction had all come to an end. But the end of the civil war freed them from their illusions. The party which got liberated from such illusions now got ready to formulate new and realistic policies. In this way Lenin came to give shape to the New Economic Policy (NEP).

Chapter 17

Stalin and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Today, the 'Stalin question' has once more become a major point of debate within the international communist movement. The controversy kicked up by Khrushchev, supplementing efforts of anti-communist bourgeois propagandists to defame Stalin, had mainly centred on Stalin as an individual. In the face of this, the C P C and Marxist-Leninists throughout the world led by Mao Tsetung adopted a stand of learning from Stalin's mistakes, even while defending him against the unprincipled and frenzied attacks of Khrushchev and upholding his great contributions to the world revolutionary movement. This stand was instrumental in enabling Mao Tsetung to raise Marxism-Leninism to new heights by formulating the theory and practice of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the context of the capitalist roaders' usurpation of power and restoration of capitalism in China, a comparison of these developments with the experiences in the Soviet Union is a must. This becomes all the more necessary, because of the stand of Enver Hoxha who has reneged from his earlier position of praising Mao to the skies to one of rejecting him totally and his attempts to crown himself as the true disciple of Stalin. Earlier, Hoxha had concurred with Mao Tsetung's evaluation, that though Stalin had committed serious mistakes his merits far outweigh them,

However, today he demands that Stalin be judged as absolutely correct and Mao be rejected as totally wrong. Obviously, this unprincipled and opportunistic position of Hoxha, who ought to have been foremost in confronting the crisis in the international communist movement caused by the setback in China, has only helped in creating more confusion. More, Hoxha's sommersaults, executed in the name of defending Stalin, even go to the extent of giving a distorted image of Stalin's merits.

Thus, an objective evaluation of the gains and setbacks in the Soviet Union led by Stalin becomes a pressing necessity today. The true causes of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union can be unraveled only on the basis of such an evaluation. This is also necessary to get a correct idea of Mao Tsetung's efforts, such as the Cultural Revolution led by him, to prevent its repetition in China, and again, to indicate the causes which led to restoration in China. Obviously, all this leads to the 'Stalin question' being debated in a wider context today. Earlier, we had examined Mao's critique of Stalin's philosophical errors. Now, with this philosophical background in mind, we shall go on to evaluate the merits and demerits of political and economic policies formulated and applied in the Soviet Union while being led by Stalin.

STALIN AND THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

An appraisal of Bettelheim's studies on class struggles in the U S S R, where he concludes that the Bolshevik Party led by Stalin committed grave mistakes in carrying forward the New Economic Policy formulated and implemented by Lenin following the period of 'War Communism', would be helpful for our purpose here.

The New Economic Policy was announced in 1921. In the period of 'War Communism' serious crises had been surmounted through efforts such as the 'Communist Saturdays', inspired by social consciousness. However this

practice could not be continued following the conclusion of the civil war and the New Economic Policy was formulated on the basis of the new objective situation. The basic characteristic of this policy was the right given to peasants, small merchants and producers including small capitalists, to carry on production and distribution "independently". And, it was generally considered to be a "retreat" from the tremendous leap witnessed during the period of "War Communism".

The History of the C P S U (B) characterises the new policy as a retreat to conserve energy for the next offensive; and in 1922, Lenin declared that the retreat was over. Moreover, he also gave a call to "prepare for an Attack against Private Capital."

Both Lenin and the Bolshevik Party had generally understood the New Economic Policy (NEP) as something more than a mere retreat, in a sense it was a retreat, however it was also part of an attempt to advance on a firmer base and in this sense it was part of an advance. The History of the C P S U (B) gives an explanation of this dual nature of NEP.

By 1926, it was considered that economic regeneration according to the NEP had been more or less completed. From then onwards Stalin concentrated on drawing up plans for socialist construction, mainly based on a policy emphasising the growth of heavy industry. However, agricultural production went down to a considerable extent in the period following 1926, and there was a crisis in grain procurement. This led to measures being adopted against the kulaks, based on an evaluation that they were behind these disturbances on the agrarian front. Moreover, attempts were made to produce tractors and other farm machinery, in order to improve agricultural production and surmount the crisis.

Capital accumulation for industrialisation was mainly carried out by squeezing the agricultural sector and compulsory grain procurement was enforced as part of this. Apart

from all this, collectives were forcibly established during 1928-29. Though the programme of socialisation was formulated in order to solve the crisis in the agrarian sector, the policy of forced conversion turned out to be counter-productive. Assessing this new situation, the Party carried out self criticism and made it clear that collectives should be formed by peasants voluntarily. With that more than half of the collectives, forced into existence, disappeared. The overall effect of these measures was a weakening of the agrarian sector.

Bettelheim's analysis of the developments following Lenin's death could be summarised as follows: NEP was not just an economic policy. It was a means to implement the political policy which considered the worker-peasant alliance as the foundation of the proletarian dictatorship. Since NEP was a policy formulated with a sense of reality following the conviction that the policies of 'War Communism' were based on illusions, it was not a retreat but an advance. And in 1922, Lenin had called for carrying forward NEP even while declaring that the retreat had ended precisely because he had grasped this. Lenin had called for strengthening the worker-peasant alliance.

However, following Lenin's death, both Stalin and the other Bolshevik leaders failed in grasping the importance of NEP as visualised by Lenin and they considered it merely as a temporary economic policy. Gradually it was ignored. When the peasants started losing the benefits and rights ensured by NEP they started to turn against the Soviet government. This was what led to the crisis in grain procurement and so on, which was not just something stirred up by the kulaks. The peasants had gone over to the enemy camp because of a deviation from the basic policy of worker-peasant alliance. The policy of squeezing the peasants for the sake of industrialisation and forced cultivation had only helped in antagonising them. Again, these policies, and especially the policy of emphasising the growth of heavy industry, led to the development of the theory of productive forces and prepared the ground for

capitalist restoration.

All these conclusions of Bettelheim's spring from certain baseless conceptions. The Bolshevik Party during Lenin's as well as Stalin's time did regard the worker-peasant alliance as the foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Before NEP as well as after it that policy was in existence. In the period following the civil war, it is true, NEP helped further strengthen worker-peasant alliance. But, this does not imply that NEP was always its basis. Lenin had remarked that NEP was at once a retreat and an advance. This was the same approach that Stalin had taken. Even when the importance of NEP got diminished, Stalin had stressed the importance of worker-peasant alliance. It can be said that Stalin had committed many mistakes as regards the effective implementation of that alliance. But, to say that Stalin ignored the importance of that alliance is factually incorrect.

While making self-criticism (on behalf of the Party) of the deviations committed in the zeal to establish collective farms, and in the subsequent reply to the comrades of the collective farms, Stalin explains that the solidarity with peasants is party's basic policy. He points out too that the failure to win over middle peasants in the struggle against kulaks was due to the local activists resorting to indiscriminate force in a hysteria of victory. Stalin had all the time emphasised the importance of the worker-peasant alliance.

That the basis of capitalist restoration lay in small scale production was repeatedly pointed out by Lenin, "...small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale."¹

Therefore, Lenin repeatedly observed and stressed the necessity of smashing small scale production and rapidly developing industrialised production. This is why he pointed out electrification as the foundation of socialist con-

1. V. I. Lenin, quoted in Stalin, Selected Works, p. 295.

struction. While emphasising the spirit of class consciousness of 'Communist Subbotniks' also, he had pointed out that it was in the context of socialised production, of large scale industry that that spirit sprang up. In short, not only Stalin but Lenin also had held that the development of large scale industry was absolutely essential for the growth of socialist construction. This understanding was widely prevalent in the communist movement in general at the time. There is no point in singling out Stalin alone for this.

It is meaningless to say that the attempt to establish collective farms was untimely. If anything, the fact that it took 12 years after the October Revolution to launch on this venture can only be said to be belated. Bettelheim is in fact criticising these efforts of Stalin in the same vein as the revisionists had done in the case of Mao's strivings to establish communes in China in 1958. In an identical fashion as that in which Peng Tehuai and others had censured Mao on this question of communes, Bukharin opposed Stalin's policies from a rightist standpoint. When Bettelheim justifies Bukharin's stands, in fact he is lending support to stands more blatantly revisionist than the arguments of the capitalist roaders of China. A charge is levelled some times that the commune movement launched by Mao was untimely. Even this is debatable, but Stalin's ventures can hardly be criticised in this way. The Soviet Union in 1929 in comparison with the China of 1958 was much more advanced economically and industrially. The error in Stalin's approach was that the peasants could not be persuaded through propaganda for establishing collective farms, to accept them in an unforced way. This is an error in the method of implementing them. Further, Stalin was able to see and correct this error on his own.

It would appear that Bettelheim holds an a priori judgement that the policies for preventing capitalist restoration could be put into practice in China because a lot of stress was given to worker-peasant alliance there. It is without taking into account the different objective conditions of

China and Russia that Bettelheim raises criticisms. Worker-peasant alliance is not a universal principle. In a country where agriculture as a whole has been industrialised, the very question of worker-peasant alliance does not even arise. In the proportion in which the country has been industrialised, the importance of this alliance also varies. Without regarding all this, Bettelheim levels the more or less baseless charge that Stalin did not give sufficient importance to the worker-peasant alliance.

EXISTENCE OF ENEMY CLASSES UNDER SOCIALISM

Would the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union have been prevented if the Bolshevik Party had adopted a more liberal attitude towards peasants in order to strengthen worker-peasant alliance? Perhaps, the process of capitalist restoration would have been easier under the conditions of small production. So also the stress given to heavy industry; it is not a factor leading to capitalist restoration, on the contrary, essential for socialist advance. The point is whether stress is given to change in production relations and to the fact that in the socialist period the decisive factor in the development of productive forces is the change in production relations; whether class struggle and politics are put in command; whether importance is given to the revolution in the superstructure. Then, collectivisation and communes and industrialisation would only contribute to socialist transformation. Such an analysis would reveal the errors in policy that led to capitalist restoration.

In the last chapter we saw that Lenin repeatedly wanted the Party to be aware of the domination of the Czarist bureaucracy in the proletarian state and of the necessity of smashing it. However, the party seems to have adopted no policy toward this end. On the other hand, bureaucracy was thriving. The implementation of mass line in every

sphere is the only effective method to combat bureaucracy. But the method followed during Lenin's time for free and open debate and ideological struggle within and without the party was gradually abandoned. The gap between the party and the masses increased. The ideological struggle within the party also gradually became non-existent. At last a situation was reached where all important decisions came to be taken by the politbureau alone. In the 1930s this bureaucratic tendency became all the more powerful.

The possibility for free exchange of ideas and the implementation of the mass line became increasingly non-existent following the practice of branding and punishing as enemy agent anyone who holds dissenting views on political and ideological issues. The ideological conflicts within the party were in fact the reflection of the class struggle in society. What was being put to test in the Soviet Union was how to continue the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Bolshevik Party under Stalin's leadership adopted bureaucratic methods to deal with this situation.

The metaphysical approach of Stalin referred to by Mao is reflected in many of the policies adopted by the Bolshevik Party. This is not a question of Stalin's personal defect. It was a general tendency prevailing in the Bolshevik Party as well as in the international communist movement.

In the materialist approach to history this metaphysics is manifested in the theory of productive forces. The tendency of giving excessive stress to the development of productive forces and neglecting the class struggle became a dominant trend in the 1920s and by the 1930s it took an ideological form and became still stronger. Stalin presents this view in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* written in 1938: "Hence, if it is not to err in policy, the party of the proletariat must both in drafting its program and in its practical activities proceed primarily from the laws of development of production, from the laws of economic development of society."

"The second feature of production is that its changes and development always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production. Productive forces are therefore the most mobile and revolutionary element of production. First the productive forces of society change and develop, and then, depending on these changes and in conformity with them, men's relations of production, their economic relations, change."²

In such crucial issues as the policy decisions of the party, etc., utmost importance is given to the economic factor. Moreover, in the economic factor the decisive element in social transformation is the productive forces and in the productive forces, the instruments of production. In short, it is the theory of productive forces in all its glory. Along with this, Stalin did not forget to add that production relations in turn react on the development of productive forces. But it does not lessen the overemphasis given to productive forces.

The characteristic feature of the theory of productive forces is that it pushes class struggle and politics to an unimportant position. Class struggles take shape as a reflection of the contradiction between productive forces and production relations. In a society without the contradiction between these aspects, neither can there be class struggles. Stalin says about the situation in the Soviet Union: "...an instance in which the relations of production completely correspond to the character of the productive forces is the Socialist national economy of the USSR, where the social ownership of the means of production fully corresponds to the social character of the process of production..."³

The natural consequence of such an evaluation is the conclusion that the exploiters and the exploited do not exist in the Soviet Union, that is, there are no enemy

2. Ibid, p. 473.

3. Ibid, p. 474.

classes. Presenting the report on the draft constitution of the USSR to the Seventh Congress of the Soviets in 1936 Stalin said, "The capitalist class in the sphere of industry has ceased to exist. The kulak class in the sphere of agriculture has ceased to exist, and the merchants and profiteers in the sphere of trade have ceased to exist. Thus all the exploiting classes have now been eliminated."⁴

But, even when Stalin was declaring that no enemy classes existed in the Soviet Union and that there were no class struggles, he was in fact giving leadership to a fierce class struggle. It was a period in which in the Party's rectification campaign a number of persons were being ousted and numerous others being punished for a variety of political offenses. This is why Mao said in an important meeting during the Cultural Revolution, "In 1936 Stalin talked about the elimination of class struggle; but in 1939 he carried out another purge of counter-revolutionaries. Wasn't that class struggle too?"⁵

The explanation Stalin gave for these actions was that it was the foreign enemy agents, not internal class enemies, who were punished. Thus he had to admit that there was no need for the state internally as there were no enemy classes and class struggle. But, since external enemies existed and their agents were infiltrating, the state was necessary. This was how he found a way to explain the inconsistency in admitting the existence of the state and the so-called absence of class struggle. In fact this inconsistency arose as a result of the non-recognition of class struggles in the Soviet society, non-recognition of the fact that classes and class struggle exist throughout the historical period of socialism.

Stalin's erroneous views had dangerous consequences. As a result of the denial of class struggles, class enemies could not be found out and wiped out, giving a good opportunity for their growth. At the same time Stalin tried to suppress political opponents and more often innocent

4. Stalin, quoted in Bettelheim, First Period, p. 21.

5. Mao Tsetung Unrehearsed, p. 269.

persons branding them as enemy agents. Though he was acting with the declared aim of defeating all forces opposed to the proletariat, he did not have a clear idea about the nature of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. So he could not prevent the growth of capitalist forces.

Stalin came to the conclusion, that with legal changes the production relations also really change, because he could not distinguish between the legal form of ownership and the real production relations.

Later, Stalin tried to correct his mistakes. In the *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* written in 1952, he said, "Comrade Yaroshenko is mistaken when he asserts that there is no contradiction between the relations of production and the productive forces of society under socialism. Of course, our present relations of production are in a period when they fully conform to the growth of the productive forces and help to advance them at seven-league strides. But it would be wrong to rest easy at that and to think that there are no contradictions between our productive forces and the relations of production."⁶ It provides only a partial correction to the mistakes. This explanation also affirms the complete agreement between productive forces and production relations, only that it does not deny the possibility of inconsistencies. However, it does not alter the basic stand of denying class struggle.

The CPC accurately evaluated this serious deviation of Stalin. It said, "...Stalin departed from Marxist-Leninist dialectics in his understanding of the laws of class struggle in socialist society..."⁷

In the absence of previous experiences these deviations were, to a great extent, unavoidable.

6. J. V. Stalin, *Selected Works*, p. 594.

7. 'On Khrushchov's Phoney Communism', Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1964, p. 15.

Chapter 18

Class Struggle under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Although class struggle was taking place in the Soviet Union under Stalin's leadership, the character of this class struggle had neither been scientifically analysed nor evaluated. No one had seriously thought at the time, in the world communist movement overall, about class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The idea that enemy classes have been eliminated in the Soviet Union was holding sway. Precisely because of this it was never felt that this subject called for any serious study. So when the Cominform evaluated that the Yugoslav Party under Tito's leadership has adopted a revisionist path, nobody seriously took up the issues of class struggle occurring in Yugoslavia and the restoration of capitalism being enacted there. The question was generally viewed as the result of the leadership's betrayal. And this question of the fierce class struggle going on in socialist society never came up for a deep investigation.

That the Chinese Communist Party itself had no clarity on this question is borne out by their Eighth Congress Report. It is the theory of productive forces which is dominant in it. On the resolution of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in China, and on the contradiction that has come in its place, the Congress resolution says: "A decisive victory has already been won in this socialist transformation. This means that the

contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in our country has been basically resolved.... However, the major contradiction in our country is already that between the people's demand for the building of an advanced industrial country and the realities of a backward agricultural country, between the people's need for rapid economic and cultural development and the inability of our present economy and culture to meet that need. In view of the fact that a socialist system has already been established in our country, this contradiction, in essence, is between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces of society. The chief task now facing the Party and people is to concentrate all efforts on resolving this contradiction and transforming China as quickly as possible from a backward agricultural country into an advanced industrial one."¹ Here we can see a repetition, in another form, of the stand taken by Stalin in the Soviet Union. Since the contradiction between enemy classes has been resolved and the foundation of the socialist system consolidated, what is required now is to concentrate on developing the productive forces. The CPC's Tenth Congress (1973) Report puts forward that this idea was smuggled in by Liu Shaochi and Chen Pota into the Eighth Congress Report. Nonetheless, it is not a trivial matter that the other Party leaders did not take into serious account such a crucial issue. Moreover, in the course of a conversation in a report meeting in 1966, Mao reportedly referred to this. When Kang Sheng pointed out that the Eighth Congress report reflected the theory of dying out of classes, Mao Tsetung said: "I read that report, and it was passed by the Congress. We cannot make those two—Liu and Teng—solely responsible."² It might be debatable whether or not Mao had really said so, yet the collective responsibility of the party for the report adopted by a party congress can

1. The Eighth National Congress of the CPC, Documents, Vol. I, Peking, 1956, pp. 115-117.

2. 'Mao Tsetung Unrehearsed', Edited by Stuart Schram, p. 269.

hardly be denied. But it is a fact that very soon Mao found out the danger inherent in this stand. In a speech in February 1957, he said: "Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp."³

This stand is diametrically opposed to the Eighth Congress conclusions. On 8 October 1957 at the Third Plenary of the 8th Central Committee, Mao re-emphasised this point: "... the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the socialist road and the capitalist road, is undoubtedly the principal contradiction in contemporary Chinese society... We are now carrying on the socialist revolution, the spearhead of which is directed against the bourgeoisie, and at the same time this revolution aims at transforming the system of individual production, that is, bringing about co-operation, between collectivism and individualism, or in a nutshell between the socialist road and the capitalist road. The resolution of the Eighth Congress makes no mention of this question. It contains a passage which speaks of the principal contradiction as being that between the advanced socialist system and the backward social productive forces. This formulation is incorrect..."⁴

In this period, i.e., in 1957, before reaching such a conclusion regarding the necessity of continuing the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat, basic misconceptions used to prevail on this question. Later on, Mao Tsetung himself had made this clear. Writing in 1958, he explained: "These notes which appeared in the book entitled *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside* were written in September and December 1955. To this day some have

3. Mao Tsetung, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People'; Selected Works, Vol. V, p. 409.

4. Mao Tsetung, 'Be Activists in Promoting the Revolution', *Ibid*, pp. 492-93.

not lost their significance. There is however one statement in the notes to the effect that 1955 was the year in which socialism won basic victory in the decisive battle with capitalism; it is not proper to put it that way. This is the way it should be put: 1955 was the year in which basic victory was won as regards the aspect of ownership in the relations of production, while in the other aspects of the relations of production as well as in some aspects of the superstructure, namely on the ideological and political fronts, either a basic victory was not won or, if won, the victory was not complete, and further efforts were required. Hence a lesson can be drawn: neither socialist revolution, nor socialist construction is plain sailing, and we should be prepared to cope with the many great difficulties that may crop up at home and abroad."⁵

The two articles prepared by the CPC in 1956 on the historical experiences of the dictatorship of the proletariat provide clear proof to the fact that it did not have at that time a proper understanding regarding the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In those articles the stand taken by Khrushchev against Stalin is criticised and Stalin's positive and negative sides are assessed in the proper historical perspective. And these were prepared under the direct supervision of Mao Tsetung. At a time when the revisionist clique led by Khrushchev was pushing the international communist movement as a whole into revisionism, those articles played a historic role in defending the revolutionary movement. Even so, we must take note of the fact that the question of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat was not properly grasped at the time. Just as it is contended in these articles that the mistakes of Stalin were historically unavoidable, it should not be overlooked that the limitations displayed in the CPC's conceptions of the time were connected with historical reasons. Even when Stalin's method

5. Mao Tsetung, Editor's Notes from 'Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside', *Ibid.*, pp. 242-44.

of handling the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat was criticised, certain basic misconceptions were reflected in it. Of course, the bureaucratic method that was employed has to be criticised. But the viewpoint from which the criticism was raised is that the method to deal with class contradictions of the socialist period should not be as ruthless as Stalin's. What this points to is the prevalence of the misunderstanding that the sharpness of the class struggle in the socialist period gets reduced.

PROBLEMS OF CAPITALIST RESTORATION

The questions thrown up subsequent to the rise to power of the revisionist clique under Khrushchev's leadership in the Soviet Union persuaded Mao Tsetung and others to think deeply about the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The CPC initiated vigorous efforts to find ways of preventing the revisionists from capturing power. The struggle against the rightists following the Hundred Flowers movement was an important step in this direction. When subsequently the "Great Leap Forward" began the rightist threat rose up with greater force. The Great Leap Forward was mainly an attempt to accelerate the change in production relations. Precisely due to this the rightists organised strong resistance against it. It was in the Lushan Conference of 1959 that Mao Tsetung and comrades defeated this rightist faction, under the leadership of the then defence minister Peng Teh-huai. In fact it is after this event that Mao and others became cognizant of the grave possibility of capitalist restoration in the socialist period.

From the beginning Mao had started the attempt to resist the copying of the Soviet Union's experiences and to find one's own path through learning from the latter's negative lessons. After the coming of Khrushchev it became clear that this approach needed to be stressed still further. Against the background of the positive and neg-

ative experiences of the "Great Leap", Mao gave leadership to critically studying the experiences of the Soviet Union. In a speech made in 1958 on Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (1952), Mao has differentiated the correct and erroneous ideas of that book. The fallacy in the policy being practised at the time (in the period of socialist construction), reflected in the book was pointed out: "Stalin emphasized only technology, technical cadre. He wanted nothing but technology, nothing but cadre; no politics, no masses."⁶ Putting his finger on the more basic error beneath this approach, Mao said: "Stalin speaks only of the production relations, not of the superstructure, nor of the relationship between superstructure and economic base."⁷

In the critical notes that he wrote on this very book of Stalin's, Mao re-emphasised this point: "They walk on one leg, we walk on two. They believe that technology decides everything, that cadres decide everything, speaking only of 'expert', never of 'red', only of the cadres, never of the masses."⁸

We can see here two basically different approaches regarding the policy to be followed in the era of socialist transition. The dominant approach prevalent in the Soviet Union during Stalin's time and afterwards was that of not seeing the dialectical connection between productive forces and production relations, and between the economic base and superstructure, of according too much importance to technology and cadres and ignoring politics and the masses. Mao puts forward a method diametrically opposed to this. In the critical notes written in 1960 (*A Critique of Soviet Economics*), Mao brings up the fundamental difference between the two and subjects them to deeper examination.

6. Mao Tsetung, "Concerning 'Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR'" (Nov. 1958) in *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, p. 129.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

8. Mao Tsetung, *Critique of Stalin's "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR"*, *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Just as he had pointed out the erroneous approach in Stalin, Mao does show the essence of the wrong method in the textbook. After talking about certain Marxist approaches present in that book, Mao says: "Notwithstanding this, this text has certain fundamental arguments that are in error. 'Politics in Command' and the 'mass line' are not stressed. There is no discussion of 'walking on two legs', and individual material interest is one-sidedly emphasized. Material incentives are proclaimed and individualism is far too pre-eminent."⁹

In these critical notes, Mao raises and discusses a number of fundamental questions, both theoretical and practical. These points of view were later developed by him into the theory and practice of the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this class struggle, a very important place is occupied by the revolution in the superstructure. Actually in the era of social revolution, especially in the struggle for political power the revolution in the superstructure always plays a crucial role. But, various revisionist trends following a mechanistic approach neglect this aspect, in effect undermining the revolution. As far as the Chinese Revolution was concerned, the growth of productive forces was not a precondition to revolution. Mao points out that the revolution commenced there with Marxist-Leninist propaganda. He also makes it clear that it was after the smashing up of the backward superstructure that the old production relations could be broken up and that it was after the establishment of the new production relations in place of old that the path was cleared for the development of the new productive forces. After this Mao says: "This textbook addresses itself only to material preconditions and seldom engages the question of the superstructure, i.e., the class nature of the state, philosophy and science. In economics the main object of study is the production relations. All the same, political economy and the materialist historical outlook are

9. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

close cousins. It is difficult to deal clearly with problems of the economic base and the production relations if the question of the superstructure is neglected."¹⁰

Stalin's conclusion that antagonistic contradictions have disappeared in socialist society had influenced all of the Soviet views. As a result, the viewpoint that the basis of development of socialist society is not contradiction, but unity, grew strong. Referring to the definition in the textbook which stated that unity of opinion was the "motive force of social development" Mao said, "This recognizes only the unanimity of solidarity but not the contradiction within a socialist society, nor that contradiction is the motive force of social development. Once it is put this way the law of the universality of contradiction is denied, the laws of dialectics are superceded. Without contradictions there is no movement, and society always develops through movement. In the era of socialism, contradictions remain the motive force of social development."¹¹

Behind all the erroneous trends in the Soviet Union can be seen the mechanical conceptions contrary to the basic tenets of dialectics. Mao has repeatedly pointed it out. In the Soviet textbook the contradiction between productive forces and production relations is sometimes recognised. However the principle that contradiction is the motive force is not recognised. After mentioning this Mao points out another erroneous conception prevailing in the Soviet Union: "Most dubious is the viewpoint in the next paragraph. It says, "The contradictions under socialism are not irreconcilable." This does not agree with the laws of dialectics, which hold that all contradictions are irreconcilable. Where has there ever been a reconcilable contradiction? Some are antagonistic, some are non-antagonistic, but it must not be thought that there are irreconcilable and reconcilable contradictions."¹²

10. Ibid, p. 51.

11. Ibid, pp. 60-61.

12. Ibid, p. 71.

Here Mao refers to the most important basic tenet of Marxian dialectics. The conception of reconcilable contradictions is the common strain of all revisionist standpoints that leads to class collaboration. The revisionists put forward this theory under the cover of the fact that under certain circumstances contradictions become non-antagonistic. Mao exposed this erroneous philosophical outlook behind such vulgar misinterpretations.

However, it should not be forgotten that at the time these critical notes were written, accurate conclusions had not been reached regarding class struggle, particularly, the forms the class struggle takes under the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was generally thought that class struggle would not become fierce. Mao also shared this view, though he had said in 1957 that class struggles during the socialist period would at times be fierce. But he had not reached definite conclusions. On one occasion, he says: "Page 641 says, "In a socialist society there are no antagonistic classes", but "there are still vestiges of antagonistic classes". The transition from socialism to communism need not be made a reality through social revolution. All that can be said is that there is no need for a social revolution in which one class overthrows another, but there will be a social revolution in which new production relations and social institutions supercede old ones."¹³

This shows he was not yet convinced of the need for a revolution to overthrow the enemy class which has usurped power during the dictatorship of the proletariat. Correct ideas about class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat were formed only during the Cultural Revolution.

Even at the time these critical notes were written Mao had not realised that capitalist restoration was in full swing in the Soviet Union; and the CPSU was not characterised as revisionist. This was why he evaluated that the Soviet textbook, though it contained fundamental errors, had only partially deviated from Marxism-Leninism. But he found

13. Ibid, p. 100.

that these deviations had risen from a lack of philosophical perspective. He said, "The book shows that its authors do not have a dialectical method. One has to think philosophically to write an economics text."¹⁴

BACKGROUND OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Although the leader of the rightists in China, Peng Teh-huai, was removed from all positions he had held in the party and the state, the rightists did not accept defeat. They went on trying in a variety of ways to get back into power. In this period, through the document *Long Live Leninism!* the CPC published in 1960, the struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism had broken out in the open at the international level. Thus in a situation in which the anti-revisionist struggle had grown stronger both at the national and international levels, Mao Tsetung arrived at a clearer definition of the class struggle in the socialist period. He said at a Central Committee meeting in 1962, "Socialist society covers a fairly long historical period. 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 capitalist restoration. We must recognise the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradiction and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place. From now on we must remind ourselves of this every year, every month and every day so that we can retain a rather

14. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

sober understanding of this problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line."¹⁵ Following this CC meeting the struggle against the revisionists in China assumed a more precise direction and purpose. On the basis of this newly acquired sense of purpose and guidance the CC adopted the '10 point resolution' in 1963; a socialist education campaign was launched. The objective of this campaign was to take the politics of class struggle to the vast countryside and wage an uncompromising struggle against bourgeois ideas and tendencies. It was this campaign which had in fact developed into the GPCR.

During all this time the CPC had taken much initiative to defend and enrich Marxism-Leninism in the open ideological struggle intensifying at the international level. All the theoretical documents of the CPC of the period 1963-64 exposing the renegacy of the Khrushchev clique played a vital role in this matter. In *'Khrushchov's Phoney Communism'* (1964) the picture of capitalist restoration occurring in the Soviet Union was graphically drawn. It showed that there are enemy classes in the Soviet Union and that a fierce class struggle is taking place between them. That document states in unequivocal terms: "The revisionist Khrushchov clique are the political representatives of the Soviet bourgeoisie, and particularly of its privileged stratum."¹⁶ Furthermore, it explained that this revisionist clique has turned the great CPSU into a revisionist party, and that it has paved the way for capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union. Also elaborated is the process of how the new bourgeoisie was rising from the bureaucracy, in the atmosphere of small scale production and from old bourgeois remnants. In short, through drawing an outline, for the first time, of the ongoing capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, this document has gained historic sig-

15. Mao Tsetung at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CPC in September 1962, quoted in the Report to the Ninth Congress of the CPC.

16. "On Khrushchov's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World" p. 29.

nificance. Still, the questions of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat have not been yet dealt with in any thoroughgoing manner. The question of what form of struggle was to be adopted against the capitalist roaders (in order to prevent capitalist restoration in those countries which were still socialist) remained unanswered.

Not much later, the target of attack of the class struggle taking place in China was precisely defined. In January 1965, Mao said: "The main target of the present movement is those Party persons in power taking the capitalist road."¹⁷ By the period 1965-66 this movement grew into a powerful offensive against the capitalist roaders. To the indirect offensive being conducted by the capitalist roaders against Mao Tsetung and socialist roaders, the latter began to give reply openly. In this way the education movement gradually took the form of the cultural revolution. The broad masses in towns and villages started to grasp the true essence of the class struggle they were waging.

17. Mao Tsetung, 'Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas', quoted in 'A Basic Understanding of the CPC', p. 199.

Chapter 19

Cultural Revolution— Its Political Significance

The Marxist-Leninists worldover saw in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution an effective means to combat restoration of capitalism in socialist countries. It was correctly evaluated as a decisive stage in the growth of the international communist movement. The new awakening created by the cultural revolution resulted in the strengthening of the struggle against revisionism all over the world and through this struggle the international communist movement immensely developed. But as at present the capitalist roaders have captured power in China and are speedily going ahead with the restoration of capitalism, the role of cultural revolution in preventing the restoration of capitalism is now being subjected to a re-examination. What is happening in today's China throws light on some of the weak points of the cultural revolution and hence it is possible for us to reach a more objective appraisal of the cultural revolution.

Though the cultural revolution started off as a struggle against decadent, reactionary ideas in the cultural and educational fields, it developed into a life and death class struggle between the socialist roaders and capitalist roaders on all fronts. The circular released by the CC of CPC giving guidelines to the cultural revolution on 16 May 1966 clarifies this point. This document prepared under the

direct supervision of Mao Tsetung stated: "Hold high the great banner of the proletarian cultural revolution, thoroughly expose the reactionary bourgeois stand of those so-called academic authorities who oppose the Party and Socialism, thoroughly criticize and repudiate reactionary bourgeois ideas in the sphere of academic work, education, journalism, literature and art, and publishing, and seize the leadership in these cultural spheres. To achieve this, it is at the same time necessary to criticize and repudiate those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party, the government, the army and all spheres of culture, and to clear them out or transfer some of them to other positions... Those representatives of the bourgeoisie, who have sneaked into the Party, the government, the army and various spheres of culture are a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists. Once conditions are ripe, they will seize political power and turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie..."¹

When the revisionists dominate in a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat it means that the bourgeoisie has captured power. Revisionism is nothing but bourgeois politics sneaking into the working class movement. This struggle, the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, is quite an antagonistic one. The class struggle that occurs under the dictatorship of the proletariat is as fierce as the class struggle taking place before the proletariat has captured power. But in a dictatorship of the proletariat the working class has the upper hand. But to the extent that the working class can at any time lose the upper hand, the possibility of the bourgeoisie coming back to power always exists. In the signed big-character poster, "Bombard the headquarters" in the early days of the cultural revolution, Mao Tsetung said the following about the hostile approach taken by one section of party leaders, right from the central committee down to the provincial levels: "Taking a reactionary bourgeois stand, they have exercised

1. Circular of the CC of the CPC, 16 May 1966.

a bourgeois dictatorship and suppressed the vigorous movement of the great proletarian cultural revolution..."² This showed that when the opportunity comes the revisionists who have sneaked their way into positions of power will impose bourgeois dictatorship. In fact, it was during the cultural revolution that the ruthlessness of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat came out in full form.

NEW FORM OF STRUGGLE

In reality, cultural revolution is the cumulative result of the search for a means to continue the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Ninth Congress of the CPC held in 1969 evaluated cultural revolution in this manner: "Just as Chairman Mao pointed out in his talk in February 1967: 'In the past we waged struggles in rural areas, in factories, in the cultural field and we carried out the socialist education movement. But all this failed to solve the problem because we did not find a form, a method to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly, in an all-round way and from below.' Now we have found this form—it is the great proletarian cultural revolution."³

Truly speaking this was a form of struggle with no precedence in history. People's initiative was fully released. They could launch an offensive against capitalist roaders, no matter what high positions in party or state they occupied. Such a kind of struggle against the capitalist roaders was occurring for the first time in the entire history of the international communist movement. In the Soviet Union, etc., the struggle against capitalist roaders had more often than not taken the form of disciplinary measures within the Party. And quite often these measures degenerated into bureaucratic measures. In the place of

2. Mao Tsetung, Peking Review, No. 33, 11 Aug '67.
3. Report to the Ninth Congress of the CPC.

such an approach, the method resorted to during the cultural revolution was that of people's trial—criticism in the open, with people's full initiative, of anybody even if he stood at the top of the party or the state. Thus the people became politically armed against the capitalist roaders and became capable of exposing them politically. More weightage was given to this ideological struggle against capitalist roaders than to taking official steps against them. For, just by taking official steps against some capitalist roaders the line represented by them does not vanish. It will continue to manifest itself through many others. Hence, the most effective way to defeat the capitalist roaders is that of people identifying what the capitalist path is and the forms in which it gets manifested. With this end in view, efforts got under way in China to politicise the whole people in the towns and countryside, to make them vigilant against the capitalist roaders. The GPCR was the beginning of such strivings.

DEMOCRACY AND CENTRALISM

The cultural revolution strove to resolve a vital problem that came up under proletarian dictatorship. This related to the basic distinction (to be realised in practice) that exists between proletarian and bourgeois dictatorships, as state-forms. Under bourgeois dictatorship the minority enjoys democracy and dictatorship is exercised over the majority. A diametrically opposite state of affairs is envisaged under the dictatorship of the proletariat: that is to say, democracy for the majority and dictatorship over the minority. To define this distinction in theory is quite easy. But to implement it is quite another matter. As a form of the state, democracy can only realise formal equality. Still under proletarian democracy, it is, and ought to be, possible to expand this formal equality and make it effectively operative on as vast a scale as possible. More, the path for advancing toward real equality, envisioned under com-

munism, must be laid out. This was the perspective with which Lenin had spoken of discovering forms for expanding democracy to the utmost and experimenting them. He had made the point that such experiments constituted the chief elements in the struggle for social revolution.

The most radical experiments in this direction were conducted and proved in practice by the Paris Commune. The proletarian dictatorships and people's democratic dictatorships that had come into being following the October Revolution in Russia, and in the post-WW II period in a number of countries not only did not go beyond the Paris Commune in this respect, they did not even attain its level. On the contrary in most of these countries, things moved in such a direction that democracy and its forms instead of getting developed in actuality got scuttled. The fact that in all these countries bureaucracy, instead of democracy, developed and grew strong had facilitated capitalist restoration.

The growth of bureaucracy or genuine democracy is a question inextricably linked to class hegemony. In all countries where the revolutionary classes, led by the working class, seized power the means of production were brought either under public ownership or class ownership. Class hegemony rests on, and gets established to, the extent to which this formal socialisation is transformed into reality. When the ownership of the revolutionary classes (which forms the majority in the society) over the means of production becomes a reality, democracy belongs to the majority; and dictatorship is enforced over the minority. But at a time when only formal socialisation exists, when bureaucrats in the factories, collective farms and government institutions have captured the actual control over them, to say that the means of production are in the ownership of the majority is a nonsense. In such a situation it is absurd to even speak about the democracy of the majority. The real power will be in the hands of a bunch of bureaucrats who have seized control of the party and the state. The actual ownership of the means of production too will be in their

hands. And this minority turns into the ruling class. Democracy gets confined to this minority, and as a natural upshot they impose their dictatorship over the majority.

In short, there is an unbreakable connection between the real ownership of the majority over the means of production and the genuine democracy enjoyed by the majority. In a social order in which a minority of bureaucrats are able to deny democracy to the majority, the real ownership over the means of production would also be vested in that minority. Despite formal proclamation to the effect that the ownership is vested in the majority only, if the real ownership continues to be in the hands of a minority, it is absolutely pointless to say that proletarian dictatorship exists there. Those who say that in the erstwhile socialist countries like the Soviet Union, proletarian dictatorship continues to prevail even now and that what has happened there are just some bureaucratic aberrations, are closing their eyes to reality. If the bureaucrats are able to capture political power, it is tantamount to the bourgeoisie coming to power. It is nothing short of a retrogression to bourgeois dictatorship, capable of the imposition of dictatorship of the minority over the majority.

Protesting against the domination attained by the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and other countries the Eurocommunists gave up proletarian dictatorship and embraced bourgeois democracy. They hold that proletarian dictatorship paved the way to the bureaucracy. But their opposition to bureaucracy is superficial. For, they refuse to recognise the truth that only proletarian dictatorship can ensure democracy for the majority, and are enamoured by bourgeois dictatorship which ensures democracy for the minority. There is no fundamental difference between the bourgeois democratic system and the domination by the bureaucracy; both are but political forms of class domination of a single class, namely the bourgeoisie. It is for this reason that even while claiming to oppose the bureaucracy of the Soviet type, the Eurocommunists attempt to cover up the fact that capitalist restoration has

taken place in the Soviet Union. Their enemy is not the capitalist system either in the Soviet Union or in the imperialist countries; on the contrary, their main target of attack is genuine proletarian dictatorship as such.

Thus it is clear that the only way to prevent capitalist restoration is to uphold and defend the genuine essence of proletarian dictatorship. And this was the real aim of the Cultural Revolution in China. The method adopted for this was that of conducting struggle on the basis of people's initiative to seize back the power from the capitalist roaders who had got into positions of power in the party and the state through bureaucratic means. As this process becomes effectual and widespread, the majority of people are assured of democratic rights and democracy as such, and dictatorship is enforced over the minority. And this opens up the possibility for the realisation of the broadest democracy via the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Shanghai Commune, established in early 1967 was one of the best examples of the process of seizing back power from the revisionists and re-establishing people's political power. By the end of 1966 itself, in Shanghai and some other major cities Cultural Revolutionary Committees were formed parallel to the prevailing Municipal Councils and thus "dual power" came into existence. In January-February '67 huge meetings and conferences were taking place in Shanghai in which over a million workers took part; and the Municipal Council fell apart. In its place was established the Shanghai Commune as the symbol of the new, people's power. It basically took the Paris Commune for a model. Many other cities had also come forward to adopt the Shanghai Commune model. However, Mao Tsetung and the central leadership took a decision of not spreading this model to other areas. Moreover it was directed that it be converted into Shanghai Revolutionary Committee. Mao reasoned in this way: "Communes are too weak when it comes to suppressing counter-revolution."⁴

4. Mao Tsetung Unrehearsed, Ed, Stuart Schram p. 278.

The commune is the most developed form of democracy. In relative terms, centralism is less in it. That is why Mao said that it does not have the power to deal with counter-revolution. He evaluated that at a time when the counter-revolutionary forces are very strong and are awaiting their opportunity to capture power, for a country like China, a form of people's power such as the Shanghai Commune if expanded widely would be dangerous.

But today when seeking the cause for the set back in China after Mao, people like Bettelheim hold that this approach taken by Mao and the central leadership towards the Shanghai Commune had paved the way for the rightists to seize control. Bettelheim contends that the model of mass democracy brought to the fore by the Shanghai Commune ought to have been upheld to the utmost, it should have been vigorously defended; but instead the steps adopted to consolidate the hegemony of the party and army had in fact undermined that process of democratisation. He points out the approach taken by Marx and Lenin in support of his contention. In a study appraising the new developments in China he says: "For Marx, in *The Civil War in France*, the commune is the organ of power, the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Similarly for Lenin, in *The State and Revolution*, the Soviets are the organ of power of the working people. In these two works the leading role of a revolutionary party is not even mentioned."⁵

The manner in which Bettelheim attempts to seek the help of Marx and Lenin in support of his views is quite misleading. It is a fact that in the work of Marx, he quotes from, no mention has been made of the role of the revolutionary party. But in a letter to Kugelmann, Marx has made it clear that one of the two main reasons for the defeat of the Paris Commune was that the Central Committee of the Party surrendered power to the Commune, thus putting

5. C. Bettelheim, 'The Great Leap Backward', Monthly Review, July-August 1978, p. 105.

his finger on the pivotal role of the party. Lenin too has emphasised all the time the vital role of the party in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bettelheim's arguing in one-sided fashion for democracy by ignoring all such facts stems from a pernicious trend of thought. This trend which refuses to see the dialectical relationship between democracy and centralism leads to bourgeois democracy based on an absolute conception of democracy and individualism.

In any social process, centralisation, just as decentralisation, is an essential component. They are two opposites of a single contradiction, mutually dependent. In the progression towards communism stress has to be given to decentralisation, i.e., democracy. But this should not be a one-sided stress. Especially under the circumstances in which the capitalist forces are powerful very often emphasis would have to be laid on centralisation. It is in this context that Mao Tsetung had mentioned the weak point of the Shanghai Commune. Bureaucracy will not grow merely because of the existence of the party and centralism. If the representatives of the proletariat have hegemony in the party, the process of democratisation would certainly advance. Only under the leadership of such a party can proletarian dictatorship catalyse the transition to communism.

GRASP REVOLUTION, PROMOTE PRODUCTION

This slogan reverberated throughout China during the Cultural Revolution. In the *Resolutions of the Eleventh Plenum of the CC of the CPC* (the Sixteen Articles), the relationship between revolution and production was accurately put: "The aim of the great proletarian Cultural Revolution is to revolutionise people's ideology and as a consequence to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in all fields of work. If the masses are fully aroused and proper arrangements are made, it is possible to carry

on both the Cultural Revolution and production without one hampering the other, while guaranteeing high quality in all our work.

"The great proletarian Cultural Revolution is a powerful motive force for the development of the social productive forces in our country. Any idea of counterposing the great cultural revolution to the development of production is incorrect."⁶

The capitalist roaders have always attempted to vulgarise this question. They spread the thesis that revolution obstructed production. So, they had raised the question: revolution or production? Really speaking the question is not whether or not production is to be increased, but rather which path is to be taken for increasing production. And this can be accomplished either through the capitalist or the socialist path. In the capitalist countries, importance is given to the development of technology and instruments of production. Alongside, material incentives to workers are also used for increasing production. Through such ways the capitalist countries have been able to achieve substantial increase in production. If technology is taken as the criterion, the productive forces of the capitalist countries stand way ahead.

The method of socialist roaders for increasing production is diametrically opposite to this. They lay stress not on technology but on the human element. They regard the development in social consciousness of those who are engaged in production as the sure guarantee for increasing production. The socialist roaders rely on moral incentives as opposed to the material incentives of the capitalist roaders.

If the social consciousness of men in socialist society has to grow in such a way as to effect speedy increase in production, politics must be put in command, class struggle must be taken as the key link and an unceasing revolution must be conducted in production relations. Let us

6. Peking Review, No. 33, 12 August 1966.

take an example. It is natural that in a socialist country the factories are nationalised and converted into the ownership of the workers' right at the beginning. In such a factory directly under workers' control, no one possesses any private right under law. All the workers have equal rights here; an elected committee will be exercising supervision over the factory. However, if we do not succeed in establishing a correct relationship between this committee and the workers the latter will not feel that it is their factory. On this point Mao says: "In our experience, if cadres do not set aside their pretensions and identify with the workers, the workers will never look on the factory as their own but as the cadres'. "Master-of-the-house" attitudes make the workers reluctant to observe labour discipline in a self-conscious way."⁷ In other words, even if the factory is workers' in juridical terms, it does not belong to them in real terms. As long as the vestiges of the ideas and production relations of the old class society continue to exercise an influence in the cadres and the workers, it is not possible that communist relations based on lofty social consciousness develop between them. Only if an uncompromising struggle on the basis of correct politics is kept up against old ideas, new relations among them can be established in place of the old production relations. If such an unceasing struggle does not take place, the relationship between the management and workers will lapse into the old state. That is to say, a bureaucratic management very similar to the old, bourgeois management would come up and workers would turn into wage slaves. Juridically, and nominally, socialist relations might be said to exist, but in effect capitalist relations would come into being. This is the process that has taken place in all countries that have undergone capitalist restoration.

In such a factory in which politics and class struggle are not upheld, and a ceaseless revolution does not occur in production relations, it is quite possible to increase

7. Mao Tsetung, 'A Critique of Soviet Economics', p. 86.

production through utilising modern instruments and technology. But who is the gainer if production is increased in this manner? A handful of the bureaucratic new bourgeoisie who have seized control of the factory management will enjoy its benefits. The workers at the same time would be subjected to increased exploitation. So all this would lead to the increase in capitalist production and not socialist production. Seeing this undeniable fact Mao had advanced the above slogan. It does not imply that both revolution and production are to be accorded equal importance, what is meant is to increase production through giving primary place to revolution. And the slogan was most effectively used and proved during the Cultural Revolution.

As a result of this correct approach, production had shot up during the Cultural Revolution. However, during its high tide the capitalist roaders had raised a big hue and cry saying that the entire production is in a mess. After seizing power they are repeating the same canard now. Even though here and there production was hampered, on the whole the new awakening and enthusiasm generated as well as the lofty political consciousness created by the Cultural Revolution in fact had accelerated production in a big way. It is an indisputable law of history that revolution inevitably develops the productive forces. On the other hand, those who had opposed revolution by saying that it will obstruct production had in effect always undermined production itself.

MATERIAL INCENTIVE AND "BOURGEOIS RIGHT"

Mao Tsetung said: "It is when politics is weakened that there is no choice but to talk about material incentive."⁸ As far as those who do not uphold the politics of

8. Ibid, p. 86.

class struggle are concerned, the only choice before them is to attempt to increase production by resorting to wage-raise, bonus, and other material incentives. The theoretical rationalization behind material incentives is that the decisive factor for increasing production is the law of distribution of consumer goods. Mao exposed the baselessness of this viewpoint: "To treat distribution of consumer good as a determining motive force is the erroneous view of distribution as determinative. Marx said, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 'Distribution in the first place should be distribution of the means of production: in whose hands are the means of production? This is the determinative question. Distribution of the means of production is what determines the distribution of consumer goods'. To regard distribution of consumer goods as the determining motive force is a distortion of Marx's correct view and a serious theoretical error."⁹

Basing on this theoretical error the capitalist roaders try to convert the principle of distribution in the socialist period ("from each according to his ability, to each according to his work") into the motive force for increasing production. In this system of distribution in reality capitalist production relations continue to prevail. "...as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents: a given amount of labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form... Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle —*bourgeois right*..."¹⁰ On this question Lenin said: "The socialist principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat', is *already* realized; the other socialist principle: 'An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour' is also *already* realized. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish 'bourgeois right', which gives rise to unequal individuals, in return for

9. Ibid, p. 78.

10. K. Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme,' Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 18.

unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products."¹¹

The system of giving equal remuneration for equal work is based on capitalist production relations. Only in a society where goods can be given according to everyone's needs, can communist relations be established. In the socialist period, conscious effort is required for reducing and restricting capitalist production relations one by one, thus establishing communist production relations in their place. But capitalist roaders try to consolidate such capitalist production relations and even to expand them. They utilise this "bourgeois right" as a powerful weapon to obstruct and divert the transition to communism. Regarding the importance of this question Mao said: "Our country at present practises a commodity system, the wage system is unequal, too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Piao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system. That is why we should do more reading of Marxist-Leninist works."¹²

In the socialist system what has to be attempted is not a defense and consolidation of "bourgeois right", but rather its restriction to the maximum extent possible. Yao Wen-yuan had addressed this question: "The analysis made by Lenin and Chairman Mao tell us that bourgeois right which inevitably exists as regards distribution and exchange under the socialist system should be restricted under the dictatorship of the proletariat, so that in the long course of the socialist revolution the three major differences between workers and peasants, between town and country and between manual and mental labour will gradually be narrowed and the discrepancies between the various gra-

11. Lenin, quoted in Yao Wen-yuan's article, Peking Review, No. 10, 1975.

12. Mao Tsetung, quoted in 'On Exercising All-round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie', Chang Chun-chiao.

des will be reduced and the material and ideological conditions for closing such gaps will gradually be created."¹³ If instead of this path, we strengthen and consolidate bourgeois right, tendency for private property and all its associated capitalist tendencies will grow, paving the way for the growth of the new bourgeoisie which in turn would lead to capitalist restoration. In the above article Yao Wen-yuan explains this whole process.

As the socialist epoch is a period of transition from capitalism to communism, it does not have any permanent laws as such. During this period an admixture of the dying capitalist production relations and the rising communist production relations will obtain. So under the dictatorship of the proletariat, we ought to go on restricting the capitalist relations and develop in their place communist relations.

This is the basic Marxist-Leninist view regarding bourgeois right and problems associated with it. The socialist roaders led by Mao Tsetung never compromised on this issue.

ALL-ROUND DICTATORSHIP OVER THE BOURGEOISIE

Right during the cultural revolution, Mao Tsetung had spoken of the necessity for continuing the cultural revolution without let up: "The present great cultural revolution is only the first; there will inevitably be many more in the future. The issue of who will win in the revolution can only be settled over a long historical period. If things are not properly handled, it is possible for a capitalist restoration to take place at any time. It should not be thought by any Party member or any one of the people in our country that everything will be all right after one or two great

13. Yao Wen-yuan, 'On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique'.

cultural revolutions or even three or four. We must be very much on the alert and never lose vigilance."¹⁴

After the cultural revolution reached a stage, evaluating the experiences of the period 1966-68, speaking at the First Plenary of the Ninth CC of the Party Mao said on 28 April 1969: "Apparently, we couldn't 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—I don't mean all or the overwhelming majority—leadership was not in the hands of real Marxists and the masses of the workers. Not that there were no good people in the leadership in the factories. There were. There were good people among the secretaries and members of the Party committees and among the Party branch secretaries. But they followed that line of Liu Shao-chi's, just resorting to material incentives, putting profit in command, and instead of promoting proletarian politics, handing out bonuses, and so forth... But there are indeed bad people in the factories... This shows that the revolution is still unfinished."¹⁵

Later developments demonstrated that this appraisal of Mao's was fully correct. Class struggle continued to rage on. Hidden capitalist roaders came on the scene. Lin Piao made attempts to bring back the theory of productive forces. Thanks to the vigil of the socialist roaders this did not take place. Demoralised, Lin Piao made a vain attempt to stage a military coup. But, the socialist roaders used this struggle against Lin Piao to launch an all-out ideological offensive against the capitalist roaders, taking the cultural revolution to a new stage. After Lin Piao was defeated, the unrepentent capitalist roader Teng Hsiao-ping, once again sneaked inside the Party and started desperate attempts to implement the capitalist path. So from 1975 on, a new stage of the cultural revolution was begun: this was the struggle against the revisionists under the leader-

14. Quoted in 'A Basic Understanding of the CPC', P. 203.

15. Ibid, p. 219.

ship of Teng known as 'the struggle against the right deviationist wind.' This marked a new stage in the ongoing class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As a prelude to this stage, even as early as 1974 itself, Mao Tsetung called upon the whole people to study seriously about the dictatorship of the proletariat. He said: "Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? It is essential to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation."¹⁶ Centring round this call of Mao, on the question of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, an intense ideological struggle took place in China. Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan, chief among the socialist roaders under the leadership of Mao, made important theoretical studies in this respect. The article of Yao quoted earlier and Chang's article *On Exercising All-round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie* are notable steps forward on this front.

To stress the point of why dictatorship must be exercised over the bourgeoisie, Mao described the state of affairs in China in this way: "In a word, China is a socialist country. Before liberation she was much the same as a capitalist country. Even now she practises an eight-grade wage system, distribution according to work and exchange through money, and in all this differs very little from the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has been changed."¹⁷

Chang Chun-chiao dealt at considerable length regarding the change in the system of ownership of China in 1975. On the industrial front for the most part, the ownership of the whole people had come to prevail. The majority of the agrarian sector was under collective ownership. In this latter sector, the ownership of the whole people was yet only marginal. Here the ownership was regulated in

16. Mao Tsetung, quoted in "On Exercising All-round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie" by Chang Chun-chiao.

17. Mao Tsetung, Ibid.

three different levels—commune, brigade and production team. The majority was at the level of brigades and production teams and it would take a longwhile for these to rise to the level of the communes. Whereas it is true that this collective mode of ownership in the agrarian sector is a big step forward compared with the system of private property under capitalism, as long as the ownership by the whole people did not become dominant, one cannot really say the problem of ownership has been resolved. The commune members also retained the right to private holdings even if on a small scale. On the fronts of industry and commerce too, private ownership continued to exist, albeit in a minority of cases. Pointing out all these facts Chang said: "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 the common property of the whole of society. Clearly we have not yet 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. Moreover, we must see that both ownership by the whole people and collective ownership involve the question of leadership, that is, the question of which class holds the ownership in fact and not just in name."¹⁸

Actually it is not just the question of ownership that remains. The objective is to effect radical transformation in production relations during the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Marx pointed out in *The Class Struggles in France*, proletarian dictatorship is the transitional period in which *class distinctions generally* are eliminated, *all production relations* supporting such distinctions and *all social relations* corresponding to them are annihilated and *all ideas* stemming from them are revolutionised. Chang pointed out: "In all the four cases, Marx means *all*. Not a part, a greater part, or even the greatest part, but all!"¹⁹ Thus the class

18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.

struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat does not end until class distinctions are completely erased through a total transformation of all the old production relations, social relations and ideas.

The class struggle under proletarian dictatorship grew more and more intense in China. In the beginning of 1976 the struggle against Teng Hsiao-ping reached its climax. Mao said at the time: "You are making the socialist 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."²⁰ This shows the gravity of the class struggle under proletarian dictatorship. When we examine the history of this class struggle in China, we can also see the step by step development of the concept regarding this struggle. Before the revisionist domination became a fait accompli, it was not clear whether the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat would take antagonistic forms. It was only after the fact of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union was known that it could be asserted that the struggle taking place under the dictatorship of the proletariat is one between enemy classes; its intensity was evident only after the Cultural Revolution was started. As the Cultural Revolution developed the struggle became sharper. Thus could Mao point out that the bourgeoisie to be fought in the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat exist right inside the party itself.

Mao had no illusions that by only becoming conscious of the intensity of the class struggle, the enemy class can be defeated. That was why he said whether socialism or capitalism would win was not yet decided. There always existed the possibility of a rightist coup. And they made full use of the favourable conditions obtaining after Mao's death. Now, the victories won in the struggle against capitalist roaders are being reversed. The true colour of the rightists comes out in their hysterical opposition to

20. Mao Tsetung, quoted in Peking Review, No. 11, 12 March 1976.

the Cultural Revolution. In China, capitalist restoration is taking place at a faster rate than in the Soviet Union.

It is irrelevant to ask why restoration occurred in China even after the Cultural Revolution, because it was not at all intended as a panacea for the prevention of capitalist restoration. It is a form of struggle so far not witnessed in all previous history. The question before we communists is how the experience of this revolution can be utilized and further developed in the fierce class struggles of today and the future.

The protracted class struggle during the period of socialism does not end up with one or two cultural revolutions; and more effective forms of struggle may have to be found out. Mao has formulated, in the theory and practice of the cultural revolution, the concept of a permanent revolution. Numerous reversals would occur in its course. The setbacks in China only reveal how complex and fierce is the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In this context, we can only mention what Mao said about the imminent rightist coup. He said, "If the Rightists stage an anti-Communist coup d'état in China, I am sure they will know no peace either and their rule will most probably be short-lived, because it will not be tolerated by the revolutionaries, who represent the interests of the people making up more than 90 percent of the population."²¹

21. Mao Tsetung, quoted in the Report to the Tenth Congress of the CPC.

Chapter 20

Communism— the Dream and Reality

Even before the Marxist worldview was comprehensively formulated, young Marx envisaged the concept of communism thus: "*Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. ... it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.*"¹

The intermingling of dream and reality is clearly manifest in this early view of Marx. He saw communism mainly as a human problem. He had not yet fully visualised, on the basis of a historical analysis, why communism is inevitable. Nevertheless, he had found that it was private property that created the situation in which man's labour and product of his labour and his life itself got

1. K. Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Moscow, 1974, p. 90.

alienated from him. Therefore, by overcoming the system of private property and reaching communism man can retrieve his true essence. With that the seemingly unresolvable basic contradictions man faced would be resolved, Marx declared. Though his later writings carried the spirit of this most profound dream the method had thoroughly changed. As the result of a prolonged study of political economy and history Marx concluded that communism would be reached to overcome the alienation produced by the working of precise economic laws only when man escaped from the necessary realm of production and entered the realm of freedom. He envisaged that communism provides for man's all-round development.

Communists are not afraid of dreaming. But their dreams are founded on reality and do not end up as mere romantic imaginations. The communist dream had a decisive role in the entire progress of human civilization and had always been a guide and source of inspiration for the progressive-minded humanity.

Man's dream about communism dates back to ancient times, handed down from generation to generation through legends and folk tales, about a tribal life in the primitive communist period. On this dream was based the romantic visions of a just and egalitarian society nurtured by philosophers of all ages. In the modern age, with the failure of bourgeois democratic revolutions to fulfil its own slogans of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', this dream again reappeared more vigorously. In the then prevailing atmosphere of total disillusionment, the Utopian Socialists tried to conquer the political arena with unforeseen vitality. Scientific socialism was conceived in the process of exposing the unscientific nature of utopian socialism.

We have seen in the preceding pages a general outline of the gains and losses scientific socialism has so far attained both in the theoretical and practical fields. It shows that the transition to communism has not proceeded without any setback in any of the countries of victorious revolutions. Almost all have taken to the road of capitalist

restoration. In this sense, the international communist movement is going through a period of grave crisis. At the same time there is another side to this dismal state of affairs, that of development.

GRAVEYARDS OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS

Among the countries where socialist revolution was accomplished, it was Yugoslavia that first posed the threat of capitalist restoration. In 1948 itself it had taken to the road of revisionism and was expelled from the Cominform. However, the question of capitalist restoration was not raised at that time. Tito and Co. were trying to re-establish capitalist production relation under the pretext of adopting an independent road to communism. A system of 'self-management' was introduced in the name of decentralisation of power. They gave special powers to the management and introduced bonus and other material incentives. As a result each factory and farm became just like the 'independent' factories and farms of capitalist countries. The relation between the management and the workers became one between capitalists and labourers. The party was transformed into a representative of this new bourgeoisie. In Yugoslavia this process of capitalist restoration began even before the revisionists captured power in the Soviet Union. But nobody drew any lesson from it.

In the Soviet Union this process did not come about in the name of decentralisation. There in the context of the growth of bureaucracy the question of decentralisation was not raised in the initial stages. However, the production system being implemented there, taking material incentive as the key link, soon led capitalist relations to come into existence. Within a decade of Khrushchev's usurpation of power, restoration of capitalism was more or less complete there. With the enactment of laws according legal sanctity to several special powers granted to managers and other bureaucrats in factories and collective

farms to even punish the workers in the name of disciplinary procedure, the rule of the new bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union received formal recognition. This in effect, led to another version of the 'self-management' system of Yugoslavia. The only difference being that of a comparatively stronger centralisation in the Soviet Union. Thus a small leading clique representing the new bourgeoisie, flourishing under the bureaucracy, could wield power for a long time. The situation in all the other revisionist countries is similar to this.

Reaping all the benefits of the tremendous economic growth of socialist construction carried out under the leadership of Stalin, the new bourgeoisie fast turned the Soviet Union into an imperialist power. This social imperialist power, carries out aggression all over the world, putting to shame even the US imperialism, and is growing into a powerful enemy of the world revolutionary movement. And it is an irrefutable fact that this metamorphosis of the world's first socialist country weakened the world communist movement to a great extent.

The Soviet rulers, while imposing a hideous fascist administration, claim that they are moving from the higher stage of socialism to communism. Just as spokesmen of bourgeois dictatorships try to cover up the existence of antagonistic classes and class struggle in bourgeois society, the new bourgeoisie of the Soviet Union and other revisionist countries, propagate the theory that antagonistic classes and class struggles disappear in socialism, and try to camouflage the class struggle which, in reality, is growing more and more fierce. In this manner they lay the theoretical base for abandoning the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the name of a classless society they put forward the distorted concept of the state of the whole people. Since the state is always an instrument of suppression used by a class against another class, a state which is not suppressive and is representative of the whole people will never be necessary and such a state can never exist. Justifying its existence in the name of countering external enemies is

childish. If external enemies exist their representatives will also be existing within the country. Enemy classes will cease to exist within the country only when such classes became totally non-existent in foreign countries too. In short the formulation of a state of the whole people is only a smoke-screen to abandon the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Let us have a look at what the Soviet constitution, adopted in 1977, says, "The aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat having been fulfilled, the Soviet state has become a state of the whole people. The leading role of the communist party, the vanguard of all the people, has grown."² The Soviet State has ceased to be a working-class state and the communist party has ceased to be a working-class party. This is nothing more than giving formal approval to the usurpation of power in the state and party by a handful of neo-bourgeoisie in the name of the whole people. This tactic of claiming representation of all the people was adopted by the bourgeoisie even from the times of bourgeois democratic revolutions. The new bourgeoisie of the Soviet Union and other revisionist countries are now trying out the very same tactic.

The basic trends of capitalist restoration taking place in China today are in no way different from what had happened in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. Moreover the pace of capitalist restoration in China is much more rapid. The open struggle between the capitalist roaders and socialist roaders in China has created circumstances different from the Soviet Union. There is a sizable section of people in China who understand the policies of the capitalist roaders and the potential danger inherent in them. Though they have temporarily lost the initiative, the struggle against the capitalist roaders is continuing and the latter emboldened by temporary victory achieved are in the process of exerting to speedily implement their policies.

2. 'Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics', Moscow, 1977, p. 13.

Since the essence of the Cultural Revolution was the struggle against the bureaucracy which served as the most important basis for the growth of the new bourgeoisie in socialist society, the capitalist roaders aimed at burying the fruits of the Cultural Revolution. And they started working with this aim in view right from the moment they could usurp power through a coup in 1976. By raising the argument that class struggle, carried on very vigorously in the factories and communes due to the Cultural Revolution, obstructs production they are trying to put a stop to the open ideological struggle against the capitalist roaders. Through bureaucratic disciplinary proceedings diametrically opposed to the essence of the Cultural Revolution they are trying to reverse its correct verdicts. To achieve this they have had to imprison hundreds of thousands of socialist roaders. But their attempts to bury class struggle through bureaucratic means will only help in intensifying it.

Another important means being implemented in China for the restoration of capitalism is the system of granting material incentives. Material incentives such as bonus, wage-increase, higher wages for more work, etc., are being adopted with a view to boost production. In a country like China, with conditions of widespread small scale production, such material incentives will lead to strengthening the trend of acquisition of private property and restoration of capitalism. These are the very actions which have accelerated the restoration of capitalism in China. Giving up class struggle, in the name of modernisation and depending on technology and capital from capitalist countries, the Chinese revisionists are mortgaging the Chinese economy which was totally independent in the time of Mao, to imperialist powers. Thus the process of capitalist restoration similar to those which took place in the Soviet Union and other revisionist countries is taking place in China though the resistance of socialist roaders is likely to create some new situations.

THE ALBANIAN MODEL

The situation existing in Albania is seemingly very different from that in the Soviet Union and China though the Albanian leadership has brought about a total reversal in their approach towards the policies adopted by the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Tsetung. No evident changes in the internal policies are yet discernible. So if the assessment is that they were moving along the socialist road it necessarily follows that they are still on the same road. In short, we will then have to reach the conclusion that no restoration of capitalism is taking place there and that it is a genuine socialist state; in which case the meaning of the crusade against Mao Tsetung Thought by the Albanian leadership remains to be explained. The Albanian Party of Labour and the CPC had several fundamental differences of opinion even while fraternal relations existed between them till the death of Mao.

The Albanian dissent centred around the cardinal standpoint put forward by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought about the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Though the Albanian leadership pay lip-service to continuing class struggle throughout the socialist period, they neither recognise it nor correctly grasp it and handle properly. They do not accept even the existence of enemy classes in a socialist society. The class struggle of the socialist era for them is really class struggle without enemy classes. The Albanian constitution adopted in 1976 says, "In the Peoples Socialist Republic of Albania there are no exploiting classes, private property and the exploitation of man by man have been liquidated and are forbidden."³ According to their constitution and other documents the only classes existing in Albania are the working class, the peasantry based on cooperative farming and revolutionary intellectuals. The struggle to resolve the

3. Constitution of the Peoples Socialist Republic of Albania, December 28, 1976, Albania Today, No. 1, 1977.

non-antagonistic contradiction between these classes is the content of the class struggle during the socialist period. Since to the Albanian leadership an Albanian bourgeoisie is non-existent, it is not surprising that the struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie is not seriously considered.

When the struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism in the international communist movement gathered strength under the leadership of the CPC, the issue of class struggle in the socialist period became highly controversial. The question whether one recognised class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat became the yardstick to distinguish Marxism and revisionism. At the time the Albanian leaders also acknowledged that class struggle continued in the socialist period. But their conclusion that exploiting classes had been eliminated placed them in ideological dilemma. They tried to give varying interpretations to resolve this contradiction, but it only made the question more complex.

This is how an Albanian leader puts it in his attempt to get out of the ideological confusion: "Antagonistic contradictions are characteristic of society with antagonistic classes. But in a society with non-antagonistic classes, such as our socialist society, where the exploiting classes have been eliminated, what place do these contradictions occupy?"

"The Party has always made it clear that antagonistic contradictions have not disappeared in our country with the elimination of the exploiting classes as such; they exist along with the non-antagonistic contradictions.

"The fundamental antagonistic contradiction is always between socialism and capitalism, between the socialist road and the capitalist road."⁴

Since they had already concluded that all enemy clas-

4. Nexhmiji Hoxha, 'Some Fundamental Questions of the Revolutionary Policy of the Party of Labour of Albania about the Development of the Class Struggle', Tirana, 1977, p. 16.

ses were eliminated, they were unable to say that the basic, antagonistic contradiction in socialist society was that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But the CPC under Mao's leadership put forward this struggle between enemy classes as the crucial issue of class struggle during the socialist period. Moreover, by summing up the experiences of the Cultural Revolution Mao pointed out that the bourgeoisie existed right inside the communist party. But the Albanian leadership were not at all prepared to recognise this crucial issue, repeating, in effect, with more dangerous consequences, the same erroneous conclusions Stalin reached in 1936. At the same time, presenting the abstract concept of the contradiction between capitalism and socialism, they pretend to recognise antagonistic contradictions in socialist period. If there is to be the contradiction between socialism and capitalism, there should be on the one side, capitalistic production relations resisting elimination and on the other, growing socialist production relations. Naturally, there will be a capitalist class engaged in life-and-death struggle to preserve and develop the capitalist production relations. One who denies this material basis of the contradiction between capitalism and socialism and speaks about its antagonistic nature is dealing only in empty phrase-mongering; thereby turning this contradiction into a mere abstract concept.

What makes Enver Hoxha and his followers incapable of grasping the political significance of the Chinese Cultural Revolution is their ignorance of the objective laws of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. They fail to understand that the Cultural Revolution was the highest form of class struggle so far known in a workers' state. It is not surprising that those who cannot recognise the fierce class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the socialist period cannot understand it. Hoxha, now, says that while he was praising Mao and the Cultural Revolution to the skies, he had written in his diary thus, "A Marxist-Leninist Party like ours builds socialism, deepens the revolution, but does

not carry out revolution like that which is going on in China today, because our party has not allowed and does not allow anyone to take power from it, but holds it firmly in its steel grip and there will never be any danger of accidents if it always proceeds resolutely and vigilantly, as it is proceeding, on the Marxist-Leninist road."⁵

Hoxha does not see that the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat during the Cultural Revolution in China was the result of the working of objective laws; on the contrary he sees it as a subjective phenomenon avoidable if the party-leadership wish so. This is another form of his subjective concept about the two-line struggle, and part of his over-all metaphysical approach. This has led him to characterise the Cultural Revolution thus, "The course of events showed that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was neither a revolution, nor great, nor cultural, and in particular, not in the least proletarian. It was a palace putsch on all-China scale for the liquidation of a handful of reactionaries who had seized power."⁶ Here Hoxha looks like a bourgeois politician without even an elementary knowledge of Marxism-Leninism amazed at the unprecedented thrust of the great proletarian Cultural Revolution. This dismal stance is the result of his inability to grasp the objective laws of class struggle owing to his metaphysical understanding of Marxian dialectics.

What would be the future of socialist construction in Albania because of adopting such a stand outwardly 'leftist' without actually grasping the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat? No doubt, Albania would follow the Soviet Union. It can be asked if Hoxha is not committing similar errors as Stalin's. Whereas Stalin's mistakes were excusable in the absence of previous experiences, Hoxha's mistakes arose from the stand of non-recognition of these experiences and even opposing them. This is a

5. E. Hoxha, 'Reflections on China', p. 360.

6. E. Hoxha, 'Imperialism and the Revolution', p. 392.

thoroughly reactionary stand. Capitalist roaders would be thriving in Albania under the patronage of Hoxha. Basically, Albania is also proceeding along the path of capitalist restoration.

TOWARDS REALITY

In short, we have reached the conclusion that today there is no country that advances along a correct path towards communism. Does it mean that communism has turned out to be a day-dream? In fact, our search leads on to the contrary. That is, instead, we have come nearer to the realisation of communism. The struggle to resolve the complex questions raised in the wake of proletarian revolutions have taught the international communist movement invaluable lessons. Marxist-Leninist parties and movements which seriously discuss these issues and make all efforts to act accordingly have come up in a vast majority of the countries. This is a major development. In many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where communist ideas had not even trickled in prior to WW II, these questions are discussed. It shows that despite grave setbacks the international communist movement is posed for a big leap.

The new experiences of the international communist movement during the last few decades have uprooted many a romantic concept about communism. And so we can confront these problems with a more realistic understanding. Now, nobody thinks that with the revolution under the leadership of the proletariat all issues would automatically be resolved. We are now convinced that it marks the beginning of a more profound and strenuous revolution. And, transition to communism would be possible only after repeated setbacks and reversals.

Marx argued that transition to communism was inevitable as it became necessary to establish socialised production relations corresponding to the socialised produc-

tive forces in capitalism by smashing individual ownership. But, it has become clear that socialisation of production relations is a complex process. Real socialisation of production relations is not effected by the working class capturing power and nationalisation of means of production by law. Moreover, if the means of production are to be really owned by the people, real political power should be transferred to the people. Thus, until decentralisation of power is effected real ownership of means of production is likely to be centralised in the hands of those at the apex of power. In such circumstances even decentralisation to the extent effected in capitalism becomes impossible. And it leads to a terrible fascist state, as happened in the Soviet Union and other countries. It clearly shows the importance of the process of decentralisation of political power along with the socialisation of means of production. The Cultural Revolution in China aimed at this, to take political power to the people and thus make them the real owners of means of production. Though it suffered setbacks it has great historical importance, like the Paris Commune which answered in practice what form the proletarian dictatorship would take though it failed. The class struggle under proletarian dictatorship can advance only by grasping the experiences of the Cultural Revolution.

The romantic concept of communism as a panacea for all ills is also being shattered. The division of classes on economic basis is behind all the issues man now faces. Therefore, with the establishment of communist production relations, the division of classes loses its economic basis and thus along with it accompanying ills too. However, it is not the end of all human problems. The contradictions between individual and society, between man and nature, etc., still remain. Certainly, their mode of manifestation may change. The contradiction between individual and society now often turns out to be antagonistic because of the existence of class contradictions. So, with the resolution of class contradictions its antagonistic nature may

undergo a change to become non-antagonistic. This contradiction cannot be eliminated till such time as individuals and a society comprising of individuals exist. It would be a contradiction between the particularity of the individual and the universality of society. Such is the case with the contradiction between man and nature. The contradiction between freedom and necessity would exist as long as the contradiction between man and nature also exists. Man would continue his efforts to realise freedom overcoming the necessity of nature. The struggle for communism is only the beginning of man's conscious efforts to realise freedom and thus retrieve the alienated human essence. Marxism does not consider communism to be the eternal destiny of man. In the present-day social realities, it is a dream man can cherish with a sense of reality. To think beyond it is to be in an illusory world.

Chapter 21

The Challenge

The brief sketch of the course of development of Marxian world view given so far shows the development of dialectics from Hegel to Marx and from there to Mao. Marx retrieved dialectics from the idealist simplifications of Hegel, and presented them in all their complexity, while Mao defined his method in unraveling this complexity by formulating the question of principal contradiction. Yet numerous problems have cropped up, and will do so in future too, in the course of development of the frontiers of knowledge.

Though the formulation of the question of principal contradiction and the principal aspect is a milestone in the development of human knowledge, it does not solve the problem by itself. For instance, regarding the principal contradiction in present-day Indian society, different views still prevail on whether it is between feudalism and the masses, or between imperialism and the people, etc. The answer requires "concrete analysis of concrete conditions" as put by Lenin. Everything depends on this definition, which expresses the quintessence of dialectics.

Problems regarding class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat still remain unanswered. Though the Cultural Revolution in China led to a qualitative leap in this regard, the lessons we have learnt are only elementary. It has become more or less clear today that the process of transition from capitalism to communism will be more

complex and protracted than envisaged ever before.

The new questions raised by class struggle in the post-revolutionary period are inseparably linked with the pre-revolutionary class struggle, because it is a continuation of this struggle. Slogans like 'Grasp Revolution, Promote Production', 'Take Class Struggle as the Key Link', 'Put Politics in Command', etc., raised by the socialist roaders are extremely relevant and significant in the preparatory stage as well as in the course of revolution. The mechanistic and economistic slogans of capitalist roaders which lead to capitalist restoration are precisely those which form the basis of the economistic positions obstructing revolution in countries where it is yet to take place. The philosophical and theoretical basis of revisionism, both before and after revolution, is one and the same. Therefore, revolution in countries like India, where it has not taken place, can advance only if all the lessons gained by the international communist movement through the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat are properly assimilated and utilized.

Today, the struggle initiated by the Naxalbari peasant uprising in 1967 against revisionism within the Indian communist movement has reached a new stage. The struggle led by Charu Mazumdar could liberate the movement from the clutches of economism and put forward the slogan of seizure of political power as a fighting slogan. Though efforts to grasp Mao's contributions to dialectics were made, the revolutionaries could not advance along correct lines. The one-sided stress given to the question of political power led them to the error of reducing the concept of political power to an abstract one. The movement, as a result, suffered serious setbacks.

However, the present ideological struggle in the international communist movement has helped in initiating a process of correcting these deviations and seeking out solutions to the concrete problems faced by the Indian revolution through achieving a thorough grasp of Marxist philosophy. As part of this process there is also an effort

to understand the concrete questions of revolution with deeper insight gained in the light of the international experiences. For example, the necessity of redefining the very concept of political power prevalent in the communist movement has come up today. The understanding common at the time of both the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, was that the process of establishing people's political power more or less reaches completion with the seizure of power through building up the people's armed force and defeating the enemy's armed power. However, today we know that such seizure of power is only the beginning of this process. The experiences of Russia and China teach us that the political consciousness of the people has to be developed and their political will has to be consolidated to an extent capable of exposing and defeating the new bourgeoisie through a fierce class struggle that follows. These experiences teach us that developing the people's political will becomes the decisive factor in strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat in the post-revolutionary stage. This concept of political power applies for the pre-revolutionary stage too. Though developing the people's armed power is decisive in this stage, it is evident that the question of developing the people's political will should not be ignored. Revolution demands a policy and programme based on this concept.

Today, the revolutionaries in India are engaged in the efforts to solve the problems thrown up by revolution, adopting an approach enriched with this new insight. It is in this context that they raise the slogan of establishing people's political power at the local level, based on an understanding that the process of establishing political power through developing people's political will takes concrete form at the local level. This certainly raises the process of establishing people's political power to new heights, both in theory and in practice. These attempts to solve the concrete problems of Indian revolution would undoubtedly contribute to the advance of the world revolution,

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Errata

- P. 111/Line 5: The sentence beginning "All revolutions..."
 should read "All revolutions except 1917
 failed in the absence of a complex situat-
 ion developing to the necessary extent."
- Line 13: For the word "single" read "simple"
- Line 23: The sentence beginning "This is what..."
 should read "It is held that Althusser's
 concept of "overdetermination" aims at
 explaining Engels' position."
- P. 116/Line 20: For the word "relations" read "revolutions"
- P. 117/Line 26: For "that recognition" read "those laws."
- P. 118/Line 2: The rest of the paragraph beginning with
 "This is..." should read: "This is indispen-
 sable for the revisionists in order to
 depoliticise the people and thus to clear
 the obstacles on their road to capitalist
 restoration, since in a socialist society
 where the proletarian politics has the
 commanding position, capitalist restora-
 tion will not be that easy. The philoso-
 phical base that lies behind their approach
 is... economics."
- P. 131/Line 10: For "external" read "eternal"
- P. 208/Line 24: After the word "production" insert "on
 which they rest, to the abolition of all
 social relations"

