

MARXIST INTELLECTION

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Editorial

Marxist Philosophy and the Problems of Development of Marxist Theory
Practice of Soviet Socialism in the Thirties : Successes & Failures
The Courage to Climb the Unexplored Mountain

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**Issue I
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Editorial

The communist movement in India has been passing through an unprecedented crisis for the last few decades. Neither is there the existence of a real communist party, nor can there be found a communist centre showing advanced ideas. Under the circumstances, all attempts of the communist revolutionaries of India should be directed towards building up a communist party in our country. But it is a very difficult task considering the serious ideological, theoretical and political confusion reigning throughout the camp. This has generated a kind of frustration too, which has been debarring the communist activists from vigorously applying themselves to revolutionary practice, without which no development of theory is possible. Added to this crisis in theory is the very long-standing problem of the proper recognition of the role of the working class in forging the correct orientation of the communist party, particularly at its incipient stage. That the activities of the communists should be concentrated among the working class at the initial stage of building up a communist party, even in a backward country is still hardly recognized. This neglect has resulted in the deep-rooted petty bourgeois bias in the communist movement of our country. Another impediment is a very mechanical approach towards the concept of democratic centralism. It is generally not admitted that according to varying conditions the aspect of democracy and that of centralism may preponderate over each other and that while the political ideas are in great confusion the aspect of democracy should be broadened for providing sufficient space for different ideas to contend with one another. The general trend of sticking to the conventional ideas that always centralism will dominate has been doing much harm to the development of theoretical understanding. In brief, these are some problems that are creating obstacle to the building up of a real Communist Party in India. **MARXIST INTELLECTION** will devote itself primarily to deal with these questions and try to create an atmosphere where reviews and evaluations of and investigations into generally accepted views of international com-

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unist movement will be made and new areas of theoretical understanding explored.

First, of all, we should recognize the fact that this plight of Indian Communist movement is not an isolated phenomenon. The international communist movement as a whole has been going through the same experience long since. The erstwhile Soviet Union and the East European Socialist states took the course of reversion to capitalism long ago. Despite the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, China, too, followed the same track. The fall of the two great socialist states gave birth to the idea, not only amongst the general sympathizers of socialism, but also a great many communist workers, that there must have been serious limitations in the Marxist theory itself; and that is why the proletariat can seize power from the bourgeoisie, but cannot retain it anywhere in the world. Add to this, the general weakness of communist revolutionary movement or the lack of intense working class movement led by any communist centre. The exceptional struggles of Nepal and other various struggles that are still being waged in different countries could hardly change the general atmosphere of despair prevailing in the communist camp of the world. This is at the same time, the most opportune moment for the reactionary bourgeois ideologues to descend gleefully on the scene with all their pernicious theories including 'post-modernism'. Nobody can deny that these apparently fascinating but essentially faulty ideas had extremely harmful effects, particularly on the students, youths and nascent intellectuals. A sort of cynicism pervaded among these young people who formerly used to form the target group for recruit in the communist parties. This long-standing crisis had its direct effect on the rank and file of the communist forces who are still striving for socialism in their respective ways. A large section of them have been suffering from inertia and aversion to revolutionary practice. This rightist tendency is generated from the belief that class-struggle is for the present relegated to secondary position due to immense development of modern technology. Now it is time to pause and ponder. It is now the time to concentrate only on theoretical work and patiently wait for the fresh accentuation of the crisis of capitalism before we take a plunge into the whirlpool of class-struggle. Exactly the opposite danger comes from the dogmatists, who think that there is hardly any problem of theory. The problem, they believe, lies solely with the communists who, too squeamish about

theoretical questions, are reluctant to put their shoulders to the wheels. The theoretical and political weapons at our disposal are already sufficiently strong to go ahead with our task of making a revolution, they assert.

All the abovementioned factors, national and international have combined together to create a grave crisis in the world communist movement and to stall the building up of a real communist party in our country.

This clear recognition of the existing reality points that for furthering the world communist movement, a qualitative leap in the development of Marxist theory is the need of the hour. Unlike the dogmatists, we believe that the failure of the Marxists theory to solve the problems of class-struggles arising in the new situations obviously indicates a sort of stagnation in the development of the Marxist theory. If for a relatively long period of time this condition persists, we must have to admit that it is a crisis in development and at such moments to deal with this crisis takes the position of prime importance. This of course, does not mean that revolutionary practice has been subordinated to secondary position. Since Marxist theory of knowledge believes in the primacy of practice in the spiral movement of knowledge from lower to the higher, no Marxist theoretical exercise can be done being divorced from the direct experience of class-struggle. MARXIST INTELLECTION will try its best to fight the wrong trends that are sweeping not only the communist movement of our country, but also the world communist movement and try to the best of its ability to address itself to the critical areas of the theory and practice of Marxism.

The attacks by the bourgeois theoreticians on Marxism-Leninism are very harmful, but no less harmful is the cult of holding fast to Marxism-Leninism with blind adoration. We are strongly opposed to such tendencies. We think that Marxism teaches us to be critical of Marxism itself. A philosophy which has been constantly developing in accordance with the changing objective conditions of class-struggles must always go forward by negating itself, which means whatever formulations in the theory were almost unquestionable at a given point of time in the history of the communist movement, may become questionable at some later time and in a different context. A re-evaluation and a reformulation of the past theories will always become necessary. MARXIST INTELLECTION em-

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phasizes on this basic approach with the strong conviction that only by creatively putting this idea into practice can Marxism Leninism be saved from the decay that it has been suffering from for the last few decades.

An uninterrupted churning of thoughts, clashes of ideas and conflict of opinions combined with corresponding revolutionary practice will contribute to the development of Marxism to-day. MARXIST INTELLECTION believes that for the facilitation of the sense of freedom required to cultivate this practice, every political organization should adopt special measures, so that within the general framework of democratic centralism, they can broaden the base of democracy. Reviews and reformulations of the past political and theoretical understandings and forays into unexplored regions can save Marxism from ossification. Our magazine believes that only this process will help the Marxist theory take a qualitative leap which is so necessary for the development of correct orientation of class-struggles and building up of the communist parties the world over including ours.

In this our first issue of the magazine we have tried to be faithful to our basic ideas.

The first article is named, “Marxist Philosophy and the Problems of Development of Marxist Theory”. In this article the author has described in detail the role of dialectical materialism in the transformation of ‘Marxist Philosophy’ into ‘Marxist World outlook’. In the process, the problem of stagnation of Marxist theory has been dealt with, with particular reference to the inconsistencies in the exposition and practice of the generally accepted revolutionary theory in the post-Lenin period. The author has averred that much of what was accepted generally in the international communist movement was far from correct both from methodological and epistemological points of view.

The second article is, “Practice of Soviet Socialism in Thirties: Successes and Failures”. The main focus of this article is on the underlying causes of the failure of soviet socialism. The author has tried to establish how the entire Stalin period of Soviet Union failed to properly handle the interrelation between the communist party and the working class and how it failed to develop the independent class-organisation of the proletariat. The author concludes that the result was disastrous, for these two failures inevitably led

to the increase of alienation of the direct producers from the means of production. But the key to the success of socialism lies in how much the direct producers can establish their control on production and distribution of the social produce. Judged by this criterion, soviet socialism was a great failure, from which many historic lessons have to be learned for future endeavours.

The third and last article is named, “The Courage to Climb the Unexplored Mountain”. We have mentioned at the outset of this introductory note that Nepal is an exception in the world communist movement where the communist party has been able to make a real headway. The communist revolutionary movement of Nepal has become the major source of inspiration in the present day world for those aspiring for revolution in their own countries. The author believes that astounding courage and innovativeness of the comrades of CPN(M) has created history in our neighbouring country. Their courage is not confined to the battle-fields alone, but it is spread to their critical attitude towards all that are generally held in unquestionable esteem in the international communist movement. The author shows great admiration for their creativity in applying Marxism to the concrete condition of Nepal, while, at the same time he is critical about their assertion that every back-ward country (semi-feudal semi-colonial) is ripe for armed struggle and their unwillingness to critically review the GPCR.

Marxism-Leninism has bequeathed to humanity the greatest of ideological guidelines. The reactionaries and rightists are trying to destroy it by head-on attacks and subtle revisions. The dogmatists are sapping its vitality by doctrinairism. It is the imperative task of all of us to save this greatest treasury of mankind from destruction and decay.

Marxist Philosophy and the Problems of Development of Marxist Theory

Dipak Bakshi

The development of the theory and ideals expounded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels is passing through a deep crisis today. The enrichment and evaluation of Marxism through practice in the hands of Vladimir Lenin has on the one hand developed Marxist theory and on the other hand put it face to face with numerous new and fundamental questions and challenges. At the beginning of twenty first century a qualitative leap in the development of Marxist theory has become absolutely imperative.

As a world-outlook, Marxism, from the birth of First International under the direct leadership of Marx and Engels to the collapse of the Third International in the times of Stalin, has concluded a truly international journey. There is no denying the fact that Marxist theory to-day is not getting developed under the able supervision of any 'recognized' international center. There is no Marxist theory with international character now active in class struggle. In fact, the communist-revolutionary centers across the globe are found weak and handicapped in reviewing the theories practised and in the face of contemporary (last 100 years) bourgeois theoretical attacks.

Amongst the people who subscribe to the view that the development of Marxism is going through a crisis, desire will surely be born to understand and follow in a consistent fashion the emergence and maturing of the Marxist theory. We, in 'MARXIST INTELLECTION', belong to this school of thought. In the present article we shall confine ourselves to the discussion of the inter-relation of Marxist philosophy and the problem of development of Marxist theory. Before we enter into this particular discussion, we shall go through the various international challenges that the fundamental formulations of Marxism have been confronted with.

Is Marxist Theory based on a New Philosophy ?

The inter-relationship between Marxist theory and philosophy can

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be deemed as the most important premise in the course of development of Marxism. The following lines, taken from Karl Korsch's 'MARXISM AND PHILOSOPHY' (1923) will help us to get along into this discussion:

"...Marx and Engels, it is true, often, indicated with great pride that historically the German Workers movement had inherited the legacy of classical German philosophy in scientific socialism. But they did not mean by this that scientific socialism or communism were primarily 'philosophies'. They rather saw the task of their scientific socialism as that of definitively overcoming and superseding the form and content, not only of all previous bourgeois idealist philosophy, but theory of philosophy altogether..."

"...The manner in which they (Marx and Engels) dealt with the question of philosophy can best be described in the vivid terms in which Engels once described 'Feurbach's attitude to Hegelian philosophy: 'Feuerbach simply 'shoved' it unceremoniously aside.' In fact many latter Marxist, apparently in highly orthodox compliance with the masters' instructions, dealt in exactly the same unceremonious way not only with Hegelian philosophy but philosophy as a whole..."

The first attempt to establish the fact that Marxist theory is not based on any new philosophical content was to pit the views of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels against each other on the question of philosophy. The main premise was that 'ANTI-DUHRING' and 'DIALECTICS OF NATURE', written by Friedrich Engels, contradict Marx's philosophical views. Where Marx has used 'Dialectical Materialism' to analyze the inter-relationship of human consciousness and the society in the context of the historical process of the development of human civilization, Engels, in his use of 'Dialectical Materialism' to explain the nature-science interaction, has behaved as a 'naturalist materialist', rather, has been reduced to a 'metaphysical materialist'.

In the beginning of the Twentieth Century, Italian philosopher duo Giovanni Gentile - Rudolfo Mondolfo and Polish philosopher Stanislaw Berozowski for the first time tried to show the differences between the philosophical views of Marx and Engels. But this discussion came inside Communist movement first in the writings of Erwin Ban. This article was published in 1920, in the South-Eastern Europe's Comintern's mouthpiece 'Koummunismus'. It

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declared that the role of Engels in the development of Marxist philosophy is incorrect and detrimental. Ban considered Marx to be a successor of Classical German philosophy, whereas Engels is a positivist and a proponent of naturalist views. In his opinion, Engels' views and writings do not fit in the Marxian theoretical framework. This view gained further momentum in International circles with the writings of George Lukacs. In his 'HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS' (1923), he laid prime importance on establishing the philosophical differences between Marx and Engels; 'DIALECTICS OF NATURE' by Engels was targeted. To quote a few lines from Lukacs' 'HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS':

"... I may be permitted to devote a few words - as a set of excursus - to the view expressed by Friedrich Engels on the problem of thing-in-itself. In a sense they are no immediate concern to us, but they have exercised such a great influence on the meaning given to the term by many Marxists that to omit to correct this might easily give rise to a misunderstanding..."

"... But Engels' deepest misunderstanding consists in his belief that the behavior of industry and scientific experiment constitutes praxis in the dialectical, philosophical sense. In fact, scientific experiment is contemplation at its purest. The experiments creates an artificial, abstract milieu in order to be able to observe undisturbed the untrammled workings of the law under examination, eliminating all irrational factors both of subject and the object. He strives as far as possible to reduce the material substratum of his observation to the purely rational 'product' to the 'intelligible matter' of mathematics."

Karl Korsch (1923) in his 'MARXISM AND PHILOSOPHY' mentions that:

"... This is best shown by a sentence from Engels' attack on Duhring, which is doubly conclusive because it is widely believed that the later Engels degenerated into a thoroughly naturalistic - materialist view of the world by contrast to Marx, his more philosophically literate companion...."

In the 1920s, the main reason behind such a reaction to the writings and views of Engels was the misinterpretation of his views to justify the revisionist politics of the 'Second International'. It became apparent from the writings of Kautsky, Hilferding that Engels has described how Nature herself progresses in a dialecti-

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cal materialistic process. Hence, by the laws of development of civilization, the capitalist society will collapse in due course of time. There is hardly any need of human conscious intervention in the destruction of capitalism and ascendancy of the rule of the working class. Kautsky writes:

“Capitalist society has failed, its dissolution is a question of time; irresistible economic development leads with natural necessity to the bankruptcy of the capitalist mode of production. The erection of a new form of society in place of the existing one is no longer merely desirable; it has become something inevitable.”

It is true that the emergence of a new society with the demise of the Capitalist society is not only a matter of mere desirability but of inevitability too. But, at the same time inevitable is, prior to the emergence of that new society, the emergence of Communist Party in the class-society, the development of class-conscious working class under the ideological leadership of that Party and paving the way towards the new society by the working class. Kautsky, in his writing, rejected in essence, this active and decisive role of the Communist Party, Working class and Consciousness. In that case the role of the Communist Party in the advent of the new society becomes actually nothing but of a far-sighted observer. Thus the wrong philosophical understanding of Kautsky gave birth to the revisionist politics of the 2nd International.

Hilferding writes:

“... It.....incorrect... to identify Marxism and socialism. Considered logically, as a scientific system alone....Marxism is only a theory of the laws of motion of society..... To recognize the validity of Marxism ... is by no means a task for value judgments, let alone a pointer to practical time of conduct. It is one thing to recognize a necessity, but quite another to place oneself at the service of that necessity...”

Hilferding is ready to accept the ‘necessity’ of the new society but not in a position ‘to place oneself at the service of that necessity.’ His philosophical and political position is very clear. The allegation against Engels is that, it is his philosophical understanding that gave birth to the revisionist political theory of Kautsky and Hilferding.

In 1930, Sidney Hook once again attacked Engels’ DIALEC-

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TICS OF NATURE accusing Engels of transforming Marx's 'revolutionary theory' into a 'positivist ideology' and abasing his 'critical historicism' to 'vulgar materialism'. In fact, Engels has been at the center of criticism from leftist philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau and Henri Lefebvre of the 1950's or Althusser of the 1960's.

George Lichtheim, in his book 'Marxism: A Historical and Critical Study' writes that instead of Marx's 'Critical vision of a critical theory' what Engels offered was 'dull science of causal evolution'; he transformed Marx's extraordinary historic creation of 'drastic transvaluation of values' into a 'cast iron system of laws'. According to him, when Marx had consciously avoided research in the realm of 'natural-science', Engels had continuously treaded the path of 'positivism' and 'scientism'.

In his book 'The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism', Z.A. Jordan tries to show that Marx's study of natural science is some sort of 'naturalistic activism' or 'anthropological realism', which he never tried to explain with the help of 'dialectical materialism'. In contrast, Engels has continuously tried to explain natural science with the help of dialectical materialism, which has resulted in degeneration of his philosophical ideas into mere 'metaphysical materialism'.

In his book 'The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism', Z.A. Jordan, gives a very 'interesting' explanation. He discusses, how their birth and socio-cultural surroundings in which they grew up had placed Marx and Engels poles apart with respect to their philosophical thinking. Marx was born in a well-to-do and educated family. His main object of interest was philosophy. That is why he was able to grasp and assimilate the essential elements from 'classical materialism' and 'classical idealism' into his thoughts. On the other hand, Engels' birth in a business family and daily grind that it entails had turned him into a 'crude materialist'. This was clearly evident after Marx's death when he published 'Dialectics of Nature'. Due to his absence of command in philosophy, Engels had used the terminologies of Hegels as mere 'external' and shallow words. Engels tried to fit the human society in the framework of a natural science methodology. According to Avineri, this robs 'consciousness' of its due importance and thus establishes the fact that Engels was never a 'dialectical materialist' in his approach towards

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the history of evolution of human society.

Criticisms, similar in spirit and content can be found in Leszek Kolakowski's 'Main currents of Marxism'; in Jeff Coulter's article 'Marxism and the Engels' Paradox', which appeared in 'The Socialist Register' magazine; in Alfred Schmidt's 'The Concept of Nature in Marx'.

In the last mentioned article, the author writes that Marx had a clear conception of nature and reference to nature appears in his discussion about the form of 'social labour' with respect to 'socio-historic character'. In order to elaborate the evolution of human civilization and society, Marx discusses the role of nature. Schmidt writes that nature is 'pre-dialectical'; only in its role of transforming human beings into 'conscious active subject', does it play a 'dialectical' role. According to him, knowing the nature only is dialectical; nature itself does not follow the dialectical mechanism, there is no 'negativity' in nature. Since only the relationship between man and nature can be dialectical, it is necessary for 'objectivism' to be un-dialectical. Marxist philosophy, to Schmidt, is 'non-ontological materialism'. Schmidt disapproved of viewing Marxism as 'naturalized Hegelianism', where only the ontological substratum can be changed, spirit replacing matter.

Lucio Coletti, in his book, 'Marxism and Hegel', criticizes Engels for increasing speculative bonds in science instead of setting science free of the former. Coletti explains this by Engels' attempt to thrust Hegel's idea of 'philosophy of nature' over natural science.

We would like to conclude this long list of criticisms with a small quote written by Althusser: "What is new in Marxism's contribution in philosophy is a new practice of philosophy. Marxism is not a (new) philosophy of praxis, but a (new) practice of philosophy" [From the article 'Lenin and Philosophy'].

Marxist Theory and Marxist Philosophy

Many in the Marxist camp do believe that it is not at all necessary or meaningful to debate if 'Marxism' is based on a 'new' philosophical theory. If there is no confusion in the question of establishment of 'dictatorship of the proletariat', then to debate or resolve whether dialectical materialism is at all applicable in natural science becomes devoid of any urgency or significance.

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After the demise of Marx and Engels, on the one side Kautsky and Hilferding and on the other Karl Korsch, Lukacs, Gramsci, Althusser, all vehemently supported Marx's idea of proletarian dictatorship in their first period of criticism, and did never dither to choose Marx's immortal classic CAPITAL as a guide to look at socio-historical evolution. In spite of this, the eventuality of these schools is well known. Apart from them, if we look at Lenin-Stalin-Mao as the school of revolutionary practice of Marxism, we can find that this international debate did largely affect them in both implicit and explicit fashion. Lenin waged a valiant theoretical and ideological war against the second internationalists. However, we can hardly find any strong theoretical work by Stalin or Mao against Lukacs or Karl Korsch. The duty of giving Marxist theory the needed completion, which was taken up by Engels with due advice from Marx himself, did not find any continuity in the international communist movement after the fragmented efforts by Vladimir Lenin. From within the communist camp, there have been incessant attacks on Marxism, numerous misinterpretations of Marxist theory have been made - but there has been no follow up of the 'Materialism and Emperio-criticism'. Marxists have virtually backed out of continuing with Engels' work on natural science.

This debate has gained such immense importance because it now revolves upon the role of consciousness in the process of socio-historic evolution. If the philosophical thoughts of Engels boil down to the fact that just as in natural science, the evolution of society and civilization will, in its own mechanism, lead to the destruction of capitalism, then the role of consciousness or the communist party becomes insignificant. There remains no need to infuse any 'advanced consciousness' from outside to transform the working class from class-in-itself to the level of class-for-itself. According to Hegel, the role of consciousness can never go beyond the existing societal setup. Marx believed that in the process of destruction of capitalism and establishment of working-class dictatorship, the dialectical mediation arising out of dialectical unity between consciousness and existing society is the driving force of this necessary qualitative leap. In the process of socio-historic evolution, how the inter-relation between necessity and freedom will be transformed into the correct dialectical relation is neither a question of economics nor politics or history, but a question of

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philosophy. If there is no existence of Marxist philosophy, then any one of the two - necessity and freedom - will remain in consideration, or both will remain, but as mutually exclusive factor. In the process of revolutionary transformation of the society, determination of the role of consciousness is thus a philosophical question; only the relentless struggle against idealist and metaphysical materialist tendencies can enable the communist party to take the correct position in ever changing circumstances. Any lack of consciousness in this question not only makes taking a correct stand impossible, but ensures adopting a faulty one. That is why, for Lenin, Stalin, Mao and for the review of subsequent theoretical, ideological and political issues, the philosophical question will play the role of main theoretical foundation. In the establishment of working class dictatorship, the withering away of the state, how the gap of consciousness between the party and the class changes or evolves, what will the interrelation between subject (party) and object (working class) become, why, how and to what extent will the object transform itself, and how will the subject adapt itself to that change - to determine all this correctly is the historical duty of the communist party.

Marx-Engels and Marxist Theory

Keeping in mind the above mentioned debates, in order to understand the inception and development of the theory of dialectics in Marx and Engels' personal life, we shall start with their early life theoretical studies. These are not much known, and all is not directly related to the debates of communist movement. Hence this discussion might become a little tiring. But it is important in order to take a clear stand with respect to the debates discussed here.

In their early life, before they met each other, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels penned two important essays. For his doctoral dissertation, Karl Marx prepared "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean philosophy of Nature". Engels wrote "Schelling on Hegel". Incidentally both were published in the same year, 1841. Both were of the same age at that time, around 21-22. Both these essays were on 'pure philosophy'. A detailed discussion of these essays is out of the scope of this write up. But we can entertain a small discussion in order to comprehend the initial tendencies of their thoughts and ideas.

Marx's "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature"

Chapter 1

The important parts of the essay are:

- 1. Opinions on the Relationship between Democritean and Epicurean physics.**
- 2. Difficulties concerning the Identity of the Democritean and Epicurean philosophy of Nature**
- 3. The Declination of the Atom from the Straight Line**

Chapter 2

The Qualities of the Atom.

The essay discusses Democritean and Epicurean physics and the philosophy behind it. Marx begins thus

"... Greek philosophy seems to have met with something with which a good tragedy is not supposed to meet, namely, a dull ending. The objective history of philosophy in Greece seems to come to an end with Aristotle, Greek philosophy's Alexander of Macedon, and even the manly-strong stoics did not succeed in what the Spartans did accomplish in their temples, the chaining of Athena to Heracles so that she could not flee."

Marx depicts Epicurean philosophy as a 'syncretic combination' of 'Democritean physics' and 'Cyrenaic morality'. Stoicism is a combination of 'Heraclitean speculation' on nature, 'Cynical-ethical view of the world' and 'Aristotelian logic'. Scepticism is a 'necessary evil' that contradicts with all this 'dogmatism'. Marx's writing of this essay is an exploration of the source of the two eclectic systems of the ancient Greek philosophies. Of the two systems one is Epicurean stoic and Sceptic philosophy, and the other is Alexandrian Speculation. As a reason for his enthusiasm, Marx writes, "...Furthermore, is it not remarkable that after the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies, which are universal in range, there appear new systems which do not lean on these rich intellectual forms, but look farther back and have recourse to the simplest schools to the philosophers of nature in regard to physics, to the Socratic school in regard to ethics..."

In the part titled 'The Qualities of the Atom' Marx discusses Democritean and Epicurean physics in the context of constitution

———— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory* of atom. “Through the qualities the atom acquires an existence which contradicts its concept; it is assumed as an internalized being different from its essence. It is this contradiction which mainly interests Epicurus. Democritus, on the other hand, nowhere considers the properties in relation to the atom itself, nor does he objectify the contradiction between concept and existence which is inherent in them.”

In the book ‘De placitis philosophorum’, Marx finds that according to Democritus, atom has two characteristics - size and shape. Epicurus there adds a third characteristic - weight. However, from the writings of Aristotle, it is not clear what Democritus’ opinion is in this regard. He says,

“...Thus none of the bodies will be absolutely light if they all have weight; but if all have lightness, none will be heavy...”

Marx writes that in ‘eighth book of Metaphysics’ which he read, he observed that according to Democritus all atoms are similar with respect to internal matter, but they can be distinguished when it comes to shape, position and arrangement. In this book there is no mention of weight as a characteristic of Democritean atom. In this book Marx also found from Aristotle’s quotes that according to Levcippus and Democritus, the individuality of an atom is in shape, arrangement and position.

From the above it is clear, according to Marx, that,

“...Democritus considers the properties of the atom only in relation to the formation of the differences in the world of appearances, and not in relation to the atom itself...”

“...Only the diversity of the figures is of interest to Democritus, since nothing more is contained in shape, position and arrangement...”

Alternatively, to Epicurus, size, shape and weight are the three inherent and distinguishing characteristics of the atom (atom in itself possesses).

Hereafter, Marx discusses the opinion of Epicurus about determination of the properties of atom. Firstly Epicurus talks of size as a characteristic of atom, which he then negates. It is not the size of the individual atom, but the variation in sizes of the atoms that is the distinguishing factor. After this, Marx writes,

“...Now I shall not concern myself with the fact that accord-

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ing Eusebius, Epicurus was the first to ascribe infinite smallness to the atoms, whereas Democritus also assumed atoms of the largest size - Stobaeus says even as large as the world. This, on the one hand, contradicts the testimony of Aristotle. On the other hand, Eusebius, or rather the Alexandrian bishop Dionysius, from whom he takes excerpts, contradicts himself; for in the same book we read that Democritus assumed as the principles of nature indivisible bodies perceptible through reason. This much at least is clear: Democritus was not aware of the contradiction; he did not pay attention to it, whereas it was the chief interest of Epicurus..."

The second characteristic of Epicurean atom is shape. But this characteristic also contradicts the concept of atom. In fact, we need to appreciate the opposite. Marx writes, about the Epicurean theory, "*Abstract individuality is abstract identity-to-itself and therefore without shape*". Thus, difference in shape amongst atoms 'cannot be determined', although they are not 'absolutely infinite'. In fact, this difference is of definite and finite number. According to Epicurus, it is certain that there are not as many distinct figures of atoms as there are different kinds of atoms. "*...This obviously relates again the determination of the shape, because a shape which no longer differs from another is not shape...*"

Democritus thinks that atom has infinite number of figures. There is a special significance of Epicurus' consideration of weight as the third characteristic of atom. This is because, it is in centre of gravity that matter attains ideal individuality which is one principal determination of atom. But weight also directly contradicts the concept of atom as "*it is the individuality of matter as an ideal point which lies outside matter. But the atom is itself this individuality, as it were the centre of gravity presented as an individual existence.*"

Hence, weight actually signifies different weight and atoms themselves, like heavenly bodies, are centres of gravity. When an atom is considered in 'relation to the void' instead of being compared to another atom, there is no existence of 'determination of weight'. Thus atoms, however different they may be in mass and shape, they move with 'equal speed' in 'empty space'.

"Epicurus thus applies weight only in regard to repulsion and resulting compositions."

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Marx wrote:

“Gassendi already praises Epicurus because, led purely by reason, he anticipated the experimentally demonstrated fact that all bodies, although very different in weight and mass, have the same velocity when they fall from above to below.”

Marx concludes this section as below:

*“The consideration of the properties of the atoms leads us therefore to the same result as the consideration of the declination, namely, that Epicurus objectifies the contradiction in the concept of the atom **between essence and existence**. He thus gave us the science of atomistics. In Democritus, on the other hand, there is no realization of the principle itself. He only maintains the material side and offers hypotheses for the benefit of empirical observation.”*

In the first part of the essay two philosophical tendencies are discussed: *“Difficulties Concerning the Identity of the Democritean and Epicurean philosophy of nature”*

Marx writes, being confused and disgusted with philosophy, Democritus found his way into ‘empirical observations’. *“He throws himself into the arms of positive knowledge”*. Democritus was erudite in physics, ethics, mathematics and many other fields of study. *“This is the same man who, according to Cicero, wandered through half the world. But he did not find what he was looking for.”*

Epicurus possessed an opposite view point. *“Epicurus is satisfied and blissful in philosophy. ‘You must’, he says, ‘serve philosophy so that true freedom will be your lot’ He who has subordinated and surrendered himself to it does not need to wait, he is emancipated at once. For, to serve philosophy is freedom itself.”*

Marx writes :

“We consider finally the form of reflection which expresses the relation of thought to being, their mutual relationship. In the general relationship which the philosopher sees between the world and thought, he nearly makes objective for himself the relation of his own particular consciousness to the real world.”

“Now Democritus uses necessity as a form of reflection of reality. Aristotle says of him that he traces everything back to necessity.”

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“More satisfactory explanations are given by the author of De placitis philosophorum: Necessity is, according to Democritus, fat and low, providence and the creator of the world.”

Contrast this with Epicurus.

‘Necessity, introduced by some as the absolute ruler, does not exist, but some things are accidental, others depend on our arbitrary will..... But it is chance, which must be accepted, not God, as the multitude believe.’ ”

Marx wrote :

Hence, this much is historically certain: Democritus makes use of necessity, Epicurus of chance. And each of them rejects the opposite view with polemical irritation. The principal consequence of this difference appears in the way individual physical phenomena are explained.”

This writing of Marx is about inter-relation between physics and philosophy and unravelling the evolution of Greek philosophy. First we shall try to know what Marx’s idea was about Hegel’s philosophy in 1841, when his essay was published. Four years before this writing was published, in 1837, Marx writes to his father in a letter [Letter from Karl to his father in Trier, 1837]:

“From the idealism which, by the way, I had compared and nourished with the idealism of Kant and Fichte, I arrived at the point of seeking the idea in reality itself. If previously the gods had dwelt above the earth, now they became its centre.

I had read fragments of Hegel’s philosophy, the grotesque craggy melody of which did not appeal to me. Once more I wanted to dive into the sea, but with the definite intention of establishing that the nature of the mind is just as necessary, concrete and firmly based as the nature of the body. My aim was no longer to practise tricks of swordmanship, but to bring genuine pearls into the light of day.”

Marx’s departure from Hegel’s views is evident from the above. Was he then completely under the spell of Feuerbach’s metaphysical materialism? Had he still not been convinced by Hegel’s theory of dialectics? There is no denying the fact that in 1841 Marxist philosophy and Marxist theory had not yet attained maturity. Naturally, there is nothing exceptional if Marx still had

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Feuerbach's effect in his thinking. Even after accepting Hegel's theory of dialectics, Marx had to struggle continuously against its idealist foundations. It was never an easy task to bring it from the hands of the creator of dialectics (although, even before this, dialectics came into the world of theoretical philosophy, albeit, half matured) into the framework of materialist philosophy. But in 1941, while writing the essay, Marx was slowly coming out of Feuerbach's influence which can be understood from the above mentioned letter:

"I wrote a dialogue of about 24 pages: Cleanthes, or the Starting Point and Necessary Continuation of philosophy. Here art and science, which had become completely divorced from each other, were to some extent united, and like a vigorous traveler I set about the task itself, a philosophical- dialectical account of divinity, as it manifests itself as the idea-in-itself, as religion, as nature and as history."

Any attempt to write 'philosophical-dialectical account of divinity' can never be deemed 'Feuerbachian'. Let us investigate the original writing.

In the essay Marx writes, *"The contradiction between existence and essence, between matter and form which is inherent in the concept of the atom, emerges in the individual atom itself once it is endowed with qualities."*

"The absolute form has now been degraded to absolute matter, to the formless substrate of the world of appearance."

The way in which the rules of dialectics have been presented here is exactly opposite to Hegelian dialectics. That is, by keeping the materialist foundation of Epicurean and Democritean philosophy, but negating the metaphysical overtones of necessity and chance. A dialectical unity has been established. This is neither a Hegelian theory nor a Feuerbachian theory. This is Marxism in its inception. Degradation of 'absolute form' into 'absolute matter', contradiction of 'existence' and 'essence' or 'matter' and 'form', formulation of emergence of individual atom in itself - all these do not fit into any other philosophical framework.

In order to understand the development of the theory and philosophy of Marxism under the supervision of Marx and Engels, we need to take a look at the evolution of the philosophical

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thoughts of Engels as well.

Hegel died in 1831. For 10 years after his death, till 1841, Hegelian philosophy was looked upon as a revolutionary one in Germany. In 1841, at the age of 21 years, Engels wrote his important philosophical essay, 'Schelling on Hegel'. Even then, he had not fully shed his 'young Hegelian' character. However, this writing at the age of 21 years does speak highly of his command over philosophy. Towards the end of 1930's, the 'young Hegelians' were drifting away from Hegelian philosophy as a reaction to the crisis emerging out of the contemporary political mayhem. In 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, Part I', published in 1880, Engels wrote,

"Towards the end of thirties, the cleavage in the school became more and more apparent. The left wing, the so-called Young Hegelians, in their fight with the pietistic orthodox and the feudal reactionaries, abandoned bit by bit that philosophical-genteel reserve in regard to the burning questions of the day which up to that time had secured state toleration and even protection for their teachings. And when, in 1840, orthodox pietism and absolutist feudal reaction ascended the throne with Fredrick Wilhelm IV, open partisanship became unavoidable. The fight was still carried on with philosophical weapons, but no longer for abstract philosophical aims."

"It turned directly on the destruction of traditional religion and of the existing state. And while in the 'Deutsche Jahrbucher' the practical ends were still predominantly put forward in philosophical disguise, in the Rheinische Zeitung of 1842 the Young Hegelian school revealed itself directly as the philosophy of the aspiring radical bourgeoisie and used the meagre cloak of philosophy only to deceive censorship."

Bruno Bauer was the leader of the group of the young Hegelian philosophers, of which Marx was also a member. Both Bruno and Strauss were about 8-9 years older than Marx-Engels. But around this time (1838-1843), they developed disagreement with Marx and Engels. The differences amongst the young Hegelians can be found in Engels' writings. "At that time, however, politics was a very thorny field, and hence the main fight came to be directed against religion; this fight particularly since 1840, was indirectly also political. Strauss' 'Life of Jesus', published in 1835,

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory* had provided the first impulse. The theory therein developed of the formation of the gospel myths was combated later by Bruno Bauer with proof that a whole series of evangelic stories had to be fabricated by the authors themselves. The controversy between these two was carried out in the philosophical disguise of a battle between ‘self-consciousness’ and ‘substance.’”

At the time when a process of division had already set in amongst the young Hegelians, the newly appointed culture minister brought Friedrich Schelling to Berlin in December 1841, in an attempt to dismantle the Hegelian anti-establishment ideas, ‘to expunge the dragon’s seed of Hegelian pantheism’ from the minds of the ‘Prussian youth’.

Friedrich Schelling was once a close friend of Hegel (though in the later half of his life he became a devout anti-Hegelian), and after the dismissal of Fichte, he was professor of philosophy at Jena. In 1841, he was the only living representative of the classical German philosophy. At that time he had abandoned his old theory of ‘Philosophy of Nature’ and was propounding his newly conceived ‘Philosophy of Revelation’. Engels’ ‘Schelling on Hegel’ was a critical essay on the famous anti-Hegelian speech delivered by Schelling in Berlin in 1841.

In this essay, Engels severely criticizes Schelling and stands in defence of Hegel.

The large quote from Schelling’s speech that appears in Engels’ essay can be summarized as follows: according to Schelling, Hegel had confused existence with essence. What was needed was ‘a return to a philosophy of existence’. Also, Hegel had argued in favour of ‘negative’ standpoint of reason; what was required was a ‘positive’ philosophy of revelation.

Engels writes “Of the latter (positive philosophy) we have not yet heard anything; the former (negative philosophy) appeared forty years ago in an inadequate form abandoned by Shelling himself, and is now being developed by him in its true, adequate expression. Its basis is reason, the pure power of cognition, which has its immediate content the pure power of being, the infinite ability to be. The necessary third element to be added here is the power over being, which can no longer alienate itself, and this the absolute, the spirit, that which is released from the necessity of transition into being and persists in eternal freedom in relation to

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being. The absolute can also be called the “orphic” unity of these powers, as that outside of which there is nothing. When these powers come into contradiction with each other this mutual exclusiveness is finiteness”.

Engels calls this theory - neo Schellingianism.

Engels asks, what is now the new version of ‘philosophy of identity’? Kant had liberated ‘rational thinking’ from ‘space and time’; Schelling has liberated ‘existence’. Then what remains there for us? Engels writes “This is not the place to prove against him that existence belongs indeed to thought, that, being is immanent in the mind and that the foundation of all modern philosophy, the cogito, ergo sum, cannot thus be stormed and overrun; but I may be permitted to ask whether a power which itself has no being can produce a being, whether a power which can no longer alienate itself is still power, and whether the trichotomy of the powers does not correspond in a remarkable manner with the trinity of Idea, nature and mind which emerges from Hegel’s ‘Encyclopedia’ ?”

We shall conclude this discussion by considering the later history of Schelling’s existentialism. One of the audience in Schelling’s famous Berlin speech was Soren Kierkegaard, one of the main proponents of existentialism. In the later phase, it was Soren Kierkegaard who was more active in establishing existentialism. Further down the line, the proponents of this theory were Friedrich Nietzsche, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Satre. Martin Heidegger was a politician and an active supporter of Hitler. Only after Hitler’s defeat in the Second World War can we find some criticisms of Hitler in his writings. Both Derida and Michel Foucault extended the works of Heidegger.

Hegel, Feuerbach and Marxian Philosophy

In 1842-1843, the first product of Marx’s joint research which declared departure from Hegelian and Feuerbachian philosophy was ‘The Holy Family’. It was published in September 1844. In the same year Marx published ‘Economic and philosophical Manuscript of 1844’. Later, with much more independence and completeness of Marxist philosophy was published Engels’ ‘Anti-Duhring’ and ‘Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy’. Here we shall begin with discussing ‘Economic and philosophical Manuscript of 1844’. In the chapter ‘Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy in Gen-

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eral' of this book, Marx started the discussion with his criticism to Bruno Bauer and Strauss, his senior friends of 'Young Hegelian' group while discussing the approach towards Hegel's 'dialectic'. He wrote that Strauss and Bruno Bauer got stuck in Hegelian logic whenever they tried to define the relation between modern criticism with Hegel's philosophy and Hegel's dialectic, in particular. Strauss's arguments are wholly confined within the Hegelian logic, Bruno Bauer's too are at least implicitly so. For example, while criticising Straus, Bruno Bauer replaced substance of 'abstract nature' with self consciousness of abstract man.(In 'Synoptiker' & 'Das entdeckte Christenthum' of Bauer)

According to Marx, none of them were ready to settle accounts with Hegelian dialectic, the mother of young Hegelianism. Whereas only Feuerback was able to reach a serious and critical position about Hegelian dialectic, and has established genuine discoveries. Marx says, *"He is in fact the true conqueror of the old philosophy"*

Feuerbach's achievements are:

(1) To establish that philosophy is 'religion rendered into thought and expounded by thought'.

(2) Laying the foundations of true materialism and real science by establishing social relation of 'man to man' as the basic principle of theory.

(3) To point out the error in viewing negation of negation as absolute positive, the self supportive positive, positivity based on itself.

Marx Wrote—

"Feuerbach thus conceives the negation of the negation only as a contradiction of philosophy with itself - as the philosophy which affirms theology (the transcendent, etc.) after having denied it, and which it therefore affirms in opposition to itself."

" But because Hegel has conceived the negation of the negation, from the point of view of the positive relation inherent in it, as the true and only positive, and from the point of view of the negative relation inherent in it as the only true act and spontaneous activity of all being, he has only found the abstract, logical, speculative expression for the movement of history, which is not yet the real history of man as a given subject, but only the

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act of creation, the history of the origin of man."

In his critique of Hegel's 'Phenomenology' Marx wrote that Hegel has committed 'double error'. According to Hegel, wealth, state-power etc, are entities estranged from human being. These beings thought entities are merely estrangement of 'pure' abstract philosophy. Thus the entire process culminates in absolute knowledge. To be precise, these estranged objects depart from their origin of abstract thought and contradict with their presumption of reality. Philosopher himself/herself is abstract form of estranged human being, and accepts himself/herself as the criterion of estranged world. Thus the entire history of alienation process and the process of its withdrawal is nothing but the history of creation of abstract absolute. This estrangement is the opposition of in-itself and for-itself, consciousness and self-consciousness or object and subject. Actually the contradiction is between abstract thinking and real sensuousness of thought, not between thought and real sensuousness beyond. Marx wrote,

"All other oppositions and movements of these oppositions are but the semblance, the cloak, the exoteric shape of these other, profane oppositions."

Secondly, Hegel considered only mind as the true essence of human being, where true form of mind depicts thinking mind, theological, speculative mind. On the other hand, objective world appears in some other way before human being. Man believes sensuous consciousness as humanly sensuous consciousness rather than abstract sensuous consciousness. Religion or wealth is considered as human objectification or only the estranged world of essential power of human being. Thus it becomes the only destiny of true human world. This realisation or insight, took shape in Hegel's thought as sense, religion, state-power etc. being spiritual entities.

Marx wrote,

"The human character of nature and of the nature created by history-man's products- appears in the form that they are products of abstract mind and as such, therefore, phases of mind-thought-entities. The 'Phenomenology' (of Hegel) is therefore, a hidden mystifying and still uncertain criticism; but inasmuch as it depicts man's estrangement, even though man appears only as mind, there lie concealed in it all the elements of criticism, al-

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory ready prepared and elaborated in a manner often rising far above the Hegelian standpoint. The ‘unhappy consciousness’, the ‘honest consciousness’ the struggle of the ‘noble and base consciousness’, etc., etc.- these separate sections contain, but still in an estranged form, the critical elements of whole spheres such as religion, the state, civil life etc. Just as entities, objects appear as thought-entities, so the subject is always consciousness or self-consciousness; or rather the object appears only as abstract consciousness, man only as self-consciousness; the distinct forms of estrangement which make their appearance are, therefore, only various forms of consciousness and self-consciousness. Just as in itself abstract consciousness (the form in which the object is conceived) is merely a moment of distinction of self-consciousness, what appears as the result of the movement is the identity of self-consciousness with consciousness - absolute knowledge- the movement of abstract thought no longer directed outwards but proceeding now only within its own self: that is to say, the dialectic of pure thought is the result.”*

This is how Marx interpreted Hegel in 1844.

We find more comprehensive and consolidated view of Marx-Engels on Hegel in “Ludwig Feuerbach and End of classical German Philosophy” by Engels. In the foreword of this book Engels wrote that in the preface of ‘A contribution to the critique political Economy’ published in 1859 from Berlin, Marx wrote about how Marx and Engels started working together in 1845 “to work out in common the opposition of our view” .,

Engels wrote:

“The materialist conception of history which was elaborated mainly by Marx-to the ideological view of German Philosophy, in fact to settle accounts with our erstwhile Philosophical conscience.”

This great effort (The German Ideology) by Marx-Engels wasn’t published due to the political situation then and in the following forty years. Marx or Engels didn’t take up any initiative to clarify their views on Hegel and Feuerbach as a whole. In the concluding portion of the foreword Engels wrote,

“Before sending these lines to press, I have once again ferreted out and looked over the old manuscript of 1845-46 (The Ger-

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man Ideology). The section dealing with Feuerbach is not completed. The finished portion consists of an exposition of the materialist conception of history which proves only how incomplete our knowledge of economic history still was at that time. It contains no criticism of Feuerbach's doctrine itself; for the present purpose, therefore it was unusable"

According to Engels, Heinrich Heine was the first one to extract the revolutionary essence out of Hegel's Philosophy, long ago in 1833. The words often quoted and appreciated by narrow minded government and liberals are - *"All that is real is rational and all that rational is real."* This phrase was interpreted as every injustice, crime or unethical act in the existing society is rational because they are reality. The then German ruler, Frederick William III and his followers, to be precise, explained Hegel in such a way. *"But"* Engels wrote,

"According to Hegel certainly not everything that exists is also real, without further qualification."

Hegel considered one be a reality only if it is simultaneously a necessity. In Hegel's words, *"In the course of its development reality proves to be necessity."* Hegel himself cited an example. Say a govt. announces a certain tax regulation. It is meaningless to consider it a reality without considering the related factors. If it appears to be unnecessary, the tax regulation should be cancelled or changed in due time. Thus unreality remains hidden in reality too. Engel's wrote,

"That which is necessary, however, proves itself in the last resort to be also rational; and, applied to the Prussian state of that time, the Hegelian proposition, therefore, merely means: this state is rational, corresponds to reason, insofar as it is necessary ; and if it nevertheless appears to us to be evil, but still, in spite of its evil character, continue to exist, then the evil character of the government is justified and explained by the corresponding evil character of its subjects. The Prussians of that day had the government that they deserved."

Roman Republic is real, says Hegel's thought, but Roman Empire that eliminated the Roman Republic was real. French Monarchy became so unreal in 1789, better to say so useless and irrational that it was to be demolished by a revolution. Hegel, thus spoke

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory* of a revolution with great enthusiasm and called it real contrary to monarchy being unreal. Anything real at some time, thus, loses its inevitability with due course of time, become irrational and unreal and ceases to exist. Viable reality replaces moribund reality peacefully if the ‘older’ realises that it has become useless and make room for the newer one. On the other hand revolution becomes forcible if the older denies the ascent of the ‘newer’ one. Thus Hegelian dialectics shows how Hegelian dialectics shows how Hegelian proposition contradicts it self. Engels wrote:

“In accordance with all the rules of the Hegelian method of thought, the proposition of the rationality of everything which is real resolves itself into the other proposition: All that exists deserves to perish.”

Engels explained and dealt with Hegels Philosophy of dialectics with further precision. He wrote,

“Just as knowledge is unable to reach a complete conclusion in a perfect, ideal condition of humanity, so is history unable to do so; a perfect society, a perfect ‘state’, are things which can only exist in imagination. On the contrary, all successive historical systems are only transitory stages in the endless course of development of human society from the lower to the higher.”

Engels summarised ‘dialectics’ from Hegel’s philosophy and said,

“For it (dialectical philosophy), nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy, itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain.”

Naturally, Engel’s got rid of Hegel’s framework.

What did Hegel conclude? He could not lead his dialectical method to its conclusion as these changes in the society occur not because of any necessity of changes within society, but as a reflection of the necessity that emerges from thinking or ‘spirit’. In Hegel’s words, thinking mind realises the necessary change in society. Engels wrote,

“Therefore, however much Hegel, especially in his ‘Logic’,

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emphasized that this eternal truth is nothing but the logical, or, the historical, process itself, he nevertheless finds himself compelled to supply this process with an end, just because he has to bring his system to a termination at some point or other. In his 'Logic', he can make this end a beginning again, since here the point of the conclusion, the absolute idea- which is only absolute insofar as he has absolutely nothing to say about it- 'alienates', that is, transforms, itself into nature and comes to itself again later in the mind, that is in thought and in history."

According to Engels, the limitations of Hegelian thought were expressed as:

"While materialism conceives nature as the sole reality, nature in the Hegelian system represents merely the 'alienation' of the absolute idea. At all events, thinking and its thought-product, the idea, is here the primary, nature the derivative, which only exists at all by the condescension of the idea. And in this contradiction they floundered as well or as ill as they could."

Feuerbach's 'Essence of Christianity' was the first blow upon Hegelian philosophy on behalf of materialist philosophy. According to Feuerbach, nature exists irrespective of all philosophy. We are born and brought up amidst nature. There's nothing beyond nature and human being. The religious fantasies, evolved in our mind, are nothing but brilliant reflection of our own 'essence' of thought. And what was the response to Feuerbach's thought? Engels says,

"The spell was broken; the 'system' was exploded and cast aside, and the contradiction, shown to exist only in our imagination, was dissolved,"

"Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much - in spite of all critical reservations - he was influenced by it, one may read in the 'Holy Family' "

In 1839, Feuerbach wrote his critique of Hegel in the book 'Principles of the Philosophy of the Future':

"The secret of the Hegelian dialectics lies, in the last analysis, only in the fact that it negates theology by philosophy and then, in turn, negates philosophy by theology."

According to Feuerbach, Hegel's god was named 'idea' just as Spinoza named it 'nature'. Feuerbach agreed with Hegel regard-

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ing identity of thought and being; but Hegel proved this only within thought, concluded Feuerbach and said that human sense organs do reflect objects just as brain reflects the world in the concepts. Thus identity of thinking and being should be explained in terms of biology, not in terms of philosophy.

In 'Essence of christianity' Feuerbach explained how the myths of christianity emerged from the lives of the common people. Feuerbach's efforts, while showing that religion or philosophy has evolved from the daily life of people, were successful to drag object or nature to the elementary position.

Marx wrote 'Theses on Feuerbach'(1845), his small but explicit critique of the philosophical ideas of Feuerbach. This article was published as an appendix to Engel's 'Ludwig Fenerbach...' (1883). The title 'Theses on Feuerbach' was named by Engels, who edited the publication too. Here is the summary of the analysis on Feuerbach, put forward by Marx in 1845, in eleven short paragraphs.

Like all former materialists, Feuerbach also committed the same error of considering only the material existence or material shape of object, actuality or sensuousness, instead of subjectively accepting sensuous activity, practice of human being. This aspect of consciousness or activism of human being was rather brought in the forefront by idealism, but brought in an abstract way, as idealism doesn't take into account the true aspect of real sensuous activity. In 'The Essence of Christianity', only the theoretical attitude is considered as true human attitude and practice is portrayed as 'dirty-Jewish' type 'appearance'. Thus he failed to realise the significance of 'revolutionary' or 'practical-critical' activities.

Materialist outlook, according to Marx, says that human being is created by the circumstances and upbringing he/she goes through; Hence a changed human being is obviously the product of changed circumstances and upbringing and it should be borne in mind that human being only can change the circumstances and a teacher himself/herself should be taught. To change the circumstances and coincidence of human activity or self change can only be considered rationally as 'revolutionary practice'.

Feuerbach wasn't satisfied with abstract thinking. Although he desired sensuous judgement or acceptibility, but he denied to consider sensuousness as practical, human sensuous activity.

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Feuerbach solved 'essence of religion' as essence of man (human nature). But essence of man doesn't exist in an individual in abstract form; instead, it is the concentrated form of the social relations. And so Feuerbach failed to read that religious sentiment itself is a social product and the isolated, abstract individual, according to Feuerbach's thought, is categorised in a particular social form. Marx says, entire social life is practical. All mysteries, that lead theory to mysticism, find the rational solution in human practice and thus in the realisation and assimilation of the said practice.

The materialism which cannot consider sensuousness as a practical activity, as active events of human being, actually recognises isolated individual unit ; it recognises civil society. Old materialism gives consideration to civil society, whereas new materialism to human society or social humanity.

Thesis no. 11 was the world famous statement of Marx :

"Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."

Marx and Engels analysed jointly, in detail, the 'materialism' of Feuerbach in 'The German Ideology'.

They wrote :

"We know only a single science, the science of history. One can look at history from two sides and divide it into the history of nature and the history of man. The two sides are, however, inseparable; the history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist."

The inseparability and mutual dependence between natural science and the history of social evolution of man as we get in 'German Ideology' by Marx and Engels, were further explained by Engels later. We shall go into that discussion.

The most complex part of Feuerbach's writing is his idea, analysis and position about sensuous world. The Marxist standpoint, in this regard, should be discussed with great importance. Otherwise Feuerbach's, philosophy will pretend to be a strong materialist philosophy, as Hegel's thought did in Marxist disguise, and occupy undue space in Marxist domain, philosophical understanding and political decision making processes, degenerating it into metaphysical materialism.

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In German ideology, we find,

“Feuerbach’s conception of the sensuous world is confined on the one hand to mere contemplation of it, and on the other to mere feeling; he says ‘Man’ instead of ‘real historic man’. ‘Man’ is really ‘the German’. In the first case, the contemplation of the sensuous world, he necessarily lights on things which contradict his consciousness and feeling, which disturb the harmony he pre-supposes, the harmony of all parts of the sensuous world and especially of man and nature. To remove this disturbance, he must take refuge in a double perception, a profane one which only perceives the ‘flatly obvious’ and a higher, philosophical, one which perceives the ‘true essence’ of things. He does not see how the sensuous world around him is, not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed, in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, modifying its social system according to the changed needs. Even the objects of the simplest ‘sensuous certainty’ are only given him through social development, industry and commercial intercourse. The Cherry-tree, like almost all fruit-trees, was, as is well known, only a few centuries ago transplanted by commerce into our zone, and therefore only by this of a definite society in a definite age it has become ‘sensuous certainty’ for Feuerbach.”

The materialist standpoint as seen by Feuerbach, in the context of social evolution, was explained by Marx-Engels (German Ideology) :

“It is also clear from these arguments how grossly Feuerbach is deceiving himself when by virtue of the qualification ‘common man’ he declares himself a communist, transforms the latter into a predicate of ‘man’, and thereby thinks it possible to change the word ‘communist’, which in the real world means the follower of a definite revolutionary party, into a mere category. Feuerbach’s whole deduction with regard to the relation of men to one another goes only so far as to prove that men need and always have needed each other. He wants to establish consciousness of this fact, that is to say, like the other theorists, merely to produce a correct consciousness about an existing fact; whereas for the real

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communist it is a question of overthrowing the existing state of things.”

Philosophy, Science & Marxism

Engels divided philosophers in two groups, namely materialist and idealist in ‘Ludwig Feuerbach....’ and entered into a pivotal philosophical debate that continues to be central point of debate after death of Engels till date.

Leaving the question of relation between thinking and being apart, the other question is how our thinking make relationship between the visible world and its exact form. Is the image, that emerges from our thought regarding the world around true ? ?‘Identity of thinking and being’ is the phrase used in philosophy to describe it.

In the discussions about Hegel and Feuerbach we find the views of Marx and Engels. On this topic. Kant and Hume shared an entirely different viewpoint. Engels pointed out that Hegel and Feuerbach opposed Kant and Hume however much was possible by their philosophy. But the true opposition and hence solution lies in the process of practice, or experiment and industry to be precise. We should go through the most important portion of Engels writing regarding this,

“To them, among the more modern ones, belong Hume and Kant, and they played a very important role in philosophical development.”

“If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable ‘thing-in-itself’. The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained just such ‘thing-in-itself’ until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the ‘thing-in-itself’ became a thing for us- as, for instance, alzarin, the colouring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much cheaply and simply from coal tar. For 300 years, the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with 100, 1000, 10000 to 1 chances in its favour, but still always a hypothesis. But then Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory* necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet, must necessarily occupy, and when Galileo really found this planet [Neptune, discovered in 1846, at Berlin observatory], the Copernican system was proved. If, nevertheless, the neo-Kantians are attempting to resurrect the Kantian conception in Germany, and the agnostics that of Hume in England (where in fact it never became extinct), this is, in view of their theoretical and practical refutation accomplished long ago, scientifically a regression and practically merely a shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the World.”

It is more than a century that the debate on the above mentioned quote is continuing. Before entering into the discussion regarding this quote from “History and class consciousness” by Lukacs(1923), we should observe the viewpoints shared by Lenin. In ‘Materialism and Emperio-criticism’ Lenin participated in this debate with the Mach-ites, Bogdanov, Valentinov, Bazarov, Chernov etc. These people criticised the version of Plekhanov on ‘thing -in-itself’, which can be considered as a explanatory note of Engels on the same topic. Victor Chernov, one of this clan and a Mach-ist and Narodnik in political affiliation, openly spoke against the idea of ‘thing -in- itself’ put forward by Engels.

In his book ‘Marxism and Transcendental Philosophy’ a part of Philosophical and sociological Studies (1907), V.Chernov tried to pit against Marx-Engels. In ‘Ludwig...’ Engels wrote,

“Is our thinking capable of the cognition of the real world? Are we able in our ideas and notions of the real world to produce a correct reflection of reality?”

V.Chernov accused Plekhanov of faulty translation. He said that Engels wrote ‘mirror reflection’ and not ‘reflection’.

Lenin quoted (in ‘Materialism and Emperio-criticism’) from V.Chernov’s writing,

“No Neo-Kantian will of course be surprised that from coal tar we can produce alizarin’ more cheaply and simply’. But that together with alizarin it is possible to produce from this coal tar and just as cheaply a refutation of the ‘thing-in-itself’ will indeed see a wonderful and unprecedented discovery - and not to the Neo-Kantians alone.”

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“Engels, apparently, having learned that according to Kant the ‘thing-in-itself’ is unknowable, turned this theorem into its converse and concluded that everything unknown is a thing-in-itself.”

Lenin wrote that both Plekhanov and Chernov dropped the word ‘ungraspable’ from Kantian ungraspable ‘thing-in-itself’ while translating Engel’s writing. Anyway, Lenin opposed Chernov’s argument and wrote:

“In the first place it is not true that Engels ‘is producing a refutation of the thing-in-itself’. Engels said explicitly and clearly that he was refuting the Kantian ungraspable (or unknowable) thing-in-itself. Mr. Chernov confuses Engels’ materialist conception of the existence of things independently of our consciousness. In second place, if Kant’s theorem reads that the thing-in-itself is unknowable, the ‘converse’ theorem would be: the unknowable is the thing-in-itself. Mr. Chernov replaces the unknowable by the unknown, without realizing that by such a substitution he has again confused and distorted the materialist view of Engels;”

We can examine Chernov’s point of view. These reactionary philosophers could not understand that Engels cannot discard ‘thing-in-itself.’ What did Engels reject then? He contradicts Kant’s very idea that ‘thing-in-itself.’ is unknowable. What does it mean? It means, it is impossible to know the real truth about any object. First of all, being a materialist, Engels did not question about the existence of ‘thing-in-itself.’ Whether you know it or not, it is not possible to go into an argument regarding this. Chernov said, the way Engels placed the example of scientific invention of ‘Alizarins’ to show the rejection of Kant’s idea of ungraspable ‘thing-in-itself.’, it became clear that the process of unknown object being known is, according to Engels, the rejection of the idea of Kant’s ‘Unknowable-thing-in-itself’. This is mere misinterpretation of Kant’s thought. If Engels says that, there are several things unknown in nature and they become known through scientific quest; and thus unknown becomes known, hence there is nothing called unknowable or unknowable ‘thing-in-itself’ - we should conclude that Engels didn’t understand Kant.

But Engels didn’t say so. It is impossible for him to do so as it was a subject dealt long ago by him. Engels is not discussing it for the first time in 1877. He, with Marx put forward same argu-

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory* ment in ‘German Ideology’ in 1845.

The essence is, if you want to have a proof of whether you can correctly know the truth about an object, you have to use it, change it, and engage it in your own work in a manner you wish (not at random).

If it acts and exhibits the desired properties in social practice, if it is same in the views of lakhs and crores of people, then we are sure that we have identified the truth about the object; thing-in-itself is not unknowable in absolute sense. It is progressively revealing itself.

Engels wrote that, Alzarin being prepared from coal tar proves that we have identified Alzarin properly. If we go into further detail of Engels work, it reveals that, although we pointed out and understood the properties of the chemical substances generated in animals and plants, it is not guaranteed that thing in itself is known. But as soon as organic chemistry started producing these substances with complex process and reactions, and we started to use them, it ceased to remain as ‘just such things-in-themselves.’

The 4th thesis on Feuerbach’ by Marx will be relevant here. If we consider unknowableness of things-in-itself as a mystery, then these words will become more appropriate :“ *All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.*”

Engels thought that, the object which has been unveiled to observe the truth cannot be called ‘thing-in-itself’ any more. It changes to ‘thing for us’. We learn how to use the object .An object necessary for us, whose true self is known to us - ‘Thing for us’. From then on a sharp debate is going on.

The debate did not end with Lenin’s ‘Materialism & Emperio-criticism’.

George Lukacs put his critique in ‘History & class consciousnesses in this context. In ‘the Antinomies of Bourgeois Thought’ of this book, he wrote:

“For Hegel the terms ‘in itself’ and ‘for us’ are by no means opposites, in fact they are necessary correlatives. That something exists merely ‘in itself’ means for Hegel that it merely exists ‘for us’. The antinomies of ‘for us or in itself’ are rather ‘for itself’,

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namely that mode of being posited where the fact that an object is thought of implies at the same time that the object is conscious of itself."

It is thus evident that Lukacs didn't agree with Lenin .We too, cannot keep away from the debate.

The inevitable question is whether 'in itself' and 'for us' are necessary correlatives or something else? Is there any other difference among them? The context that Engels' was discussing was Kant's unknowable 'thing-in-itself'. It is important to discuss, in brief, the difference between Kant and Hume's philosophy.

The essence of agnosticism of Hume is that, thing-in-itself doesn't exist at all in reality. Whatever our sense organs receive is mere sensuousness. Various forms of senses create a probability of any object in our brain. But it certainly doesn't prove the existence of the object in reality. The object is absent, whereas different sorts of senses exist. Agnosticism disagrees with the idea of existence of thing-in-itself, and is considered to be a separate philosophical thought apart from materialism and idealism. Kant asserts the existence of thing-in-itself. But it is impossible to know its real self and thus he called it unknowable thing-in-itself.

The basic question raised by Engels, in his discussion, is whether this thing-in-itself is unknowable to human being.

It is hard to understand why Lukacs expected Hegelian way of thought from Engels, while opposing Kant's idea of unknowable. How is it possible for an inanimate object to become 'for itself'? The discussion is about unveiling of the essence of such object in human idea. Engels here did not put 'for us' as the anti-thesis to 'in-itself' for the role and action of the object itself. The discussion is not at all about any external or internal change, rather about the object as placed in human idea. Whenever anybody or any class changes from 'in itself' to 'for itself', the change is not only an apparent one, but also the structure and role change. So it is clear that Engels is not describing the change between 'in itself' and 'for us' states of an object, his explanation is about the two different reflections of the same (unchanged) object on human mind. In this context, Engels argues that we can acquire knowledge about an object or its true self through practice (he mentioned about experiment and industry as examples). Thing-in-itself doesn't re-

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main unknowable or intangible. He used the phrases ‘in itself’ and ‘for us’ to explain this transformation of the reflection of the object in human idea. In Hegel’s writing ‘in itself’ and ‘for us’ indeed is necessary correlative while describing any object, but why should the relation necessarily be the same in case of human idea about the state of an object ?

Why didn’t Lukacs point out that Hegel’s philosophy has nothing to do with practice? On the contrary, the keyword of Marxist philosophy is practice. Not only Hegel, none of the philosophical thoughts prior to Marx did place practice in that role, not even Feuerbach, at least according to Marx. The difference between ‘in itself’ and ‘for us’ in respect of knowing unchanged objects in human consciousness, can never occur in Hegel’s philosophy. Practice is the basis of Marx’s theory of knowledge whereas transformation of object is in the absolute domain of ‘idea’ in Hegel’s philosophy. So, it is only the dialectical mediation of consciousness inside the ‘idea’, which is required in Hegelian philosophy. Naturally in the interaction between unchanged object and ‘idea’, Hegel’s philosophy doesn’t deal with any change in image of the object in the ‘idea’. So in our discussion about the difference of ‘in itself’ and ‘for us’ by Hegel, dialectical interaction between consciousness and object should be laid upon the foundations of materialism. Otherwise, if we try to understand Marxian ‘practice’ by Hegelian dialectics, we will roam within world of confusion. So, *“We must correct a terminological confusion that is almost incomprehensible”* - Lukacs’ effort made the simple one too complex.

Lukacs wrote:

“In that case, it is a complete misinterpretation of Kant’s epistemology to imagine that the problem of the thing-in-itself could be a barrier to the possible concrete expansion of our knowledge. On the contrary, Kant who sets out from the most advanced natural science of the day, namely from Newton’s astronomy, tailored his theory of knowledge precisely to this science and to its future potential. For this reason he necessarily assumes that the method was capable of limitless expansion. His ‘critique’ refers merely to the fact that even the complete knowledge of all phenomena would be no more than knowledge of phenomena (as opposed to the things-in-themselves). Moreover, even the complete knowledge of the phenomena could never overcome the structural

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limits of this knowledge, i.e., in our terms, the antinomies of totality and of content. Kant has himself dealt sufficiently clearly with the question of agnosticism and of the relation to Hume (and to Berkeley who is not named but whom Kant has particularly in mind) in the section entitled 'The Refutation of Idealism'."

This shows how Lukacs could not recognise the dialectics prevailing in nature. Nature is seen by him just in a Kantian way. And communist theoretical quest should have a deep insight to find out wherefrom this evolved - his understanding of philosophy or science?

Science, seen by Lukacs in the above mentioned context, has clearly become metaphysical. Firstly, complete knowledge of phenomena surely can be greater than 'knowledge of phenomena'. Secondly it can overcome structural limits often. Thirdly, because of this very mechanical approach Kant has seen knowing thing-in-itself as merely a sensuous process and thing-in-itself as something beyond the tangible world. Lukacs doesn't agree that dialectics exists in nature and thus got trapped by Kantian outlook of science very easily.

Engels, in his book *Ludwig Feuerbach*, has described how the progress of science had its impact on philosophy.

"The materialism of the last century was predominantly mechanical, because at that time, of all natural sciences, only mechanics, and indeed only the mechanics of solid bodies - celestial and terrestrial - in short, the mechanics of gravity, had come to any definite close. Chemistry at that time existed only in its infantile, phlogistic form. Biology still lay in swaddling clothes; vegetable and animal organisms had been only roughly examined and were explained by purely mechanical causes. What the animal was to Descartes, man was the materialist of the 18th century - a machine. This exclusive application of the standards of mechanics to the processes of a chemical and organic nature - in which processes of chemical and organic nature - in which processes the laws of mechanics are, indeed, also valid, but are pushed into the backgrounds by other, higher laws - constitutes the first specific but at that time inevitable limitations of classical French materialism.

The second specific limitation of the materialism lay in its inability to comprehend the universe as a process, as matter un-

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory* dergoing uninterrupted historical development. This was in accordance with the level of natural science of that time, and with the metaphysical, that is, anti-dialectical manner of philosophizing connected with it. Nature, so much was known, was in eternal motion. But to the ideas of that time, this motion turned, also eternally, in a circle and therefore never moved from the spot; it produced the same results over and over again. The Kantian theory of the origin of the Solar system [that Sun and planets originated from incandescent rotating nebulous masses] had been put forward but recently and was still regarded merely as a curiosity. The history of the development of the earth, geology, was still totally unknown, and the conception that the animate natural beings of today are the result of a long sequence of development from the simple to the complex could not at that time scientifically be put forward at all. The unhistorical view of nature was therefore inevitable.”

Although it is necessary for the Marxian theory to discuss the questions that have been raised later about Engels’ outlook of science, but interrelation between Kant’s outlook of science and idea about thing-in-itself was clearly stated in the above discussion.

Lukacs criticized Engels that Engels categorised ‘scientific experiment’ and ‘industry’ as practice (praxis) in a dialectical and philosophical sense.

Philosophy & practice (praxis)

In philosophy, ‘practice’ is no category based on unanimity. Idealism and materialism are divided here. Materialism too contains various opinions in this respect. So before going into Engels’ comment, we should find out the definition of ‘practice’ from the viewpoint of dialectical materialism.

Feuerbach wrote,

“This is the fundamental defect of idealism: it asks and answers the question of objectivity and subjectivity, of the reality and unreality of the world, only from the standpoint of theory.”

According to Feuerbach theory is the sum total of human practice. But, Feuerbach’s ‘practice’ is not conscious sensuous activity of human being. He did not accept it subjectively. He did only include the inanimate objective side of this, in ‘practice’.

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Marx used 'practice' and 'revolutionary practice' in many of his writings.

First of all, he asserted that 'practice' is the only source of entire knowledge of human being.

"The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." (2nd thesis, Thesis on Feuerbach).

Here, practice means conscious, active, sensuous act by human being or act of consciousness on object, if said philosophically. This gradually gives better notion about object. This indeed is a process that makes 'thing-in-itself' accessible to consciousness. Engels wrote, *"The result of our action proves the conformity of our perceptions with the objective nature of the things perceived"*.

Another one, according to Marx, is 'revolutionary practice' that changes circumstances or depicts the coincidence of human activity or self change. Marx wrote:

"The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice." (3rd thesis, Thesis on Feuerbach).

What kind of practice did Engels talk about ? It is the same practice that Marx uttered in his Thesis No.4 Feuerbach) - "human practice and in the comprehension of this practice"- all scientific experiments can obviously be classified under this. This is the cause why Marx said that all mysteries will reach a rational solution through human practice. Industry can be classified under human practice both ways. One due to the need felt for scientific and technological research and development and the other due to birth of theories of economics and class struggle owing to conscious participation of human being in commodity market.

Two yardsticks can be considered to judge anything as human practice - whether the act has been subjectively taken up as conscious, active, sensuous act by human being and whether continuous use of it generates knowledge.

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Scientific experiment and industry should thus be surely considered as practice. The criticism put by Lukacs and others is not correct in this context.

Study of Natural Science by Engels

If Capital by Karl Marx is the best creation among Marxian literature, next to it should be Anti-Duhring by Engels. Marxist theory and philosophy appears with all its comprehensiveness here. To discuss the significance and importance of Engels' study on natural science is very important a task for Marxist theory today. Opinion and outlook reflected in the writings of eminent scientist JBS Haldane in 1939 can be a starting point. Haldane wrote,

“Engels had tried to discuss the whole of science from the Marxist standpoint. He had been a student of science. Since 1861 he had always been in close touch with the chemist Schorlemmer at Manchester, and discussed scientific problems with him and Marx for many years. In 1871 he came to London and started reading scientific books and journals on a large scale. He intended to write a great book to show ‘that in nature the same dialectical laws of movement are carried out in the confusion of its countless changes, as also govern the apparent contingency of events in history. If this book had been written, it would have been of immense importance for the development of science.’”

Haldane wrote these words while discussing on ‘Dialectics of Nature’. An important debate is about what was Marx’s opinion about the study of science by Engels? Was Marx in agreement with Engels’ view?

Like other branches, their interaction about study of science too shows that their opinions were formulated by joint effort.

We quote here, a portion from a letter by Engels written to Marx on 30th may, 1873 :

“This morning while I lay in bed the following dialectical points about the natural sciences occurred to me: The subject matter of natural science - matter in motion, bodies. Bodies cannot be separated from motion.....

..... .One cannot say anything about bodies without motion, without relation to other bodies. Only in motion does a body reveal what it is. Natural science, therefore, knows bodies by examining them in their relation to one another, and in motion....”

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There are so many evidences in the letters by Marx and Engels to prove that they had regular interaction during the long period of studying natural science by Engels. After going through Darwin's 'Origin of species', Engels wrote to Marx,

Darwin, whom I am just reading, is magnificent - there has never been until now so splendid an attempt to prove historical development in nature".

Marx replied,

"Darwin's book is very important and it suits me very well that it supports the class struggle in history from the viewpoint of natural science.....it not only deals the deathblow to teleology in the natural science for the first time, but also sets forth the rational meaning in an empirical way."

"Class struggle in history from the viewpoint of natural science"

Marx clearly talks about relation between history and natural science. Anti-Duhring was initially published in the editions of 'Vorwärts', the German social Democratic newspaper as an article titled "Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science". This book can be called a complete handbook of Marxian philosophy, political economy and theory of scientific socialism.

It was a time when Engels was engaged deeply in studying natural science and Marx, when requested by Bebel, Bracke, Bernstein, Liebknecht - the leaders of German Social Democratic Party, asked Engels to prepare a complete critique against Eugen Duhring's erroneous ideas. Engels mentions that Karl Marx went through Anti-Duhring, admired it and moreover wrote the portion of this book dealing with economy.

If Anti-Duhring is the only complete book on Marxian theory and philosophy, then naturally comes the question, whether Marx had his agreement with the debatable portions of this book.

Practically Marx and Engels made a sort of division of work for their studying and writings. Marx concentrated on the portions of political economy which led to the creation of 'Capital', whereas Engels took up studying philosophy and natural science and answer the contemporary critics. Marx of June 22, 1867, wrote in a letter,

"Your satisfaction is more important to me than anything

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory the rest of the world may say of it.*”

In the same letter, he wrote,

“I quote Hegel’s discovery regarding the law that merely quantitative changes turn into qualitative changes and state that it holds good alike in history and natural science”.

On 19th December 1860, Marx wrote about ‘Origin of species’ in a letter, “This is the book that contains the natural historical foundations of our outlook.”

The early writings of Marx too carries the same essence. In 1844 manuscripts, Marx criticized the philosophers and philosophies for keeping apart from the vast resource of knowledge of natural science, which according to him is the foundation of all knowledge. Marx devoted himself to bridging the unity of nature and human being.

In Economic and philosophical manuscripts, Marx wrote,

“Nature taken abstractly for itself, nature fixed in isolation from man, is nothing for man” - some interpret this to assert that ‘nature in itself’ means nothing to Marx, but Marx, in the same book, wrote for them *“Only nature is something”*.

Marx wrote, in ‘German Ideology’, *“In all this the priority of external nature is unassailed.”*

In Holy family,

“Man has not created matter itself. And he cannot even create any productive capacity if the matter does not exist beforehand”,

In Capital,

“A material substratum is always left, which is furnished by nature without the help of man”.

Three scientific inventions were mainly discussed in ‘dialectics of nature’, by Engels - (i) Invention of cell; (ii) law of conservation and transformation of energy and (iii) discovery of the evolution of species.

The first one signifies the identity of organic world, second one shows nature is actually a continuous process and third one proves the natural origin of human history.

Engels predicted two possibilities about the crisis prevail-

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ing in advancement of natural science - (i) chaos and incoherence, (ii) achievement of order and coherence through dialectical synthesis.

He wrote,

“The revolution, which is being forced on the natural sciences by the mere need to set in order the purely empirical discoveries, great masses of which have been piled up, is of such a kind that it must bring the dialectical character of natural processes more and more to the consciousness even of those empiricists who are most opposed to it.”

The significance of the discussion by Engels, about contemporary science, in ‘Dialectics of Nature’, was best interpreted by JBS Haldane, taking Marxist way of thought in consideration.

In the preface of Dialectics of Nature, he made a very valuable discussion. In 1939 he wrote, since the manuscript of Engels was written between 1872 and 1882, it is very difficult to follow the scientific analysis of 60 years back if one is not properly conversant with the history of scientific practice and theory. He wrote, *“The idea of what is now called the conservation of energy was beginning to permeate physics, chemistry and biology. But it was still very incompletely realized, and still more incompletely applied. Words such as ‘force’, ‘motion’ and ‘vis viva’ were used where we should now speak of energy.”*

In the chapters titled ‘Basic forms of motion’, ‘The measure of motion-work’ and ‘Heat’ etc. Engels discussed about contemporary debate that arose from incomplete or faulty theory about heat. Engels used ‘vis viva’, which means double the kinetic energy. It is obsolete now and ‘force’ in physics is used in a specific context now-a-days. Haldane wrote,

“Engels would not have published them in their present form, if only because, in the later essay on tidal friction, he uses a more modern terminology.” Haldane wrote, *“The essay on electricity ‘dates’ even more. As a criticism of Weidemann’s inconsistencies it is interesting, and it ends with a plea for a closer investigation of the connection between chemical and electrical action, which, as Engels said, ‘will lead to important results in both spheres of investigation.’ This prophecy has, of course, been amply fulfilled. Arrhenius’ ionic theory has transformed chemistry,*

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory and Thomson's electron theory has revolutionized physics. Here again, the manuscript would certainly have been revised before publication. In a letter to Marx on November 23rd, 1882, he points out that Siemens, in his presidential address to the British Association, has defined a new unit, that of electric power, the Watt, which is proportional to the resistance multiplied by the current. He compares these with the expressions for momentum and energy, discussed in the essay on 'The measure of motion - work' and points out that in each case we have simple proportionality(momentum as velocity and electromotive force as current) when we are dealing with transformation of one form of energy into another. But when the energy is transformed into heat or work the correct value is found by squaring the velocity or current.' So it is a general law of motion which I was the first to formulate.' We can now see why this is so. The momentum and the electromotive force, having directions, are reversed when the velocity and current are reversed. But the energy remains unaltered. So the speed or the current must come into the formula as the square (or some even power) since $(-X).(-X) = X^2$."*

" In the essay on 'Tidal friction' Engels made a serious mistake, or more accurately a mistake which would have been serious had he published it"

" Elsewhere there are statements which are certainly untrue, for example in the sections on stars and Protozoa. But here Engels cannot be blamed for following some of the best astronomers and zoologists of his day."

The limitations of Engels, pointed out by Haldane, does no way reveal that Marxist theory is weakening. Rather application of Marxist theory in such a philosophical approach helps us to see nature clearly and approach the truth.

Haldane writes,

"When all such criticisms have been made, it is astonishing how Engels anticipated the progress of science in the sixty years which have elapsed since he wrote."

"His insistence that life is the characteristic mode of behaviour of proteins appeared to be very one-sided to most biochemists since every cell contains many other complicated organic substances besides proteins. Only in the last four years has it

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turned out that certain pure proteins do exhibit one of the most essential features of living things, reproducing themselves in a variety of environments.”

Haldane was basically a scientist. His comments on limitation of Engels' philosophy may not be of high importance, but when one of the greatest scientists of the last century writes,

“Had Engels' method of thinking been more familiar, the transformations of our ideas on physics which have occurred during the last thirty years would have been smoother. Had his remarks on Darwinism been generally known, I for one would have been saved a certain amount of muddled thinking”.- it makes us eager to understand Engels' dialectical materialism in explaining natural science.

Twentieth Century Science & Marxism

We need not discuss the entire gamut or various analyses of the twentieth century science here. The long-standing relation between philosophy and natural science, especially the way Marxism has viewed the natural science demonstrates that the course of development of this branch of knowledge is inextricably tied up with the development of Marxist philosophy. Some important scientific inventions can be drawn into our discussion in this context.

Say the 'Uncertainty principle' of Warner Heisenberg. In 1927, Heisenberg proposed his theory and went beyond the purview of natural science to explain its philosophical significance. He was awarded the Noble Prize in 1932 for 'system of matrix mechanics'. This 'Uncertainty Principle' and its philosophical interpretation by Heisenberg is the most significant anti-Marxist theorization that evolved after the demise of Engels.

Heisenberg's 'uncertainty principle' states that the position and velocity of a particle can't be simultaneously determined with absolute correctness. The more precise is the position of the particle, the more uncertain will be the determining of momentum. The vice-versa is equally true.

How is the position of an electron determined? If we use a powerful microscope, we do hit the electron with a 'photon' particle. Light here behaves like a particle and forces the electron to change momentum. Thus observation itself changes the momentum of the electron, a change that is unpredictable and uncon-

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trollable. The magnitude and direction of the change of momentum of the electron is impossible to determine since existing quantum theory says that it is not possible to know or control the bombardment of light quantum upon lens in a precise angle.

Now, if we use a developed electron microscope? The answer is still negative, the problem can't be solved. As all sorts of energy come from 'quanta', which exhibits dual properties of wave and particle, the problem will remain the same in all cases.

On the contrary, for accurate determination of momentum, light quanta of low momentum is needed. Naturally it will be of greater wavelength resulting in larger angle of diffraction and thus determining position will be inaccurate.

Werner Heisenberg writes (Physics and Philosophy, 1958),

“The words ‘position’ and ‘velocity’ of an electron, E for instance, seemed perfectly well defined as to both their meaning and their possible connections, and in fact they were clearly defined concepts within the mathematical framework of Newtonian mechanics. But actually they were not well defined, as is seen from the relations of uncertainty. One may say that regarding their position in Newtonian mechanics they were well defined, but in their relation to nature they were not. This shows that we can never know beforehand which limitations will be put on the applicability of certain concepts by the extension of our knowledge into the remote parts of nature, into which we can only penetrate with the most elaborate tools. Therefore, in the process of penetration we are bound sometimes to use our concepts in a way which is not justified and which carries no meaning. Insistence on the postulate of complete logical clarification would make science impossible. We are reminded here by modern physics of the old wisdom that one who insists on never uttering an error must remain silent”.

Basically, Heisenberg showed a bit more tilt towards idealism than even Kant's unknowable thing-in-itself. The truth revealed is just apparent and may not be correct, argued Heisenberg, in the spheres of physics and philosophy.

Heisenberg, in 1958, wrote :

“Therefore, Kant's arguments for the ‘a priori’ character of the law of causality no longer apply. A similar discussion could

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be given on the a priori character of space and time as forms of intuition. The result would be the same. The a priori concepts which Kant considered an undisputable truth are no longer contained in the scientific system of modern physics.”

We won't enter into a discussion in detail about Heisenberg's physics and philosophy, but some significance and essence of them is worth mentioning.

Heisenberg's theory is not at all an isolated one; rather it was a part of the dominating reactionary theories that prevailed till first decade of 21st century in contemporary linguistics and philosophy. From the 2nd decade of 20th century, in all branches of knowledge, bourgeois ideology had a domineering presence and this, Heisenberg's philosophy, should be viewed as a related one, being most important and influential idealist thought in the world of science. If Heidegger carries the baton of Scheilling to Derrida, Heisenberg inherits the same school in the world of science. Heidegger and Heisenberg had a deep similarity in their political lives - they both supported Hitler actively.

We won't comment on the Scientific aspect of physics in Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty principle', but can talk a bit about its philosophical impact.

First of all, well before Heisenberg's theory, we got the idea of Brownian motion in physics, where we knew about random movement of gaseous atoms. Dialectical materialism always opposed Laplace's deterministic theory, where it was tried to ascertain movement and causality of smallest particle in the theoretical framework of certainty. Dialectical materialism called it identity between necessity and chance, where particle movement can be explained or observed by causality (necessity as called in physics) to a greater extent; on the other hand another portion lie beyond this and we can call it chance. There is interpenetration in the identity between these two aspects of contradiction. That means, necessity changes into chance and chance too changes into necessity.

What does 'chance' mean? Is it that there is no cause-effect relation playing here? No, it is not so. In fact an infinite number of factors can exercise their influence on the motion and change of a matter. The nature, characteristic and degree of these

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factors vary infinitely. Thus it is not possible to bring it absolutely into account beforehand. The dominating, determining and the most important factors constitute causality for the motion or change of an object whereas the remaining innumerable factors, lying beyond consideration, unite to form 'chance'. And this forms the randomness or uncertain portion of the movement. The factors lying beyond consideration can come into reckoning, through the plan or necessity of the experiment or practice and can add to the factors that form causality. Thus chance and necessity (causality) form an identity in an interpenetrated condition and the transformation of 'necessity' into 'chance' and vice versa continues to occur. In Marxism, when Kantian 'unknowable thing-in-itself' is opposed, it does not stand for absolute knowability. Marxism does not consider any other knowledge as absolute except the existence, motion and change of matter (in a philosophical sense). Marxism opposes absolute truth.

The 'absolute accuracy' in which Heisenberg spoke of knowing the position and motion of an object is considered in Marxist philosophy itself as impossible. Heisenberg didn't explain rationally how to interpret that 'thing-in-itself is absolutely unknowable'. Moreover, he didn't explain how causality can be completely eliminated from his experiments.

Prof. J B S Haldane wrote (in the article 'The Laws of Nature', 1941)

"Positivists and idealists have made great play with the fact that many laws of nature, as formulated by scientists, have turned out to be inexact, and all may do so. But that is absolutely no reason for saying that there are no regularities in Nature to which our statements of natural law correspond. One might as well say that because no maps of England give its shape exactly, it has no shape.

What is remarkable about the laws of Nature is the accuracy of simple approximations. One might see a hundred thousand men before finding an exception to the rule that all men have two ears, and the same is true for many of the laws of physics. In some cases we can see why. The universe is organized in aggregates with, in many cases, pretty wide gaps between them. Boyle's law that the density of a gas is proportional to its pressure and Charles's

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law that the volume is proportional to the temperature, would be exact if gas molecules were points which had no volume and did not attract one another. These laws are very nearly true for gases at ordinary temperatures and pressures, because the molecules occupy only a small part of the space containing the gas, and are close enough to attract one another only during a very small part of any interval of time. Similarly, most of the stars are far enough apart to be treated as points without much error when we are considering their movements...

.... Mendel's laws, according to which two types occur in a ratio of 1:1 in some cases and 3:1 in others, are theoretically true if the process of division of cell nuclei are quite regular, and if neither type is unfit so as to die off before counts are made. The first condition never holds, and the second probably never does. But the exceptions to the first condition are very rare. In one particular case a critical division goes wrong about once in ten thousand times. The effect of this on a 1:1 ratio or 3:1 ratio could be detected only by counting several hundred million plants or animals. Differences in relative fitness are more important. But even so the Mendelian ratios are sometimes fulfilled with extreme accuracy, and are generally a good rough guide."

Christopher Caudwell (*The Crisis in Physics*, 1939) explained causality and wrote:

"There is a tendency in modern science to use 'causality', or principle of causality as equivalent to 'determinism'. As Eddington correctly points out, so far from being equivalent, they are incompatible. The relation of cause and effect involves a flow of power from the cause to the effect, and therefore a certain freedom on the part of the cause. But if every event is completely and necessarily determined, then how can any event be regarded as a cause, since it is absolutely determined from the start by prior events?"

While explaining the crisis of science and philosophy, Caudwell quoted Planck, the father of Quantum Physics:

"We are living in a very singular moment of history. It is a moment of crisis, in the literal sense of the word. In every branch of our spiritual and material civilization we seem to have arrived at a critical turning point. This spirit shows itself not only in the

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actual state of public affairs but also in personal and social life.

Formerly it was only religion, especially in its doctrinal and moral systems, that was the object of sceptical attack. Then the iconoclast began to shatter the ideals and principles that had hitherto been accepted in the province of art. Now he has invaded the temple of science. There is sincerely a scientific axiom that is not nowadays denied by somebody. And at the same time almost any nonsensical theory that may be put forward in the name of science would be almost sure to find believers and disciples somewhere or other.”

That there is a crisis in the field of theory in general along with science was categorically expressed in the writing of Caudwell

“The symptoms are precisely the same in all spheres of ideology.”

We would like to conclude this discussion with a comment by Caudwell which is intended to clarify the magnitude of the challenge posed to the Marxists in respect of theoretical crisis in the world of science.

“Einstein is the father of relativity physics and Planck is the originator of quantum physics. Both were ‘revolutionary’ in their they. Even Planck’s faith and Einstein’s incomprehension therefore have pulling power over the undecided. But the younger men include Heisenberg, Schrodinger, and Dirac whose technical achievements are of similarly ‘revolutionary’ character. There is no doubt that the new school is winning mass support in its struggle for a more mysterious universe.”

Marxist Dialectics and the ‘crisis’ in its interpretation

A. Laws of Dialectics

We have discussed, in detail, about the emergence of the common understanding of Marx and Engels so far as the concept of Dialectical materialism is concerned. Here, we shall deal with the concept of ‘Dialectics’ itself and identify the misconceptions evolved in the international communist movement while practising the doctrine in the last 85 years.

Engels summed up the concept of ‘Dialectics’ in three laws, in his ‘Dialectics of Nature’. He wrote:

“It is therefore, from the history of nature and human so-

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ciety that the laws of Dialectics are abstracted. For they are nothing but the most general laws of these two aspects of historical development, as well as of thought itself. And indeed they can be reduced in the main to three :

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

The law of interpenetration of opposites;

The law of the negation of the negation.”

All of these three laws are developed by Hegel, but obviously with his idealist foundation. Engels wrote

“ All three are developed by Hegel in his idealist fashion as mere laws of thought: the first, in the first part of his Logic, in the Doctrine of Being; the second fills the whole of the second and by far the most important part of his Logic, the Doctrine of Essence; finally the third figures as the fundamental law for the construction of the whole system.”

What was the mistake of Hegel ? Engels answered,

“The mistake lies in the fact that these laws are foisted on nature and history as laws of thought, and not deduced from them. This is the source of the whole forced and often outrageous treatment; the universe, willy-nilly, is made out to be arranged in accordance with a system of thought which itself is only the product of a definite stage of evolution of human thought. If we turn the thing round, then everything becomes simple, and the dialectical laws that look so extremely mysterious in idealist philosophy at once become simple and clear as noonday.”

We will discuss here, in detail, the third law, which according to Engels, is ‘ the fundamental law for the construction of the whole system’ of Hegel.

The law of the negation of the negation

Engels opened the subject quoting Duhring, in his Duhring’s critique to Marx. Here is a portion of that writing of Duhring :

“This historical sketch (of the genesis of the so-called primitive accumulation of capital in England) is relatively the last part of Marx’s book, and would be even better if it had not relied on the dialectical crutch to help out its scholarly crutch. The Hegelian negation of the negation, in default of anything better and

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The above quotation is a part of the attempt of Duhring to establish that Marx has nothing to prove the necessity of social revolution but the Hegelian concept of the negation of the negation. To answer this, Engels has quoted Marx himself. It is from the writings of Marx that he tried to explain what is negation of the negation and what is Marxist negation of negation. Marx wrote, in *Das Capital* :

“ It is the negation of the negation. This re-establishes individual property, but on the basis of the acquisitions of the capitalist era, i.e. on co-operation of free workers and their possession in common of the land and of the means of production produced by labour. The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labour, into capitalist private property is naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, arduous, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property.”

Engels summarised and analysed:

“To anyone who understands plain talk this means that social ownership extends to the land and the other means of production, and individual ownership to the products, that is, the articles of consumption. And in order to make the matter comprehensive even to children of six, Marx assumes on page 56, ‘a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community.’, that is a society organised on a

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socialist basis, and he continues, 'The total product of our community is a social product. One portion serves as fresh means of production and remains social. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. A distribution of this portion amongst them is consequently necessary.'

The property which is at once both individual and social, this confusing hybrid, and as Marx does not do this to Herr Duhring's taste, the latter has to fall again into his higher and nobler style, and in the interests of the complete truth impute to Marx things which are the products of Herr Duhring own manufacture."

The essence of the discourse of Marx and Engels is that the history of the development of society itself turned up at these cross-roads. Marx never thought of imposing the dialectical theory of negation of negation as necessary. Engels quoted Marx:

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalistic production itself. Capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Concentration 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."

Thus, in a most rational fashion, in the unique theoretical creation of Karl Marx, the socio-historic progress had reached its logical culmination of history. And only after that, Marx highlighted the internal essence of this course in the words of philosophical materialism. Engels wrote:

"It is only at this point, after Marx has completed his proof on the basis of historical and economic fact, that he proceeds :[Marx] ' The capitalist mode of production and appropriation, hence the capitalist private property, is the first negation of the individual private property founded on the labour of the proprietor. Capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a process

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This is the concept of the negation of the negation, as it was formulated and used by Karl Marx to understand the history of man and nature. It is not a concept adopted or formulated by Engels. Marx himself seized the concept, as a part of the concept of dialectics, from Hegel and used it with an inimitable fineness to grasp the philosophical transcription of the transformation of the society to socialism and communism. To concretize and summarise the emergence and use of the concept of the negation of the negation:

The very concept of the negation of the negation was taken by Marx, from Hegel, as an integrated part of the concept of Dialectics and being separated from its idealist foundation, it has been turned into an inseparable part of Marxist World-outlook, the dialectical materialism.

Marx used the concept of the negation of the negation for the philosophical interpretation of socio-historic rationale of socialism, his most valuable contribution for the working class, in formulating the task for their emancipation.

Marx, in explaining the philosophical significance of abolition of private property (ownership of land and means of production), as the outcome of his materialist conception of history, used this very part of the law of dialectics.

So we can conclude that, for explaining the development of nature, society, and thought, from lower to higher order, in philosophical terms, 'the negation of the negation' is the principal law of dialectics.

Marx did not write any comprehensive article to explain 'the negation of the negation'. It was accomplished by Engels. In his 'Anti-Duhring' he prepared a complete version of the concept. Engels wrote:

"It is the same in Mathematics. Let us take any algebraic quantity whatever: for example, a. If this is negated, we get -a (minus a). If we negate that negate, by multiplying -a by -a, we get + a square, i.e, the original positive quantity, but at a higher degree, raised to its second power."

" Let us take a grain of barley. Billions of such grains of

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barley are milled, boiled and brewed and again consumed. But if such a grain of barley meets with conditions which are normal for it, if it falls on suitable soil, then under the influence of heat and moisture it undergoes a specific change, it germinates, the grain as such ceases to exist, it is negated, and in its place appears the plant which has arisen from it, negation of the grain. But what is the normal life-process of this plant ? It grows, flowers, is fertilized and finally once more produces grains of barley, and as soon as these have ripened the stalk dies, is in its turn negated. As a result of their negation of the negation we have once again the original grain of barley, but not as a single unit, but ten-, twenty- or thirtyfold”.

“ Buttrflies, for example, spring from the egg by a negation of the egg, pass through certain transformations until they reach sexual maturity, pair and are in turn negated, dying as soon as the pairing process has been completed and the female has laid its numerous eggs.”

“ Or let us take another example : The philosophy of antiquity was primitive, spontaneously evolved materialism. As such, it was incapable of clearing up the relation between mind and matter. But the need to get clarity on this question led to the doctrine of a soul separable from the body, then to the assertion of the immortality of this soul, and finally to monotheism. The old materialism was therefore negated by idealism. But in the course of the further development of philosophy, idealism, too, became untenable and was negated by modern materialism. The modern materialism, the negation of the negation, is not the mere re-establishment of the old, but adds to the permanent foundations of this old materialism the whole thought-content of two thousand years of development of philosophy and natural science, as well as of the history of these two thousand years. It is no longer a philosophy at all, but simply a world outlook which has to establish its validity and be applied not in a science of sciences apart, but in the real sciences. Philosophy is therefore ‘sublated’ here, that, ‘both overcome and preserved’ [D.K.G. 503]: overcome as regards its form, and preserved as regards its real content.”

Engels, here, himself answered in positive to the question of negation of philosophy altogether by Marxist Doctrine. But it was

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just opposite to the interpretation of Karl Korsch, George Lukacs or Althusser. They interpreted Marxist Doctrine something less than a philosophy or rejection(and not negation) of philosophy altogether. According to Althusser, it was a praxis (practice) of philosophy and not a philosophy of praxis. Karl Korsch wrote:

“They rather saw the task of their scientific socialism as that of definitively overcoming and superseding the form and content, not only of all previous bourgeois idealist philosophy, but theory of philosophy altogether...”

Engels put forward just an opposite view. To him, Marxist Doctrine is more than a philosophy. Here, Philosophy is overcome so far its form is concerned and preserved so far as its content is concerned. It is very much evident that Karl Korsch was wrong in explaining the nature and character of the emergence of Marxist World-outlook .To him content as well as the form of philosophy is overcome. But he fails to understand that content of the Marxist philosophy as a philosophy is preserved in Marxist world-outlook.He failed to understand the process of Marxist ‘negation of the negation’. Here is the difference of rejection and negation in the philosophical sense of the term. In that sense, unlike the other philosophies, Marxist philosophy is not at all a mere instrument to explain the world. Moreover, it propagates that, the world can only be properly explained and understood when the process of changing it (society or object) is under-taken. So, Marxist philosophy, as opposed to all other philosophies, explains the world from the stand point of practice.

The history of man, i.e. the materialist conception of history is a living subject of ‘revolutionary practice’. With time, history travels many a path of unforeseen and unanticipated twists and turns. Particularly, when the history takes the ‘spiral’ course of its development, when the revolutionary practice shoves us to negate ourselves, the cruellest responsibility is bestowed upon us by the history. Then, sometimes, we forget that the route of development is a not a straight line but a spiral one; we fail to remember that there are leaps, catastrophes, breaks in continuity. Now, Materialistic Dialectics, being the guiding world-outlook and reference frame for all re-evaluation and re-examination, cannot be an obscure and ambiguous concept. And, here is the crisis. Despite the revolutionary practice of the last one hundred years, a

grave crisis in the interpretation of 'Laws of Dialectics' remains. Let us examine whether any crisis exists at all or not in the interpretation of the laws of dialectics, at the present moment, in the international communist movement.

B. 'Interpretations of Dialectics' and the 'crisis'

We have discussed, at length, how the fundamental writings of Engels, which are foundation of Marxism too, have been attacked for the last one hundred years. And it was only Lenin, who with his entire burden of leading the intense class struggle, had endeavored to defend Engels, in his 'Materialism and Emperio-criticism'. But, we have already discussed, after the death of Lenin more intense and more inclusive attacks were directed from the popularly known 'Marxist Philosophers' on Marxist Doctrine, in the form of, mainly, attacking Engels. Here, in this article, we have not dealt with anti-Marxist theories like that of Heidegger or Derida. But no Heidegger, no Derida, no Karl Korsch, George Lukacs or Althusser had constituted any crisis in the 'Interpretation of the Marxist World-outlook' and in the 'development of Marxist theory in general'. These intellectuals, having no significant direct connection with the revolutionary practice of the communists world over, were not in a position at all to create any crisis or problem in the field of Marxist theory. It is the inner limitations, weaknesses and failures of the communists, which can only give birth to such a 'problem' in the theory.

The weakness is felt from the late 30s of the last century. Neither of the two big Parties of the then International Communist movement made any endeavor to answer and react to the vehement attack on Marxist theory from Heidegger, Heisenberg, Lukacs, and Althusser etc.

Com. Stalin and Mao, the two main leaders of the international communist movement after the death of Lenin, had played no significant role in defending Marxist Doctrine from the attacks of bourgeois theorists. On the other hand, both of them propagated 'materialism' of different origin and implication, alien to Dialectical Materialism of Marx and Engels. This new interpretation of 'Dialectics' of Stalin and Mao had made serious confusion about the connotation and significance of the Marxist world-outlook as such in the international communist movement. Naturally, the guiding doctrine of all other Marxist theories being put into great

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questions in the last seventy years, in our view, the development of Marxist theory could not be effected with a dialectical method and foundation.

Com. Stalin denied accepting ‘the negation of the negation’ as a law of dialectics. In his article ‘Dialectical and Historical Materialism’ he described ‘Marxist Dialectical Method’ as constituted of four ‘principal features’, two of which are ‘Natural Quantitative Change Leads to Qualitative Change’ and ‘Contradictions Inherent in Nature’ - two laws of the three formulated laws of Engels. He added two laws as principal features: ‘Nature connected and determined’ and ‘Nature is a State of Continuous Motion and Change’ .But he revoked, without assigning any reason and logic, the law of the negation of the negation, one of the ‘three laws of dialectics’ formulated by Engels. Why he accepted Engels and quoted him in explaining the method of dialectics and why he excluded and thereby rejected one of the most vital and fundamental laws of dialectics, brilliantly used by Marx in reaching his greatest contribution to the mankind, the theory of socialism- is unknown to us; because nowhere, in any of his writing, he discussed about the concept of the negation of the negation.

Com Stalin’s understanding of ‘unity of opposites’ was put into confusion when he wrote:

“There can be no identity between war and peace, between the bourgeois and the proletariat, between life and death and other such phenomena, because they are fundamentally opposed to each other and mutually exclusive”. [Definition of Identity, Shorter Dictionary of Philosophy, Fourth Edition]

This is not a proper understanding of dialectics. He accepted only struggle and not the unity of the opposites; he recognised ‘opposites’ as mutually exclusive but actually they exist in an interpenetrated state. And this was the primary teachings of Marx and Engels. Even, in the exposition, ‘Contradictions Inherent in Nature’, of Com. Stalin, one-sidedness was clearly expressed.

In this connection, it will be meaningful to quote Engels once again:

“Negation in dialectics does not mean simply saying so, or declaring that something does not exist, or destroying it in any way one likes. Long ago Spinoza said: ‘every limitation or deter-

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mination is at the same time a negation.’ And further the kind of negation is here determined, firstly, by the general and, secondly, by the particular nature of the process. I must not only negate but also sublimate the negation. I must therefore so arrange the first negation that the second remains or becomes possible. How? This depends on the particular nature of each individual case. If I grind a grain of barley, or crush an insect, I have carried out the first part of the action, but have made the second part impossible. Every kind of thing therefore has peculiar way of being negated in such manner that it gives rise to a development, and it is just the same with every kind of conception or idea. The infinitesimal calculus involves a form of negation which is different from that used in the formation of positive powers from negative roots. This has to be learnt, like everything else. The bare knowledge that the barley plant and infinitesimal calculus are both governed by negation of negation does not enable me either to grow barley successfully or to differentiate and integrate; just as little as the bare knowledge of the laws of the determination of sound by the dimensions of the strings enables me to play the violin. But it is clear that from a negation of the negation which consists in the childish pastime of alternately writing and cancelling ‘a’, or in alternately declaring that a rose is a rose and that it is not a rose, nothing eventuates but the silliness of the person who adopts such a tedious procedure.”

After so clear and penetrating an analysis regarding the use of negation of the negation, we cannot expect silence or casual comments from at least our great leaders like Com. Stalin and Com. Mao. But this was the most unexpected and shocking event of international communist movement.

Com. Mao wrote:

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 the 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 the negation, and the law of the unity of opposites is 'triplism', not monism. The most basic thing is the unity of opposites. The transfor-

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mation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of
the opposites quality and quantity. **There is no such thing as the
negation of the negation.** Affirmation, negation, affirmation,
negation . . . in the development of things, every link in the chain
of events is both affirmation and negation. Slave-holding society
negated primitive society, but with reference to feudal society it
constituted, in turn, the affirmation. Feudal society constituted
the negation in relation to slave-holding society but it was in turn
the affirmation with reference to capitalist society. Capitalist
society was the negation in relation to feudal society, but it is, in
turn, the affirmation in relation to socialist society.

While answering a question Com. Mao answered in the above
words. The question was :(Comrade Sheng:) ‘Could the Chairman
say something about the problem of the three categories?’ [Talk
On Questions Of Philosophy, August 18, 1964, Selected Works of Mao
Tse Tung, IXth volume.

SOURCE: Mao chu-hsi tui P’eng, Hua-ng, Chang, Chou fan-
tang chi-t’uan ti p’i-p’an.]

It is a mystery how and why a leader with a stature of Com.
Mao handled the subject like ‘negation of the negation’ with such
a casual manner- “*and the negation of the negation does not exist
at all*”. Without criticizing and analyzing the use and
acknowledgement of the very concept by Karl Marx, an unambigu-
ous refutation of such an important portion of Dialectical method,
is actually, tantamount to dismissal of the concept of dialectics
altogether.

In the same article Com. Mao said:

*“The weakness of philosophy is that it hasn’t produced prac-
tical philosophy, but only bookish philosophy.”*

Phrases like ‘practical philosophy’, ‘bookish philosophy’ are
something new in Marxist classics. Marxist world-outlook had over-
come philosophy altogether as far as its form is concerned. It was
overcome in a sense that all other philosophies only explained the
world from the standpoint of theory and knowledge, but Marxism
explained the world from the standpoint of practice, and at the
same time, it determines a task of ‘revolutionary practice’. But,
Marxism is not and cannot be a ‘practical philosophy’. So, the con-
cept of popular or practical philosophy, philosophy for all is some-

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thing unfamiliar and contrary to classical Marxism. Marx or Engels never applied philosophy in such a manner. Effort must be made to teach or communicate philosophy in easy language. But, that version of philosophy cannot be called a 'practical philosophy'. Perhaps Com. Mao tried to develop such a philosophy and the end result was dilution, error and even deviation in the very basic concept of 'dialectics', dialects of Hegel, Marx and Engels.

In the most popular of his all philosophical writings, 'On Contradiction', Com. Mao eliminated the concept of 'negation of the negation' from the 'laws of dialectics' by keeping absolute silence on this most vital aspect of dialectics. He emphasises only on 'contradiction of the opposites' and said nothing about course of development of nature, society or thought to higher order. Whether it is spiral or straight, whether development rejects or negates the old, whether the old is overcome altogether, or something is preserved too - Com. Mao remained silent on all these questions

If, this concept of 'dialectics' is to be acknowledged and be taken as a development of philosophy, the Marxist world-outlook itself is to be corrected in its foundation. And in that case, Marx's materialist conception of history is to be re-written, because it is based on the philosophical underpinning which includes the concept of 'negation of the negation' as a very essential part of the 'dialectical method' for analysis of and investigation into the history of man on a philosophical plane.

On the other hand, Com. Mao was the most legendary revolutionary leader of the post second world war international communist movement. Moreover, at the present moment, the name of Com. Mao (as Maoism or Mao-thought) is attached with the revolutionism in every corner of the contemporary world. Consequently, in the documents of the Maoist revolutionaries, the concept of 'negation of the negation' is almost eliminated while dealing with the concept of 'Dialectics'. The document (Fundamental Documents) of PCP (Peruvian Communist Party) said :

"On the content of Maoism, of its substance, we must point out the following basic issues:"

"In Marxist philosophy he developed the essence of dialectics, the law of contradiction, establishing it as the only fundamental law; and besides his profound dialectical understanding of the theory of knowledge, whose centre are the two leaps that make

——— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory up its law (from practice to knowledge and vice versa, but with knowledge to practice being the main one). We emphasize that he masterfully applied the law of contradiction in politics; and moreover he brought philosophy to the masses of people, fulfilling the task that Marx left.*”

Visibly, PCP did not identify with the dialectics of Engels or Marx. There was no room of negation of the negation in their understanding of dialectics. Similarly, Com. Prachanda, Chairman, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) wrote in ‘On Maoism’:

“Mao has established the law of contradiction as the essence of dialectical materialism and as the fundamental law of dialectics in all the fields of nature, society and human knowledge. The analysis of universality of contradiction and the process and importance of determining principal contradiction has raised to new heights the development of understanding of dialectics. The important role played by fundamental law of contradiction in formulating the strategy and tactics of revolution is self-evident”.

Com. Prachanda made no comments on the rejection of ‘negation of negation’ by Mao .

These disseminations regarding Marxist philosophy have already created serious problems and confusion in the field of development of Marxist theory.

In a sense, the ideological-theoretical potential and leaning of advancement of the Marxist theory, at present, is confronting with the ‘practice’ of the mainstream contemporary revolutionism. This has accentuated, to a large extent, the problem of the development of Marxist theory.

The nature and task of the contemporary Theoretical Struggle

In this article we have discussed, in detail, on the role of the theoretical frame-work of ‘dialectics’ in the transformation of ‘Marxist philosophy’ into ‘Marxist world-outlook’. We have endeavored to mark the inconsistencies of the explanations and applications of the largely accepted ‘revolutionary theory’ in the field of philosophy, from both methodological and epistemological angle, which was expressed as Marxist theory so far, after the death of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels. In the present article we will not enter into the various other sections of the Marxist theory including ‘Marxist Political Economy’ and ‘Scientific Socialism’.

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We are well aware of the fact that the most profound interpretation and application of the Marxist world outlook, i.e., dialectical materialism, were set by Karl Marx himself in his worthiest contribution to the world, in describing and analyzing the course of history of man, the materialist conception of history ; and so we have the responsibility to make effort to identify the impact of the erroneous concept of the 'Marxist Dialectics', promulgated and practiced by the later great revolutionary leaders of the International Communist Movement, in the 'revolutionary practice' of the last century. We, in separate articles, must try to convey our views on those sections of the Marxist theory, in future, in this magazine.

We are ready to accept and appreciate the inconsistencies, if any, even in the philosophical-theoretical framework of 'dialectics', formulated even by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels. But, so far as our knowledge and understanding are concerned, we are of the opinion that the understanding of materialist philosophy of the later Marxist leaders, after Marx and Engels, in comparison to that of the fathers of the theory, was too incomprehensive to explore or identify the 'gap' or 'inconsistencies' of their world-outlook, if they exist at all .

Karl Marx burnt up most of his creative energy to write the worthiest book of the Marxist classics, Das Capital. In this book, he described the internal working of the Capitalist system as a whole and showed how the course of the 'journey' will be ended ('negation of the negation' in the philosophical sense) in giving birth to another social system, where the forms of property will be both, individual (for the articles of consumption) and social (for the land and the means of production).

The revolutionary practice of the last one hundred years has given birth to a set of new theories of revolutionary practice too. In the history of the international communist movement, the 'revolutionary practice' with the world outlook of Marx and Engels was uniquely continued and led by Vladimir Lenin. And in doing so he had evolved, formulated and introduced new theories of revolutionary practice, e.g. theory of the stage of revolution, theory of imperialism, theory of the military affairs, theory of organization etc. Some parts of these theories should be marked as 'Universal Teachings' and the others had laid foundation for more compre-

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hensive and correct theories be evolved in the future through re-evaluation and re-formulation of the present state of the theory. The ‘journey’ from the ‘Das Capital’ to ‘Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism’ should be reviewed thoroughly. The unprecedented events of the world history, i.e., the Russian and the Chinese revolutionary power-seizure, and the experience of the struggle to achieve ‘Socialism’ should be re-evaluated with highest objectivity and endeavor in the light of ‘Das Capital’ and ‘Anti-Duhring’.

After the death of Marx and Engels, even in the early years of twentieth century, a vacuum was found in the field of Marxist theory in general, particularly in the comprehensive enrichment of the Marxist World Outlook. Though the situation was not at all comparable with the present state of things because of the intensive and extensive ‘practice’ of the last one hundred years, still it will be helpful to us if we cast a glance at a relevant writing of Rosa Luxemburg of 1903. In ‘Stagnation and Progress of Marxism’ she wrote:

“Does this account for the stagnation in Marxist doctrine which has been noticeable for a good many years? The actual fact is that- apart from one or two independent contributions which mark a theoretical advance - since the publication of last volume of Capital and of the last of Engels’s writings there have appeared nothing more than a few excellent popularizations and expositions of Marxist theory. The substance of that theory remains just where the two founders of scientific socialism left it.”

This was the realisation of Rosa, eight years after the death of Fredrick Engels. She discussed, whether it was the reason that, Marxism had built too rigid a framework for independent action of the consciousness of the later Marxists. She wrote:

“It cannot be said, then, that the rigidity and completeness of the Marxist edifice are the explanation of the failure of Marx’s successors to go on with the building.”

Why she thought in this line?

She wrote :

“Still, it is only where economic matters are concerned that we are entitled to speak of a more or less completely elaborated body of doctrines bequeathed us by Marx. The most valuable of all

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his teachings, the materialist-dialectical conception of history, presents itself to us as nothing more than a method of investigation, as a few inspired leading thoughts, which offer us glimpses into the entirely new world, which open us to endless perspectives of independent activity, which wing our spirit for bold flights into unexplored regions,”

Contrary to Stalin and Mao, both Lenin and Rosa expressed in unequivocal terms that Marx and Engels - in the question of Marxist Philosophy, Marxist World Outlook - while fighting the wrong philosophical trends, had made their theory reach an unparalleled height. Lenin was much more concrete in expressing his opinion. In his opinion, the ‘most clear’ and ‘fully expounded’ version of philosophical materialism is available from the writings of Engels, 1) Ludwig Feuerbach, the end of Classical German philosophy, 2) Anti-Duhring

He wrote:

“Marx and Engels always defended philosophical materialism in the most determined manner and repeatedly explained the profound error of every deviation from this basis. Their views are most clearly and fully expounded in the works of Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and Anti-Duhring, which like the Communist Manifesto, are handbooks for every class-conscious worker.”

It is very clear that, so far as the concept of ‘dialectical materialism’ is concerned, Lenin fully accepted the explanation of Engels as the Marxist View.

We are, obviously, of the opinion that the interpretation of the ‘law of materialistic dialectics’ propounded by the two great revolutionary leaders, Stalin and Mao, had given birth to deep crisis in comprehension and development of Marxist theory as such. But, that should not and must not generate any misconception that they are responsible for the present void in the development of Marxist theory for at least a period of last fifty years. The materialist conception of history of Marx, Engels and Lenin had tackled simultaneously the necessity of the civilisation to go forward and chances of various routes, which might set in to reach the ‘end’, consistent with the necessity. Marxism is not astrology, having any ‘deterministic’ formula to accomplish socialism or communism. While working out the plan of the revolutionary practice of their age Marxist leaders were compelled to have their own idea

———— *Marxist Philosophy and the problems of development of Marxist theory* and assessment of those ‘Chances’. Many of those assessments, of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao have already been proved to be absolutely correct; at the same time, some were wrong. But, the transformation of almost all the major Communist parties of the world to bourgeois parties, non-existence of any international centre for the last sixty years and even non-existence of significant political agitation and movement of the working class in the capitalist world after the second world war have engendered ground for making serious search and review of the Marxist theory as a whole.

In the present context, some tasks to make a comprehensive programme of ‘Theoretical Struggle’ are:

1. While fighting the contemporary reactionary bourgeois philosophical and ideological theories, to make dialectical materialism a living subject, in the proper sense, as a theory of ‘revolutionary practice’ in the contemporary studies and research.
2. To study, explain, debate and develop the theories of the last one hundred and fifty years, in the field of science (specially of Physics in general, astronomy, genetics, biotechnology, psychology), linguistics, technological science, ecological studies, gender studies, anthropological studies, studies of ethnicity, caste and religion etc. from the standpoint of Marxist world-outlook.
3. To review and identify the inconsistencies of the theories and elucidations, written and developed from the revolutionary practice of the international communist movement led by our great leaders, with reference to the standpoint of Marxist world-outlook.
4. To give special attention to analyse and review thoroughly: (i) the dialectical relationship between ‘Dictatorship of the Proletariat’ and ‘Proletarian Democracy’ in the period of transition to socialism, (ii) the relation between the development of productive force and socialisation of ownership of the means of production in the proper sense, in the period of transition to socialism with special reference to revolution in backward countries. (iii) the interrelation between the advancement of the revolution of backward countries towards socialism with that of the advanced capitalist world, (iv) the proper nature and character of the interpenetration and transformation of ‘Centralism’ and ‘Proletarian Democracy’ into each other in the functioning of ‘Democratic Centralism’ in the

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Communist Party, the interrelation between the Communist Party and proletariat as a whole before and after the seizure of state-power, (v) the special characteristics of accumulation of capital in the 21st century and the course of development of the imperialistic state machineries ; and the nature and character of the crisis of world capitalism in the 21st century, in general.

Today, the necessity of a qualitative development in Marxist theory is being felt by all the serious communist activists, leaders, groups or Party all over the world. It is being expressed in the form of 'question' or 'confusion', emerging from or within all the serious communist organizations at the international level. Even, the Maoists are not the exception. On the contrary, the need for a serious theoretical development has been asserted and expressed, in the most clear and reflective manner, in the international communist movement by Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). In the article, 'Imperialism and Proletarian Revolution in the 21st Century' [Published in 'The Worker', No. 11, July 2007] it was written:

"History has posed many important questions to deal with. Why the dictatorship of the proletariat turned into their opposite without any bloodshed no later than the main leadership died? How could revisionist forces so smoothly overturn dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism without any resistance from the powerful red army, state apparatus and the revolutionary people? Why Comrade Stalin failed to curb the counter-revolutionary renegades to emerge from and sustain in the party he had led in spite of forceful suppression against them? Whether the counter-revolution in China was an overnight coup d'état or there was a long process of degeneration that culminated in 1976?"

"Comrade Lenin had defined imperialism as a moribund stage of capitalism. But why is imperialism not only sustaining but also developing? When the inter-imperialist contradiction, during 70s, had reached at the brink of the third world war, Mao had said 'Either revolution will prevent war, or war will give rise to revolution'. But neither one has happened till date. Why? These and alike are some very important questions that our generation must answer correctly to advance proletarian revolution in the 21st century."

We are of the opinion that, the nature of the 'development' of Marxist theory at this moment is not of a character that any

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kind of addition to the existing theory will serve the purpose. Some arbitrary and lopsided new theories will not furnish any change in the situation. A set of consistent and comprehensive theories, in different fields of Marxism, is the need. In this connection we can reiterate Lenin, about the course of development of the society, as such:

“In our times the idea of development, of evolution, has almost completely penetrated social consciousness, only in other ways, and not through Hegelian philosophy. Still, this idea, as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel’s philosophy, is far more comprehensive and far richer in content than the current idea of evolution is . A development that repeats,as it were,stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way ,on a higher basis (“ the negation of the negation”), a development, so to speak,that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line ; a development by leaps, catastrophes,and revolutions ; “breaks in continuity” ; the transformation of quantity into quality ; inner impulses towards development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body,or within a given phenomenon,or within a given society;.....” (Lenin, chapter “Dialectics” of “Marxist Doctrine” from,V.I.Lenin, Selected works, in three volumes, Progress Publishers, 1967)

This being the clear understanding of Marxist world-outlook, it is applicable to the development of human thinking and human knowledge also. Many segments of the present status of Marxist theory are to be negated for the sake of its development itself. And while performing that, it should be clear that, a ‘negation’ is needed, not a rejection or destruction, in the philosophical sense of the term.

We are passing through a ‘spiral’ way of development ,not a straight line, of human knowledge- a development in human knowledge, ‘by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions and breaks in continuity’.

This being the nature of the development, it is a journey to a higher order of human knowledge, where the theory believed and practised at the cost of millions of martyrs world over will be ‘both overcome and preserved’, in Hegelian words (which was condemned as ‘jugglery of words’ by Duhring,but appraised with great

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honour and adopted by Karl Marx). Those sections and contents of the theories are to be overcome, which are inconsistent and invalid with respect to practice realized, to time and, and above all, to Marxist world-outlook; and, on the other hand the whole of the revolutionary spirit imbibed in the theories, its closeness to 'truth', the proper and objective reflection of material world incorporated in the theories, the rational and dialectical analysis of the class society integrated within the theories and obviously the 'philosophical materialism', its inherent and inbuilt soul, are to be preserved.

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Practice of Soviet Socialism in the Thirties: Successes and Failures

Sujit Das

Failure of socialist systems all over the world has created a trend of trying to understand the problems of socialism, problems of communism, problems of developing Marxist theory in a new light. For the present moment it is a very necessary trend. Conservative Marxists do not like this. They think that it brings a tendency to negate Marxism itself. This suspicion [about this dangerous trend] is not without any basis. But as there is no alternative to this review, we have to do it. The blind thinking that whatever has happened in the countries with the history of successful revolution is axiomatically all right, has done more harm than good to Marxism. Hence there will be a natural tendency of overreaction against this trend. We have to be cautious about this. But what is more important is to break the inertia of unquestioning loyalty. This unenquiring mindset that has been in vogue till now has actually destroyed the very essence of Marxist philosophy. So, we should welcome this endeavor to break free of this mindset.

Naturally, the first thing that will become important in the process of this renewed inquiry is a deeper analysis of the successes and failures of the practice of socialism till now. Among such practices the erstwhile Soviet Socialist experience will demand the greatest attention. The reassessment of Soviet Socialism is most important not only because it is the first socialist country, but also because such varied experimentation, such colourful history, such intense ideological struggle, such intensity of failure and success as can be seen in the history of socialist experience in Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin is not to be found in any other country. And it is because of this that the most debates and researches centre on the formation, development and the fall of Soviet Socialism. The positive and negative lessons learnt from the practice of socialism in the first socialist country will act as the richest source with which to reassess socialism. In this article we will try to understand the positive and negative aspects of practice

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of socialism in Soviet Russia, so that we can come to some explanation of the debacle that occurred after the 20th Congress in 1956.

It is better to mention a few words at the very outset. First, there is an over-simplistic notion in vogue among the leftists in our country that everything was all right before '56 and the entire problem started with Khrushchov. It is not at all correct. If everything were all right, the impact of just one Congress couldn't turn everything upside down. That such mediocre leaders as Khrushchov could jeopardize things proves that the source of disaster was already present. It may be difficult to accept this, but we have to face the truth without any prejudice.

Secondly, at the very outset one has to make a primary understanding of how to identify socialism. Though there are many viewpoints about this, everybody is unanimous on an essential point, that it is the re-establishment of the relation of the direct producer with the means of production made possible by step-by-step abolishment of the alienation of the direct producer from the means of production that had been created by capitalism. The subject is a complicated one. For, this 'alienation' is not effectively reduced unless and until the direct producer class(es) starts effectively taking the decision-taking power of the production and distribution in its hand. To earn this power the class(es) needs political power; continuous decentralization of power is required. But if that is not done, mere formal statement that as the state and the government belongs to the proletariat (as the bourgeoisie is not in power) any decision taken by the state or the party is basically the decision taken by the proletariat, could well be deceptive. It is very important to try to always remain vigilant about the welfare of the proletariat. It cannot be maintained without political will. But to depend on this alone will not lead to the transfer of power to the proletariat. How intense was this push and pull in the Soviet Union surrounding this question is a point to ponder over.

Thirdly, if we are to discuss such a problem, we have to tune our mind to a philosophical question. The point in question is the inter-relation of the role of consciousness and historical necessity. We must admit the role of historical necessity, otherwise we will fall prey to 'left' adventurism. But we have also to keep in mind that in the whole phase of socialist and communist movement the role of consciousness is decisive. In this phase the consciousness

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will determine the material condition more than the other way round. In this phase, as the consciousness remains so overactive, on the one hand socialist human being zealously endeavors to make the impossible possible, on the other hand it candidly gives recognition to historical limitations. If there is any hesitation or reluctance in recognizing the limitations, we have to admit that it is due to backwardness of consciousness.

In the study of the Russian Socialism, the thirties is the most intense time. This decade is brilliantly shining with the success of the five-year plans, the collectivization in agriculture and big leaps in industry. The turmoil of the NEP in the twenties was over. The position of Comrade Stalin had become stronger in the inner-party struggle. But the stormy wind of war had not started blowing. One can be more objective in the study of the failures and successes of practice of socialism in this period that was relatively favourable for the experimentation of socialism. For the convenience of discussion we are choosing the agriculture as the first instance, and the industry will be taken up afterwards.

In the entire 20s, capitalism was dominant in the agriculture of the Soviet Union. Because of this, the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants lived in abject poverty, the middle peasantry was exploited ruthlessly and the rich peasantry (kulaks) were amassing more and more wealth and power. The arrogance of the kulaks was without limit, and many a time they unfurled the flag of armed rebellion against the soviet state. They posed a real threat to soviet socialism and the soviet state. In such a situation, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia under the leadership of Stalin took the historical decision of uprooting the kulak economy. The movement of collectivization began.

Innumerable small and mid-sized farms coalesced to form a few thousand collective farms. The size of each collective farm thus became large. The old owners of small plots started to cultivate them collectively. A part of the produce went to the state as tax, the collectives could sell the rest and disburse the amount accrued among themselves. The kulaks were the main obstacle against the collectives. The Soviet party undertook a programme of uprooting the kulaks as a class. This bloody struggle persisted from 1928 to 1933. The Party and the Red Army played an important role in this battle. At last, the kulaks were defeated. When this battle

ended in 1933, two-thirds of the peasantry were already under collective farms. In 1934, the very next year, Stalin declared at the 17th Party Congress: “From now on the socialist economy becomes the only driving force in the national economy.”

We are more used to with the bright picture of success of this collectivization movement. And, why not? To remove capitalism from the vast rural area is a basic socialist task. In the process of implementing this program, huge obstacles were encountered, disasters ensued, the party had to fight intensely against both the left and the right deviations and succeeded at last. Of course, it is a ballad of heroism of socialist reconstruction. Hence, in the the-then government documents of Soviet Union, in its arts and literature, cinema, the success of collectivization movement was depicted with pride. This is certainly justified. But for a long time this success, this brighter side, masked a serious question. The question is: whether the alienation of the direct producer from the means of production gradually reduced throughout this entire period. The declaration of victory of socialism without evaluating it on the basis of this cardinal question might be the victory of a party or a state, but it does not follow that it would be the victory of socialism. Now we will present a brief summary of what happened beneath the ecstasy of the collectivization movement.

Just before the beginning of the collectivization movement the socialism in agriculture was so rudimentary that only 3.3% of the whole agricultural production used to come from state farms. The rest used to come from individual farms. It should be remembered that two-thirds of the peasantry were middle peasants. A more important fact is that middle peasants and small peasants jointly supplied agricultural produce at least 8 times of the supply of the rich peasants in the market. In the process of realizing the serious deviations in the collectivization movement these figures are essential.

After the soviet state completely failed in grain collection in 1927, in 1928 the party took the decision of taking some emergency steps in the rural areas. The main point was: the peasants would have to sell grains at a low price determined by the state. If any peasant denied doing this, he would be punished. Punishment included the confiscation of his property. To enforce this system, party cadres from the cities would go to the rural areas. Though in prin-

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principle it was decided that only the kulaks would thus be forced, in practice it was enforced upon all the peasants, because, as we have already found, the lion's share of the grains came from the middle peasants. In the spring of 1928 when the famine erupted, the repressive measures were heightened and as a result, even the poor peasantry went against the rural policy of the state.

In such a backdrop the collectivization movement started in 1929-30. From the very beginning, it suffered from the problems of vacillation of policy. In the 17th Party Congress in April 1929, the policy of offering more economic benefits to the middle and small peasants was declared. But in the next summer the target for compulsory supply of excess grain was fixed, which was so high that peasants were not able to meet it. It is true that the poor peasants tried to pass the lion's share of the quota upon the rich peasants, but that would not fulfil their individual quota, and they would be punished. Frequently, for fulfilling the quota peasants would purchase high-priced grains from the market and to get the necessary money they would sell domestic animals, utensils, or even a part of the farmland. According to the official estimates of the Soviet State, in the year 1929 alone, the peasants sold 2.6 million horses and 7.6 million cattle. Thus, the overall development of the agriculture was sacrificed at the alter of quota fulfilment. Many such instances of extremes were cited not only by the strong critics of the Soviet system like Bettelheim, but also described with great pain by staunch Stalinists like Anna Louise Strong. For example, Strong said, "The farms were ruthlessly pressurized to give away fully the state grain dues in order to meet the impending short-fall. Grains due as tax, for equipment, were taken away. Whether the farms had any grains for themselves had not been taken into account."

In 1930, the next year, the plan for collectivization was jacked up. The new target far outstripped the target decided in the five-year plan. The target fixed in 1929 for the year 1933 was already fulfilled in the year 1930. Such rapidness is amazing. But there is also a flip side to it, which warrants our attention. Did the peasants attain such lightning speed voluntarily? There were cases where peasants were threatened with being branded as kulaks— such instances did not escape the eyes of persons like Anna Louise Strong. She wrote, "In the mean time, the organizers, in their zeal for surpassing others, forced the peasants into collectivization by threat-

ening to brand them as kulaks. They started to declare the cattle, goats, chicken, even utensils and undergarments as common property.” The Central Committee had declared that the party wouldn’t try to influence the collectivization movement by decrees from the above. But was this declaration adhered to in real life? The administrative steps for collectivization taken during the period under the supervision of the Party went against this declaration. The circular issued on 27th June 1929 by the Central committee to the administrative departments was not only about increasing the grain deposit in the state granary, it also included a declaration of inspiring the peasants in building ‘big’ or ‘super big’ collective farms. Apparently it looks like a benign proposal. But the fact is that the peasants did not want to do it. It is because in many cases the peasants had already built small and middle farms, and the administration of those farms was in their (peasants’) own hands. On the other hand, in the super-big farms they were more and more alienated from the means of production. Secondly, there was a contract system, which was in effect forced onto the peasants from above. This contract was about supply of industrial goods to the peasantry in lieu of compulsory grain supply. The contract was between the peasants’ organisation and the collector body constituted by the state. The peasants organizations had to agree to the collectors’ proposals, as otherwise they would not receive industrial goods. Again, once the organizations agreed to the proposal, every individual peasant was inevitably compelled to fulfil his individual quota by whatever means. In the whole process, pressure, not inspiration, became more dominant. In this way the ‘collective farm centres’ and the ‘tractor centers’ were established. The first would supply equipments to the collective farms on loan, and in lieu of it would, frequently in collaboration with the Central Planning department, enact varieties of laws for the collective farms. The machine centers and the tractor stations were brought together to build tractor centers. These administrative steps produced more centralization. The power of the peasantry to take their own decision was curtailed and the importance of their opinion was diminished. The state intensified its pressure to increase the collection, and one-sided instructions began to be issued from above to expand the area under collective farms.

The administrative steps were also intermingled with Party

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initiative. Party cadres from the cities went to the rural areas in great numbers and they were inspiring the peasants. As a result the peasants were really inspired up to certain extent. But this process has its limitation. These urban cadres realised the peasants' problem very little. And the inspiration instilled from outside did not have any depth.

Two other processes should also be mentioned here. One of them was a propaganda movement, which branded any protest against the collectivization movement as 'kulak activity'. The situation became such that even in personal rivalry between two peasants these abusive words were used. For the peasants these adjectives became something to be afraid of. And the second process was punishments, which were supposed to be used against the kulaks only, but nonetheless had been used against whoever created problems for state plans.

In this phase the collectivization movement gathered great momentum. Whereas in 1929 only 4.1% of peasant families were in collective farms, in March 1930, 59.3% of the peasant families were in the collectives. But behind this success lay darkness. In the beginning of 1930, there were widespread agitation among the peasants, which in many places became near-revolts. As the situation could well go beyond control, Stalin decided to temporarily suspend the collectivization movement.

The article '*Dizzy with success*' by Stalin, published on the 2nd March, 1930, was the first pointer to there being any problem in the collectivization movement. The deviation from the Party line in this movement was first admitted here, though ordinary level Party cadres were held responsible for this. The Party cadres were displeased. But the peasants were happy. They thought that from now on, they would be 'free'. In replying to the dissatisfaction among Party cadres Stalin, in the article '*To Kolkhoz Comrades*' admitted that middle peasants were pressurized. But it is to be noted at the same time that the peasants who were pressurized, specially who were exiled, were not rehabilitated. The cadres who made those excesses were not demoted. It is an ideal example of the push and pull that existed in those days.

That a large number of peasants were subjected to force becomes evident from the fact that after a few months when the tempo of collectivization programme was on the wane, the number

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of peasant families under collective farms decreased markedly. In March 1930, 59.3% families were in the collectives, but in October of the same year the number dwindled to only 21.7%. But the collectives remained, though with some changes. In 1939 only 3.1% peasants remained as individual farmers, the rest were either under collective farms or under state farms. 'Bright Victory of Socialism' was declared, but there was a fallacy within it. Statistics clearly shows that the goal of the Party and the State was fulfilled. But what about the main orientation of socialism?

In this phase, it appears from the intense struggle that took place in the countryside that in many areas the collectivization went against the middle and the poor peasants. If we name the process of eviction of kulaks [as] 'dekulakisation', it will be seen that in 1930, 50% families of Ukraine were put under dekulakization. This number is five times the number of kulaks. This clearly shows that a large number of middle peasants were also put under the dekulakization programme. There are recorded instances where quarrel among peasants were marked as subversive activity and the peasants involved were 'dekulakized'. These were not just exceptions. The vast number of peasants who were transported by railways to new places as punishment seems to mean that such measures of repression was universal. But the fear of the peasants did not end with collectivization. On the basis of some old incident, or on the basis of some current mistake one may be branded a kulakist, and may be sent to exile. If one were found neglecting his work he would be branded a 'kulakist'. If one questioned some illogical administrative instruction, it would be branded as 'sabotage'.

A law enacted in August 1932 could send one to jail for up to 6 years for committing a crime of collecting grains from the field. In addition, there were various commissions throughout the rural area, which would punish the peasants then and there. Then they would be accused with such a section of law that they could easily be booked as a saboteur. In 1932-33, during the years of famine, these repressive measures became particularly harsh. Because of these the contradiction between the peasants and the administration became more intense. On the one hand hunger due to famine and on the other hand more and more grain collection (by the state) caused an irreconcilable contradiction. In spite of apparent success of collectivization movement, such a socio-economic-political situ-

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ation was not conducive to taking the Soviet State towards building socialism.

Socialism cannot be ushered in automatically by only doing away with private ownership of property. On the other hand, socialism in real terms would take place as far as the alienation of the direct producer from the means of production is done away with. This second point, that is, doing away with the alienation of the direct producer from the means of production, is decisive in determining whether a system is socialist or not, because, in modern capitalism quite often it becomes difficult to identify who is the owner of the capital. But it doesn't mean that it is socialism. The collectivization movement in Soviet Union was of course a primary step towards doing away with private ownership of property. But to determine how much socialist content was brought in during negotiating this primary step, we have to find out to what extent the alienation of the peasants from their means of production was done away with. And it is precisely this question with respect to which we are drawn into some serious problems.

The collective farm can never be considered as a system directed towards socialism unless the role of producers, peasants become primary in policy making and decision taking. In the collectivization movement which took place in the Soviet Union in the '30s, not only the peasants didn't have this role, but it was also highly saddled with interference and repression from outside, i.e., of the Party and the state.

Secondly, if the class organization, i.e. the own organisation of the producer class(es) is not growing day by day, the alienation of the direct producer from the means of production cannot decrease. But if the political power of this class is not developing, this power will be centralized in the hands of a coterie . And as the political power is the seat of all other power, economic power would also be centralized in the hands of a coterie - whatever else is said to the contrary. Then, how would this alienation of the direct producer be overcome? The soviets in the Soviet Union could have been the institution through which the political power of the direct producers could materialize. But during the whole period of collectivization movement it was seen that the role of the peasants' soviets was marginal. Those institutions became gradually weaker and not stronger; the State and the Party became relatively stronger. In the

whole period of collectivization movement, the role of the peasant committees was relegated only to nodding to the decisions coming from above, from the Party.

Thirdly, if decentralization of power is an important condition of development of socialism, to get rid of the differences between the rural area and the urban area is imperative. But the experience of the collectivization movement in Soviet Union mainly went to the opposite direction. There are many examples of deprivation of the rural area in this period. Vast soviet countryside was the place from where the needs of urban authorities were to be met. By increasing the arbitrary 'collection' from the countryside, by increasing the grain-rent for purchasing the equipment for the machine and tractor stations, by reducing the price of the agricultural commodities and by taking compulsory donations from the members of the collective farms, the rural economy was generally jeopardized. Sometimes rural labor force was forcibly sent to the mines and industries in the urban area and thus rural economy was further weakened. These steps hardly helped in developing socialism, they helped establishing capitalism instead.

To take away huge amount of grains through 'collection' became the backbone of the Soviet economic policy in that period. The dual compulsion of the import of necessary machinery by exporting grains and ensuring the food supply for the cities by any means was of the topmost priority to the Soviet leadership. Such policy was the result of one-sided endeavor of trying to ensure the development of heavy industry. No doubt, the result was tragic. In every step, on the outside the move was towards socialism, but underneath, in a deeper sense, the essence of capitalist economy was preserved. This self-contradictory dual tendency was the characteristic of the Soviet economy in the entire Stalin era.

How to view this complicated scenario, how to explain it, has become a very important issue today. The western theoreticians who brands the whole period as a period of primitive accumulation of capitalism, led by the Party, cannot explain the absence of the labour market and the capital market, which are two essential features of capitalism. On the other hand, the conservative Marxists, who like to state that the entire period was pure 'socialism', fail to explain the gradual increase of the alienation of the direct producers from the means of production. In reality, the whole pe-

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riod was a 'mixed' one. It cannot be taken to be capitalist, as the people in power were neither capitalist, nor capitalist-roaders. Their political goal was to build socialism, to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. We can call this period socialist in the same sense that Lenin called the Soviet Republic of 1918 or 1921 socialist. "The Socialist Soviet Republic indicates that it is firm in its determination to graduate to socialism. It's not that the new economic system can be called socialist." But at the same time, the inherent limitations of this system, not only the remnants of but sometimes also the growing tendency of capitalism and the inability to recognise the problems, constitute a serious deviation. If we do not become conscious of these deviations, we won't be able to draw any lesson for the future.

The error in judgment of the interrelation between principal and non-principal contradiction led to the impediment of a balanced development in Soviet economy, the proletarian dictatorship remained only on paper, in reality all political power was centralized in the Party, in the whole period the questions of decentralization of power and the withering away of the state were not dealt with theoretically - all these were basic limitations of practice of socialism in the Soviet Union. Now the time has come to pay attention to these points very deeply.

Like agriculture, the Soviet industry in the 30s also provides a complicated picture. On the one hand, there was great enthusiasm for the practice of socialism, which was genuine to a great extent. On the other hand, there was alienation of the direct producer from the means of production. During the whole period these two opposite trends went hand in hand. If we try to brand this complicated scenario in one dimensional fashion, we will learn nothing out of it. The situation has to be understood in its entirety.

First, we will start with the endeavors of the Party to cut down the alienation of the producers in industry. In the years just after the seizure of power, workers' soviets were formed rapidly and spontaneously. These were real centers of political power - the Party did not interfere in their process of decision taking and policy making. In this phase the working class in their own initiative seized control of factories, which was later made legal by issuing state decrees. The 'Sabotnik' movement started from such a living environment. In the hard days of civil war when Moscow-Kazan rail work-

ers worked for extra hours without extra payments, it was due to nothing but socialist zeal to save the nascent soviets. Lenin described the Sabotnik movement as the 'real beginning of socialism'.

In the next phase, in the 20s to the 30s, some party-directed movements took place, which were similar to the 'Sabotnik' movement in form, but which nonetheless lacked its spontaneity. The 'Voskreskin' movement which took place in the late 30s, was also a movement of performing extra hours of voluntary work, meant to collect money for the completion of the first five-year plan. 'Shockwork Team' movement was started in 1926 to increase the productivity within regular work hours. 'Public Tugboat' movement was started to help backward industries to move forward. It was started by a worker. A worker of the 'Artem' Mine was from the Navy. It was he who visualized the tugboat plan. Just like a tugboat which carries with it the boats which had lost their steam, a backward industry could also be taken to its destination. He started working on this idea. In 1930, the workers of Leningrad started a new movement named 'Counter-planning'. In this practice of counter-planning the workers attained so much expertise in the organization and administration of industry that some of them took special training and became specialists in different industries. As a result of this, the workers of a factory decided to finish their work scheduled in the five-year plan in 4 years, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party broadcast it in the radio. Work was done in such a speed that really the work of five years was done in four years and three months. The most famous movement of increased initiative of the workers was Stakhanovite movement. This movement, started in 1935, depended not only on high spirits but also reorganized the division of labour and used creativity in work pattern and craftsmanship.

In opposition to the inertia of capitalist production, these movements brought speed and vitality in production. No doubt, the productivity of labour increased by 41% in the first five-year plan, by 82% during the second five year plan, when the Stakhanovite movement had started, and by 32% more during the third plan period. While at the same period the entire Europe was immersed in the great depression, this feat was undoubtedly worth mentioning. In the government documents of Soviet Union, in its arts and literature, this success has been described as the success of socialism.

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There is some truth in this assertion. The dark days of Tsarist autocracy was still not forgotten. People liberated from that dark regime were naturally inspired in engaging themselves into productive work, because till then they thought this state to be their own. They thought the party also was their own. But in agriculture we found that behind this visible reality lurked another deeper reality, which grew to shatter this first reality. In the case of industry also we shall see that behind this inspired work another process was also at work, which alienated the direct producer from the means of production. Political power was not being centralized in the hands of the working class, rather the working class was being changed into a social force subservient to the Party and the State. Trade unions, which were their own organization, were either withering away, or being made subservient to the Party and the State. The income differential among workers was increasing, not decreasing in most cases. We must focus our attention to the complicated scenario created by these two divergent pictures, so that we can at least locate the areas of the problem.

It should be reiterated here that the-then soviet economy could not solve the problem of unequal development. Instead of decreasing, the difference between countryside and cities went on increasing through large-scale urbanization. From 1926 to 1939, in the twelve years the urban population increased from 26.3 million to 56.1 million, that is, an increase of 112%. This incidence indicated a primary failure of socialist construction, because this increase was anarchic in nature. This increase of urban population was not consistent with the needs of economic planning or economic growth. The Government controlled newspaper '*Izvestia*' wrote: "The urban growth is too much. The food supply, the supply of housing and other needs of life has posed a serious problem..." Many administrative and repressive steps were taken to stop this anarchy. For example, compulsory labour, internal passport etc. was imposed, but these yielded no result. The cities were gradually filled up, filled up with uprooted peasants from the far away countryside, who were unknown to each other. Thus endless poverty on the one hand and alienation from one another gave rise to indiscipline of various types. Alcoholism was on the rise. As the divided workers could not put up proper resistance, the authority used to have recourse to repressive measures, which had little resemblance with

————— *Practice of Soviet Socialism in the Thirties: Successes and Failures*
socialism. This was the common scenario of the cities and of the workers.

In this process of urbanization the number of workers went on increasing at a rate which was more than 50% above the government plan. But should only the increase of the number of wage-labourers be called socialism? Should that be called the strengthening of the working class? Mere increase in numbers does not signify that this was indeed a journey towards socialism. It should rather be searched in the daily life of the wage-labourers, in their work conditions, their rights and in the relations of production. Now we shall judge this.

Upto 1929 the trade unions of Soviet Union had an important role in the administration of the factories. They had some independence, which helped them take steps in the appointment or removal of workers, in opposing such decisions as went against the interests of the workers. The situation changed in the year 1930. The state started taking such steps in the name of economic plan that took away the rights of the workers - they became the instruments for meeting the needs of the state. But as the working class of the Soviet Union was a bit accustomed to exercising their own power, they did not accept these steps. From 1931 onwards the soviet state had to take some harsher steps.

In 1932 the system of using internal passport for appointment was started. The worker had to show the passport to the administrator of the new factory. The administration thus could know why the worker had left the old job. In 1938 work book was introduced. Work book was opened when a worker started his first job. As long as the worker worked in that organization, the work book would remain with its administration. The administration would note all the punishments received by the worker in that work book. When the worker went to work in a new organization, the book was to be taken to the new manager. In June 1940 a new decree proclaimed that no worker could leave his job. If one leaves his job without permission, he would get an imprisonment of two to four months. New law was passed to enable the judges punish the workers without hesitation. In this way the authorities were taking away the rights of the workers to leave their job, and at the same time they were giving the administrators the power of retrenchment of workers. A few laws were passed in the name of 'preservation of labour

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power', which infringed upon the workers' rights. For example, the students who would take money for their vocational training from the finance department would have to compulsorily work in the factories earmarked by that department for three years. To make this system permanent and strong a directorate of labour reserve was created, which would admit eight to ten lakh students into the vocational schools.

The system that in determining the wage, administrative steps were more effective than trade union acted as a barrier in the path of independent decision-taking of the workers. In the whole of 30s the wage was decided in the condition that they have to meet the production target. It was decided what target the workers would have to [meet] to receive a fixed wage. Instead of bilateral contract administrative arrangement became more important. In this way, 'Commission for Settling Labour Disputes', established in 1918, basically a workers' organization, was abolished in the 30s. The management became all-powerful. The right to strike was not taken away. But if the workers would take any collective step against the decisions of the management regarding the wage, the method of work, or the work environment, they would be punished. The police could act in such situations, they would use the clause 58 of the Criminal Code, which said : "If the workers voluntarily shun their responsibility or voluntarily neglect their work, their independent status would be taken away from them for one year, their property may also be confiscated." To this was added the tendency to break the labour laws by the management itself. In the 30s itself all the rules of overtime were broken, the work hour was extended to 12 to 16 hours. And all these was done in the name of socialist competition.

The labour laws passed to do away with the 'indiscipline' among the workers did not vest the power in the hands of the working class, rather they looked like capitalist arrangement. For example, according to the clause 47 of the labour law, if one got absent for 3 days in a month (and if he could not show satisfactory cause), he would be retrenched. In 1932 this rule was changed, according to the new rule if one was absent for just one day, the management was empowered to retrench him. If the worker was proved to be in the wrong, he and his family could be evicted from his home, even if it were winter, even if he had no alternate ar-

rangement. There are many examples that to avoid the punishment of being late the workers would skip their lunch. All these are symptoms of centralization of excessive power in the hands of the management, who controlled the means of production. Again, this was the period when the government was declaring the victory of socialism, and on the outside, there was truth in this declaration. From the government documents it is found that the number of labour-days lost due to absent workers was 5.95 days in 1932, it was reduced to 0.93 days in 1933, and 0.67 days in 1934. How much of this was due to ideological inspiration and how much was the result of pressure from the Party or the state, is a complicated question [and cannot be ascertained from the partial snap-shots] It won't be known from the part-pictures. The statistical figures can well be confusing. To understand the situation in its totality, one can try to understand the trade union rights of the workers.

Lenin advised that the trade unions are to be built as an independent organization so that they would not become lackeys of the state, they could be used as the instrument of the working class to safeguard their own interest from their own state. Lenin thought that it was also the first necessity for fulfilling the target of production. In the 14th Congress in 1925 this ideological position was adopted. But afterwards, when the programme of rapid industrialization was taken, this position became slackened. To achieve the target the trade unions themselves started to remove their old leaders. They started to regard the Party mandates as unchangeable. In the 16th Congress in 1930, these removals were recognized and it said that the opportunism of the old leaders didn't go well with the needs of the period of reconstruction. From then on the unions became the instruments of making the plans successful rather than instruments of safeguarding the interests of the workers. At the same time the process of changing the structure of the union was started from above, through the Party. The power of the central council of the trade unions was reduced and the power was concentrated in the hands of the presidium led by the Party Polit Bureau. In the one-sided emphasis on the implementation of the Central Plan the welfare of the workers became so neglected that Stalin had to write in 1931 that for the increase of production a situation favourable to the work and livelihood of the workers is of prime importance.

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But this warning from Stalin could not change the chain of happenings. To maintain the increase of production as the main target, the unions had to relegate the problems of the workers to a secondary position; in many cases they were turned into instruments of preventing the increase of wage of the workers. The workers lost their faith in the trade unions. In many cases spontaneous workers' agitations started to take place. The trade unions were used for the repression of those agitations. From the 9th Trade Union Congress in 1932 the Trade Unions formally became the instrument of the State. Thus began the "Trade Union Crisis".

Practically the Central Committee of the Party was forced to place itself in a self-contradictory situation. On the one hand Stalin had declared - the Trade Unions should mainly care for the human existence of workers, their housing, their cultural needs and the daily needs of the workers, and on the other hand the Central Committee didn't depend on the workers and themselves formed a committee [from above]. This committee headed by Kaganovich was appointed for reorganization of the Trade Unions. For the first few months the Trade Unions did not even know about the existence of this committee. The Committee first postponed the election of the Trade Unions, and convened a Conference of the Central Council. In this Conference they accepted that there was a crisis in Trade Union, and they declared the policy of developing the initiatives of the workers from below. Much self-criticism was undertaken. A few leaders following the Party line were made scapegoat and blamed for this.

In 1936 due to political and social unrest the Trade Union Crisis was put under the carpet. But the problem of alienation of the working class remained.

It goes without saying that if the Trade Union rights were curtailed in this way, the economic condition would become worse. But if we are to understand the situation in its entirety, a few points should be mentioned. Firstly, since 1926 the difference between the wages of skilled and unskilled workers could be noticed. Maurice Dobb has mentioned that in the 7th Trade Union Congress in 1926 in declaring the policy of reducing the wage difference Tomsky made an amazing statement. At first he explained how the wage difference between skilled and unskilled workers had increased disproportionately, and why a struggle should be lodged to decrease this

difference. And next he said, “When foreigners come to visit our country, they are most surprised to see that in the revolutionary union under the dictatorship of the proletariat the wage difference between skilled and unskilled labourers is so great that it is not seen even in the West European countries.” In the following years piece rate work was formally recognized by the government and the basis of wage differential was further extended. Secondly, work-norm was made higher in a unilateral way. Hence the wage of the workers who failed to produce according to the target was decreased. Up to this time, work-norm was decided according to the production of an average worker. In the period of ‘socialist competition’ it began to be decided according to the productivity of the Stakhanovite worker or the shock-work team workers. The Stakhanovite movement, which stands as an ideal for the great socialist work initiative, also shields the history of oppression of many workers. Quite a great number of workers could not meet the work-norm. In 1938, 60% workers of the metal smelting department could not attain work-norm. In all the departments taken together, the percentage was 22 to 32 per cent. Not only was the endeavor to decrease the difference of wage shelved, but the wage difference started to increase very rapidly. After the rationing system was abolished in 1935, the plight of the workers surviving on low wage became very acute. There was no role of the Trade Unions in deciding as to what should be the wage for which work, which worker should be appointed where. Hence the Party, the State and the management started to decide the target in a one-sided way and also decide the policy to reach that target. The productivity increased, the density of work increased, but the real wage started to decline, the different problems of livelihood started to increase.

In such a situation, the workers had chosen the path of passive resistance by increasing the absenteeism, by reducing the amount of work or performing their work badly. But this path cannot make the workers a united block, instead this had made them even weaker. In long absence of any trade union movement among the workers, and a large exodus of peasants from the countryside made them like fish out of water. On top of it, the party workers view them with suspicion because of their “kulak” connection in the past. As a result, the goal of increasing productivity that was set by the party and the state, these large sections of the masses

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had no contributions to make in the entire state of affairs. In the final analysis, the productivity indeed suffered.

Yet, this was the period when the industrialization was a grand success. The inherent contradiction of the socialist construction of the Soviet Union most probably assumed the most intense proportion in this sector. How the apparent success in the process of rapid industrialization in the 30's and following that how the seeds of the future catastrophes were being sown is a matter to ponder over.

In that era, the backdrop of socialist competition that was created by the party was by no means an illusory affair. A part of the workers had indeed responded to the call and established various legendary milestones which we have read in the contemporary soviet literature. Those who had responded to the call consisted of a bunch of skilled old-time workers. They were loyal to the party and obviously they were earning a higher wage. And there was a bunch of young and ambitious workers. These two sections of the work force were the ones who had mainly organized the Shock Brigades and the Stakhanovite movement. These movements, in the sphere of industrialization, gave rise to many a splendid results. At the same time, it created a deep fissure in the society, it created a division within the working class. The socialist competition had two contradictory bearings. On the one hand, it had its declared objective - "comradely helping hand be extended by the advanced workers to the less advanced ones so that it would lead to a collective progress". On the other hand there emerged as an offshoot a trend of replacing a group of workers by another group of workers thereby increasing the work-norm. Since those who emerged as victorious in this competition received bonus and [extra] commodities, the difference of income of those who received these and those who did not, led to a social contradiction. Those who belonged to Shock Work team were found to be usually alienated from the common workers. The management persons or the administrative persons were usually recruited from among them; as a result the alienation would further increase.

Similarly, this same internal contradiction was intensely present within the Stakhanovite Movement as well. Shock-Work movement while increased the density of work, the Stakhanovite Movement has changed the production processes and production techniques per se, thereby registered an unbelievable increase in

the production. The coal mine where this movement had started for the first time, had teams comprising 23 workers; after the initiation of the movement, teams of 10 workers were made and the production was increased from 250 ton per shift to 330 ton per shift. The per capita increase in productivity was 3 times as much. This spectacular increase in the production had created a sensation in the entire Soviet Union and in no time this movement was spread in other engineering sectors and in the textile sector. The most interesting thing was that this movement had widened division of labour. Before this movement, the skilled workers used to share some of the jobs meant for the unskilled workers. But after this movement, the unskilled workers were confined to perform the jobs meant only for them. Previously, the teams were composed of 18 skilled and 5 five unskilled workers; now instead of this composition, the teams were composed of 6 skilled workers and 5 unskilled workers. Quite a number of sectors witnessed a composition in which there was one skilled workers per dozen of unskilled workers. Since the unskilled workers earn less amount of wage, these changes increased the disparity in the wage of the workers. This movement was created by the workers themselves, the determinant factor was workers' initiatives, consistent with socialist ideology; yet as a result of this movement, the work-norm and the density of work had started increasing in such a manner that the Stakhavites became far removed from the masses of the workers, the internal contradiction among the workers started intensifying. On the one hand workers' own organization, which was supposed to look after workers' own demands - the trade union- was virtually dead, on the other, most of the workers resorted to passive resistance against the elevated work-norm and fighting against the administration and the management. In this social backdrop the Stakhanovite movement both increased the production as well as the alienation of the workers from the means of production. This increase in alienation was responsible for the fulfillment of only 59% of the target production in 1936, the year named as the "Stakhanovite Year".

In such an alienated environment, the over-dependence on the skilled work force, the establishment of "Central Institute of Labour" in order to impart specialized training to a few workers to separate them from the rest of the workers, providing extra facilities to minority of the work force - all of these steps were going against the

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principles and the methods of socialist development. In this phase, the gap between those among the workers who were members of the Communist Party and those who were not started widening. The high-handedness and the ambitions of the party members had assumed such a proportion that in the year 1933-1934 many among the party members had to be expelled from the ranks of the party. The representation of the workers within the party started diminishing slowly. The degree of reduction of such representation in 1939 has become 50% more compared to the corresponding figure in 1932. The fact remains that during the peak period of the socialist reconstruction, the alienation of the working class with the party continued to increase. Another significant incident was that during this period, alcoholism among the workers assumed a dangerous proportion. This cannot be explained unless one assumes that the workers were not only alienated from the means of production, but also they were suffering from a kind of a social alienation as well. In the entire phase of transition from the capitalism to socialism, the mix of capitalist and the socialist components that are present in the socialist society and the task of destroying the capitalist components and strengthening the socialist components is a very difficult proposition and this has been aptly made clear by the discourse of the history of socialism in Soviet Union. The socialist society inevitably retains the determinant force of "bourgeois right" of distribution of produced commodities and the distribution of labour among the members of the society. Marx mentioned this aspect as a defect, but in the primary phase of the communism this defect was inevitable because the overthrow of capitalism does not mean that the people without any criterion of rights will engage themselves into any kind of work. Besides, the abolition of capitalism cannot instantly fulfil the economic conditions of these changes. Marx said that indulging in such a thought is just utopia. The more complicated aspect of it is that in this phase, the capitalism not only can survive but can also develop over a certain phase, as it has happened during the NEP period. That is why identifying the society as capitalist by identifying these capitalist features within the society is over-simplification. There is a reverse trend against this which is more dangerous. Unbridled capitalism sometimes are passed off as socialism with the argument that in socialism, capitalism exists. Capitalism can be developed from the viewpoint of capitalism; it can be developed from the point of view of socialism as well. Again,

with socialist intentions, capitalism can be developed by mistake. This process is an exceedingly complex one; thus the role of ideology, political clarity, the dynamics of consciousness play the determinant role. Any kind of slackness, limitation of thought / consciousness, lack of far-sight can easily off-set all the good wishes and can generate the reverse process, a return from which is very difficult. Again, if one gives rise to a reverse trend consciously, then as and when the need be one can change the course since one holds the key to control the process. That the role played by “consciousness” in the entire phase of socialism is determinant can be understood from these lessons. The struggle for socialism, is in effect, the resolution of innumerable contradictions. In the primary phase of world revolution (the same phase is continuing till date), the resolution of these contradictions in favour of socialism is the most difficult task, because in this phase, the habits and psyche of the old society would be the strongest one. Small scale production and the capitalist encirclement provide the material basis to strengthen these habits. This is a new experiment in the history of mankind. As a result, the chance of committing a mistake in this experiment would be high. Soviet Union embarked upon such an endeavour for the first time and hence chances of making an error in the Soviet experiment was also high over there. The practices in the Stalin era in the Soviet Union should be viewed from these perspectives.

The assertion that it is the consciousness that plays the determinant role subsumes an inherent contradiction that the then Soviet Communist Party could not resolve. One of the causes of the catastrophe of the Soviet Union at a later time and the catastrophe of the world’s socialist movement in general lies in the absence of the resolution of this problem. If “consciousness” has to play the determinant role, it has to become the consciousness of the “vanguard”. A section of the working class must be the bearer and become the vanguard having this consciousness. This vanguard section would be the “party”. On the contrary, the socialist revolution overthrows the capitalist class to install the working class as a whole and not any fraction of the working class, not the party itself. This leads to a contradiction. The determinant role was played by the vanguards, in other words, by the party, though, at least theoretically, the working class is in power. The party started thinking that the class is backward, the class retains the peasant and the petty-

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bourgeois components. Hence it cannot view the entirety. Hence the party started to impose its vision on to the class. On the other hand, the class started thinking that its own party is now neglecting its own class interest. This contradiction has been there in the Soviet Union since the days of the NEP. The trade unions or the Soviets were representing the interests of the workers and the managers implemented official policies of the state. One went against the other. The struggle became inevitable. This problem has become very acute in the decade of 1930. The vanguard of the workers thought that those backward section of the workers, who could not appreciate the necessity of the workers' state, were fundamentally "petty-bourgeois" or "peasant". Because had they been true workers (that is, had they been vanguards) they would have understood the imperatives of the moments. Hence if they were strengthened by means of trade unions and other channels, that would further the interests of the capitalism. Thus the activities of the trade unions were thwarted. As a reaction to that, the class became alienated from the party one again. This problem could not be solved in a proper fashion; it was thus decided in an implicit way in the history of socialism that the "class" and its "vanguard" i.e., the "party" were one and the same. Thus the power held by the party was identified with the power held by the class. And hence for this reason, the soviets, the own power center for the class became superfluous, the class lost any of its independent organizations, party became the determinant of everything.

This situation gave birth to many crises. As the class failed to organize themselves into their own organization, hence it did not have an organized matrix, the class became numerous isolated entities. The party turned out to be divorced from the class, above the class, an organization outside the ambit of the class. The result was as it was expected to be. The ideological foundation of the Communist Party lays the foundation of the working class as a class and ensures that it derives its sustenance from the continuous struggle of the class. Thus a party, divorced from the class inevitably receives the favourable objective condition for inclining towards the bourgeois class. This process had started in the Stalin era. This was completed with Khrushchev and in the later days. Secondly, as the party was divorced from its class, hence the state and the means of production, run by the party was also divorced from the class. In

the capitalist system, the worker is alienated from the means of production owned by the capitalists, the worker has no right to decide about the production process and distribution; and in the Soviet Union, the workers were alienated from the state-owned means of production. This situation had arisen because of the alienation of the workers from the party. And the contradiction between the vanguard and backwards had not been resolved successfully and thus the problem persisted. Thirdly, this situation gave rise to another serious self-contradiction. The working class is disorganized, the workers' soviets were wound up, even the trade unions non-functioning, but in such a situation it was asserted that the form of the political power of the working class was the "dictatorship of the working class". In the political literature of the Soviet Union, it was never mentioned that the "dictatorship of the working class" would be operationalised through the "party dictatorship". It was never mentioned that the dictatorship of the working class and the dictatorship of the party is one and the same. But the contrary was asserted with all emphasis. Apart from the first few years of the October revolution when the Soviets were alive, despite repeated declaration of the dictatorship of the workers, we have never seen this form of the dictatorship. And if the dictatorship of the proletariat has not taken its shape, how could the democracy for the majority be established? Was it not that the failure to establish dictatorship of the workers from the 1930s contained the seeds of the party bureaucracy that had grabbed the Soviet Union in the later years?

Similarly, the contradiction between the existence of the state and its withering away could not be resolved by the then Soviet Union. Lenin had shown in his book, "The state and Revolution" that more a state become democratic, more the situation would be conducive for its "withering away". If the dictatorship of the workers does not take its shape, then that state can never offer democracy to its majority citizens. Because if the class does not have its center of political power, it would be impossible for it to become armed for protecting the state which provides democracy to the majority and to impose "control" on to the production and its distribution as well as to keep an "account" of the labour and the commodity produced by the labour. If that be the case, then the bureaucratization and the centralism of the state would be increased, as a result instead of state getting withered away, the

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state would be strengthened as is the case in any capitalist system. The contradiction between the planned economy and the decentralization of the economic power remained unresolved as there was no class organization of its own. Unless there is a decentratization of the economic power, the gap between the countryside and the cities cannot be reduced. Unless the capitalist curse of division of labour is dispensed with, the difference between the physical and mental labour cannot be reduced. Through the description of the experience of the Soviet Union during the 30s, we have seen how the failures in these sectors had also occurred.

The failure to a comprehensive resolution of interrelation between the party and the class and the absence of the development of their own class organization, there was a major gap in the experiments in the Soviet socialism since 1930s. We have already mentioned that if there is one *signature specifica* of the socialism, then it is the gradual termination of the alienation between the direct producers and the means of production. From the historical materialist point of view, this has a deep significance. The origin of the irreconcilable crisis of the capitalist production system is the contradiction between the socialization of the production and the expropriation of the means of production by the individual owners. The socialist revolution removes this crisis by establishing the social ownership over the means of production. Thus, the proper liberation from the capitalist production system lies in the establishment of the social ownership. And the fundamental key to social ownership lies with the degree to which the direct producers are able to control the production and distribution process. The extent to which the socialist practices are able to achieve this aspect, the success of the socialism will be achieved to that extent; on the contrary, the degree to which the socialist practice fails to achieve these aspects, the success of the capitalism would be attained to that extent. As socialist ownership is literally the ownership of the direct producers, hence no party or its supreme well-wisher state on behalf of the direct producers is able to take that ownership. The extent to which this happens, the direct producers in effect, would be deprived of its ownership and in a deeper sense of the term, the capitalism will take its place. The dictatorship of the workers is that political embodiment through which not the party, but the whole class can establish its hegemony and on the basis of

that strength it exercises control over the production and the distribution process. The dictatorship of the working class is that political form whose continuous development would establish the socialist ownership, as opposed to private or group ownership. We have noticed that the most glorious period of the struggle for socialism in the Soviet Russia, namely during the 30s, the class was alienated from the production process, the class organization started becoming weakened and the concept of dictatorship of the workers had been reduced to mere words.

The practice of socialism is a unique and unprecedented experiment in the history of mankind. Though many an old practice will remain at this stage, the determinant practice would be the introduction of the new. Because for the first time in the human history, a new system would begin in which the power to exploit has not been transferred to another exploiting class; a new exploitation-free system had been established. For the first time a system began when the ownership of the means of production no longer remained at the private hand, but taken a course to become “socially owned”. Now all these “firsts”, the beginning of all these “new features”, if they are to be successfully implemented would require extraordinary cautionary measures. Though these cautionary measures are fundamentally ideological in nature, but they should be expanded to the political, cultural and organization spheres. It is such a course of a social system in which the “democracy” would be extended to such a degree that the “democracy” would finally wither away. The various classes of the society will wither away, the difference between the mental and the physical work will be terminated. Men, at last marks of their own mode of social organization, consequently become at the same time masters of nature, masters of themselves- free.” (Engels).

In the social system where the programme of mankind is such, the interrelation of the advanced thinking and the backward thinking, the interrelation between the class and the party, the interrelation between the party organization and the class organization must all be looked into from a fresh and a new viewpoint. In all the previous social systems, consistent with the prevailing systems, the power had been concentrated continually to only groups ie, parties representing the class. That class had grabbed the power disregarding the class itself (fascism, in effect, had divided its class). All

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these were rather natural, because all these systems were (and are) based on private ownership and hence they are exploitative, master-centric, clannish and with centric tendency. But the charter of the socialism is exactly the opposite and thus its course must be towards an opposite direction.

Thus in socialism the “vanguard” will have to realize that its vanguardism is a historical objectivity on the one hand, on the other, the organic program of the vanguard would be to eliminate the difference between the vanguard and the backward; in other words, the vanguard must continuously diminish its very existence. Though in the human history, the role of the vanguard would remain for quite some time to come, yet the conscious effort to initiate the process to reduce this difference and the role of the vanguard to be limited only to the “ideological leadership” must be continued in an uninterrupted manner. The organizational form of this would be to reduce the importance of the party and continuous increase of importance of the role of its own class organization. The continuous development of the political-organisational form of the dictatorship of the working class must be consistent with it, because it will decide whether the democracy of the majority will be extended or not, whether the proper social ownership will be established over the means of production or not, whether the direct producers will have real control over the production process or not. On the contrary, the extent to which the difference between the vanguard and the backward will remain within the society, the extent to which the “party” organization of the vanguards would be more powerful than the organization of the backwards, the extent to which the continuous assumption of power by the class will be thwarted, exactly to that extent in all social activities the party will come to the determinant position and the alienation of the class from the means of production will be increased. The concept of social ownership will become a mere word, the party and the class will move away from one another, the ownership of the state would no longer be treated as the ownership of the class. And party will become a group, de-linked from the class; the capitalist ideology will have an easy breeding ground in such a group.

The Soviet Union has been drawn into this problem since 1930s. If we have to learn a lesson from the past in order to build socialism in future, then we have to understand the Soviet experiment in an

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objective manner. Blind hate or unconditional loyalty- both of these are detrimental to learning process.

In the history of the world, Stalin established an unprecedented new order in a unique situation; if one cannot appreciate pressure of the circumstances, the historical compulsions it had, one can easily dub Stalin as a “demon”. The Capitalist intellectuals are doing just that for their own class interest. But it is rather unfortunate that many a leftist intellectual is also doing the same thing owing to their one-dimensional viewpoint. As a result the forces which are against socialism are strengthened. On the other hand, in our country, the leftist movements view this Stalin era with a nostalgia charged with emotion that any attempt to understand and analyse it with a critical attitude is usually treated as a heresy. The time has now come when we have to defeat these two wrong trends to understand with ruthless objectivity that the glorious effort of Stalin to establish socialism had carried seed to destroy socialism, that the absence of a deep discourse of the ideological problem led to the thwarting of the development of working class as a class, despite the fact there was no dearth of good will towards the working class; that despite the continuous declaration of the dictatorship of the working class, the political-organisational form of it was getting abolished and finally despite the abolition of the private ownership, the direct producers were deprived of assuming their ownership. We have to understand with right earnest, that the Khrushchovs do not emerge from the blue. If we can identify the path they tread, then only we can advance a step further to resist their re-emergence.

The extreme catastrophe of the socialism might be laying the foundation of a more powerful reconstruction of the socialism.

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The Courage to Climb the Unexplored Mountain

Prasanta Roy

Since the last decade of 20th century to first one of this century, all attention of the revolutionary people and the communists of the whole world has been concentrated on the developments in Nepal. The continuing revolutionary movement of Nepal led by CPN(M) has become the beacon, the only source of inspiration to thousands who aspire for making revolution in their own countries. It will be a sheer over-simplification to believe that only the sustained armed struggle that the CPN(M) carried on successfully for long 10 years at a stretch generated this admiration and faith in that party. Many other Communist parties of the world in different periods of history waged armed struggle for such a long period, even for a longer period. But those parties failed to create such a deep interest. It is because none of those parties could show such rare innovativeness as the CPN(M) has been showing right from its inception. Its firm belief that a genuine communist party should never forget that Marxism teaches to become critical towards Marxism itself and that only revolutionary practice is a laboratory to know whether one is upholding Marxism or something else, and its tireless and brave effort at translating this belief into action have instilled a kind of freshness and vigour in all its activities. CPN(M) has shown a rare combination of sticking unwaveringly to the politics of armed struggle and an immense flexibility in tactical questions.

Learning lessons from the Nepal revolution, particularly from the theoretical understanding of the CPN(M) is of paramount importance for the revolutionaries of India. The communist movement of India is characterized by extreme swings, either towards right or to left. This tendency is a natural outcome of the particularities of Indian history. So it is deep-rooted and very difficult to combat in the Indian context. To overcome this impasse, the role of consciousness is decisive. It is, therefore, imperative for the Indian Communists to study and understand very thoroughly the political line of CPN(M) which has shown exemplary quality in this matter.

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Rightist deviation in the Indian Communist movement is very hated and much exposed a phenomenon. Compared to this 'left' deviation, since it is fraught with great sacrifices and dedication carries a sort of respect and awe with it. As a result the comrades practising this line grow in them arrogance and imperviousness of mind, which makes it difficult for them to learn from mistakes. For these comrades of our country, particularly the Maoists, to learn from the theory and practice of the Nepal Comrades is of immense importance. This emphasis does not mean that others have to learn anything less; at times it is more, when the question of making a revolution at all arises.

At the very outset let us recognize the principal strength of the political line of CPN(M). It is to keep politics always in command. Although armed struggle is an indispensable means to the proletariat to achieve their political end and hence subordinate to the latter, there have always been problems with international communist movement in determining the interrelation between them. The dominant tendency has been to make either of these two aspects the only one, resulting either in reformism or militarism. It is a unique achievement of CPN(M) to keep on properly ascertaining the interrelation between the two while keeping politics in the controlling position.

With this basic orientation, the CPN(M) comrades have been creating history in our neighbouring country which is as prismatic as it is elusive to some. But it is most fascinating all the same. The rightists in the Indian communist movement disdain them as votaries of left anarchism while the dogmatists feel sorry for their occasional "rightist" tendencies. But both these forces are compelled to shift their positions when the CPN(M) takes any decision in their own favour. And just herein lies the basic strength of CPN(M). Its deft combining of the legal and illegal, open and secret, parliamentary and extra parliamentary forms of struggle baffles both the right and the left deviationists. But this very quality of CPN(M), together with its audacity to 'develop' revolutionary theory according to the concrete condition of Nepal has made this party the finest tutor of the communist revolutionaries the world over.

In this article, we shall enumerate in brief some of the basic political propositions of the CPN(M) which have creativity and a

sort of novelty about them and from which, we, the communist revolutionaries of India have a lot to learn. At the same time we shall try to point out some of the weaknesses in its theoretical understanding.

The question of state

It has two aspects. One is the understanding of the state-power after the destruction of the existing state of Nepal and the other is the general problem of state in countries where the proletariat seizes power. As to the first aspect, as a result of the ten years of armed struggle, and the resultant destruction of the old state, particularly in the rural areas, revolutionary people's power began to be established named United Revolutionary People's Council as an embryonic Central State power. The 75 point 'Common Minimum Policy and Programme' adopted at the first national convention of the U.R.P.C. gives a general outline of the New Democratic State that was proposed to be built up at that point of time. But in April 2003, there was a decisive shift in the understanding and the programme of the party. This shift is a result of a clear recognition of reality. This was a sort of retreat and that is why it required more daring, confidence and brilliance that would have required in treading the charted path. In "An Executive Summary of the proposal put forward by CPN(M) for the Negotiations", the party advanced a proposal for a Democratic Republic. It was deemed by the party as the minimum forward looking political solution of completing the bourgeois democratic revolution and in the process of which negotiations would take a very important place. The party considered it a step towards transition to New Democracy rising above the bourgeois parliamentarism, but not yet reaching the level of New Democracy. The party thought it the most appropriate step both theoretically and given the concrete condition obtaining in the country.

This strategic shift of the party is one of the most remarkable commentaries on CPN(M)'s dialectical understanding of the changing situation and the skilful adaptation to the changed condition. In 2003, so far as the balance of forces was concerned, the strategic equilibrium was achieved, demanding political slogan of rallying around as many political forces as possible. It was a time when monarchy assumed absolute power, destroyed the constitution and made the royal regression come full circle. Upper sections

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of the parliamentary forces representing feudalism and comprador and bureaucratic capitalism strongly sided with the king and the lower and middle strata got polarized around the revolutionary forces. Thus the tripolar alignment of revolutionary democratic, parliamentarian and monarchist forces veered towards a bipolar realignment. So time was required to consolidate the forces that could be rallied, before going for the final offence. Also some time was necessary for garnering international support for the Nepal revolution, given the fact that the communists there are going to seize political power in a highly sensitive geo-political region, sandwiched between two big powers like India and China. These are some of the reasons why the programme of a interim govt. i.e. a Democratic Republic was felt highly necessary for achieving the ultimate goal and why the slogan of Roundtable conference, Republic and Constituent Assembly was popularized throughout the nation.

This being the basic understanding of the interrelation between offence and defence of the Maoists of Nepal, a host of other tactical steps and maneuverings follow. These moves on the part of CPN(M) raise many eye-brows and puzzle many others. So a few words on this. First of all we should mention that to a large section of Indian revolutionaries, participation in election is an anathema in any semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. Teaching these comrades a very good lesson the CPN(M) not only participated in the election in 1991 and won 9 seats in the parliament, but also in its political documents still proclaims, “we did not miss opportunity even for a brief period to carry out political offensive against the futility of the parliamentary system right from the rostrum of the parliament itself. In fact, we prepared people’s war from all fronts.....” (The Worker No.11, page 19) The message is clear. Parliamentary activities, too, can be a part of the preparation of armed struggle if the general political orientation of a party is correct. As for participation in the interim government, we have briefly stated the rationale of a democratic republic as envisaged by CPN(M) and that itself explains why the party decided to take part in the government. CPN(M)’s participation in the government as well as its striking an alliance with the SAP before the April uprising left the rightist snobs of our country as helpless as it left our ultra-left comrades fuming in rage. But when only a few months later the CPN(M) decided to quit the government, how much puzzled our rightist friends became is not fully known to

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us, but that our ultra-left comrades became all gleeful is doubtless. For the Nepal comrades the rationale for deserting the government is as clear as it was when joining it. The Fifth expanded meeting of the Central Committee of CPN(M) held from 3 to August 8, 2007 and attended by 2,174 comrades, decided after prolonged deliberation to quit the government. Let us quote a part of the resolution itself adopted at the meeting. "The CPN (Maoist) will have no alternative to go to movement by quitting the government, if it is not guaranteed to ensure running of the interim government in accordance with the spirit of the agreement (12pt. Agreement), bring an end to terror and regressive feudal conspiracy taking place against the constituent assembly election **by declaring republic**" Add to this the party's self-criticism as evinced in the subsequent press communiqué, "while making compromises with the parliamentary parties, masses should have been informed of those agreements and mobilized along them as far as possible, especially when the party failed to inform the masses of the struggle that the party had kept up on the federal state system and proportional election till the last minute inside Baluwater room. It provides opportunity for the reactionaries and opportunists to launch a campaign against the party by spreading confusion that Maoists left their agenda on Madhesh."

In consonance with this general approach of utilizing every opportunity to promote the cause of revolution, the Maoists of Nepal thoroughly used the weapon of Negotiations. 12 point Understanding of 22 November, 2005, 8 point Agreement of 16 June, 2006, 6 point Agreement of November 8, 2006 - all these are the result of this understanding of the CPN(M). To this party, the negotiations are not only for gaining time before taking the ultimate offensive, but they are a means to make a qualitative leap to a higher level of struggle. Every negotiation is used by the Nepal comrades to accumulate energy to raise their revolution to a "qualitatively newer height".

As for the new type of proletarian (which includes New Democratic) state, CPN(M) shows serious concern and deals with the problems of degeneration of these states into bourgeois states in great detail. While upholding the lessons of Paris Commune and Lenin's advocacy of a "state **without** standing army, **without** a police opposed to the people, **without** an officialdom placed above the people," our comrades of Nepal find the ultimate solution in the

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theory and practice of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China. They believe comrade Mao made historic contribution in the development of a new type of proletarian state. They put much importance on the creation of revolutionary committees made up of non-party masses to conduct the state functions. In a 2003 resolution of the Central Committee circulated for public debate, it is stated: "A party, which may be proletarian revolutionary, and a state, that may be democratic or socialist at a particular time, place and condition, may turn counter-revolutionary at another time, place and condition. It is obvious that the synthesis of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, namely the masses and the revolutionaries should rebel in such a situation is fully correct in its place. However, as if a particular communist party remains proletarian for ever, once a New Democratic or Socialist state is established under the leadership of the party, there is either no opportunity, or it is not prepared, or it is prohibited, for the masses to have a free democratic or socialist competition against it". The same resolution stresses on the need of creation of a situation to ensure continuous proletarianisation and revolutionisation of the communist party by organizing political competition within the constitutional limit of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist democratic state. If the party fails to continuously revolutionize itself the masses must have the right to install an alternative revolutionary party or leadership of the state. Amongst these parties, there should not be mechanical or formal co-operation with one another, as it was in China, but democratic political competition in the service of the people. The Nepal comrades are so serious on this question that they would rather go through the risk of allowing room for the imperialists to sabotage revolution than allow the hegemony of a single party. According to the paper submitted by CPN(M) at the International Seminar on 26th December, 2006, its deep conviction in this matter is expressed in the following words : "Till now, most of the proletarian revolutions have been sabotaged by internal degeneration of the party itself, not the direct intervention of the imperialists. Yet, this danger remains there. But we think it is less dangerous than the degeneration of the party into revisionism".

What is most important in CPN(M)'s concern with the question of state is the attention it has focused on the inter-relationship between class dictatorship and the leadership of the communist

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party. According to it, since 'state' literally means forcible exercise of the 'will' or 'dictatorship' of one class over the other, without the last class in history, i.e. the proletariat exercising direct dictatorship, no 'new state' can be created in the Marxist sense of the term. But how can the class exercise dictatorship? The CPN(M) believes that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the dictatorship of the party or its higher leadership but a class dictatorship applied through the elected representative organs (eg. The Soviets or the People's Councils) of the masses. The CPN(M) thinks that grave errors were committed everywhere in the international communist movement by virtually obliterating differences between a communist party and a socialist state. So the communists of to-day should show courage to rectify the errors by upholding what Lenin, after the October Revolution continuously stressed, that dictatorship of the proletariat should be applied through the Soviets. This might well be a very cardinal lesson for the Indian Communists, too.

On the Question of Party

The historic tendency of the communist parties even the parties led by our greatest leaders to have degenerated into revisionist parties has been a great concern of the comrades of CPN(M). They are reluctant to oversimplify the causes behind this by ascribing treachery or degradation to individual leaders, as we, the Indian communists are wont to do. Rather they emphasize on wrong or one sided understanding of democratic centralism and the isolation of the parties from the masses as the basic causes behind the degeneration. They think while it may be historic 'necessity' to put more emphasis on centralism at some times, it is absolutely wrong to make the immediate necessity a universal principle. It is what happened in the commintern period and as a result the understanding of relation between democracy and centralism became metaphysical. They advocate high degree of democracy to achieve proper centralism without which socialism cannot be attained. That they are sincere about this belief is clearly demonstrated in their holding of Expanded Central Committee meetings at regular intervals where thousands attend. The CPN(M) thinks that the serious mistakes that were committed to practice democratic centralism itself led to the isolation of the party from the masses. Taking lessons from the GPCR, our Nepal Comrades believe, to-day's communists should build new parties by institutionalizing the methods to in-

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crease the initiative of party cadres and masses to rebel against counter-revolution carried out by the highest leadership of the party. This rebellion can be carried to the extent of dismissal of the party members. In this context, the barrier between 'inside' and 'outside' of the party should be demolished. They quote Mao Tse Tung to substantiate their conviction : "To use the excuse of distinguishing between 'inner' and 'outer' is to fear revolution.: (Stuart Schram, Mao Tse Tung Unrehearsed, P.254) A constant supervision, criticism and control over the communist party from outside is possible only when the party ceases to enjoy monopoly power and is compelled to enter into multiparty competition. There should be provisions to throw a communist party out of power through elections when it loses its proletarian character.

Apart from these institutional methods, the CPN(M) highlights the role of consciousness to increase the ideological grasp in the new type of party. It believes that understanding of 'necessity' and transformation of necessity, through the endless journey, into 'freedom', should be the essence of this consciousness. This consciousness should be instilled into every comrade of the party. The practice of the old parties of communist model must end where only the top handful were ideologically active and the rank and file were helpless spectators, unable to judge independently. In the new type of party, conditions must be created where every party worker can develop in himself/herself the ability to dialectically assess and act accordingly.

Creative Application of the Line of People's War

Taking into consideration the specificities of the international and national condition, the CPN(M) has developed a line of people's war which corresponds neither with the protracted people's war as waged in China, nor with insurrection of Russia. The party calls it a fusion of both. But fusion does not mean a mechanical amalgamation of these two different strategic and tactical lines. But it means the application of either of the two that fits in a particular concrete condition. Thus it can be recalled that the initiation was a kind of rebellion where five thousand actions took place simultaneously. It was an objective demand of the then prevailing condition and incidentally it resembled an insurrection. After its success, started planned guerrilla war which was like a protracted people's war.

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“Initiation in a rebellious form but continuation in a protracted way is the specificity of the Nepalese People’s war”. (The Worker No.11) Not to be constrained by the framework of certain model, but continuously developing and changing the old patterns is in absolute consistence with Marxist ideology. The Maoists in Nepal are following this path in various fields of their activities and herein lies the fountain head of their strength, vigour and freshness.

Limitations

It seems paradoxical, almost enigmatic that a party which is so meticulously objective in assessing the reality of its own country, is so grossly enmeshed in subjectivism as to declare that each semi-feudal semi colonial country (which includes India) is ripe for the start of armed struggle. As for India, the level of capitalist development together with the development of working class has given birth to powerful capitalist institutions including the parliament. In such a country, the task of organizing the working class itself has not been properly taken up with a revolutionary orientation. Not to speak of Russia, even in China this task was fulfilled by the CPC before embarking upon the programme of armed struggle. CPN(M) considers entire south Asia as a theatre of people’s war, where liberation of any single country or of a part of it should be the base area for continuing people’s war in other countries of that region. This is perhaps, why it stresses so much on the need of CCOMPOSA or South Asian Soviet Federation. It is a sort of mechanical approach to appraise so evenly the condition of different countries. Particularly when the suggestion comes from a communist party like CPN(M) which has shown exemplary grasp of Marxist understanding so far as their own country is concerned, it carries great weight, so much so that the comrades of other countries would execute the programme even if it does not suit the situation. It may cause immense harm.

Another disturbing limitation of our Nepalese comrades is their relative unconcern regarding the near absence of industrial proletariat in that country. Industrial proletariat in Nepal constitute only 1.25 per cent of the toiling population. The appearance of the working class in the world provided the material basis for creation of Marxism. It is all history now that the communist parties of Russian and China developed their ideological orientation by concentrating deeply on the work among the proletariat, at least at the

initial stage. So a very weak presence of this class in a particular society may pose serious problem so far as the emergence and development of Marxist outlook is concerned. Not that in such countries, there will be no communist party or a revolution. But the problem must be fully recognized, should be dealt with in great detail and ways and means should be devised to overcome the problem arising out of the weak material basis on which communist ideology is built up. It is now a common knowledge that one of the basic reasons why the bourgeoisie of the erstwhile socialist countries could recapture power in the communist parties themselves is their alienation from the proletarian class. The parties failed to organise the class because of their faulty policies and as its outcome the parties also could not get sustenance from the class. The parties turned into breeding ground of bourgeois ideology. The role of the working class, therefore, is of cardinal importance in the development of correct orientation of a communist party. Hence, the extreme smallness of the size of this class is a matter of serious attention, which is not paid to by Nepal comrades.

CPN(M) is extremely one sided in its evaluation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. As an attempt at stalling restoration of capitalism in a socialist society it will definitely go down in history as a great experimentation. But should we not at the same time recognise the painful reality that it failed to perform its desired objective? Should we not concentrate on analysing the reasons behind it, so that we can take lessons for the future? CPN(M) comrades seem to be indifferent to these questions. Unless we are careful about the negative lessons, no positive lesson can be drawn.

The GPCR with all its positive aspects had its own serious limitations that helped the capitalist roaders in the party to seize power without much resistance. Is it not a fact that to oust the capitalist roaders, the smashing of the party committee system led to boundless anarchy throughout the country? The chaos that was let loose gave a handle to the revisionists to consolidate their own power and the arch opportunists like Lin Biao to hatch conspiracy. This situation paved the path of the 9th Congress of the CPC with serious distortions like the theory of 'New Era' and choosing of the 'Successor'. The capitalist roaders used all this to malign the G.P.C.R. and came to power. The G.P.C.R. as its very name implies needed a sound and a very deep theoretical foundation. It pre-supposes an all

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comprehensive revolution in human consciousness. The walk-over that the capitalist-roads had in such a short time indicates that the G.P.C.R. fell far short of achieving all this. We must admit this stark truth. It was obviously not a panacea although we can and should take many great lessons from it. But CPN(M) shows an unqualified support to it. Its contention in favour of the use of 'Maoism' instead of Mao Tse Tung Thought also is very weak. The points that have been put forward to prove the qualitative development in the Marxist Theory of Mao are not always very convincing. There is much left to be desired in their philosophical writings.

The readers will, perhaps, understand that all the criticism that we make of the CPN(M) comrades is the result of our sky-high expectation from them. Their achievement is the highest in the contemporary international communist movement. That is why any of their shortcomings hurt us most. With this very expectation we will hope that they will thoroughly combat any trend that goes against the living spirit of Marxism. Our beloved comrades of Nepal have shown daring to climb the unexplored mountain. They will definitely show this daring in every aspect of ideological and theoretical questions.

Contribution : Rs. 30