



# MARXIST INTELLECTION

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## Editorial

**The Great Proletarian  
Cultural Revolution :  
Some Observations**

*Prasanta Roy*

**Absolute Ground Rent,  
Metabolic Alienation &  
the Green Imperialism**

*Subhra Ketan Basu*

**The Lalgarh Movement,  
the PCAPA  
and the CPI (Maoist)**

*Kushal Debnath*

Issue II  
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Editor and Publisher  
**Prasanta Roy**

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## Editorial

*In the nineties of the last century thanks to imperialist globalization, capitalism appeared to be a bit revitalized. By virtue of its new explorations in the fresh fields of exploitation by ruthlessly crushing protectionism and tariff barriers, imperialism attained, as it were, a fresh lease of life. The advocates of capitalism got euphoric at this, while the Marxists the world over, already losing their sheen after the global debacle of socialism, found it more and more difficult to uphold the invincibility of their doctrine. They did not, perhaps, become skeptical about the future of communism; but that they were gripped with a sense of being irrelevant to the contemporary society was beyond doubt. But this phase was short-lived. As early as in the year 2000, the U.S. Stock-market collapsed and with this the country's economy went into recession. The U.S. economy tried to salvage itself by lowering short-term interest rates to boost the financial management. From then on a credit-induced expansion of economy started creating 'bubble' and when this creation of bubbles was based on home-mortgages, the profit kept on booming through extension of mortgages to further and further customers, until the credit market froze. The bubble at last burst in the later half of 2008, causing a crash, reminiscent of the Wall Street crash of 1929. The citadel of world imperialist was shaken to its foundation. The crisis had its spillover effect on the whole world. The viability of the capitalist system was once again questioned. Marxist understanding of the inevitable doom of capitalism was once again fully vindicated.*

*Our country, too, is having her share of the toll caused by this global recession. On the one hand there is unprecedented job losses particularly in textile, garments, gems and jewellery, construction, steel and IT sectors, and a hectic revision of monetary policy to manage the economic slow-down, like increasing government borrowings, on the other. To add to the woe of Indian economy, defence spending is terribly increased and purchase of arms, particularly from the U.S. and Israel has surpassed all past records. In the period of imperialist globalization, India has completely shed her air of neutrality that she had as a leader of non-aligned movement and become an integral part of the imperialist network, led by the U.S. imperialism. Flinging open the entire economy to FDI, passing and implementing the Seed Bill 2004, SEZ Act 2005, National Agricultural Policy 2006, FII and many other steps indicate the government's tie-up with global capital and an absolute unconcern for the well-being of the masses. It is during this period that India declared herself a Strategic partner of the U.S. imperialism. It is an interesting phenomenon that the Indian National Congress, the major constituent of this very government, the source of immense*

*misery of the people, could win the last parliamentary elections with comfort by projecting itself as a symbol of peace and stability and a new generation leadership on the one hand and offering rural debt waiver and NREGA as a sop, on the other. This is not inexplicable either. Given the fact that the BJP was torn to pieces for its internal squabbles, the so called Third Front was a patchwork of parties hardly generating any confidence among the people and its major architect the CPI (M) was blatantly acting as the enemy of the people, the electorate considered, by default, the Congress as a better option for the time being. The people of West Bengal rightly rejected CPM, the shameless land grabbers and the mindless killers of peasants in Singur and Nandigram while at the national level the electorate failed to connect the suicide of lakhs of peasants with the treacherous pro-imperialist policies of the Congress and voted for them en masse. But this is what the parliamentary politics leads to in the absence of an organized movement of the working class and other toiling masses. Is it not true that there is as yet no political party that can consistently expose the anti-people policies of the ruling classes and the government and launch agitational programmes against them?*

*The parliamentary left parties have traversed fully the course of their degeneration. In the late fifties and sixties of the last century they started their journey as the partners in the state governments very benignly, proclaiming that their governments would play the role of providing support to the people's struggles and relief to them and partly they did that. But as was the historical destiny of revisionism, these parties led by CPI(M) at some time in their experimenting in self-contradictions, found it difficult to hold on to power and at the same time to carry on reforms of sorts even within the bounds of the constitution. They came to realize in the late seventies that to opt for the former was a sure and safe course to rally the cadres behind the party who had by then lost even the vestiges of revolutionary conviction and habit of putting up with the hardships of a struggling life. Thus the basically revisionist line was further nurtured by the constraints of the situation of its our making, leading to what these parties are now today, an integral part of the makers and executioners of the reactionary state policies. Thus these parties, by their negative example have acted as eye-openers and imparted an important lesson: No Communist Party worth the name should go in for the state-power with an objective of retaining it at any cost, within the existing system.*

*Our own camp, i.e., the "the communist revolutionary forces" too, has been consistently failing to live up to the expectation of the people as well as to forge a revolutionary line capable of uniting the various groups into a party. Some of us are distinctly leaning towards a rightist direction. They do still retain the tinge of radicalism and a very militant and struggling cadre force,*

almost reminiscent of the CPI (M) of the sixties. Their too much bias towards parliamentary struggles and a programme of building a mass party show distinct trend of their deviating towards a confirmed revisionist party. On the opposite extremity there are forces among us who despite their supreme sacrifice, courage of conviction and unwavering revolutionary spirit, are still suffering from left adventurism. True, they have rectified many the of errors of the seventies by way of promoting mass organizations, mass struggles, differentiating between the struggles of the rural and urban areas and putting an emphasis on the working class movement. But the root of their basic error and left deviation for that matter lies in their wrong understanding of the present Indian society. They are still stuck to the idea that India is more or less like pre-independence China. They might not proclaim it, but their entire theoretical frame-work points to this mind-set. And as a result they earnestly believe that they are already in war with the Indian State, that Indian revolution is facing the counter-revolution waged by the ruling class and that guerrilla warfare is the principal form of struggle at this juncture. To be true to their belief, they are concentrating their forces in the jungle and hilly areas inhabited predominantly by the tribals, in an honest effort to create guerrilla zones there. They have earned a limited success in carrying out their programme in these selected areas, so much so that the Indian Government also seems to be disturbed at this development. But we must keep in mind that India is too vast a country, its economic development, its capitalist development in particular, has nothing to compare with that of China in her pre-independence days and her working class, both numerically and qualitatively is much more developed than that of China in her revolutionary days. In such a country and in such a situation how can the revolution surge ahead without the political awakening of the working class, without enabling the working class to lead the revolution and without unleashing mass-movements against imperialism and the Indian ruling class? Even the CPC went through this practice before hoisting the red flag in ChingKang Mountain, of course in a way befitting the concrete conditions obtained in China at that period. Unless our comrades become prompt in taking historical lessons, their success may become short-lived and whatever the success, it will remain confined within a few pockets. In between these two aforementioned forces, there are myriads of revolutionary groups endlessly groping in the darkness, untiringly trying and failing to unite the revolutionary groups into a single party. They cherish a false belief that a sufficient political ground exists by which to unite these disparate revolutionary groups into one party. In pursuit of this will-o'-the-wisp these forces are getting fatigued, the elderly leadership devoid of any liveliness and creativity, the number of the cadres decimated.

India is crying out for the birth of a real communist party, incorporating whatever is positive and discarding whatever is negative in the Indian Communist

movement. The situation is ripe. Imperialism is in its throes, likened only to the Great Depression of late twenties of the last century. India, although having a measure of capitalist development and consequently showing some bargaining power of her own, has become a favourite hunting ground for global capital which is sucking our country full to the lees in its desperate attempt to survive. On the one hand, our ruling class shows scant hesitation to compromise with our country's sovereignty by means of new Patent Acts, SEZ, FDI, FII and to top it all the abominable Indo-US Nuclear Treaty, and on the other, they have unleashed an all-out attack on our people in an unprecedented scale and intensity. The working class is undoubtedly the worst victim. The number of workers (including organized sector workers, unorganized sector workers, agricultural labourers and informal sector workers) is around 40 crore; most of them finding it difficult to make both ends meet. Lay offs, lockouts, wage-cuts, retrenchment are a day-to-day affair for industrial workers. This class which is potentially revolutionary is also the motive force of our revolution. The class that will lead our revolution is now a sleeping volcano, lying in wait for the ultimate offensive. Under the circumstances, building up a real communist party is the historic task of the communist revolutionaries. But as our past history and the present confusion indicate, the main obstacle to the formation of a party is the absence of the advanced theoretical line without which all efforts in that direction are bound to failure. The communist movement both nationally and internationally is completely in the doldrums, groping in vain to find out the appropriate road to progress. Applied socialism is now a history. Instances of a continuing social revolution are confined to the pages of books. Amidst this near total darkness the CPN (M) [now called UCPN (M)] of Nepal lit up a glimmer of hope. But in the recent past, after the party had entered the government, the call of its Chairman to strengthen the "Democratic Republic" dashed our hope. The party was floundering in its way to New Democracy and so long as it was in power it was in utter confusion to devise ways and means to regulate, discourage or discard the capitalist economy. Now that the UCPN (M) is out of power we are waiting with bated breath to see how the party can go ahead towards the revolution. That the Marxist theory has long been suffering from the crisis of its development, that it has been failing properly to deal with the complexities of the class-struggle of our times and that a great leap is required in the course of its development is all too obvious. Anybody denying this in the name of defending the sanctity and invulnerability of Marxism is doing harm, not a service to it. Marxism now demands that we face this reality very courageously, for since its birth, this great doctrine had never faced such a predicament before. Any complacency in this matter will ruin the spirit of enquiry and the urge to formulate new political stands, and if and whenever necessary, to reformulate the already existing political positions. Keeping

*continuously to this process of reconsideration, re-evaluation and reformulation is the essence of Marxism.*

*This issue of Marxist Intellection contains three articles:*

*The first one is an attempt to investigate into the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China led by Com. Mao and his party to avert the destiny that befell the great party of Lenin and Stalin. In its long and tortuous course, the GPCR kept on exploring various theoretical questions, most importantly the questions involving class-struggle under socialism, the source of restoration of capitalism in a socialist country and the necessity of continually carrying on revolution in the socialist countries till they achieve communism. Though confined to China alone, this movement assumes world-historic significance. We, too, are always trying to take lessons from this great event. But at the same time, we are opposed to those who consider it as a comprehensive answer to all the problems that the world communist movement is facing to-day and will face in future. These comrades are reluctant to investigate into its failure, for they believe that it was not at all a failure. We on our part cannot but question how a ten-year long movement and that too led by a leader like Comrade Mao completely failed to achieve its objective of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, within a few days of Mao's death. The patent answer that the forces of reaction were more powerful than the forces of revolution is too naïve to be convincing. If this be the answer, no failed revolution requires to be investigated to find out the faults of its inner working. The Paris Commune or the 1905 revolution also could be explained this way, but neither Marx nor Lenin did it. We have in the article "Some Observations on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" tried very partially to look into its limitation. We hope this will provoke many comrades to go into greater details either upholding or criticizing this movement. We will be looking forward to them.*

*The second article "Absolute Ground Rent, Metabolic Alienation and the Green Imperialism" explains the interrelation between the absolute ground rent and metabolic alienation to show how the increased infertility of land, a concomitant of growing capitalism necessitates more and more increase in organic composition of capital that makes a dent into the surplus profit in agriculture and thereby into the absolute ground rent. This erosion of ground rent deprives the landowners of pre-capitalist rights on land paving the way for capitalism to grow further. How this process is in operation in Indian agriculture has been shown with elaborate data. It has also been shown how this ongoing*

*trend in our agricultural sector has been helping imperialism to turn it into its favourite hunting ground.*

*In the third article named “The Lalgarh Movement, the PCAPA and the CPI (Maoist)”, the reader will find a humble attempt at assessing the strength and weakness of Lalgarh movement in West Bengal. Going to do that, the political understanding of CPI(Maoist) vis-à-vis this particular movement has also been analyzed and shown how Com. Ganapati’s appraisal of the movement stands directly opposed to his party’s general evaluation of Indian situation. The author of the article is critical about the later phase of the movement. This phase, he avers, has ruined the possibility of this brilliant movement’s developing into an exemplary mass upsurge. We will be awaiting many rejoinders and hope a healthy and comradely debate will start on this most vital mass movement of our times.*

## The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Some Observations

Prasanta Roy

Restoration of capitalism in the erstwhile USSR tremendously agonized the communists of the whole world. But this agony stopped short of utter despondency, because immediately after the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU, the CPC led by com. Mao Tse Tung plunged headlong into defending Marxism-Leninism and lambasting the vicious revisionist line of the Khrushchovs. At the same time, drawing sustenance from the CPC, many countries including Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea kept waging armed struggles against imperialism and its local allies. These factors enlivened the communists the world over and the serious setback of the world communist movement that was caused by the Khrushchov revisionists was compensated for. Mao's China became the centre of the world communist movement.

The Great Debate carried on between the CPC and the CPSU (1963-1965) enthused the revolutionary communists, who shook off their initial shock and devoted themselves to the party-work in their respective countries. The cogent arguments of the CPC in favour of Marxism-Leninism shattered to pieces the anti-Marxist position of the CPSU and inspired afresh thousands of communists throughout the globe. Following this debate started the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (hence forth only the GPCR) in China. This was an absolutely unprecedented revolution in the world, a revolution in a socialist country directed against those in authority of the party taking the capitalist road. This was a revolution initiated and directly led by com. Mao, a revolution concretely meant to avert the bitter experience of the U.S.S.R i.e., to stall the restoration of capitalism in a socialist country. The communists of the world were further inspired by this great event in history. A feeling of ease was added to revolutionary zeal.

But this situation could not last very long. The GPCR after traversing a zigzag course and passing through a see-saw battle with "those in authority taking the capitalist road", ultimately ended with com. Mao's death in September 1976. But as history would have it, the conclusion of the GPCR did not result in the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat as was the declared objective of this ten years tumultuous struggle. On the contrary, immediately after Mao's death, the capitalist-roaders seized political power and started reversing the entire direction of the GPCR with the clear-cut objective to establish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Within a very short span of time they

successfully achieved this. It was the time when the communists of the world fell into the deepest crisis, which has been persisting till to-day. In fact, for the first time in history of the world communist movement a period of vacuity set in. The reactionaries of all hues gleefully started to propagate that 'socialism as a system does not work'. In the absence of concrete examples of socialist states or any ongoing communist revolution, a great number of people, particularly the younger ones came to believe this. Excepting the streak of hope created by the CPN (M) of Nepal, gloom has been pervading and the communists in every country have been experiencing confusion and frustration. A mechanical denial of this state of affairs born of dogmatism will not solve the problem. The communists should bravely face the stark reality that the prevailing situation is the result of a crisis in the development of the Marxist theory. Since the present situation directly follows the fact that the GPCR in China could not prevent the capitalist-roaders from restoring capitalism almost immediately after its conclusion an objective analysis of this great event in history is an urgent task of the communists to-day. We should try and take serious lessons from it, both positive and negative. We think that efforts in this direction will go a long way to understanding the contemporary problems of Marxism-Leninism, for it involves the most crucial questions of socialism, e.g., the method of consolidating and developing the dictatorship of the proletariat, nature of class-struggle under socialism, the relation between super-structure and the base, the relation between the working class and the party of its vanguard and above all the role of consciousness in the entire period of transition from capitalism to communism.

### **Rationale of the GPCR**

*“Thus the complete victory of socialist system in all spheres of the national economy is now a fact. And what does this mean?”*

*It means that exploitation of man by man has been abolished, eliminated, while the socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production has been established as the unshakable foundation of our soviet society.”*<sup>1</sup>

*“You are making socialist revolution and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the communist party – those in power taking the capitalist road.”*<sup>2</sup>

The first quotation is from com. Stalin's speech, delivered at the extra-ordinary 8<sup>th</sup> congress of the Soviets of the USSR in November 25, 1936. The second one is a part of the statement of com. Mao Tse Tung issued shortly before his death in September 1976. The contrast of these two different evaluations of

the two great socialist countries by their two great leaders very poignantly focuses on the issues raised by the GPCR. Stalin's speech testifies that despite his serious conviction to the cause of socialism, he grossly deviated from Marxism-Leninism so far as the understanding of 'socialism' is concerned, whereas Mao Tse Tung successfully hit the nail on the head and carried the legacy of Marxism-Leninism by not only emphasizing on the existence of class-struggle in socialist societies, but also, at the same time, locating the fountain-head of capitalism in a socialist society. Right from the early fifties of the last century Mao had been keenly observing the negative practice of socialism in the USSR led by Stalin. At the same time he kept a close watch on the followers of that erroneous line in his own party and their increasing strength almost to the point of seizure of political power in the mid-sixties. Mao, who was haunted by what had happened in the post-20<sup>th</sup> Congress the USSR desperately tried to forestall its recurrence in China and embarked on what became one of the most famous and controversial political movements of the world – the GPCR. The reactionaries and revisionists denigrated it in the most bitter terms, revolutionary communists generally hailed it as great a revolution as the October Revolution and there were others who critically appraised it. But there is no denying the fact that the GPCR raised the most vital questions relating to the practice of socialism. The range of the problems dealt with is considerably vast, from the simple to the complex, from the coarse to the subtle. At the same time the GPCR had its great limitations too. For those who want to carry forward the task of proletarian revolution taking lessons from the GPCR must take both its strength and weakness into account.

As has been stated earlier, learning lessons from the mistakes committed by Stalin in the process of building socialism in his country was the cornerstone of the GPCR. We shall try to study the rationale of the GPCR from this angle, i.e., how Mao tried to overcome the negative aspects of the socialism practised in USSR.

We have already seen the grossest error of Stalin in his non-recognition of class-struggle in a socialist society, which goes against the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism. Karl Marx did not have a first-hand experience of building socialism. But many years before the foundation of the first socialist state, i.e., in 1875 Karl Marx most succinctly explained the *raison d'être* of the existence of capitalist elements during the entire period of the first phase of the communist society, i.e., the socialist society. He wrote,

*“What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has **developed** on its own foundation, but, on the contrary, just as it **emerges** from the capitalist society; which is thus in every respect,*

*economically, morally and intellectually still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.”*<sup>3</sup>

But it was Lenin as the builder of the first socialist country categorically put forward:

*“And classes still **remain** and will **remain** in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat...The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.”*<sup>4</sup>

In the same article Lenin explained the source of strength of the exploiting classes even under the dictatorship of the proletariat and how the class struggles waged by the overthrown exploiters become *more bitter*.

*“The transition from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch. Until the epoch is over, the exploiters inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this hope turns into attempts of restoration...with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold...”*<sup>5</sup>

Lenin believed that the source of strength of the bourgeoisie in a socialist state was innate in the society itself and the bourgeoisie keeps on regenerating itself taking sustenance from the society itself.

*“...and whose power lies...also with **force of habit**, in the strength of small-scale production. Unfortunately, in the **small-scale production** is still widespread in the world, and small-scale production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale.”*<sup>6</sup>

The reader might get tired of reading the oft-quoted lines of Lenin (although Lenin’s dealing with this subject is so vast that any number of quotations would appear inadequate), but it is a necessary reiteration considering the fact that the whole theme of the GPCR hangs on this particular issue, although with varied ramifications. Let us compare this recurring theme with Stalin’s report to 18<sup>th</sup> Party-Congress, held in 1939.

*“The feature that distinguishes Soviet society today from any capitalist society is that it no longer contains antagonistic hostile classes; that the exploiting classes have been eliminated, while the workers, peasants and intellectuals, who make up Soviet society, live and work in friendly collaboration.”*

Is this understanding not the precursor of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress thesis of Khrushchov, formulating ‘the state of the entire people’ and ‘the party of the entire people’? The question arose right there in the CPSU (B) itself ‘that, if there is nobody to suppress’ in the society why the state ‘is not relegated to the museum of antiquities?’ Stalin answers “These questions not only betray an underestimation of the capitalist encirclement, but also an underestimation of the role and significance of the bourgeois states and their organs which send spies, assassins and wreckers into our country and are waiting for a favourable opportunity to attack it by armed force.”<sup>7</sup>

After that Stalin gave a theoretical foundation of this understanding of state by quoting the famous passage of Anti-Duhring where Engels discusses the withering away of the state and showed how Engels’ formulation was not applicable in the then prevailing situation of the USSR for two reasons : 1) The country concerned cannot be treated in isolation from the international situation, 2) Socialism was not then victorious in the majority of the countries, not to speak of all the countries. Ironically enough, he vindicates his position by quoting none other than Lenin himself, “We do not regard Marxist theory as something completed or inviolable;...which socialists *must* further advance in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life.” (Lenin, ‘Our Programme’, 1899) Stalin here updates Marxism by basing himself on a complete non-recognition of the Marxist-Leninist understanding of continuous class-struggle in a socialist society. He contradicts Engels for reasons that Engels did not want to mean – he dealt with the long-term and a general direction of the ‘State’ towards *withering away*, “when interference of the state-power in the social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another and then ceases of itself” (Engels, Anti-Duhring). Where this wrong understanding of class-struggle in a socialist society led Stalin will be our next centre of attention, for it had a direct bearing on the dramatis personae of the GPCR. For now, we shall see how Mao Tse Tung tried to save the communist movement of the world particularly that of his own country by repudiating Stalin’s position.

In the USSR the unprecedented development of productive forces in Stalin era made history in the annals of the progress of human civilization. The victory in the World War II was the culmination of the glory and prestige of the USSR in the decade following the conclusion of the war. It was, therefore, quite natural that the influence of the CPSU (B), of Stalin and particularly of his political thought would exercise tremendous influence over the communist parties of the world. The CPC was not an exception. The entire period from the founding of the Peoples’ Republic of China to the holding of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CPC in 1956, was distinctly marked with general political orientation of the CPSU (B).<sup>75</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CPC

bears testimony to this, where the class-struggle was relegated to the secondary position. How it could happen despite Mao's leadership is a matter that has to be discussed at greater length. But it did happen. But that Mao could, by no means, share the ideas expressed at the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPC is obvious. Mao never wavered on the basic point of continuing class-struggle during the entire period of socialism. Mao began expressing this concept in an embryonic form even before the liberation, gradually kept on developing it and culminated it in the GPCR. In the 'Report to the second plenary session of the Seventh Central Committee of the CPC', held in March, 1949 Mao stated almost prophetically—

*“The policy of restricting private capitalism is found to meet with resistance in varying degrees and forms from the bourgeoisie, especially from the big owners of the private enterprises, that is, from the big capitalists. Restriction versus opposition to restriction will be the main form of class-struggle in the new-democratic state. It is entirely wrong to think that at present we need not restrict capitalism and can discard the slogan of “regulation of capital;” that is a right opportunist view.”*

The rumbling of the ensuing struggle with the right opportunists could be heard now. In 1952 June, he issued the statement “Contradiction between the Working class and the bourgeoisie is the principal contradiction in China.” A few years later in 1957, after China was declared a socialist country, Mao was more forthright:

*“Class-struggle is by no means over. The class-struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, the class-struggle between the various political forces, and the class-struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its world outlook and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism is not really settled yet.”<sup>8</sup>*

Mao was absolutely clear that transformation of the ownership of the means of production by itself cannot bring on socialism.

*“While we have won basic victory in transforming the ownership of the means of production, we are even farther from complete victory on the political and the ideological fronts. In the ideological field, the question of who will win out, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie has not yet really settled.”<sup>9</sup>*

With the passage of time Mao gradually increased the clarity of his understanding. In 1962, at the 10<sup>th</sup> plenary session of the 8<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the CPC, he said:

*“Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period. In the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class-contradictions and class-struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of the capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance.... otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate and a capitalist restoration will take place. From now on, we must remind ourselves of this every year every month and day so that we can retain a rather sober understanding of this problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line.”*

But till then the target of the class-struggle was not clearly spelt out, which was done by Mao two years later, at the end of 1964. He convened a working conference of the Central Committee and under his direction a 23 point document was issued named, “Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas” where for the first time he identified the target: “The main target of the present movement is those party persons in power taking the capitalist road.” The essence of the GPCR was at last brought forth, though officially the issue of “May 16, 1966 circular” of the Central Committee of the CPC is considered the beginning of the GPCR. In a talk of February 1967, Mao pointed out:

*“In the past we waged struggles in the rural areas, in factories, in the cultural field, and we carried out the socialist education movement but all this failed to solve the problem because we did not find a form, a method, to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly, in an all-round way and from below.”<sup>10</sup>*

That form was found in the GPCR. This is how Mao’s understanding of class-struggle under socialism gradually developed into the launching of the GPCR and how he firmly combated the erroneous line of Stalin. There are innumerable writings of Lenin and Mao on how and why classes and the ingredients of emergence of new exploitation remain in a socialist society. Lenin in his famous article, ‘Economics and Politics in the Era of Dictatorship of the Proletariat’, ‘A Great Beginning’, ‘The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky’, ‘Left Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder’ etc., has brilliantly analyzed why continuation of class-struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat is an indispensable task of the communists. After an

interregnum of Stalin period, Mao once again focused on the same problem. But what was new in Mao's understanding was that the revisionists in the party constituted the head-quarters of the bourgeoisie and that restoration of capitalism in a socialist society would be executed mainly by the capitalist-roaders in the party, although the bourgeois social forces would provide a very favourable condition for the comeback of the bourgeoisie to power. How a wrong political line becomes the decisive factor in the reversal of a socialist society is a matter of great importance to understand the guiding principles of the GPCR.

The abolition of the private ownership of the means of production is the first and the most indispensable task of the proletariat. But in itself it is not the sufficient condition for the founding and developing of socialism. Class-struggle starts right from the beginning, because 'socialism' is born (in the superfluous sense that the private ownership of the means of production has been abolished) taking with itself various features of capitalism. Lenin said:

*"Theoretically there can be no doubt that between capitalism and communism there lies a definite transition period which must combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy. This transition period has to be a period of struggle between dying capitalism and nascent communism—or, in other words between capitalism which has been defeated, but not destroyed and communism which has been born but is still very feeble."*<sup>11</sup>

But if the struggle between dying capitalism and nascent communism is not properly recognized, a reversal is bound to take place. How does this reversal come about and how is this process led by a section of the communist party who are in the position of authority is a matter of serious attention for the understanding of what the GPCR tried to achieve.

Before the advent of capitalism, within the womb of a society new productive forces and new production relations corresponding to them used to develop. In the capitalist system of production, on the other hand, productive forces kept on developing with an unprecedented force and scale. But it did not allow any new production relation to grow within it. It imparted social character to production and created the proletariat who by means of social revolution would in future unleash the enchained productive forces by converting the private ownership of the means of production into social ownership of them. Although there was no precedence of socialist relation of production, conditions in a nascent socialist country were created by which "social production according to a predetermined plan now becomes possible."<sup>12</sup> Without going through any previous experience of a socialist production relation, the powerful

development of capitalist production system and the assumption of the social character of production provided the material basis for generation of the ideology and politics of the era of socialism. After the seizure of power by the proletariat (which itself was essentially an act of consciousness), it was the consciousness that started to determine the production relations and productive forces. So long it was the base that determined the superstructure; now a period set in when mainly the superstructure began to determine the base. After the seizure of political power, the proletariat by dint of its consciousness set out to build a new production relation which in turn did away with the hurdles of the development of productive forces. Thus a qualitative leap took place in the entire course of the development of society.

But this newly created production relation started its journey very tottering, under constant pressure of capitalism which has been defeated but “the energy of their resistance has been increased a hundredfold and a thousand fold.”<sup>13</sup> If the constant class-struggle in a socialist society is not recognized, the production relation under socialism will gradually turn into capitalist production relation and the dictatorship of the proletariat will ultimately be replaced by the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This happened in the USSR and post-Mao China.

Abolition of the private ownership of the means of production and to transform them into state property is the primary and the basic task of the proletariat. It is a precondition of socialism, but it cannot be equated with socialism. The second most important task of socialism is to do away with the alienation of labour and thereby to replace gradually capitalist production relation with the socialist one. We shall see later on how this problem of alienation becomes pivotal in our discourse. However that only the state ownership cannot achieve socialism is evident from the soviet experience. In the USSR, right from the period of Stalin, it was believed that since the exploiting classes had been abolished from the society and there was no class-struggle, the principal contradiction in the society was between advanced production relation and backward productive force.

It was thought, since the basic prerequisite for a socialist economy had been fulfilled and production process had been freed from capitalist competition, market and profit. The planned economy would lead to unhindered development of productive forces. To accelerate this process emphasis was laid on heavy industry, at the expense of light industry and agriculture. Stalin thought that in a backward country like the USSR, socialism required to achieve a powerful material base for furthering the course of socialism and therefore the use of the most modern techniques and developing cadres who would be

able to use it, was the prime need of society. Consistent with this outlook, one man management, use of piecework, dependence on experts, even bonuses were introduced. The aspect of production relation was ignored. Relation between the leadership and the masses, between the management and the working people and between the expert cadres and the general cadres began tilting towards capitalist relationship. Central planning excluded local initiative. Policy-making in respect of production and administration was monopolized by a few people belonging to the upper echelon of the party and the masses of the workers and peasants were kept in total darkness. Individual workers or peasants turned into cogs of the machine as it happens in the capitalist production. It is to be noted that all this started taking place in a general structure of 'socialism' where formally the toiling people were the owners of the means of production. Stalin neglected constant revolutionizing of the production relation and the superstructure because, since he found no class-struggle in the society, he sensed no danger coming from the superstructure, that in turn might vitiate the production relation and the human part of the productive forces. The result was the alienation of the producers from the means of production – a course essentially characteristic of capitalist production. Capitalism can abolish (and actually has abolished) private ownership of the means of production in some countries. But what it can never achieve is to terminate the alienation of the workers from the means of production. So the question of 'alienation' can be called the most important distinguishing feature separating socialism from capitalism.

Karl Marx was the first person to discover the problem of alienation as early as in 1844:

*“He (the worker) is at home when he is not working and when he is working he is not at home. His labour, therefore, is not voluntary, but coerced; it is **forced labour**. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a **means** to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification.”*<sup>14</sup>

Engels envisaged that in socialism “productive work will become a delight instead of blight.”<sup>15</sup>

A worker can never have delight when he is in complete darkness about the commodity he is producing, why it is being produced, where and how the income generated from the production is distributed. His personal skill and creativity is hardly of any use in the completely mechanical and monotonous capitalist production process. This is what befell the workers of the USSR

particularly in the later period of socialist practice. (Why in the early period this problem was not so acute is a matter of separate study). Mao took great lessons from this negative experience of the USSR and tried to set things aright, which we shall see later, became one of the major thrusts of the GPCR.

It was from the early fifties of the last century that Mao Tse Tung became fully conscious of the overwhelming influence of the soviet model on the CPC. He realized that if it was not fought back, China also would go the soviet way. Continuation of class-struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat would be discarded; the theory of the productive force would take the center-stage and base, production and productive force would take precedence over superstructure, politics and production relation respectively. He was afraid that planned economy would mean only centralization without combining it with decentralization and as a result there would be only central authority and no local authority. A few months before the holding of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CPC, Mao wrote in his signal work, 'On the Ten Major Relationships':

*"... our attention should now be focused on how to enlarge the powers of the local authorities to some extent, give them greater independence and let them do more, all on the premise that the unified leadership of the central authorities is to be strengthened... Our territory is so vast; our population is so large and the conditions are so complex that it is far better to have the initiative come from both the central and the local authorities than from one source alone. We must not follow the example of the Soviet Union in concentrating everything in the hands of the central authorities shackling the local authorities and denying them the right to independent action."*

Mao urged the party to avoid the mistakes committed by Stalin in respect of giving one-sided emphasis on the heavy industry. In the same article he said:

*"Their (of the Soviet Union and East European Countries) lopsided stress on heavy industry to the neglect of agriculture and light industry results in a shortage of goods on the market and an unstable currency. We, on the other hand, attach more importance to agriculture and light industry."*

There is no reasonable ground to believe that Mao was altogether against heavy industry and use of technique. All he was concerned about was to stall the tendency of monopolization of the economic and administrative power by a handful of party men in the upper rung of the party. To break this monopolization and the resultant bureaucratization he suggested some measures. In his 60 points of directives on working methods, he said in January 1958:

*“The technological revolution is designed to make everyone learn technology and science. The rightists say that we are small intellectuals incapable of leading the big intellectuals.... We must summon up our energy to learn technology so as to accomplish the great technological revolution history has left to us [to accomplish].”<sup>16</sup>*

Mao combated Stalin’s stress on developing a group of experts to accelerate production, generally at the cost of their politics. He wrote in ‘The 60 Points on Working Methods’:

*“Red and expert, politics and business—the relation between them is the unification of contradictions. We must criticize the apolitical attitude. [We] must oppose empty-headed ‘politicos’ on the one hand and the disoriented ‘practicoes’ on the other.”*

By all these measures Mao tried in a way to grapple with the problem of alienation of the producers from the means of production. He summed up the whole problem and gave an outline of the solution in his “A Critique of Soviet Economics” which is worth quoting in this context:

*“After the question of the ownership system is solved, the most important question is administration—how enterprises owned either by the whole people or the collective is administered. This is the same as the question of the relations among the people under a given ownership system, a subject that could use many articles. Changes in the ownership system in a given period of time always have their limits, but the relations among people in productive labour may well, on the contrary, be in ceaseless change. With respect to administration of enterprises owned by the whole people, we have adopted a set of approaches: a combination of concentrated leadership and mass movement; combination of party leaders, working masses, and technical personnel; cadres participating in production; workers participating in administration, steadily changing unreasonable regularities and institutional practices.”*

These are some of the measures Mao exhorted his party to adopt to address the problem of alienation and the widening chasm between the leaders and the led. Unlike Stalin he clearly understood that the contradiction between the forces of production and production relation cannot be correctly resolved unless the party takes upon itself the task of correctly handling the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (which follows the recognition of continuing class-struggle in a socialist society), unless the party keeps politics in command and unless it can retain the dominating role of the superstructure

over the base. With great anguish Mao wrote, “Stalin mentions economics only, not politics.” “Stalin’s book, (Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR) from first to last says nothing about superstructure. It is not concerned with the people; it considers things, not people.”<sup>17</sup>

After Stalin’s death, taking advantages of the errors committed by Stalin, the Khrushchovs in the Soviet party jumped at the opportunity of unabashed restoration of capitalism. Mao keenly observed the course taking place in the first socialist state of the world and clearly came to the conclusion that if a communist party deviates from Marxism-Leninism, it is the party leaders at the highest level who become instrumental in bringing about capitalism in a socialist country. As we have already seen, in a socialist society (in the broad sense) capitalist elements remain and remain very powerfully. Private ownership still exists, for it is never possible for the proletariat to expropriate all capitalist enterprises at one stroke. Small-scale production, the breeding ground for capitalism still remains. Major capitalist characteristics of capitalist income and distribution still persist. Mao has put it in this manner:

*“China is a socialist country. Before liberation she was much the same as a capitalist country. Even now she practises an eight-grade wage system; distribution according to work and exchange through money, and in all this differs very little from the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has changed.” “Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted.”<sup>18</sup>*

In such a society both the possibilities, one of gradual consolidation of socialism and the other of gradual restoration of capitalism are, so to speak, evenly poised. In these societies, born of violent and painful social revolutions, working-class believes that it wields its political power through its own party. It would brook no bourgeoisie to intervene and take over power as a class. It is the leaders of the party that control the key positions in economic and administrative spheres. Now, it is up to the leaders to decide the future course of the society. If the leadership has the correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism and the political will to implement socialism, it will keep on developing the ‘elements of communism’ in that particular society. If it is the other way about, i.e., if the leadership adopts policies of monopolizing management and administration, if the distinction between manual and intellectual labour is not gradually eroded, if the difference in wages, instead of being narrowed down, keeps increasing, if profit motive is initiated, the production relation between the leadership of the party and the workers and other sections of the toiling people begins turning into capitalist one very slowly, silently and without any jerk. To a certain point this restoration of capitalist relationship continues to take place within the frame of what can be called broadly socialist. But a time comes

when this framework becomes a hindrance to furthering capitalism. Then it is broken and the classical system of capitalism with the market of capital and labour once again emerges, as it has been in the erstwhile USSR. Thus, it is the leadership of a communist party, being in command of the whole production system, administration and a corresponding superstructure that brings about capitalism in a socialist country. To enter into this process of reversal what is most important is to start it by changing the superstructure. So if the Marxist-Leninist section of a communist party resolves to stick to the path of socialism, it has to constantly keep revolutionizing the superstructure. At times this struggle assumes the proportion of a social revolution involving the entire masses of the people and maintaining the intensity for a considerable period of time. Such a revolutionary period has been termed ‘Cultural Revolution’ by Mao. This is what the GPCR is all about. Mao says:

*“The transition from socialism to communism need not be made a reality through social revolution in which one class overthrows another, but there will be a social revolution in which new production relations and social institutions supersede old ones.”*<sup>19</sup>

Thus Mao not only brought to surface the question of continuing class-struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also discovered and earmarked the core of the bourgeoisie operating through the leadership of the communist party. This explains why Mao with great concern and anguish uttered a few months before his death, “[The bourgeoisie] is right in the communist party – those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road.”

### **Mao’s Struggles in the Party before the launch of the GPCR**

These capitalist roaders, although described by Mao as ‘handful’ in number, were very powerful, in fact more powerful than is generally thought to be, in the CPC. They were ‘people in authority’; they showed tremendous clout to tilt the balance of forces in their favour on many occasions and had a nationwide network of organization. All this explains why the battles fought by Mao to champion his proletarian line were so difficult, and the paths traversed by him so tortuous and complex. Let us first of all have a glance at the forces that Mao had to fight against and then enter into the concatenation of events leading to its culmination, the GPCR. When ‘Party People in Authority’ is reduced to ‘Party Person in Authority’ obviously Liu Shao Chi is meant. Next only to Mao, he had long been the most powerful leader of the CPC since 1945. When Mao flew to Chungking in August 1945 for peace negotiations with Chiang Kai Shek, Liu acted in his place for several months and was the head of

the Organization Department. From 1945 to 1955, he was the general secretary of the CC secretariat and looked after the administration of the domestic affairs. In September 1956, he delivered the most important political report to the Eighth Party Congress. He was elected the Chairman of the People's Republic at the Second National People's Congress on April 20, 1959. Apart from this key man, "Other people in authority" included the Secretary-General of the party Teng Hsiao-Ping, the Chief of Staff of the Army Lo Juiching, the man who replaced him Yang Cheng-wu, Marshall Ho Lung, head of the All China Sports Commission; Lu Teng-yi, head of the Propaganda Department; Chon Yang, deputy head of the Propaganda Department; and Vice Premiers Tan Chen-len and Po yi-Po. Added to this long list were mayors of Peking, Shanghai, Tientsin, Wuhan and Canton, President of Peking University, Lu Ping. William Hinton in his 'China—An Unfinished Battle' cited an estimate of the proportions of the capitalist-roaders in different hierarchies of the party, given by the CIA. Hinton asserts that since the CIA always comes forward first and with the most data, their summary is probably more accurate than any other available to us. According to this estimate, 'Capitalist-Roaders' made up at least two-thirds of the political Bureau of the CC of the CPC and about one-half of the CC. They led all regional bureaus, held three-quarters of the provincial governorships and headed three-quarters of the provincial party committees.

It seems almost unbelievable that the party that successfully carried on the most heroic and fierce class-struggle in history and achieved liberation from the yoke of imperialism and feudalism and then achieved considerable progress in its journey to socialism, can still be filled with hundreds of topmost leaders of the party intent on changing the country into a capitalist one. But this is the reality. Marxism itself has taught us that the two-line struggle in a communist party is a reflection of the class-struggle in a class-divided society. The more backward a society is, the more intense and pronounced will be the reactionary influence on a communist party. Even when the society enters into the socialist stage, that influence continues and the contradiction may be even sharper, because the victory in socialism is supposed to eliminate the system of exploitation altogether, inciting the hidden traitors in the party to wage a life and death struggle. In China the traditional national bourgeoisie still survived in the sixties of the last century. There were plenty of bourgeois intellectuals thoroughly imbued with capitalist world outlook. A section of these bourgeois intellectuals sided with the CPC in its anti-feudal anti-imperialist struggle. But after the liberation of 1949, they, too, clung to their capitalist bastion with even more ferocity. Although very few in number, the intellectuals played an important role in China, at times for bringing about a social change, more often for defending their own class-interest. In the vast rural areas of China,

the peasants numbering hundreds of millions were petty owners of productive property. Thus they were the hunting ground for bourgeois ideology. These in-built social forces and the ideology they generated continued to exert their influence even at the stage of socialist revolution in China. As a result, even a section of the product of revolution constituted new managerial and administrative stratum in the Chinese society, enjoying the privileges that the revolution itself had bestowed upon them. There were a large number of party members who fought valiantly in the period of democratic revolution, but when faced with the socialist revolution they began retreating. There others who did not understand what 'socialism' actually was. Such petty-bourgeois revolutionaries abounded till the mid-sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were remnants of landlord elements too, in the society who were a hidden force, but still exercising their extremely reactionary ideological influence, not only on the masses, but also on the party people. According to William Hinton, on the eve of the GPCR these elements totalled about 20 million in China.<sup>20</sup> Loving their land, the ex-feudal lords had to live a life of an ordinary peasant. They waited impatiently for the restoration of the old order. There were expropriated Compradors, foreign imperialist powers, particularly the U.S. and the Soviet revisionist rulers always giving their counterparts in China, political and ideological support. All these forces combined together to form a formidable force to topple socialist China and as has been explained earlier, it was the 'party people in authority' who could most conveniently form the nucleus of the bourgeoisie that was to restore Capitalism in the country. This also explains why the capitalist roaders could occupy such a strong position in different strata of the party, particularly in its upper stratum, with Liu Shao Chi being the indisputable leader of them althroughout the course of struggle between the two lines in the CPC.

In an article of Red Flag and People's Daily published in 1967, named 'Along the Socialist Road or the Capitalist Road?'<sup>21</sup> a detailed history of Liu Shao Chi's political career has been given. It shows that from the early twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he was with Chen Tu hsiu opposing the seizure of political power by the 'juvenile proletariat'. After the counter-revolutionary camp of Chiang Kai Shek in April 1927, he followed Chen Tu-hsiu in ordering thousands of rifles over to the Kuomintang. After the publication of 'On New Democracy' by Mao Tse Tung he sharply reacted by saying "Why don't we say that we are carrying out the three people principles instead of obstinately working out something else?" Liu's role from the time of war of resistance against Japan is better known to us. Liu strongly advocated compromise with Chiang to avoid war while Mao insisted on preserving the 'gun' and territory even if it meant war. Liu, surrendering the 'gun' wanted in return a chance to enter some elections and win some posts in a coalition government. Another central

issue that the CPC had to deal with at that time was the question of an all-out land reform. Now it was a time when Liu peddled an ultra-left line to sabotage the land-reform movement which became a pre-condition for rallying the peasant masses in the civil war. The poor and hired peasant line advocated by Liu upheld extreme equalitarianism, exhorting the peasants to expropriate everyone better off than themselves in a bid to give middle peasant status for all. The idea was utopian, for there was no such wealth existing in the villages. This line caused great chaos in the land-reform movement until Mao intervened and corrected the line in 1948. The continuing struggle between Mao and Liu became sharper after the founding of People's Republic of China. While Mao declared that the founding of Peoples' Republic of China marked the conclusion of the new democratic revolution and the beginning of the stage of socialist revolution. Liu raised the slogan of "struggle for the consolidation of the new-democratic system"<sup>22</sup> He went on to say, "In China, there is not too much capitalism, but too little."<sup>23</sup> "It is necessary to develop capitalist exploitation, for such exploitation is progressive."<sup>24</sup> Repudiating Mao's theory of restriction of capitalism, he asserted, "There must be no restrictions for seven or eight years. This is beneficial to the state, the workers and production."<sup>25</sup> Following the land-reform, another debate came into focus, which although apparently revolved round the question of individual versus collective production in agriculture, was in essence a struggle between capitalist and socialist roads of development. According to Liu Shao Chi, New Democracy with its mixed economy should be a protracted stage, when land reform will promote rich peasant economy. With this purpose in mind, Liu advocated four 'freedoms'—freedom to buy and sell land, freedom to hire labour, freedom to loan money at interest and freedom to establish private business for profit. As to the socialist programme of collectivization, he categorically ruled out its possibility until industrialization of the country developed to a great extent. Only when modern factories would acquire the capacity to produce tractors, pumps, fertilizers and other equipments of modern agriculture, it would be meaningful to pool land and till jointly. He avers that "when 70 per cent of the peasants have become rich peasants, it will be time to talk about collectivization." It was very fortunate for the Chinese peasantry that after waging a very tough battle Liu's line was defeated. Mao succeeded in organizing collectivization on a class basis. It is to be noted, during this entire struggle fought between Mao and Liu, the emphasis laid by Liu all along was on economic prosperity (of course at the individual level), on productive forces, only on the base. For Mao revolutionary politics had to be in command, because the co-operative movements of the peasantry depended on the conscious will of the millions of producers which on the other hand, could be developed only by the application of consciousness of the party-leadership. The whole of this period is a classic demonstration of the contradiction between the theory of productive forces

and the theory of class-struggle which demanded the decisive role of the superstructure, i.e., consciousness, politics and ideology to be played on the base for furthering the cause of socialism.

‘The theory of Productive forces’ scored a decisive victory in the 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the CPC held in September 1956. The Resolution adopted at the congress declared :

*“A decisive victory has already been won in this socialist transformation. This means that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has been basically resolved, that the history of the class-exploitation, which lasted for several thousand years in our country, has on the whole been brought to an end, and that the social system of socialism has in the main, been established in China. However, the major contradiction...is between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces of society.”*<sup>27</sup>

It is very strange that despite Mao who clearly stated as early as in 1952 that “the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie has become the principal contradiction in China” and a few months after the publication of ‘Ten Major Relationships’ (April, 1956) the party congress could have passed such a resolution! Roderick Macfarquher in his research work ‘The Origins of the Cultural Revolution’ points out that Liu Shao Chi revealed in his confessions during the GPCR that Mao had taken exception to certain sentences (quoted above) in the political resolution. He quotes Liu as having said, “There was no time to revise them and it was passed in this form”. Another explanation is that the resolution was drafted by Chen Po Ta, a close confidant of Mao and therefore Mao did not insist on vetting the resolution before it was distributed. Macfarquher assumes that Moscow-trained Chen felt obliged to depict China following the Soviet road. But such explanations are too naïve to be believed, particularly when the occasion was a party congress. A more convincing explanation is that given the balance of forces prevailing in the mid-fifties, Mao was outmanoeuvred by Liu, as had happened on several occasions. We should not forget that in the midst of a successful movement led by Mao throughout the rural China, Liu could show the clout of dissolving 200000 agricultural cooperatives. It was a neck-to-neck battle between Mao and Liu at that particular phase of Chinese history. The sweep of the rightist politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of the Soviet Union and Hungarian incident by which “certain people in our country were delighted” became two major international events that strengthened Liu and his ‘comrades’. Mao was too alert to miss the danger-signal. He delivered a long speech at the eleventh session (enlarged) of the Supreme State Conference on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1957 by which he tried to set the

proper direction of correctly handling the contradiction among the people and to defeat the rightists' attempt at confusing the antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions and the right and the wrong. At that very speech he raised the slogan, "Let a hundred flowers blossom, and let a hundred schools of thoughts contend." The purpose was to facilitate the emergence of truth by free contention of thoughts as well as to let the rightists give vent to their repressed thoughts. This speech signaled the start of the rectification movement of 1957, the first harbinger of the GPCR. Mao clearly spelt out the objective of the rectification movement in his article, "Things are beginning to change" written in May 1957, to be circulated among party cadres. The principal target of this movement was Right opportunism, because, "They pose the bigger danger because their ideas are a reflection of bourgeois ideology inside the party and because they yearn for bourgeois liberation, negate everything and are tied in a hundred and one ways to bourgeois intellectuals outside the party.... Now it is time to direct our attention to criticizing revisionism". Mao recounted the areas where the Rightists posing as real communists spread their influence—"... In the democratic parties, in the fields of education, literature and art, the press, science and technology, or in industrial and commercial circles." Mao admits, "They know that in these fields the communists are not as strong as they are, which is actually the case." This preponderance of the Rightists in all the above-mentioned fields can explain, in retrospect, how at the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPC Liu's line could score a crucial victory on the question of the principal contradiction, the all important issue concerning the road to socialism.

After the rectification movement of 1957, Mao lost no time to start implementing the socialist road in China. The year 1958 was the most crucial year in this respect, the year of 'Three Red Banners— general line for socialist construction, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune. The essence of the general line was, "going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results." By the first two slogans Mao underlined the predominant role of consciousness, i.e., ideology and politics in the process of socialist reconstruction as opposed to Liu's line of 'Productive Forces'. The last slogan was meant to unleash people's initiative from below to augment production. This general line was translated into action in the Great Leap Forward announced at the second session of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress, in May 1958, and the People's Commune which started in the spring of 1958 and got the CC approval on 30<sup>th</sup> August the same year. The main objective of the Great Leap was to fully utilize the huge human resources and natural resources at a hurricane speed, absolutely depending on the initiative and creativity of the masses. In the process, Honan peasants created communes on their own as a means for concentrating labour for big projects. "He (Mao) saw them as a

way to unleash human potential, and set the stage for continuing revolution. Through the creation of new, non-bureaucratic, self-governing institutions that combined industry, agriculture, commerce, education and military affairs in one autonomous local unit, the peasants had taken up a step forward supplementing traditional state power.”<sup>28</sup> How much successful the communes were to supplant traditional state power is a subject of closer examination; but that the Great Leap and the People’s Communes dealt a heavy blow to Liu’s revisionist line and set the tenor of socialist reconstruction for the subsequent years, is beyond doubt.

Liu took devious tactics to undermine the Great Leap and the People’s Communes. He hardly ever opposed them directly. He himself announced the Great Leap programme on behalf of Mao, but at the same time adopted two dangerous methods to upset these programmes. The first one was to sabotage them by carrying the plan of action to excess, reminiscent of the ‘Poor and Hired Peasants line’. When a policy was adopted, he one-sidedly emphasized only one aspect of it and made a mess of the whole programme. The other was a concerted ideological onslaught in the fields of philosophy, economic studies, historical studies, literature, education and journalism. Particularly vicious were the attacks on the philosophical fields by Yang Hsien-Chen. His notorious theories of ‘synthesized economic base’ and ‘combine two into one’ provided the philosophical basis of the ‘dying out of class-struggle’, the most cherished political line of Liu Shao Chi. Although in those tumultuous days of peoples’ growing aspiration for socialist reconstruction, the ideological attacks by Liu’s cohorts could not make any deep inroads into the peoples’ mind, some errors which were actually committed during this period created some problems which the revisionists seized upon to discredit Mao’s line. Deliberate excesses committed by Liu’s men apart, there were other problems, too, associated with the Great Leap and the People’s Communes. Much of them were inherited from the past practice or the Soviet tradition. There was ‘commandism’, imbalance between consumption and investment because of excessive accumulation rate in certain areas and for certain period, some inevitable exploitation of agriculture for the accumulation for industrial sector, (taking negative lessons from the USSR. China tried to lessen the discrepancy between agricultural and industrial prices as much as possible), some environmental damage done by too hasty water-conservancy projects, some problems in transport, shortage of certain supplies and of course certain ‘left’ errors. Amidst these chaotic conditions, it was now the turn of Peng Teh-huai, the Defense Minister to strike hard at Mao. In the Lushan meeting of the CC in 1959 Peng Teh-huai demanded that army be transformed into a ‘modern’ army that emphasis should be laid absolutely on heavy industry and military construction. For 20 days on Peng continued his criticism of ‘petty bourgeois fanaticism’ in a series of caucuses. But Mao had kept his composure “The chaos caused was

on a grand scale and I take responsibility”, he said, throwing down the gauntlet to the rightists.<sup>29</sup> On August 2, Mao turned the enlarged politburo meeting into a final CC plenum; confident of support from his ‘reinforcements’, he launched a counter-attack.

*“Peng Tehuai’s letter of opinion constitutes an anti-party outline of rightist opportunism....It is by no means an accidental or individual error, bur it is planned, organized, prepared, and purposeful.”*<sup>30</sup>

Mao likened the Great Leap with Paris commune and referred to Marx who did not assess the Paris commune from a point of view bothered only about immediate result. Mao exhorted his comrades to view the Great Leap and the People’s communes as Paris commune, which ‘*was first proletarian dictatorship, he (Marx) thought it would be a good thing even if it only lasted three months. If we assess it from an economic point of view, it was not worthwhile.*’<sup>31</sup> It is obvious from this statement of Mao that he envisaged the Great Leap and the people’s commune more as a political programme than an economic one. Mao’s seriousness in these essentially political programmes is borne out by the fact that in his speech at the eight plenum of the CC he expressed his resolve to organize guerrilla bands, “*if the PLA chooses to follow Peng Tehuai.*”<sup>32</sup>

Significantly enough at Lushan plenum Liu played a conciliatory role, with an air of supporting Mao, but at the same time urging for leniency in dealing with Peng. Peng and his followers in the CC and politburo were dismissed from their executive posts, but retained membership in the politbureau and the CC. After the end of the Lushan plenum a nationwide rectification movement was launched against right opportunism. The Great Leap policies which were shelved in vast areas were restored and Mao’s line clearly triumphed over revisionism. But at the same time, in collusion with their Chinese counterparts, the ruling revisionists of the Soviet Union unilaterally withdrew all the technicians and blue-print of projects that were under way, causing severe damage to China’s economy. This was followed by grave natural disasters continuing for three successive years. The economic crisis that was prevailing in China was a fertile ground for the revisionists to thrive on. Liu and his men once again seized the opportunity. In November, 1960, the party dispatched a secret ‘Urgent Directive on Rural Work’ (12 Articles) to cadres which restricted the powers of the Commune. This was followed by a more detailed ‘Draft Regulations Concerning the Rural People’s Communes’, approved by a central work conference in Canton in March, 1961. Drafted by Teng Hsiao-Ping and Peng Chen, the Regulations tried to roll back the policies of the Great Leap. Initiatives were unleashed by Liu in industrial sector too. In his ‘70 articles’ for the regulation of industry he once again upheld the primacy of market and

profit. He demanded an end of political struggles in the factories. In January 1962, in a conference of 7000 cadres he cast off his ambivalence regarding the Great Leap and described the painful experience of those years and how the people suffered starvation for two years. Liu who posing himself an ardent supporter of the People's Commune carried the movement far to left, now, by 1962 more ardently introduced *San zi yi bao*, (the extension of the free market, expanded private plots, production quotas based on individual households and a free hand for private enterprise), a programme attacking Mao's line from a rightist angle. It should also be noted that, in August 1962 itself, he again issued his infamous book, 'Self Cultivation' which became a handbook of all revisionists to create public opinion for the restoration of capitalism.

By now Mao Tse Tung perceived that the revisionists led by Liu were trying to come back to the controlling position of the party with a vengeance. From January 1962 he began to warn the comrades against the concerted onslaughts of the rightists in the party. At the leading bodies in the party, he issued the call "Never forget class-struggle", a call that reverberated throughout the GPCR. At that historical juncture, at the 10<sup>th</sup> plenary session of the 8th CC, held in September, 1962, Mao put forward the basic line of the CPC for the entire period of socialism.

From 1963 to 1965 Mao spearheaded the socialist education movement that immediately preceded the GPCR. Mao believed that ideology and politics would be the deciding factors in building up of socialism in China, as in any other country. That is why he always put great emphasis on the class-struggle on the ideological and cultural fronts. He correctly understood that the education system and the educational institutes were the grounds where the basic outlook whether revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, took shape and flourished to a great extent. On various occasions he admitted that in the sphere of education, the revisionists of the party were more dominant than the Marxists. Mao was keenly aware of this problem in the superstructure right from the days of New Democratic Revolution. In his famous articles, 'On New Democracy' and 'Talks at the Yen-an Forum', he deals brilliantly with the struggle between two-lines in the cultural front. The same concern for revolutionary ideology, literature and art is reflected in his several writings during the socialist period, e.g., 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions', 'On Propaganda Work' etc. All these writings fell on deaf ears of the diehard revisionists of the party. They spread the bourgeois and revisionist ideology on the ideological fields as the press, radio broadcasting, periodicals, books, text books, the literary and artworks, the cinema, the theatre, ballads, music and dancing. It all started in the early <sup>32</sup>fifties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with 'The Life

Of Wu Hsun', 'Dream of the Red Chamber' and culminated at the time of Lushan meeting in 1959 when the group called 'Three-Family Village' started bringing out one after another such anti-Marxist books as 'Hai Jui Scolds the Emperor', 'Hai Jui Dismissed from Offices', 'Evening Chats at Yen-an', and 'Notes from the Three-Family Village'. To reverse the victorious advance of the revisionists during 1960-1962, Mao first and foremost concentrated on socialist education movement. In May 1963, under the direction of Mao the 'Draft Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Certain Problems in our Present Rural Work' (Ten Point Decision) was worked out which chalked out the basic principle of the movement. But Liu Shao Chi was not to accept it tamely. He tried to misdirect mass criticism of rightist cadres by shifting the focus of attention. To divert the attacks on the revisionist leadership by the people and the cadres, he turned them against the lower level cadres, demanding that everyone make a self-examination in regard to "being clean and being unclean in relation to four questions" (Politics, Ideology, Organization and Economy). This led to the confinement of criticism at the lower rungs of the party and the leadership got off. But Mao did not give in to the tactics of this arch revisionist. At the end of 1964 he convened, once again, a working conference of the CC and issued a document named "Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas" (23 point document) .In this document Mao for the first time specifically pointed out :

"The main target of the present movement is those party persons in power taking the capitalist road." With this clear statement, the orientation of the approaching GPCR was firmly set. So long the two-lines struggle was centred round the rural programmes, one the proletarian line of collectivization and public interest and the other bourgeois line of private enterprise and self-interest. In 1965, the two-lines struggle shifted to Peking University, the most important educational field in China. The powerful revisionist clique in Peking Municipality led by Wu Han, the Vice Mayor, turned the Peking University into a base from which to wean the young generations away from the proletariat and proletarian culture. Lu Ping was the head of this clique. He together with his followers used to admire the bourgeois academic authorities and systematically spread the bourgeois and revisionist ideology in the university. These people who had nothing but scorn for the socialist education movement desperately resisted it. The revolutionary teachers and students, on the other hand, firmly kept the movement a-going bringing to light a vast amount of material showing how Lu Ping and his associates implemented revisionist policies in the sphere of education movement. The attacks and counter-attacks lasted for seven months and became the most serious event in the socialist education movement. This set the stage for the start of the GPCR.

## **An Outline of the History of the GPCR**

The GPCR, one of the most important and significant events in the international communist movement spanned more than ten years, till the death of Mao and criss-crossed with innumerable episodes. Here we shall describe in brief the course of events of this unique political experimentation in the history of the world communist movement. While the socialist education movement was being carried out in 1964, the CC of the CPC formed the group in charge of the Cultural Revolution under the party central committee. The group consisted of five members, led by Pen Chen, Mayor of Peking and a member of the politbureau of the CC. Historically speaking this was the first organizational formation of the ensuing GPCR. But the first salvo of the GPCR was fired by an article written by Yao Wen-Yuan and published in Shanghai Wenhui-pao on November 10, 1965, entitled 'On the New Historical Play Hai Jui Dismissed from Office'. The play was written by the vice-mayor of Peking, Wu Han. It is the story of an honest and upright official of the Ming Dynasty, named Hai Jui who dared to speak openly to the emperor about his faults. Yao Wen-yuan claimed that the drama alluded to Peng Tehuai's (Hai Jui) dismissal by Mao (the emperor) in 1959. In a talk in December 1965, Mao also said, "The crux of 'Hai Jui Dismissed from Office' lies in his dismissal. Emperor Jiajing dismissed Hai Jui; in 1959, we dismissed Peng Tehuai. Peng Tehuai is presented as another Hai Jui".<sup>33</sup> Yao Wen-Yuan's article created a great furore in political circles of China. Peng Chen gagged its circulation. But Liberation Army Daily reprinted it in Peking. By early 1966, a full-scale criticism campaign in academic and literary circles was launched. The group in charge of the Cultural Revolution called a meeting to study the play. In their 'Outline Report on the Current Academic Discussion', the five member group tried to keep the debate at an academic level, expressing disapproval of any attempt to turn it into a political debate. It also stated that "one should convince others through reasoning and must not be dogmatic and intimidate people with one's power, like an academic overlord". Attempts by the Peking party writers to channel the debate away from its political content and confine it to academic discussion only was countered by more articles by Yao Wen-Yuan criticizing 'Notes from Three-Family Village' written jointly by Wu Han, Teng To and Liao Mo-Sha and 'Evening Chats at Yen Shan' by Teng To. At the same time Chiang Ching and Lin Piao started a forum on literature and art criticizing the prevailing literary and art circles as "following an anti-party and anti-socialist line that have exercised dictatorship over us and discredited the achievements in progressive literature and art of the 1930s and those in the seventeen years since the founding of New China". The summary of the minutes of the forum after being revised by Mao was distributed throughout the country as a CC document. Till then

the struggles did not exceed the limits of battles in the press only, hardly giving an inkling of what was to follow soon after.

The official launching of the GPCR, however, took place at the enlarged meeting of the politbureau of the CC held from May 4 to 26, 1966. From this meeting was issued the most famous document of the GPCR, namely the 16<sup>th</sup> May circular, 1966. In that circular the CC revoked the 'Outline Report on the Current Academic Discussions' mentioned earlier and dissolved the 'Group of Five' and its offices and set up a new Cultural Revolution Group directly under the standing committee of the politbureau. The circular declared, "Our country is now in an upsurge of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which is pounding at all the decadent ideological and cultural positions still held by the bourgeoisie and remnants of feudalism". Virulently criticizing the 'Outline Report' submitted by the 'Group of Five', the May 16 circular stated, "Far from being a minor issue, the struggle against the revisionist line is an issue of prime importance having vital bearing on the destiny and future of our party and state, on the future complexion of our party and on the world revolution".

The upsurge of the GPCR as envisaged by Mao started with big character poster put up by Nieh Yuan-Tze, the cadre of Peking University on May 25, 1966. In that poster Nieh and her comrades asked why a mass political debate on Wu Han's play had been suppressed at the Peking University. They blamed Lu Ping directly by name and accused him of diverting a political debate into an academic one. Lu Ping reacted. He mobilized a large number of students to attack Nieh and her comrades as anti-party elements who showed the audacity to question the authority of the party, for Lu Ping himself was the secretary of the party unit of the university. For a week, Nieh and her colleagues were surrounded by the students who stood by their party leaders thinking that those leaders represented the CPC and Mao. But on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, Nieh's poster was published in The People's Daily, the official paper of the CPC and broadcast to the whole of the nation by Peking Radio. This sparked off the nation-wide students' upsurge in support of Nieh's call:

*"all revolutionary intellectuals, now is the time to go to battle! Let us unite, holding high the great banner of Mao Tse Tung's thought, unite round the party's central committee and chairman Mao and break down all the various controls and plots of the revisionists....."*

Lu Ping sent 'work teams' to suppress and divert the rebel students. The members of the 'work teams' shouted left slogans, almost similar to those raised by the rebels. But this was a ploy to protect the conservative party leaders, by setting one group of the masses against another and creating great confusion

about who were the rebels and who were not. The in-fights amongst the masses started right then and as we shall see later on, they were waged very often at the cost of the real issues. For fifty days on end, the “work teams” dominated the scene throughout the institutions of the nation except Peking and Tsinghua Universities. On August 8, 1966, at the 11<sup>th</sup> plenary session of the 8<sup>th</sup> Central Committee, “Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party concerning the Great Proletarian Revolution” was adopted. This session was very important in the entire course of the GPCR, for the objective of the meeting was to work out a programme for the Cultural Revolution, eliminate resistance and further boldly arouse the masses. The most significant call of the ‘Decision’ was ‘Let the Masses Educate themselves in the movement in the Movement’. “In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves and any method of doing things on their behalf must not be used”, the ‘Decision’ explained. The “Decision” clarifies how the cultural revolutionary groups, committees and other organizational forms “are the organs of the power of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution.” As regards the system of elections of the cultural revolutionary groups and the committees, it refers to the Paris Commune.

It is to be noted that in this plenary session Liu Shao Chi was demoted from the second position to the eighth position of the party’s command and Lin Biao was promoted to the second position. Even while the eleventh plenary session was going on, on August 5, Mao Tse Tung wrote ‘Bombard the Headquarters—My Big Character Poster’, directly raising the issue of a bourgeois headquarter in the party. He charged that “In the last 50 days or so, some leading comrades from the central down to the local levels....adopting the reactionary stand of the bourgeoisie have enforced a bourgeois dictatorship and struck down the surging movement of the Great Cultural Revolution of the Proletariat”. The slogan of bombarding the headquarters by the chairman of the same party has been regarded since then as something innately self-contradictory by some or extremely revolutionary by others and remained the most controversial slogan in the International Communist Movement.

In the tumultuous situation that prevailed throughout the nation, the rebel groups taking the name Red Guard came up everywhere. From their ranks The Red Guard movement got under way. On August 18, six days after the conclusion of the plenary session, Mao stood on the Tiananmen rostrum in military uniform, wearing a Red Guard armband and reviewed one million people from all over the country who assembled there. This personal support of the chairman of the party set off a large-scale mass movement with an unprecedented vehemence in the entire nation. The Red Guards came out on the streets shouting slogans, making speeches, distributing leaflets and putting

up posters. They resolved to repudiate and overthrow 'old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes'. They pledged to "struggle against and overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic 'authorities' and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system."

The followers of Liu Shao Chi who were called 'loyalists' also plunged into the Red Guard Movement, only to confuse the ranks of the cadres and to protect the conservatives thereby. These units took names almost similar to those adopted by the real rebel organizations. Both sides swore by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung thought. At times it became very difficult for the masses to discriminate between these two opposing forces. The essentially rightist Red Guard units adopted the tactics of showing off an ultra-left face to hoodwink the masses, while the red rebel Red Guards also raised the slogan of overthrowing people in power at all levels and thus they also very often slipped into left deviation. This could happen because most of the Red Guard units were made up of students and youths, with distinctly petty-bourgeois leanings. The students and youths brought up in socialist China had deep regard for the party as a whole and wholeheartedly relied on every section of it. Many of them were at their wits' end unable to grasp the real issues. When this struggle between the rebels and loyalists spread out to the factories and rural communes, the same problem cropped up. Rebel groups started to form units in factories and communes with great speed while their opponents countered this move, sometimes with greater speed, with militant names and masquerading as the genuine disciples of com. Mao Tse Tung. The people at the grassroots were much confused and very often failed to understand who actually represented Mao and his thought. Taking advantage of this situation, the 'loyalists' won a wide following among the masses, who took their slogans at the face value and identified their leaders with the CC and chairman Mao.

Amidst this turmoil, in the early 1967, was created the Shanghai Commune, politically the most significant event in the entire course of the GPCR. In November 1967, Shanghai workers set up an organization called 'Shanghai Workers' General Headquarters for Revolutionary Rebellion'. After this the rebel organizations mushroomed everywhere in the city. To stall the advance of revolutionary organizations, the Mayor of the city Tsao Ti-Chiu and the city party committee organized a second movement called 'The Shanghai Workers Scarlet Guard for Defense of Mao Tse Tung Thought.' Following this, Tientsin, Wuhan, Peking and Canton also witnessed similar developments. But Shanghai

was the main centre of the workers' movement. By the end of November 1967, the Shanghai rebels demanded that their own paper 'Red Guard Dispatch' be printed and distributed along with the 'Liberation Daily', the official newspaper of the East China Bureau of the CPC. The local party leaders refused to agree to this rebel demand. Angry, the rebels occupied the office of the 'Liberation Daily' and stopped all operations of the paper. Severe fight broke out between the rebel organization 'Workers' General Headquarters' and its opponent workers. One noticeable feature of this struggle was its strong political and a sharp polemical character. Leaflets, wall newspapers, declarations and debates through loudspeakers to draw the followers to each side prevailed over the physical skirmishes. The confrontation lasted for eight days. With each passing day, the rebels gained ground. Sensing their immediate downfall the city party committee signed an agreement with the Red Guards which indicated capitulation on the part of the former. But the struggle did not end here. Its centre shifted from the newspaper office to the streets. Although both sides mobilized large forces, the rebels outnumbered the 'loyalists' and organized a mass rally attended by over 600,000 people and won the mayor's approval for a new publication 'The Worker Rebel'. The paper intensified the campaign of the rebels with the result that they gained more and more mass support in Shanghai. The party committee fast losing its strongholds tried to win workers' support through profuse economic concessions granted to them. Rebels successfully defied these tactics and started taking power in plant after plant. Now they moved to take power in the city, On January 6, 1967, under the leadership of Chang Chung-Chiao, one million strong rally was held in Shanghai where Mayor of the city Tsao and East China Bureau chief Chen were publicly thrown out of power. The old party committee was dissolved and the workers seized power in China's largest city and industrial base.

On January 9, thirty two organizations jointly issued what was called an 'Urgent notice. It promulgated several rules directed towards the formation of a new government. All Chinese papers published it. Mao hailed it as a model. On 22 January Jen Min Jihpao wrote, "Of all the ways for the revolutionary masses to take their destiny into their own hands, in the final analysis, the only way is to take power! Those who have power have everything; those without power have nothing...we, the worker, peasant and soldier masses, are the indispensable masters of the new world! " The slogan raised throughout the city was, "All power to the Commune!" But it was not until February 5 that the commune was proclaimed at a meeting, once again attended by 1 million people. The speakers declared, "The new organ of power had been established, in keeping with the doctrines of Chairman Mao and the principles of dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>34</sup>

This seizure of power by the workers of Shanghai was a major turning point in the GPCR. By this event the 'loyalists' came to realize that the struggles could no more be confined to debates and exposures. It unleashed a movement of taking political power. They employed three measures to put a stop to this dangerous move taken by the revolutionary rebels. Opening of the floodgates of economism to divert revolution, series of false seizures of power to preempt the real ones by the rebels and use of armed forces at places were the three tactics adopted by them. At this crucial juncture two important events took place. One was the decision taken by Mao Tse Tung and Lin Piao to send PLA to carry out "three supports and two controls" - the support of industry, agriculture and the left and the control of all strife-ridden institutions and political military training of the students. 2.8 million army officers and soldiers were sent to government agencies, schools, shops, factories, mines and villages. Henceforth, it was the PLA through its propaganda teams for Mao Tse Tung Thought that was to identify the genuinely left rank-and-file committees, guide them toward unified actions and thus dominate the whole scene. Another was the replacement of the Shanghai Commune by Shanghai revolutionary committee only twenty days after it was born. Other communes in different cities followed suit. What are the characteristic features of the 'Revolutionary Committees?' Let us quote Mao himself: "The basic experience of revolutionary committees is this—they are threefold: they have representatives of revolutionary cadres, representatives of the armed forces and the representatives of the revolutionary masses. This forms a revolutionary three-in-one combination. The revolutionary committee should exercise unified leadership, eliminate redundant or overlapping administrative structures, follow the policy of better troops and simpler administration and organize a revolutionary leading group which keeps contact with the masses. " <sup>35</sup> How these two decisions went a long way in shaping the future of the GPCR will be discussed by us later on.

The 'January Storm' of 1967 was followed by the February counterattack. In a politbureau meeting held on February 14 and 16, and presided over by Chou En Lai, a large number of politbureau members burst out with questions such as: should or should not the 'Cultural Revolution' be led by the Communist party? Was it right to overthrow all veteran cadres? Should it not be necessary to maintain stability in the army? Vice-Premier Tan Zhelin most vehemently accused Chang Chunchiao of staging a counter-revolution in Shanghai and announced his determination to fight to the bitter end against the grave error being committed, even if it meant his expulsion from the party, imprisonment or death. In a February 18 meeting Mao denounced the opposition for attempting to start a restoration movement. At this, the followers of Mao started a nationwide campaign to repulse the counter-current. A veritable chaos gripped

the entire nation. Army was given an exceptional power at such a critical moment. The slogan 'All power to the commune' evaporated.

The Wuhan incident of July 1967 is recorded in the history of the GPCR as the most violent armed conflict that took place during that period. There were severe clashes between the rebels and the 'Million Heroes' organized by Chen Tsai Tao, Governor of Hunan. The 'Million Heroes' physically supported the rebels while the Governor called in the local garrison troops to break up rebel demonstrations and arrest rebel leaders. The rebels took to arms and a serious fight broke out. The Cultural Revolutionary Committee in Peking sent Hsieh Fu-Chih and Wag Li to Hupei to intervene, but they were arrested by Chen. Only when the naval units had sailed up the Yangtze and parachute troops had been dropped, Chen himself surrendered and went to Peking for self-criticism.

How complex the whole situation was could be gauged by the fact that the same Wang Li, turned a hero after the Wu Han incident, plunged into completely ultra left activities in the foreign language schools, under the ministry of foreign affairs. Chen Yi, the foreign minister was denounced and heckled and the Foreign Ministry itself was seized on August 7, 1967. Wu Han and his accomplices turned overseas embassies and consulates into centres of political agitation against the host governments. They instigated Chinese sailors in Italian port to fight physically with native people who would not wear Mao buttons. In Peking, British diplomats were beaten up. Archives of the foreign embassies were looted and secret documents were pasted on the walls. Some of the Asian embassies were closed down. Later investigations proved that Wang was Liu Shao-Chi's man. It was further discovered that all these activities were the handiwork of a secret counter-revolutionary organization named May 16, after the date on which the most important circular of the CC of the CPC was issued regarding the GPCR. Always the Red Book in hand, the members of the May 16 launched a series of attacks on the PLA, seized arms from the PLA depots and started armed attacks in different provinces. Since the PLA after its deployment by Mao acted as a unifying force in the country, its main target of attack was the PLA. It always tried to turn the political struggles into armed struggles to destabilize the nation. The ultra-left tendencies on the part of the rebel Red Guards also who very often attacked the army units considered by them conservative, further aggravated the situation. Mao in his speech to the Albanian Military Delegation on 1 May 1967 regretted, "After the 'January Storm' the central committee repeatedly concerned itself with the problem of a great alliance, but it did not work out. Later, it was discovered that this subjective wish was not in keeping with the objective laws of the development of class-struggle. This is because each class and political power wanted to exert itself stubbornly. Bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideologies burst forth like

unbridled flood-waters, thus undermining the great alliance. It was impossible to work out a great alliance and even if it were, it would eventually be broken up.”<sup>36</sup> There is no doubt that the lack of proper class-alliance had done great harm in the consolidation of class-forces and the successful advance of GPCR for that matter. This problem of the GPCR demands our greater attention.

From the beginning of the ‘January Storm’, 1967 to September 1968, amidst the reigning chaos and confusion, leading offices of the government, the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions had been reorganized into revolutionary committees with 3-in-1 composition as propounded by Mao. With this, both Lin Piao and Chiang Ching gradually rose to political power. It was thought that conditions were now ripe for convening the 9<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CPC. For its preparation the CC convened its twelfth plenary session (enlarged) from Oct 13 to 31. Mao delivered the opening speech: “The current great proletarian cultural revolution is absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing the restoration of capitalism and building socialism.” The main item on the agenda was to approve the ‘Examination report on the crimes of Liu Shao Chi, the Renegade, Hidden tailor and Scab’. It was approved and the decision was taken to “expel Liu Shao Chi from the party permanently and remove him from his posts both inside and outside the party...”

From April 1 to 24, 1969, the Ninth National Party Congress was held in Peking. The congress process convened after the bombardment of the headquarter and dismantling of party committees found it difficult to elect its deputies. The method of selection had to be adopted at various places. There were 1512 deputies to the congress. Lin Piao delivered the political report to the congress. The “theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat” was the main focus of the congress. The Cultural Revolution and its great new contribution to the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism were discussed at great length. The programme of carrying out ‘the task of struggle-criticism-transformation conscientiously’ declared and the task of consolidation and building of the party taken. The concept of a New Era was introduced in this congress and Mao Tse Tung thought was equated with Marxism-Leninism”. “Mao Tse Tung Thought is Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to world-wide victory” - the 9<sup>th</sup> congress announced. It stated, “Whoever opposes Chairman Mao, whoever opposes Mao Tse Tung Thought, at any time or under any circumstances, will be condemned and punished by the whole party and the whole nation”. As in the 8<sup>th</sup> congress, the 9<sup>th</sup> congress also stated, “In the new historical period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletariat enforces its dictatorship and exercises its leadership in every field

of work *through* its vanguard the communist Party.” This congress included a clause in its general programme naming Lin Piao as the successor to the Chairman. (Emphasis ours)

The 9<sup>th</sup> Congress was followed by the campaign of “Struggle, criticism and transformation.” With the establishment of ‘revolutionary committees’ abiding by the principle of 3-in-1, it was thought that the question of power seizure had been basically settled. But the revolution was not yet over. The all-important task of changing the superstructure now became the principal one to carry the revolution through to the end. There were several aspects of this campaign. Mao defined the task in this manner:

*“Struggle-criticism-transformation goes through the following stages: establishing a 3-in-1 revolutionary committee, carrying out mass criticism and repudiation; purifying the class ranks; consolidating the party organization; and simplifying the administrative structure, changing irrational rules and regulations and sending office workers to the workshop.”*

Although in the course of carrying out mass-criticism and purifying the class-ranks, serious ultra-left excesses were committed, the spirit of “fighting self” and simplifying the cumbersome production process, combining ‘expert and red’ a conscious effort to narrow down the gap between the physical and mental labour were clearly perceptible in this phase. In education policy, too, some revolutionary changes were brought about.

The most severe jolt that the GPCR received was the fall of Lin Piao. Right before the holding of the 9<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the party, Lin Piao in the draft political report of the congress stated that the GPCR had won final victory and the time for the economic rejuvenation had come. He shamelessly extolled Mao’s genius, considered cadre participation in productive labour as “forced labour reform” and criticized the sending of youth to the countryside as being “disguised unemployment”. Mao was fully aware of his ulterior motives, but he was helpless. In his letter to Chiang Ching written on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1966, he regretted: “My friend (an ironical reference to Lin Piao) and his supporters have forced my hand. Apparently I am unable to do otherwise than agree with them.... This is the first time in my life that, on an essential problem, I find myself aligned with other people against my will.”<sup>37</sup> Lin Piao glaringly exposed himself when Mao put forward a proposal for the ensuing Fourth National People’s Congress that the post of State Chairman should be removed. In the working conference on March 17, Lin vehemently opposed Mao’s proposal. On August 23, 1970, in the second<sup>42</sup> plenary session of the Ninth Central

Committee, before the agenda were taken up, Lin came up with a long speech, lauding Chairman Mao as a 'genius', which was meant to pave the way for his own chairmanship of the state. Mao became alert. He convened an enlarged meeting of the politbureau's standing committee, where he stopped the circulation of Lin Piao's speech which insisted on maintaining the post of State Chairman. Lin's overweening ambition was exposed. Then there was no other option for him than to stage an armed coup de' tat. In February 1971, Lin Ligno, the son of Lin Piao drew up the plan of action called 'Outline of Project 571', which intended either to kill Mao by any means, or to catch Mao together with his close comrades in a dragnet while they were at meeting. Mao, smelling a rat quickly convened the third plenary session of the 9<sup>th</sup> CC. Lin, too, stepped up preparations sensing that he might be exposed at the plenary session. Mao beat him by leaving Peking in mid-August 1971, on an inspection tour. In his talks with responsible comrades at various places he revealed, "Someone is eager to become the State Chairman; he wants to split the party and is anxious to seize power."<sup>38</sup> Lin Piao learnt of Mao's remarks and decided to stage the coup by assassinating him in the middle of his tour. Mao seeing his unusual activities suddenly changed the route of his journey. Lin then requested Peking to send to him seven airplanes and a special plane, Trident No 256. The CC and Chou Enlai in particular hearing of the unusual request, ordered to trace Trident No 256 on the radar. Lin together with his son and wife and six other accomplices hurriedly took on board the Trident in a bid to flee the country. The plane crashed in the People's Republic of Mongolia and all on board was killed.

Fall of Lin Piao indicated another turning point in the history of the GPCR. Since Lin was most closely associated with the GPCR and was often regarded as a symbol of this movement, his collapse and the exposure of his treachery left a trail of pernicious effects not only on the GPCR, but also on the country as a whole. After his fall, 32 key military generals were either arrested or dismissed. Twenty-five district or regional commanders were removed in early 1973. Army thus being thrown into a shambles, it became very necessary to strengthen the party. Old cadres were to be rehabilitated but in the process many rightists infiltrated the party.

Against the 'ultra-leftism' of Lin Piao (which was in essence rightism) a sort of truce was forged between the Left and the Right. The nation was in need of stability. Premier Chou Enlai played the role of a moderator. There was a virtual stalemate in the balance of forces within the party. But by 1972 the rightist forces began to reassert themselves. Debates started regarding economic planning, industrial management and restoration of individual management. Towards the end of 1972, the education front was assaulted by the Right,

reversing some important changes in the education system brought about by the GPCR. What was later described as 'evil wind' by the party started to blow. On April 24, 1972, the People's Daily published an editorial entitled "Learn from past mistakes; cure the illness to save the patient", which emphasized the need for faith in great majority of cadres, particularly on veteran cadres. From that time a large number of leading cadres, disgraced during the GPCR, were reinstated. In March 1973, at the proposal of Mao, CC of the CPC decided to reinstate Teng Tsiao Ping. The Left led by Chiang Ching felt surrounded by the Right and in reaction showed signs of ultra-left tendencies. Mao, however, deemed the ultra-right tendencies more dangerous than the ultra-left and sided with the latter. In such a complex situation the 10<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress was held in Peking, in August 1973.

The congress declared that the political and organizational line of the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress was correct. The crimes of Lin Piao clique were severely criticized. In the election of the CC many veteran leaders condemned as revisionists during the GPCR were included in the CC, while all the members of the 'Gang of Four' had their place in the politbureau. Now both the right and the Left were almost evenly poised to embark on a fresh battle for the victory of their respective lines. The left had an edge on their opponents in that the report on the new constitution delivered by Wang Hung-wen contained the call "going against the tide is a Marxist-Leninist principle" and "Practice Marxism, and not revisionism; unite, and don't split; be open and above board, and don't intrigue and conspire". These calls were favourable for them to launch a counter-attack.

This counter-attack took the form of "Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius". Though ostensibly it was aimed at Lin Piao, given the prevailing political context, it was obviously a veiled attack on the Right, particularly on Chou Enlai. Confucius and Mencius were severely battered for their 'restorationism' and the 'doctrine of the mean'. The target becomes more clear when it is directed against the "Duke of Chou", a distinct reference to Chou Enlai. This campaign got approval of Mao at its initial stage. But when carried to excess; he strongly chastised the 'Gang of Four'. On October 1974, when Chou Enlai was hospitalized, Mao proposed that Teng Hsiao Ping be the first Vice-Premier of the State. That Mao's trust on the "Gang of Four" was on the wane was further vindicated by the fact that at that crucial juncture of the party history, Mao put Chou Enlai in charge of the Fourth National People's Congress and recommended Teng Tsiao Ping as Vice-Chairman of the CC as well as First Vice Premier of the State Council, Vice chairman of the CC's Military commission and Chief of the General Staff of the PLA.

The first session of the Fourth National People's Congress was held in Peking from January 13 to 18, 1975. Chou Enlai made the government report, affirming the necessity for the realization of the four modernizations – in agriculture, industry, national defense and science and technology—by the end of the century while at the same time upheld the GPCR as having a far-reaching influence and affirmed 'Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius' campaign. On Mao's personal insistence 'right to strike' was included in the Report on the State Constitution delivered by Chang Chun-Chiao. The 4<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress thus hung in a precarious balance. The Right was on the ascendancy in respect of organizational clout, while the Left had been empowered with Mao's unrelenting emphasis on continuing the class-struggle. The contest was so close that Mao, it is said, spent a sleepless night before the 4<sup>th</sup> People's National Congress started. During the entire period of this uncertainty starting from the fall of Lin Piao to the convening of the 4<sup>th</sup> People's National Congress, Chou Enlai's role was the most complex and subtle. The stabilizing role that he had played in this period was necessary for the nation and there is no recorded history of Mao's opposing it. He stood against anarchy let loose by the ultra-leftists and the Right used this to their own advantage. But that he was the nucleus of the rightist forces, as many would have us believe is not borne out by the facts. Forgetting Mao's cardinal slogan, "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production", the ultra-leftists became wary of anybody talking about production. The difference between Chou and Teng becomes obvious if one takes the trouble to compare between the economic programmes Chou had taken up before the 4<sup>th</sup> National Congress and the 'General Programme' drafted under Teng's supervision in the summer of 1975.<sup>39</sup> The General Programme though shot through with dozens of Mao's quotations, brazenly advocates the primary importance of the development of the national economy. Mao issued three instructions at different occasions in 1974, concerning development of economy, stability and unity and studying the theory of dictatorship of the proletariat. 'The Programme' declared them as inseparable entities and substituted as the key-link these 'three directives' of Mao for Mao's famous dictum "Class-Struggle is the key-link". Chou's illness grew after the Fourth National People's Congress and Teng took up the reins both of the party and the government.

Teng, now acting as a functioning Premier started filling the Central Government posts with his own men. Twenty out of thirty appointments at the centre were from the rehabilitated party persons digressed during the GPCR. On the other hand, he set out to launch a policy rectification movement directed to put the development of national economy in command. He started reforms with a fresh vigour in the fields of railways, industrial and agricultural productions, army and even science, education and culture. At the same time the Left led

by the 'Gang of Four' stepped up the movement for studying 'Theories of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' directed to expose 'empiricism' which the Right had been indulging in. There were head-on collisions between these two centres in the CPC, resulting in major clashes breaking out in various factions where the PLA had once again to intervene. The line of demarcation was so clear and the struggle so acute that Mao had now no option but to distinctly declare his position.

Mao distinguished between two kinds of attitudes. One was discontent with the GPCR and the other was setting accounts with it. Now it was obvious to him that Teng stood for the latter. The tension that was prevailing took a sharp turn when a Deputy Party Secretary of the Tsihghua University sent a letter to Mao through Teng complaining against two Party leaders of the university who were close to Chiang Ching. Mao believed that the entire move was a handiwork of Teng and the motive was improper. In October 1975, the movement to 'criticize Teng and repulse the Rightist Restoration' began.

These attacks and counterattacks always sprang up from either of the centres of the party and after that gradually engulfed the society. Repetition of this process had serious negative effect on the people. The issues involved were very often beyond their grasp. When they tired of the monotony of these battles, a very sensitive issue came up. Chou Enlai died on January 8, 1976. Both the factions of the party plunged into establishing their dominance over the other centering round the funeral of this respected leader. The Right lost no time in mobilizing the masses to mourn the death of a leader who, they claimed, belonged to them only. They utilized the 1 million gathering at the funeral to push forward their ambition of isolating the Left completely. Emboldened by this vast gathering, they raised provocative slogans against the Left, particularly the 'Gang of Four'. The Left on their part, feeling that their mass-support had been receding reacted sharply, calling the gathering "The counter-revolutionary political incident at Tien-an-men square.....deliberately planned over a long period of time." <sup>40</sup> On April 4 the same year, at the Tomb-Sweeping festival, 2 million people gathered at the Tien-an-men square to show their respect for the departed leader. The Right very cleverly utilized this occasion, too, to further isolate the Left. The Left instead of letting this sensitive occasion pass off peacefully, tried to retaliate. According to their own admission: "Filled with rage at their perverse action, the masses of the people.....took up weapons to wage a heroic struggle against them." <sup>41</sup> Militia men, police and Peking garrison also were employed to check this 'counter revolutionary political incident'. Teng Hsiao Ping was branded the 'Chief behind-the-scene manipulator' and on 7 April, at the proposal of Mao was stripped of all posts

inside and outside the party. Hua Kuo Feng was appointed First vice Chairman of the CC of the CPC and Premier of the State Council.

Finally on September 9, 1976, Mao Tse Tung passed away. Both the sides were now in a haste to seize power. But the Left headed by the four had already lost much of the people's support for their rash activities. Last few years' domination of Teng Hsiao Ping in the party rendered them into a minority in the party too. It was now the turn of Hua Kuo Feng, apparently known to be trusted by Mao, to clinch the whole power struggle in favour of the Right. On October 6<sup>th</sup>, the Four were placed under arrest under the leadership of Hua. The very next day the politbureau of the CC made Hua Chairman of the party as well as of its Military Commission. Criticism of Teng Hsiao-Ping stopped at the end of November. In January 1977, demonstrations were held demanding the return of Teng in the leadership of the party and the state. In June 1977, Teng's ideas and his criticism of the Four were praised copiously in Jen-Min Jihpao and in July of the same year at third session of the Central Committee, Hua was officially appointed Chairman and Teng got back all his previous powers. The Rightists were firmly in control of both the party and the State. In fact, the accession to power by Hua Kuo Feng resulting from the coup de' tat on October 6, 1976 brought the GPCR to a close. From that point of time the triumph of the rightist line began and steadily kept on replacing the revolutionary line that the GPCR had set in motion. Excepting some sporadic resistance offered by the workers in Shanghai and some other places, the final takeover of power by the Right had not to face any stubborn opposition by the Left or the people in general.

### ***A Revolution That Failed: The Critique of the GPCR***

With the end of the GPCR, a phase of the world communist movement came to a close. It ushered in a void in the sphere of applied socialism, operative since the October Revolution in 1917. The crisis of the development of Marxist theory that could be traced back from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (see two articles, one on the Marxist Philosophy and other on practice of Soviet socialism, in the first issue of Marxist Intellection) also came to a head after the debacle in China. When both the theory and practice of socialism have fallen into such a deep predicament, it is obvious that now is a time when only a qualitative leap in the theory of Marxism can rejuvenate the world communist movement and place it once again on the pedestal of its pristine glory. Since the GPCR was the last great attempt at salvaging Marxism from the morass of revisionism, a thorough study of this historic experimentation will provide us with rich material for a search into the root cause of the failure of socialism, not only in China but also in other former socialist countries. There are two extremely opposite

views regarding the evaluation of the GPCR. One is held by the revisionists who attack it with all the virulence they can muster up, while the other is held by the communist revolutionaries, particularly by those claiming themselves to be Maoists, who believe that the lessons of the GPCR are the panacea that will rid the world communist movement of all its maladies. It goes without saying that both these views are wrong. The GPCR was a great attempt at saving China's socialism from deviating into capitalism and therefore revisionists of all hues spare no pains to denigrate it. The communist revolutionaries, on the other hand, prefer to remain blind-folded towards its limitations and its failures. A sort of dogmatism still haunts them and they think they must have to fall back upon some ideas—almost sacrosanct and any attempt to question them is considered an anathema. It is to be noted here that even the comrades of UCPN (M) who otherwise appear to us to be very reasonable have fallen victim to this irrational approach towards the GPCR. To us, it was a serious attempt to save the international socialist movement from the severe errors committed by com. Stalin and later on from the treachery of the arch revisionists Khrushchov and Liu Shao Chi; but it had its grave limitations, so much so that it ultimately failed in its purpose. Can we connive at the fact that a revolution conducted by no less a leader than com. Mao and for no less a period than ten years resulted in the return to power of the capitalist roaders as soon as com. Mao had died? While appreciating its positive contributions, should we shut our eyes to its tragic failures? To take lessons from both strength and weakness of any political movement is the hall-mark of a true communist and we shall in this section try to find out the serious lapses that the GPCR had suffered from and try to take necessary lessons for the future.

Com. Mao very clearly stated “The current Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidating the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism”<sup>42</sup> (The emphasis is ours).

In this statement com. Mao with his usual lucidity unequivocally pointed to the basic objective of the GPCR. Com. Mao was absolutely correct in spelling out the principal task that had to be achieved through the GPCR and that was the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and building socialism by preventing capitalist restoration. And this is what it had to be, for in a country where the state character had been declared ‘socialist’, consolidation and development of the dictatorship of the proletariat was to be unquestionably the pivot of all other activities. This is quite in tune with the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Marx said in his famous letter to J Weydemayer:

“As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class-struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) That the *existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) That the class-struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, 3) That this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a classless society.”

In ‘Critique of Gotha Programme’ Marx becomes more explicit:

*“Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the **revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.**”*

Lenin upholds the concept of ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ as constituting the basic difference between a Marxist and a non-Marxist depending upon one’s recognition of it or otherwise. In his crucial work ‘The State and Revolution’, he says:

*“Those who recognize only the class-struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the boundaries of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics... Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class-struggle to the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois”.*

The GPCR of China tried to defend and develop this dictatorship of the proletariat and foil the attempt of the revisionists (capitalist-roaders) to turn the country into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. We shall try to analyze the GPCR to find out its success or failure in achieving this dictatorship.

To Marx, Paris Commune was the first instance of dictatorship of the proletariat in history. He thoroughly examined this great event in ‘The Civil War in France’ and brought forth the most important features of it. He stated:

*“It was essentially a working class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, **the political form at last discovered** under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour.*

*Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been impossibility and a delusion. The political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his social slavery.” (Emphasis ours)*

What is the most significant utterance here is that Paris Commune as an embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat was the political rule of the producer. Marx is here the most emphatic on the question of the *political rule of the producer*, for to him this was the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour. And where will this emancipation of labour lead? Marx himself explains in the same book, “With labour emancipated, every man becomes a working man and productive labour ceases to be a class attribute”. Thus political rule of the producer is, to Marx, an indispensable transitional phase to achieve a classless society. According to Marx’s understanding how firmly the producing class can exercise class dictatorship, i.e., wield political power is the measure of success of socialism. How this political power of the working class can operate under the dictatorship of the proletariat was demonstrated by Paris Commune, which Marx elaborated on in ‘The Civil War in France’. Let us have a look at it, for the essential features of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be properly understood by the study of the measures that the Paris Commune adopted to replace the old state power by ‘the Self-government of the producers’. All the quotations given below are from ‘The Civil War in France’:

*“The first decree of the commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army and the substitution for it of the armed people.”*

*“The commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members was naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class.”*

“The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time.”

“The police was at once stripped of its political attributes and turned into the responsible and at times revocable agent of the commune. So were officials of all other branches of the Administration.”

“From the members of the commune downwards public service at *workmen’s wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of State disappeared along with the dignitaries themselves.”

“Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune.”

“..... The Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression of the ‘Parson-power’, by the disestablishment and disendowment of all Churches as proprietary bodies.”

“The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and cleared of all interference of church and State.”

“Like the rest of the public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible and revocable.”

This is what the dictatorship of the proletariat boils down to. What in the ‘Manifesto of the Communist Party’ was a political concept, now turned into reality in the establishment of the Paris Commune. As envisioned in the Manifesto, the Paris Commune became the concrete experience of “Conquest of political power by the proletariat”. “....the first step in the revolution by the working class” which was, according to Marx and Engels directed “to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.”

What is most noticeable in the whole discourse is Marx’s emphasis on ‘The Political Rule of the Producer’ and how this political power of the working class becomes “the political form....under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour.”

After the Paris Commune and taking great lessons from it Lenin continued with it and further developed the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin had all along been forthright in asserting that in Russia the Soviets were the concrete expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In his famous book “Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky”, like in many other of his writings he was very unequivocal:

*“The Soviets are the Russian form of the proletarian dictatorship. If a Marxist theoretician, writing a work on the dictatorship of the proletariat, had really studied the subject... he would first have given a general definition of dictatorship, and would then have examined its peculiar national form, the Soviets; he would have given his critique of them as one of the forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”*

In the same book he further elaborates:

*“The Soviets are the direct organization of the working and exploited people themselves, which helps them to organize and **administer** their own state in every possible way” (Emphasis ours)*

What with Marx was ‘the political rule of the producer’ while describing the Paris Commune becomes “the direct organization of the working and exploited people.....to organize and administer their own State” with Lenin to describe the Soviets.

He further clarifies the tasks of the Soviets:

*“But it (the Soviet Power) does pave the way to socialism. It gives those who were formerly oppressed the chance to straighten their backs and to an ever-increasing degree to **take the whole government of the country, the whole administration of the economy, the whole management of production, into their own hands**”,<sup>43</sup> (Emphasis ours)*

As was the case with Paris Commune, The Soviets too, were discovered by the masses:

*“Soviet power is the road to socialism that was discovered by the masses of working people, and that is why it is the true road, that is why it is invincible.”<sup>44</sup>*

The Soviet power in Russia was strikingly similar to the Paris Commune; the former being, as it were a direct descendant of the latter. When Lenin in the Draft Programme of the RCP (B) prepared for the 8<sup>th</sup> congress of the party put forward the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, this similarity becomes obvious. Let us recount some of them:

(1) “..... Soviet power has made that organization (of the masses) the essential permanent basis of the entire State apparatus, local and central from top to bottom. Only in this way is it possible to ensure democracy for the great majority of the population (the working people), i.e., actual participation in state administration.”

(2) “..... uniting the most backward and disunited masses of rural proletarians and semi-proletarians more closely with the advanced workers .....

(3) “..... implementation of real democracy, i.e., the real equality of all working people, and by excluding the exploiters from the category of members of society possessing full rights.”

(4) “The more direct influence of the working masses on the state structure and administration..... by the electoral procedure and the possibility of holding

elections more frequently and also by conditions for re-election and for the recall of deputies....”

(5) “.... closer contact between the state apparatus and the masses of advanced proletarians .....

(6) “..... the creation of the armed forces of workers and peasants which are much more closely connected with the working and exploited people than before.”

(7) “The Soviet power has at the same time, swept away those negative aspects of bourgeois democracy that the Paris Commune began to abolish i.e., parliamentarism or the separation of legislative and executive powers .....

(8) Soviet State organization alone has enabled the proletarian revolution to smash the old bourgeois state apparatus at one blow and destroy it to the very foundation..... The continuation of the struggle against the bureaucracy, therefore, is absolutely necessary .....

(9) “First, every member of a Soviet must, without fail, do a certain job of state administration; Secondly, these jobs must be consistently changed so that they embrace all aspects of government, all its branches; and thirdly literally all working population must be drawn into independent participation in state administration by means of a series of gradual measures...”.

(10) Proletarian, or Soviet democracy, on the contrary has transferred the centre of gravity.... to the actual participation of none but the working people, who were oppressed and exploited by capital, in the administration of the state, .....

We have quoted rather extensively from Marx’s ‘Civil War in France’ and Lenin’s Draft Programme to find out the most essential feature, the most distinctive characteristic of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And obviously this is the participation of the working people in the administration of the state. From this it also follows that to eliminate bourgeois production relation at the base, to do away with the alienation of the producers from the means of production, i.e., to work out the economic emancipation of labour” the precondition is the existence of “the political rule of the producer,” ....to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes and therefore of class rule.”<sup>45</sup> Any revolution or any political initiative that strives for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and building socialism must, therefore, mainly concentrate on drawing literally all the working population into independent participation in state

administration. This and only this can create the necessary bulwark under which the conversion of the means of production and distribution into common property of all working people is possible.

The second thing which is the most noticeable in the writings of Marx and Lenin is the absence of the direct role of the party in the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This omission is particularly striking in case of Lenin for he writes after the October Revolution in which the role of the Bolshevik party was of paramount importance. Evidently Lenin tried to emphasize on the independent assertion of the working class in the running of the Soviets. But Lenin knew the paramount importance of the role of the communist party, the advanced detachment of the working class in the execution of the dictatorship of the proletariat, not to speak of its role in advancing the humanity towards a classless society. This role has been clearly spelt out by Lenin in 'The Left-wing Communism, on Infantile Disorder.' In this book Lenin states, "..... the dictatorship is exercised by the proletarians organized in the Soviets; the proletariat is guided by the communist party of Bolsheviks ...." Here the choice of the word 'guided' is very significant. It implies a sort of ideological leadership, which for all practical purposes is not only necessary but also indispensable, given the fact that a communist party in the true sense of the term is the embodiment of the highest consciousness that the advanced section of the proletariat can collectively possess. That Lenin was extremely unhappy with and regrets the situation where the party exercised the virtual leadership over the Soviets was amply clear in his report on the party programme submitted at the 8th congress of the RCP (B) held in March 1919. He says, "..... The Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government **by the working people**, are in fact organs of government **for the working people** by the advanced section of the proletariat, but not by the working people as a whole." (Emphasis Lenin's) In the same report he dissects, "We can fight bureaucracy to the bitter end, to a complete victory, only when the whole population participates in the work of government." He attributed this undesirable situation to 'the low cultural level' of the workers. He prescribes 'prolonged education' to tide over this crisis. Lenin specified the nature of the problem as well as its solution "... the cultural level has not been raised, and therefore the bureaucrats are occupying their old positions. They can be forced to retreat only if the proletariat and peasants are organized far more extensively..... and only if real measures are taken to enlist the workers in government." The uplift in the sphere of culture and education of the workers is, according to Lenin, a pre-condition for 'an expansive democracy', which is the essential element in the transition of the society to communism. Reference is often made of Lenin's comment in the 10th congress of RCP (B) held in March 1921 where he said, "After two and a half years of the Soviet power we

came out in the communist International and told the world that the dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the communist party.” But anybody who goes through the entire report of the 10th Congress will understand that Lenin never intended to make it a general line. On the contrary, that it was a result of a historical compulsion becomes evident when one studies the context.

But whatever might be Lenin’s intention, the course of events showed that this very situation continued thereafter in the Soviet Union till the complete dissolution of the Soviets, vindicating with greater force the correctness of the basic formulation made by Marx and Lenin about the characteristics of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There is hardly any debate among the present day Marxists regarding Stalin’s complete failure in this matter. But could Mao restore the dictatorship of the proletariat, particularly through his 10 years of experimentation called the GPCR? There are various answers to this question. Let us try and formulate our own.

First of all let us look back at the history of Chinese socialism. The 8th National Congress of the CPC declared China a socialist country.

“The party of the working class – the Chinese Communist Party – has become the party that leads the state power of the whole country; therefore, the people’s democratic dictatorship has in essence become a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”<sup>46</sup>

That very document goes on to say, “such a state power, in its essence can only be the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only when the proletariat, through its vanguard, the communist party has employed this weapon..... it will be able to fulfill this serious and complex task.”<sup>47</sup> The CPC started its journey towards socialism with a complete contravention to the teachings of Marx and Lenin. To it, as if the problem of the leadership in the dictatorship of the proletariat has already been solved, in favour of the leadership of the party. This complacency on the part of the CPC becomes more pronounced when we see that in two articles of utmost importance, namely ‘On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat’ and ‘More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,’ one written immediately before and the other immediately after the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress, various problems of the party. e.g., the 20th Congress of the CPSU, evaluation of Stalin, criticism of the personality cult etc. have been dealt with, but not a single line was devoted to the problem of building the class-organization of the proletariat and its leadership. At times it appears that the party as a whole is blissfully unaware of this most pressing problem of the international communist movement during the entire period. It is not very plausible that all this could happen because of the predominance

of Liu Shao Chi in that period. That Mao, too, was completely unconcerned about the problem becomes evident when we go through the most cardinal article by Mao written in 1955, named 'On the Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture.' This was a subject written on the eve of the transformation of the country to socialism, which could provide ample scope to discuss the problems of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat in the vast rural areas of China. Instead, his stress all along has been only on the party and the people, completely oblivious of the working class. The party is ubiquitous; the party is the be-all and end-all. In the above-mentioned article Mao goes on to say, almost like a refrain "... the party is capable of leading the people of the whole country to socialism." "We must have faith in the masses and we must have faith in the party. These two are cardinal principles." "... reliance must be placed on the party and the Youth League." There is no mention of the working class, whose leadership as a 'class' was to steer the Chinese society towards communism.

Now the question arises: was the People's Commune the answer? No doubt that this form of 'The basic unit of the socialist social structure' as it has been defined by the CC of the CPC in its December 10, 1958 Resolution, had all the ingredients of being built up as the Chinese form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Like the Paris Commune or the Soviets, the Chinese Communes too, were created by the people. Before the intervention of the party the Sputnik Commune of Honan prepared its own constitution that stated the People's Commune was "a basic unit of society"..... "to manage all industrial and agricultural production, trade, cultural and educational work and political affairs within its own sphere." After 33% of the peasantry were communized, the first resolution of the CC of the CPC was adopted on August 29, 1958, where it was stated that "the new form has become the proper form to accelerate socialist construction ..... and carry out the gradual transition to communism." The CC's resolution on 10th December, 1958 also describes the functions of the commune in the following manner:

*"This was the large scale people's commune in the rural areas of our country which combines industry, agriculture, trade, education and military affairs and in which government administration and commune management are integrated."*

Despite all these declarations which very often verge on the desired objective of achieving proletarian dictatorship, a thorough study of the functions of the communes clearly shows that the People's Communes in China could never transcend its genesis, i.e. evolution of the peasant cooperatives into its next stage of development as production units. During the winter of 1957-58 the

government started a country-wide water conservation and irrigation programme. But this drive necessitated the demolition of cooperatives that were too small in size to properly utilize the benefits of large dams and canals. Under this compulsion, informal mergers of co-operatives began to take place throughout the countryside of China. In Honan province, twenty seven co-operatives merged in April, 1958 and after some experimentations and group discussions the merger was formalized and a new constitution was adopted on 7, August, 1958. It was called Weihsing (Sputnik) Enlarged cooperative. The name People's Commune was given later on by the enthusiastic peasants themselves, afterwards approved by Mao. Although in its first official resolution the CC of the CPC has called it the proper form to accelerate socialist construction.... and carry out the gradual transition to communism, no theoretical writing was ever found expatiating on the relation between the People's Commune and the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is a mention of an incident to establish how proletarian dictatorship was enforced in communes in the book 'Inside the people's commune' by Chu Li and Tien Chieh-yun. It describes how a runaway landlord tried to run off under cover of night but caught by the commune's militiamen and turned over to the poor and lower middle peasants of his own village. Considering the gravity of the issue this illustration of the way how dictatorship of proletariat was implemented and that, too, in an official Chinese document seems to be ludicrous. It is a commentary on the levity of the Chinese communist party's perception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is a plethora of writings on communes by China experts, but none of them tried to or could establish that the communes were an embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. All that the communes could achieve was a partial involvement of the producers in the decisions regarding production. We shall see how that too, was marred by the intervention of the party.

The intervention of the party in the commune affairs (as we have seen earlier how the party and the party alone became used to taking the centre stage) started taking its toll right from the beginning. As early as 1959, Anna Louise Strong, an ardent champion of the Chinese revolution, observed in her book that one is struck by the constant presence of communist leadership in the communes. She says, "Communist leadership exists from the township to the nation's centre. The local communists seek to organize the local people for the satisfaction of their demands for a better life. When they lead badly, as they did in 1957 in Changshih through apathy and in Honan province through a choice of a mistaken line, they are brought up short by actual failure, shown by small harvests and a poorer life."<sup>48</sup> What havoc was wrought in the people's communes by the authoritative intervention of the party in the affairs of the communes has been sharply brought out by Dongping Han, an enthusiastic supporter of com. Mao and the Cultural Revolution, in his book, a research

work, 'The Unknown Cultural Revolution.' He writes, "The concentration of power in the hands of the party officials who were not responsible to ordinary villagers had tragic consequences during the Great Leap Forward (1958-59). Bent on pleasing their superiors and on achieving quick results, village and commune officials became slave-drivers in some cases. Many leaders forced villagers to work twenty hour a day. Frequently, it was no longer possible for rural people to meet the officials' ever-increasing demand for quick results. The commune and country leaders' irrational planning, in disregard of villagers' conventional wisdom and their tendency to inflate production figures during the Great Leap Forward caused the breakdown of effective communication. Many commune and village leaders in Jimo ignored the food shortage in their communes and villages and sold more grain to the state to please their superiors. Consequently serious food shortages occurred in some areas."

How could the communes, under the circumstances described above be the vehicle of 'transition to communism' or 'the basic unit of state power'? At best the communes could be conceived of as just production units, disturbed very often by the undesirable interference of the party. The communes despite its initial possibilities of being the basic units of the socialist society of China and the basic unit of the state power gradually fell victim to the authoritarianism of the party.

So was the case with the GPCR too. At the initial stage of the launching of the historic movement, the GPCR held out great promises to put the country on the socialist track by defeating the capitalist-roaders of the party and by unleashing the immense initiative of the masses. This is what it should have done given the fact that Mao had all along been extremely aware of the deviations of Stalin on the one hand and of Khrushchov and Liu Shao Chi on the other. We have discussed them at length earlier in the writing. In 'Decision of the CC of the CPC concerning the GPCR', reference was made of the Paris Commune when new forms of organization were discussed. Again, in the 'Communiqué of the eleventh plenary session of the 8<sup>th</sup> CC of the CPC', the question of the all-important role of the masses has been emphasized "..... the key to the success of this great Cultural Revolution is to have faith in the masses, rely on them boldly, arouse them and respect their initiative ..... Be pupils of the masses before becoming their teachers ....." More important is the call - "Dare to make revolution and be good at making revolution. Don't be afraid of disturbances." How the party reneged on these proclamations will be our later study. For now, it is important to understand how the contradictory attitudes of the party, one for upholding the spirit of the Paris Commune and the other for the inherent proclivity for upholding supremacy of the party creates a serious ambivalence. In the 5<sup>th</sup> August 8 decision on the one hand it is

said, “In the GPCR, the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves and any method of doing things on their behalf must not be used.” While on the other hand, it is stated “..... under the leadership of the party the masses are educating themselves.” On the one hand the declared objective of the GPCR is the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat (Communiqué of the Enlarged 12th Plenary session), on the other hand the points of concentration of GPCR is “the cultural and educational units and leading organs of the party and Government” (8th August Decision) where the word ‘proletariat’ is not even hinted at. This tension between the all-embracing rule of the party and respect for the initiative of the masses at last came to an end with the death of Shanghai Commune. Both the coming into being and then the disappearing of the Shanghai Commune is the most important event of the GPCR which had far-reaching theoretical and practical implications.

The factory committees showing allegiance to the GPCR started to come up in Shanghai absolutely under the initiative and leadership of the factory workers and constituted the embryos of the dictatorship of the proletariat, almost in the classical sense of the term. These committees called ‘headquarters’ existed side by side with the production groups consisting mainly of party cadres, supported by the Shanghai Municipal Council. But with the passage of time the power of the ‘headquarters’ steadily increased, so much so that they challenged the authority of the Municipal Council which totally crumbled in early January 1967 after a series of meetings, attended by one million revolutionary workers. On 9th of January thirty two organizations jointly issued a notice that set forth rules for the new centre of power, purported to be a new revolutionary government. As expected Mao himself hailed it and called it a model for the future.

To us, it was the height of the GPCR. Not only for its being the true embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but for its being a fruition of workers’ own initiative and an unhindered experimentation with new social movement. This was in tune with the true spirit of the Paris Commune, the Soviets and the early formulations of the GPCR. Most importantly, what the method of political leadership vis-a-vis a mass movement should be also evolved through this practice: the conservative cadres were swept away and the revolutionary leadership (Chang Chun-Chiao, to name one) acted without any authoritarianism. “The Shanghai Commune had all the elements of being a model for the Chinese form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But this was not to be. The party felt uneasy with this form of movement right from the beginning. The central press kept silent over the formation of communes, including those of the other cities. After twenty days of

proclamation, the Shanghai commune was disbanded and replaced by the revolutionary committee, comprising, as we have stated earlier, cadres, armed forces and revolutionary masses. Other communes followed suit. Dominance of the proletariat in the functioning of the state power was consciously put to an end.

To our utter dismay we find that even at that vital moment of history, once again the question of undermining the importance of the party has been put forward as the main reason for the dissolution of the commune and this question was raised by none other than Mao Tse Tung himself who only five months ago exhorted his comrades to bombard the headquarters. This is the most disturbing episode in the whole course of the GPCR and henceforth it was an account of gradual retreat. Mao's reactions on the Shanghai Commune was first made public by Chang Chun Chiao in his speech of 24 February '67, tape-recorded version of which was later transcribed into the documents. Mao said,

*“If everything were changed into commune then what about the party? Where would we place the party? Among commune committee members are both party members and non-party members. Where would we place the party committee? There must be a party somehow! There must be a nucleus, no matter what we call it. Be it called the communist party, or social democratic party, or Kuomintang or I-kuan-tao, it must have a party. The commune must have a party, but can the commune replace the party?”*<sup>49</sup>

How does the question of this replacement arise is not clear to us. But that Mao was not concerned with the name alone became evident after a few lines, “Any change in name is a change in form, and does not solve the problem of content. When we set up temporary power structures, do we not still call them revolutionary committees?”<sup>50</sup> Mao is obviously in favour of the content of the Revolutionary Committees where the party cadres and the members of the armed forces would constitute the nucleus of the leadership. Independent initiative of the proletariat was checked and the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the class itself was jeopardized. We think we owe the readers an explanation of why we stress so much on the 20 days event of Shanghai Commune while the GPCR spanned a whole decade.

At the outset let us see on what a weak base the socialism in China was built. According to the 8th congress of CPC report; “In 1949 the value of production on state-owned industries only amounted to 26.3 per cent of the total value of industrial production; in 1952 it had climbed to 41.5 per cent, and by 1955 it was up 51.3 per cent.” In such a backward society even if state ownership reaches up to 100 per cent, production relations at the base would continue,

rather tenaciously, to retain capitalist production relations, unless a constant and vigorous revolutionizing of the production relations takes place. The experience of the Soviet Union has amply demonstrated that the formal state ownership of the means of production itself does not and cannot give birth to socialist production relation. Converting capitalist production relations into socialist production relation is a separate, independent task and decisive too, if a country is to undertake the course of transition from capitalism to communism. The GPCR with all its revolutionary potential and revolutionary thrust miserably failed to concentrate its attention to this. Its whole concern was centred around the capitalist elements pervading the superstructure, expressed in the revisionist line of the capitalist-roaders in the party. How capitalism found a fertile ground to grow upon and keep on continually developing in the base in the form of constant generation and regeneration of capitalist production relation was in the main, ignored. It was obviously a continuation of the Stalinist model of socialism which perceived that the elimination of the private ownership of the means of production automatically brings about 'socialist ownership' provided there is a 'socialist superstructure.' To the CPC leadership led by Mao, that super structure was invaded by the capitalist roaders. The whole target of Mao and his followers was to weed out those vicious elements from the party. To achieve this end masses, particularly the students, youth and the PLA who are more amenable to political persuasion, were aroused to find out the 'loyalists' and to persecute them. The slogan 'Bombard the Headquarters' further impelled them to be more aggressive. Anarchy was let loose. It did much harm to the cause, making many friends into enemies. Mao, though in a minority position in the party could exercise ample power by his position of authority. And actually he did whatever he wished and thought proper to do. When Mao did not contemplate to build a parallel party, the slogan however revolutionary in content was absolutely unwarranted. It was fraught with the seeds of anarchy and it started taking its toll. That Mao was so much concerned about the party following the emergence of the Shanghai Commune was obviously an over-reaction to the role of the cadres who hysterically started overthrowing 'all those in responsible position.' Meanwhile the Shanghai commune, without any instructions from above, embarked upon a completely separate path directed towards endowing the working class with state power. After the extinction of the Shanghai Commune the process of assumption of political power by the working class halted, with the result that the separation of the immediate producers from the means of production continued to remain in the Chinese society i.e. capitalist production relation persisted to a large measure. As we have seen earlier Mao was totally aware of the problem of 'alienation' and considered it the cause of Soviet debacle. But he was too wary to go in for bold experimentations with various forms of social formations. The chaos that was let loose at the beginning of

1967 highly disturbed a majority of the party comrades, especially the veterans including Mao himself. A further holocaust it was feared, would have spelt disaster and existence of the party would be in danger. A sort of moderation was needed. Mao responded to the need. That is why in his conversation with Chang Chun-Chiao and Yao Wen-yuan, he exclusively upheld the importance of party. The over-enthusiasm of the early months of the GPCR gave way to conservatism costing the great experimentation dear.

The increase of the all-encompassing power of the party is a concomitant of the decrease of the independent assertion of the working class. The authoritarian intervention of the party in every sphere of the society invariably undermines the class's own organization, its own initiative and its creativity in evolving newer forms of social organizations through multifarious experimentations. If the superior consciousness of the vanguard of the proletariat i.e. the party (without which the most complex and difficult journey of humanity towards a classless society is unimaginable) is confined to ideological guidance only, the proletariat with its own powerful class organization will keep on revolutionizing the production relations in such a way that the producers' control over production, distribution and administration of the state power gradually increases, and thereby democracy gradually expands. This is the only guarantee, the only hall-mark of a developing dictatorship of the proletariat. Not only this. This process alone can stall the alienation of the party from the class. The objective existence of the working class, the most organized class in a society for that matter, lays the ideological foundation of the communist party. The existence of the powerful class organization, therefore, is the guarantee for the living relation between the party and the class. The party continuously gets rejuvenated by the invigorating nourishment provided by the class organization exercising its dictatorship (with, of course, the guidance of the party). This dialectical relationship between the class and the party, and this both way traffic between them help dictatorship of the proletariat consolidate itself and saves the party from being isolated from the class whose advanced detachment it is.

If the party takes upon itself the responsibility of wielding political power for the working class, the latter will be deprived of the scope of leading mass movements, of creating new forms of struggles and thereby of having a vibrant existence as a class. A class not in motion becomes politically ossified, almost a dead entity. It becomes impossible for such an entity to challenge or to criticize a party even if the latter shows signs of bourgeois deviations, nor can it provide the party with the necessary class outlook that its objective existence in a society is supposed to continually generate. Both the party and the class suffer in that case. The party becomes a favourable breeding ground for bourgeois ideas and elements; the proletariat loses its power to rule, i.e. fail to

excise its dictatorship. This is what happened in the Soviet Union and what happened in China, too, despite its superior awareness of the problems of socialism and mistakes committed by the CPSU. In the ultimate analysis, the CPC, under the leadership of Mao, too, could not wriggle out of the Soviet heritage of vesting all power to the party at the cost of the working class. The greatest failure of the GPCR can be attributed to this.

Since the basic task of the GPCR was narrowed down to criticism of the capitalist-roaders within the party, the role of the petty-bourgeois elements particularly of the students and youth assumed singular importance. This was quite natural, because if the struggle against capitalism and capitalist roaders is confined to verbal attacks (which very often stooped to persecuting the elderly cadres of the party), those elements must have surfaced on the scene, for they are more adept at political debates, persuasion and if necessary, verbal and physical attacks. The leading role of the petty bourgeois elements received a formal stamp of approval from the party when in a directive to the party members, the Revolutionary Committees comprising the cadres, PLA members and masses were declared to be the basic units leading the GPCR. Is it not obvious that in a conglomerate where the cadres co-exist with the masses, the leadership will, for all practical purposes, be assumed by the cadres most of whom are students and youth? Even a casual reading of Mao's talks, speeches, letters and dialogues during the most vital early months of the GPCR<sup>51</sup> will convince any reader that most of them concern the students and youth and reference to the proletariat has to be searched out. How does all this make us believe that the central programme of the GPCR was to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat? How are we to believe that in the process of the GPCR Mao had been trying to resolve the most fundamental problem of the period of transition to communism that was till then far from resolved? During the entire course of the GPCR could a single writing by Mao or any other comrade of the CPC be found that dealt with the grave problem of vesting political power, both administrative and economic, in the proletariat free from the authoritarianism of the party, but immensely amenable to its persuasion and its ideological guidance? What Mao actually meant by the 'seizure of power' is clarified by Mao himself in the speech to the Albanian Military Delegation on May 1, 1967.<sup>52</sup> "During the third and the fourth stages the question of seizing power was paramount. The fourth stage was concerned with seizing the power of revisionism and of the bourgeoisie ideologically. Consequently, this was a crucial stage in the decisive battle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines, and this was the main and proper theme of the whole movement." Evidently it was not a question of the working class assuming greater role in ruling the country, but seizing of power by one section of the party by another and that, too, only ideologically. The<sub>3</sub> contention here is that if the political

power remains with the revolutionary section of the party that itself will amount to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat with all its various implications. This lopsided application of the role of consciousness not only failed to save the party from sliding down the abyss of revisionism and the society from taking to capitalism, it gave rise to some other maladies that also caused the GPCR to go awry and precipitated the fall of socialism in China.

First, when the power struggle at the grass-roots level waged by the working class was replaced by only political struggle against the capitalist roaders inside the party, the whole attention of the movement concentrated on the power-struggle at the centre. Liu Shao Chi had an advantage over his rivals in terms of organizational strength in the party structure while Mao had an unassailable and unquestionable position to the entire nation as 'the great helmsman'. Such was Mao's charisma in the whole party that even the cadres vehemently opposing his programme of the GPCR tried to rally the party workers and the people behind them swearing by Mao's name. Mao's followers had to outdo them by idolizing him even more frantically than their opponents. This competition on the one hand and a genuine compulsion of the pro-Mao section to promote the basic line of the GPCR by raising Mao to almost a mythical figure on the other, fostered the personality cult at a time when the declared aim of the party was to have 'politics in command'. This paradoxical situation disturbed Mao also. But the compulsion of the circumstances deterred him from putting a stop to it. The result was dangerous. In a society where the feudal heritage of thousands of years still had powerful roots, the propagation of personality cult, typically a feudal characteristic, found a favourable ground. What was more harmful was that the real political issues were forgotten and the entire struggle boiled down to a fierce fight between Mao's real followers and his sham followers. The organization of the working class and its disciplined movement could challenge the party leadership to mend its ways. This was absent. The students and youth were at the helm of affairs. As was natural, they were hypersensitive, rash, prone to adventurism and to a degree indisciplined, too. Political campaigns (which very often took the form of personality cult) led by them had a tendency to degenerate into scuffles, abuses and even street fights. In Wuhan, as we have described before, these conflicts resulted in a sort of battle. Party veterans irrespective of their actual political positions were ruthlessly harassed and insulted. To make the situation worse, the anti-Mao section of the cadres deliberately resorted to committing excesses only to discredit the followers of Mao and his line. In the name of sweeping away 'Old Fours' intellectuals, scientists and educationists were branded reactionaries at random and subsequently bullied and tortured. There was great chaos. Not that all this is malicious propaganda engineered by the anti-communist Western press. Even the writings of ardent supporters of the GPCR bear testimony to

this. The great chaos under the sun was approvingly admitted by Mao himself. We must keep in mind that this was not a chaos caused by the workers' revolutionary mass movements aimed at eliminating the persisting bourgeois production relations, giving birth to workers' power centres at the base of the society. Had it been so, to hail it was completely justified. What actually happened was its opposite. At the initial stage of the GPCR, the workers' participation was highly noticeable. The encrusted hierarchy of the party was greatly destabilized and the possibilities opened up for a thorough-going democratization not only of the society, but also of the party. But the leadership, traditionally used to the all-powerful role of the party became afraid, particularly after the Shanghai Commune, of the party's role being replaced by the workers' increasing power. The party failed to envisage a situation where the growing movements of the proletariat, instead of seizing leadership from the party's hands would enliven it by suffusing it with proletarian world outlook and thus revitalized, the party would play the role of ideological guide of the workers and their movements. The result was the dissolution of all the communes. From February 1967 onwards the role of the workers began to diminish and petty bourgeois students and youth took the centre stage. From that period of time the chaos was characterized by anarchy that signalled no positive developments. This was inevitable when class struggle assumes the form of a struggle to determine whether individuals representing the working class or the individuals representing the bourgeoisie will remain in power. Both the class and class-politics were thrown into oblivion.

When this chaotic condition kept on escalating, Mao felt the need of an increasing role of the PLA in the GPCR. It is important to notice that the formulation of the Three-In-One combination was first made public on March 23, 1967 in an editorial of the Liberation Army Daily i.e. almost immediately after the termination of the communes. By now, perhaps, it is no longer surprising that in that very crucial article it was declared that the PLA was the 'strong pillar' of the 'Three-In-One' combination, that it was the PLA that would determine the friends and enemies of the revolution and to cap it all that "our army is the mainstay of the dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>53</sup> Quite in tune with this political understanding, Lin Biao was given an extra-ordinary power which he kept enjoying till his death and the PLA, de facto, took the reins of the whole movement. In its continuation, in the 9th congress of the CPC, Lin Biao was elected an heir to Mao (an obnoxious precedent in the international communist movement) and of the twenty five members of the politbureau, fourteen were PLA Generals. With the conclusion of the 9th Congress of the party the most turbulent phase of the GPCR came to an end. But the PLA became firmly seated at the centre of power and started its operations secretly, first in 1971, when Lin Biao unsuccessfully, tried to stage a

coup de' tat and lastly in 1976, it was the Army coup de' tat that finally brought an end to the last vestiges of the GPCR and paved the way for Liu Shao Chi to finally come to power.

The basic spirit of the GPCR reflected in the communiqué of the 11th plenary session of the 8th Central Committee held on 12th August, 1966, which had all the potentials of heralding a genuine mass revolutionary movement of the working class to develop and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat was in fact killed as early as the early months of 1967. Let us recall a few phrases from that communiqué: "Be pupils of the masses before becoming their teachers." "Dare to make revolution and be good at making revolution." "Don't be afraid of disturbance." But when the masses actually embarked upon a course that was characterized by the daring to make a revolution and that in reality caused much disturbance, the party backtracked rather hastily. But the line formulated at the 11th plenary session was not a product of haste. It was not created on the spur of the moment. As we have already seen before, Mao was intensely conscious of various errors committed by Stalin in his efforts to build up socialism in the USSR. Right from the mid-fifties of the last century Mao started raising the issues concerning socialism that his great predecessor either did not understand or did not take care of. In his important writings like 'Ten Major Relations', '60 Point Directives' or 'Critique of the Soviet Economy', he not only focused on the mistakes made of Stalin, but also indicated what was to be done in his own country to avert the repetition of those mistakes. The launching of the GPCR in China was, in a sense, the culmination of Mao's ideas regarding socialism. Directives of the 11th plenary session too were the product of a long thought-out ideological-political churning. The question, then, naturally arises: what was the problem of the CPC in translating the party's own political ideas into action? The answer is that while combating many of the deviation of the Soviet Party, Mao carried on the Soviet legacy on the question of the party. That typical idea of the party debarred him from effecting the necessary rupture with past and evolving a correct course of action for the period of transition. Contrary to Stalin's position, he correctly upheld the idea that production relations do not become socialist automatically with the conversion of the private means of production to the ownership of the state. In his 'Critique of the Soviet Economy' he even went to the extent of stating that in a socialist state social revolution is needed to make "the new production relation supersede the old one." In spite of all this, when the workers started revolutionizing the production relation in their communes, he had to rein in their initiative raising the question of the party. The Soviet concept of the exclusive power of the party affected the GPCR in two ways: first the entire activity centering round the GPCR was confined to the ambit of the party structure, mainly in the form of targetting, attacking and eliminating

the capitalist roaders within it and secondly, the party did not pay attention to the building up, bit by bit, the dictatorship of the proletariat at the base in form of revolutionizing the production relations. It was believed that only by flushing out the capitalist roaders, the possibility of the seizing of power by the bourgeoisie within the party would be stalled and dictatorship of the proletariat would be consolidated. It amounted to the belief that a party can remain truly Marxist-Leninist only by eliminating the confirmed revisionists within the party and such a party by virtue of its remaining Marxist-Leninist would take care of every other social dynamics. It was forgotten that only a dialectical relation between the ongoing mass movements led by the proletariat and the party can be the basis of a party's remaining Marxist-Leninist. The party was considered an independent entity, embodying the highest consciousness and therefore wielding the supreme authority. If such an organization is overwhelmed by the revisionists, there remains no other alternative than 'bombarding the headquarters.' On the other hand, when the authority of the party appears to be challenged by the rising movements of the proletariat to protect the "nucleus" becomes a very urgent task. Both these dangers coming from corners opposite to each other have their origin in the same understanding – that a communist party should have an all-pervasive role, controlling every sphere of life and society. All power to the hands of the party leads inevitably to authoritarianism, overcentralism and an impervious hierarchical order in the party. Mao, with all his revolutionary ideas, unfortunately inherited the concept of the party being the absolute. As a result of this, the GPCR, in spite of its initial potential failed to

- i. revolutionize the bourgeois production relations persisting at the base.
- ii. revitalize the party with the nourishment drawn from the workers movements.
- iii. expand inner party democracy by exposing the party to a developing proletarian democracy.
- iv. involve the masses in political debates and
- v. consequently, as a combined effect of all these factors to polarize the society in favour of proletarian dictatorship.

Thus a ground for capitalist consolidation remained in the Chinese society despite the GPCR and after Mao had died, the capitalist-roaders seized power of the party and the state with a vengeance and had not to farce any formidable resistance.

The failure of GPCR to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat once again underscored the most crucial problem of applied socialism. It all started

to manifest itself from Lenin's time. From April Theses itself, Lenin started advocating for a Paris Commune type state - "***a state without*** a standing army, ***without*** a police opposed to the people, ***without*** an officialdom placed above the people." <sup>4</sup> To him the Soviets were an ideal replacement of communes in his own country, and he set about to build up the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union after that model with great conviction. But within a few months of the October revolution, he felt that the journey was not at all smooth. His first faltering was seen at the 8th Congress of the RCP when he confessed to the problem of Soviets becoming "organs of the government ***for the working people*** by the advanced section of the working people, but not by the working people as a whole." To Lenin, inspired by the experience of the Paris Commune, the gradual transition towards the whole working people's participation in the work of government was the key to the successful advance of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At that very congress he pointed out that 'the low cultural level' of the working people had been the stumbling block to achieving this. He felt that to involve each and every member of the working class in the decision making process in economic and administrative activities of the state, his/her cultural level had to be raised. He prescribed a 'prolonged education' to be imparted to the working class to tide over this problem. At that very speech in the 8th congress he expressed his apprehension that unless and until the cultural level had been raised, the bureaucrats would be occupying their old position and creation of a state by the working people would remain a distant dream. Lenin could not get rid of this problem even after two and half years of the Soviet power. In a debate with Angel Pastana of the Spanish National Confederation of Labour and Jack Tanner of Britain, at the second Congress of the Comintern of July 23, 1920, he stated how "in the era of capitalism, when the masses of the worker are subjected to constant exploitation" (they) "cannot develop their human capacities". He went on to say, "We are, therefore, *obliged* to recognize that it is only this class-conscious minority that can direct and lead the broad masses of the workers." (Emphasis ours) Lenin here confessed in no uncertain terms that the state of affairs obtaining at that period was a matter of obligation imposed by an objective condition left by history and hence an extremely undesirable situation, so far as the developing of the dictatorship of the proletariat was concerned. He was so disturbed with this helplessness that even at the 10th Congress of the RCP (B) he referred to the speech of the Comintern with great anguish, "The experience of all our hardships tells us how desperately hard it is to combat them. After two and a half years of the Soviet power we came out in the Communist International and told the world that the dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the communist party."<sup>55</sup> All through the later period of his life Lenin, on the one hand, kept constantly upholding the need of involving each and every member of the working people in administering their own state, and

the necessity of wiping out all the obstacles that are left behind by the overbearing influence of the capitalist era, on the other. But he never evaded the issue only because it was very difficult to solve.

The most vital problem of the period of transition deserved no attention of Stalin, as if the problem had already been solved or there was no such problem worthy of attention. Stalin was unconcerned with what had been plaguing Lenin throughout his experimentation with socialism. This neglect had its inevitable concomitant. Since the organization of the proletariat (in the form of the Soviets or even in the form of trade unions) either evaporated or weakened, the role of the party in every field of life became more and more dominant and cut off from the working class, kept developing within itself all unhealthy traits of over-centralism and authoritarianism. After Stalin, Mao had shown a superior understanding of the problems of socialism. But tragically enough, this superior understanding in him was washed away by his ultimate submission to the exclusivity of the party. Of many other reasons, this one-sided concern with the party played the major role in the failure of the GPCR. We call it a failure because it could not repulse the onset of the bourgeois dictatorship and usher in and consolidate the proletarian dictatorship. We are not ready to subscribe to the view cherished by many comrades throughout world that the GPCR has not failed. It could not, they aver, yield concrete results because in the balance of forces prevailing at that time, the forces of revolution were pitted against superior forces. They assert that though it was a failure in material terms the GPCR has been spiritually victorious leaving behind so many lessons for the posterity in its endeavour to build socialism. We know that every failed revolution teaches very important lessons. In that sense the GPCR too has taught us many significant lessons. But we must admit that we have learnt more from its negative lesson than from the positive ones. The GPCR has inspired us to probe into the reasons of failure of socialism with a greater attention and a wider understanding.

After the GPCR the problem of elimination of the wide gap between the advanced and the backward sections of the proletariat, a complex problem of the period of transition has been crying out to be solved, more vehemently. In humanity's journey from capitalism to communism, consciousness will play the decisive role. An absolutely new system of society including its production relations has to be developed all afresh, from scratch and going against the formidable forces of the preceding society. That is why a powerful role of consciousness cannot be dispensed with: but only the advanced section of the working class with its advanced level of culture, education and political training can be the carrier of this. After a successful revolution, the whole of the class seizes the political power defeating the bourgeoisie. Hence the dictatorship of

the proletariat, not a dictatorship of the advanced section. This situation has been giving birth to irreconcilable contradiction during the entire history of socialism. Since an extra-ordinary operation of the superior consciousness is required to fight back the opposing force of the society and to develop a new system unprecedented in human history, the carriers of this superior consciousness come forward as the saviours. To this section (advanced) of the proletariat, the masses of the backward section are unable to deal with the multifarious complexities confronting socialism, nor can they comprehend the totality, because of their backwardness expressed in peasant or petty bourgeois mentality. Therefore the party i.e. the advanced section is compelled to take upon itself the task of salvaging the entire class. Once the party enters into this course, two things happen. One is that the party starts believing that it is the supreme organ of the society and therefore has the right to impose its will on the backward sections: two the latter start feeling that the former is behaving tyrannically with them although they are supposed to represent the interest of the whole class. The class (the major section of it remaining outside the pale of the party) starts feeling let down by the party and a great gap develops between them. In the history of socialism so far, this problem has recurrently engulfed the erstwhile socialist states leading to their doom.

If the era of capitalism subjects the masses of the working people to constant exploitation retarding the development of human capacities, if it flings them to a life of poverty, illiteracy and wretchedness robbing them of cultural endowments, if it throws them into abysmal darkness depriving them of all enlightenment required to develop political acumen and if this order of things is deemed responsible for the inexorable gap between the masses of the workers and their advanced section, the most important task of the communists should be to rid them of this curse by an all-out effort to raise them culturally and educate them politically. This task should be undertaken by the communists the moment they begin organizing the class, much before the high tide of the revolution. This task is very difficult, arduous and taxing much on the patience of the cadres. But this slow and apparently thankless work will enable the masses of the workers to politically organize themselves, to attain the necessary cultural and educational qualities to wield the dictatorship, not as unprepared and perplexed men, but confident, due to a prolonged experience of political training. This confidence will empower them to hold on to their ground and if necessary going against the diktat of the party. A living confrontation with the party will resuscitate the party, too. The GPCR through its failure has brought this truth home to us.

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# Absolute Ground Rent, Metabolic Alienation and the Green Imperialism

## A Marxist Political Ecological Analysis of Contradictions in Agriculture

Shubhra Ketan Basu

The focal point of this writing is to discuss the contradictions in agriculture with special reference to India, in the light of two revolutionary discoveries of Marx i.e. *absolute ground rent* and *metabolic alienation*, which we think are still relevant for this purpose. We hope that it will help us to realize the complexity of contradictions prevailing in agriculture.

### **Absolute ground rent and its relation with the composition of capital (C/V ratio):**

In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of Capital Marx discussed about the mode of conversion of surplus profit into the ground rent. The properties, characteristics, and different aspects of differential and absolute ground rent are elaborately stated there. Here we shall discuss the matter very briefly with special emphasis on the relation between the composition of agricultural capital and absolute ground rent. The learned reader should go through the original text to assess whether our inference is compatible with Marx's view or not.

Let us assume that cultivation is done in four kinds of land, i.e., A, B, C, & D. According to fertility, infrastructure, and position the worst type is A. B is better than A, C is better than B and the best one is D. For cultivating the unit area of these four types of land, let us assume that the same amount of capital 'a' is invested. Let us assume that the crop produce from the unit area of those four types of land are W, X, Y, & Z respectively. Naturally  $Z > Y > X > W$ . Let us assume that the market price of these W, X, Y, & Z quantity of crops are w, x, y, & z; let us assume that 'w' is 120% of the invested capital 'a' i.e.  $120a/100 = w$  or  $6a/5 = w$ . If capital is ready to be invested for 20% profit and if it can be invested freely, then according to market price A type of land will produce no surplus profit. If only surplus profit is converted into ground rent, then A type of land will produce no ground rent. In case of B type of land the selling price of crop produced per unit area is 'x' and  $x > w$ , thus  $x > 6a/5$ , i.e. in B type of land invested capital 'a' will produce more than 20% profit. So (x-w) is the surplus profit which is converted into the ground rent and goes into the pocket of the landowner. In the same way it can be said that the surplus profit or ground rent produced from C type of land will be (y-w) and from D type of

land (z-w). It is important to note that the surplus profit is grabbed by the landlord and not by the capitalist, because the landlord has monopoly right over the land, and it is a pre-capitalist right. Whether a capitalist will be able to invest on a piece of land or not depends solely upon the will of the landlord. Now if the location and infrastructure of a piece of land remain unchanged but its fertility is decreased, then to achieve the same amount of crop from unit area of B, C, or D type of land, an increase in investment is necessary. Let us assume, in this case, the increased investment will be 'b' 'c' and 'd' respectively. If the 20% rate of profit is to be maintained the value of 'b' 'c' & 'd' can be increased up to that extent when  $6b/5 = x$ ,  $6c/5 = y$ , and  $6d/5 = z$ . But then there will be no surplus profit. If investment is not increased, the product of B, C, & D, type of land will be decreased and thus the price of crop may rise. But then more area of A' type of land, which is more infertile than even A type of land, may come under cultivation; or due to development of infrastructure A type of land may be converted into B, C, or D type of land. In such a process or for importing crops from foreign countries the price of crop may remain same or increased slightly. Then due to decreasing fertility, so long as B, C, or D type of land will be able to produce crop priced 'w' on investment of capital 'a', 20% profit is possible. But in such case no surplus profit is produced, hence no ground rent. So it can be said if fertility is decreased, ground rent will be decreased; the income of landlord due to his pre-capitalist right will be decreased.

Now let us assume in the unit area of A type of land 'a' capital is invested. Thus W quantity of crop is produced whose market price is 'w' and  $6a/5 = w$ , i.e. rate of profit is 20% and there is no surplus profit. Naturally there is no question of conversion of surplus profit into ground rent. In such condition, does the landlord allow the capitalist farmer to invest in his land free of ground rent? Definitely not. Then if ground rent has to be paid for cultivation, what will be its source? As we have already seen in this condition there is no surplus profit. If capitalist mode of production prevails then capital investor will definitely not pay rent from that 20% profit, in that case he will not invest in agriculture but some other place, because socially determined rate of profit is 20% or above. By cutting wages rent cannot also be paid, because in capitalism labour market is also free. Then what is the source of the absolute ground rent i.e. the ground rent which is not coming from surplus profit? Marx's explanation regarding this is given below in abridgement.

Generally the composition of capital invested in agriculture is lesser than that of the average social capital i.e. the ratio of its constant portion 'C' used for the material conditions of labour, and variable portion 'V' which is used for wages, (C/V ratio) is lesser than that of average social capital. Thus the surplus value

produced in agriculture is greater and in such case the value of the produce is greater than the price. It is the perpetual tendency of capital to bring about through competition the equalization in the distribution of total surplus value produced by the total social capital. Price of production arises from this equalization of the values of commodities. In this way the price of production of a commodity produced by the higher composition (higher C/V ratio) is greater than its value and the reverse will occur in case of commodity produced by the capital of lower composition (lower C/V ratio). The entire matter can be made clearer with the following example. Let us assume there are two industries A & B. In A constant capital is  $C_a = 85$  and variable capital  $V_a = 15$  and in B constant capital  $C_b = 75$  and variable capital  $V_b = 25$ . If the rate of surplus value produced is 100% in both cases, then in case of A total value produced will be 115 and in B 125. But because the quantity of total social capital is 200 and total surplus value produced is 40, then in respect to the total social capital the rate of surplus value is 20%. In this way the socially determined rate of profit will be 20%. Thus in both A & B the price of production will be 120. So it is seen that in case of A price of production ( i.e. 120 ) is higher than the value ( i.e. 115 ) and in case of B price of production ( i.e.120 ) is less than the value ( i.e. 125 ) . But this type of situation can only occur when free capitalist competition exists. In case of agriculture the landlord has monopoly right over land, and capital can only be invested in the land according to the will of the landlord. Without rent the landlord does not allow the capitalist farmer to cultivate land. In that case if the capitalist farmer fails to sell the commodity produced through agriculture at a price above the price of production he will not be able to pay rent. Because the composition of capital invested in agriculture is less than that of average social capital, the value of agricultural commodities is greater than that of its price of production, so agricultural commodities can be sold at higher price than its price of production. Let us assume the total capital invested in agriculture is  $K$  (whose composition is less than average social capital). The profit determined by the equalization of total surplus value produced by total social capital is  $P$ . Then price of production is  $= K+P$ . Since the composition of capital invested here is lesser than that of social capital, the value of commodity is greater than the price of production. Let us assume its value is  $= K+P+d$ . (d stands for extra surplus value above the price of production). Since the landlord has monopoly right over land and he does not allow the capitalist farmer to cultivate land without rent, the capitalist farmer has to sell agricultural commodity at a price above the price of production for paying the rent. Let us assume the capitalist farmer sells agricultural commodity at a price which is  $= K+P+r$  .

Now whether the entire amount of extra surplus value will be grabbed by the landlord in the form of ground rent or a portion of it will be distributed

through the process of equalization, depends upon the demand and supply. Thus we can say  $r \leq d$  or  $r = d/x$  when  $x \geq 1$ .

On the basis of this theory it can be said that if the composition of capital (i.e. C/V ratio) in agriculture increases and for that when  $d/x < r$  ( $x \geq 1$ ), then ground rent or income of the landlord through pre-capitalist monopoly right will decrease. And if composition of capital becomes equal to that of average social capital then absolute ground rent will disappear. In Marx's own language "*If the average composition of agricultural capital were equal to, or higher than, that of average social capital, then absolute ground rent - again in the sense just described - would disappear*".

In agriculture, increase in composition of capital erodes the pre-capitalist right.

**Metabolic Alienation:** Plants receive several elements like potassium (K) magnesium (Mg) molybdenum (Mo) zinc (Zn) etc. from the soil. Needless to say that the same is true for the crops also. Animals take plant as food and in this way those elements are transferred from plant to animal body; and in the same way from herbivorous to carnivorous animals. Those nutrient elements perform several vital roles in physiology. Through the decomposition of plant or animal dead body or excreta these elements come back into the soil again. Several bacteria and other organisms play a crucial role in this complex process of recycling.

If agricultural products are consumed at a place near by the site of production then the nutrient absorbed by it from the soil may return through the complex process of recycling mentioned above. But if it is consumed at a place, geographically distant from its site of production, the nutrient contained in it can never come back to the production field through the priceless natural process. Thus the fertility of soil becomes undone.

With the emergence of capitalism large number of peasants were uprooted from land and several rural artisans became jobless. A considerable portion of them gathered in the town as modern proletariat. Several large cities with monstrous industries and huge number of proletariat emerged vis-à-vis capitalist development; simultaneously a demand for agricultural product (mainly foods & clothes) highly increased in cities and to meet with that a large quantity of agricultural product started coming from the country to the towns. Thus soil of the country gradually became deficit with nutrient and the problem of decreasing soil fertility became prominent. During the emergence of capitalism several countries had to face these problems. To maintain soil fertility huge amount of fertilizer application started. Import of fertilizer increased several times. In those days practice of chemical fertilizer application was not so extensive. Generally animal excreta, <sup>76</sup>bones etc. were used as fertilizer. In the

year 1823 Britain imported bones valued 14,400 Sterling Pound and in the year 1837 import shot up to 2,54,600 Sterling Pound.(1) The same story we found in the USA. In the year 1835 the USA for the first time imported Peruvian Guano (dried faeces of marine birds). In 1841 she imported 1700 tons of Guano and in 1847 it sprang up to 2,20,000 tons.(2) A desperate attempt was made to combat the fertility problem which solely evolved due to the commoditization of agricultural produce. In the year 1865 Guano Island Act was passed in the US Congress and American capitalists captured 94 Guano islands by sending fleet. But when these expeditions in search of fertilizer were going on, the huge excrement of human beings and animals in large cities created nothing but pollution.

In the year 1842 Lawes invented soluble phosphate or super phosphate which is absorbable to plant. Super phosphate factories were established in 1843 and its massive application in agricultural field started, bringing good result. But this chemical fertilizer fails to maintain soil fertility for a considerable time, because super phosphate can only supply phosphorus to soil and plants absorb more than 15 elements from soil to run its physiological processes. If there is deficiency of any one of these nutrients in the soil, it produces ill effect on plant physiology, no matter whether other elements are sufficiently present or not. In 1913 Haber invented technique applicable for production of nitrogenous fertilizer and huge production of nitrogenous fertilizer started. But for the reason mentioned above nitrogenous fertilizers also fail to keep soil fertility for a considerable time. In capitalist agriculture maintenance of soil fertility is still a burning problem. To combat it, magnificent researches on soil chemistry were done with the aid of the money of the capitalists and the states run by them; several different types of fertilizers were invented, but problem of declining soil fertility still remained. Actually speaking it is not at all a technical problem. In the mode of production where huge quantity of agricultural produce and nutrients contained in it are transferred from the field of production to distant places, maintenance of soil fertility there is like a long lasting battle. Fertilizer is not the answer. On the contrary the effect of it abolishes several soil organism which plays crucial role in recycling process, making the situation more complex.

It was expressed in the analysis by Karl Marx that the problem of soil fertility is not a mere technical problem but the problem of a specific mode of production. Justus Von Leibig the great chemist, contemporary to Marx, first explained scientifically the process of nutrient absorption by plant from the soil, in his famous book "*Organic Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology*" in the year 1840. Marx was deeply familiar with this research work. Leibig's research made an end of old idealist concept regarding soil, that soil has immortal and eternal <sup>77</sup>power. Leibig proved that due to over

exploitation, soil fertility may be ruined. According to Leibig's law of minimum overall soil fertility, it is always limited by the nutrient in least abundance. Thus application of one or two nutrient like phosphate or nitrate cannot maintain the fertility. Leibig criticized that Great Britain robs all countries of the condition of fertility. On that basis Marx said in the first volume of Capital, *"England has indirectly exported the soil of Ireland, without even allowing its cultivators the means for replacing the constituents of the exhausted soil"*. In the first volume of Capital Marx clearly stated that *"Capitalist production collects the population together in great centers, and causes the urban population to achieve an ever-growing preponderance. This has two results. On the one hand it concentrates the historical motive force of society, on the other hand, it disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth, i.e. it prevents the return to the soil of its constituent elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; hence it hinders the operation of the eternal natural condition for the lasting fertility of the soil ....But by destroying the circumstances surrounding that metabolism ...., it compels its systematic restoration as a regulative law of social production, and in a form adequate to the full development of human race ..... [A]ll progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time is a progress toward ruining the more long-lasting sources of that fertility... Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the technique and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original source of all wealth - the soil and the worker."* The Industrial proletariat are not only alienated from means of production but from nature also. This alienation was reflected in Marx's intellect as metabolic (in German *stoffwechsel*) alienation. If these impassable differences between town and country prevails, there is no way to overcome the problem. In *Anti-Duhring* Engels said *"Abolition of the antithesis between town and country is not merely possible. It has become a direct necessity of industrial production itself, just as it has become a necessity of agricultural production and, besides of public health. The present poisoning of the air and water and land can be put an end to only by the fusion of town and country; and only such fusion will change the situation of masses now languishing in the towns, and enable their excrement to be used for the production of plant instead of for the production of disease."*

From the above discussion we may draw following three inferences.

1. If natural soil fertility reduces and maintenance of soil fertility comes under control of capital, it undermines pre-capitalist right over soil.
2. Increasing composition of agricultural capital abated pre-capitalist right over land.

3. The unavoidable catastrophe of capitalist development in agriculture is the alienation of human being from nature.

Now let us have a glance at the Indian situation.

**Indian perspective :** Before entering into the discussion we would like to state some statistical information which is as follows:

1. From the year 1999-2000 to 2003-2004 the number of tractors sold all over India is 11, 88,735 and the number of power tillers sold is 75566. If we consider only the number of tractors that were sold in those five years, the net sown area per tractor comes to 119 hectares. A tractor can till 4-5 hectares land per day, so within one month the tractors that were sold in those 5 years can till the net sown area of the whole country. If we include the power tillers, the net sown area can be tilled in a shorter time.(3)
2. The energy utilization in Indian agriculture is increasing. The 25%-30% of the total used electricity of the country is being utilized in agriculture.(4)
3. In the year 1992 the total number of electric pumps and diesel pumps that were utilized in Indian agricultural field was 45774000 and 64035000 respectively.(5)
4. In the year 1951-52 the total quantity of utilized chemical fertilizer in Indian agricultural field was 65600 MT and in the year 2002-03 it sprang up to 16094100 MT. The fertilizer application increased about 245.3 times in these years.(6)
5. In the year 1992-93, 90.8% of the total wheat field and in the year 1993-94, 70% of the total paddy field in India, had the so called HYV seeds used in cultivation. At present the use of so called HYV seeds has increased more.(7)
6. The area under irrigation is gradually increasing since 1951. In the year 1988-89, 78.1% of wheat field and 44.9% of paddy field came under irrigation.(8)
7. In the year 1960, 2000 tons pesticide was used in Indian agricultural field, and in the year 1993-94 the quantity of applied pesticide became 90000 tons. At present in India 50 large and 450 small companies are engaged in pesticide production and it is an industry of Rs.1400 crore.(9)
8. In the year 1992 India alone imported 8%,14% & 7% of total imported urea DAP and potash of the world. It is notable that India has to import the total quantity of potassium fertilizer, which is utilized in her agricultural field.(10)
9. In the year 2002-2003 India exported agricultural product, the value of which was about US\$6734 million.(11)

10. In the year 2003-04 the total amount of institutional agricultural credit in India was Rs80000 crore.(12)
11. During the year 2000-01 to 2003-04 the total number of distributed *Krisan Credit Card* was 413.79 lakhs, and the total amount of credit given through those cards is Rs.97710 crores.(13)
12. The percentage of peasant and agricultural labour in respect of the total working people in India is 31.7 & 26.7 respectively.(14)

From the above information it can be easily inferred that a considerable amount of capital is invested in Indian agriculture. Now we shall discuss the state of metabolic alienation in India. According to the Census 2001, Indian urban population is 28, 53, 54,954. The average monthly consumption of different food items by urban people is given in the table-1. In the year 1999-2000 urban people of India consumed average 5.5Kg rice and 4.4Kg wheat per month. In 1999-2000 India produced rice and wheat a little more than the demand. So it can be assumed that the quantity of rice and wheat consumed by urban people in that year was produced in the agricultural field of this country. (If some food was imported at all, as production was greater than demand, surplus was either exported or stored and rotted in the godowns and in this way went far away from the production field). Several different elements contained in this huge amount of food grains were consumed by urban people. Among them we only produce a detailed account of potassium. Calculations regarding other elements may be made by the interested readers by her/himself, from the data given in the table 2, 3, 4 & 5. One of the reasons to confine our discussion only to potassium is that, this fertilizer is not at all produced in India. The entire quantity is imported. Potassium (K) contained per gm of rice and wheat are 1.16 mg and 3.86mg respectively. Thus per month every urban Indian consumed  $(5.5 \times 1.16 \times 1000) + (4.4 \times 3.86 \times 1000) = 23364$  mg Potassium i.e.  $23364 \times 12 = 280368$  mg, say 280.4 gm Potassium per year. Through simple arithmetic it can be shown that, in one year  $(280.4 \times 285354954) / 1000 \times 1000 = 80013.5$  metric ton Potassium was transferred from Indian agricultural field to cities through rice and wheat only. The quantity is greater than even the total Potassium fertilizer utilized in the agricultural field of India in the year 1964-65 (i.e. 69300 MT). This Potassium will never come back to the agricultural field through normal natural process. If we consider the Potassium contained in exported food grains, food grains that were stored and rotted in Govt. godowns, the large quantity of fruits, vegetables, pulses, oilseeds, etc. which come from country to town, the quantity of Potassium that is departed from agricultural field will increase many times. The fate is the same for other elements absorbed by the crops from the field and exported to the town. This process impoverished the soil. From table 4, 5, & 6. it can be seen how soil is being impoverished. Chemical fertilizer is used for checking the impoverishment, but this invites several<sup>80</sup> other problems. Major fertilizers (N,

P, and K) cannot supply micronutrients. Thus very soon micronutrient (i.e. Zn, Mo, Cu, Mn, Fe, etc.) deficiencies occur. Due to deficiency of some micronutrient the requirement of some macronutrient increases. For example, if there are deficiencies of Mo and Mn in soil the Nitrogen fixation and rate of Nitrogen absorption fall. To combat the situation new micronutrient fertilizers are recommended. But there is very little difference between the density of micronutrient ideal for production and the density which brings toxic effect. After four decades of green revolution different agricultural fields of our country are now suffering from over density of some nutrients and deficiency of others. Due to prolonged application of chemical fertilizer and reduction of application of organic manure, several soil organisms get abolished. Thus the entire process of natural recycling is jeopardized. Deficiency of organic matter not only reduces the rate of absorption of different nutrients, but also creates several ecological problems which reduce both quality and quantity of production. In the age of globalization several MNCs are having patent over several beneficial bacteria, micro flora, fauna, of our soil, and selling it to us in the name of promoting organic farming.

For increasing production, Green Revolution (i.e. cultivation of foreign HYVs with heavy chemical input) was not indispensable. In a healthy soil where nutrient cycling is not jeopardized, there are several indigenous rice varieties which can give production more than so called HYVs, without any chemical input, in a sustainable manner. (15) However Govt. policy makers ignore this fact with a malintention.(16)

**TABLE-1**

**All India Urban Per Capita Average Food Intake (Kg/30 Days)**

Name of the food Item	Year 1987-88	Year 1999-2000
Rice	5.65	5.50
Wheat	4.57	4.40
Other Grains	0.83	0.40
Total Grains	11.05	10.3
Pulses	1.06	1.0
Milk & Milk Product	4.52	5.6
Edible Oil	0.56	0.70
Meat/Fish/Egg	2.01	2.90
Vegetable/Fruit	11.46	15.20
Sugar/spices	1.63	1.60
Processed Food	0.80	2.20
Beverage	5.84	6.40

*(Source: Food Consumption and Calorie Intake in Contemporary India by Srikanta Chatterjee, Allen Rae, Ranjan Ray.)*

**TABLE-2**  
**Few Elements Contained in Rice, Wheat, & Potato (mg/g)**

Name of the food item	Calcium (Ca)	Iron (Fe)	Potassium (K)
Rice	3.35	0.29	1.16
Wheat	2.00	0.30	3.86
Potato	0.09	0.01	4.17

*(Source: Nutritive Value of Food. Susan E Gebhardt. And Robin G Thomas, U S Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Research Service Home and Garden Bulletin Number 72.)*

**TABLE-3**  
**Absorption of Micronutrients Per Crop-Cycle (gm/Ha.)**

Name of the crop	Production	B	Cu	Zn	Mo	Fe	Mn		
Potato	13.0 ton potatoes & 2.5 tons leaves and stem.				31	13	14	1.0	350
				18					
Wheat ( <i>Kalyansona</i> )	7.2 ton grain & 8.2 ton hay	218	236	383	13.0	3650	580		

*Source: Micronutrient - New Dimension in Agriculture; J.S. Kanowar, Indian Farming 18(10), 5-8 (January 1969).*

**TABLE-4**  
**Absorption of N P K by Different Crops per Crop-Cycle**

Name of the crops	Production (Kg/Ha.)	N (Kg/Ha.)	P (Kg/Ha.)	K (Kg/Ha.)
Wheat (HYV)	Grain-5000, Hay-7500	140-210	85-105	215-290
Maize	Grain-2690, Hay-10760	114	47	105
Groundnut Seed	1906	78	22	45
Mustered Oil Seed	673	22	11	28
Linseed	1009	19	12	33
Sugar Cane	57809	146	30	186
Cotton	104	26	20	84
Jute (Fibre Only)	1121-1681	112-280	112-123	168-224
Potato	17575	85	30	140
Tobacco	1121-1345	87	19	52

*Source: Fertilizer Statistics, 1978-79 F.A.I*

**TABLE-5**  
**Different Elements Contained Per Ton of Paddy and Hay (in Kg)**

Name of Item	N	P	K	Ca	Mg	S	Fe	Mn	Zn	Cu	B	Si	Cl
Hay	5.3	0.8	13.6	3.9	2.6	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.03	0.00289	0.0089		74.0
						1.8							
Paddy	10.9	2.0	3.1	0.5	1.1	1.0	0.04	0.05	0.010	0.00506	0.0038		16.8
						1.6							

*After de Dalla (1981)*

**TABLE-6**  
**N P K Status of the Soil after Cultivating HYV Paddy with the Chemical Fertilizer for Five consecutive Years.**

Experiment No.	Cultivation Process	Applied Fertilizer (total in 5 Yrs.)						Total Grain Production				
		Applied Element (Kg/Ha)			Absorbed Element (Kg/Ha)			Result (Kg/Ha)				
		N	P	K	N	P	K	N	P	K		
1	HYV Twice in a year	No Fertilizer	32400	0	0	0	545	122	710	-545	-122	-710
2	Do	105Kg N/Ha/Crop	50100	1050	0	0	840	190	1100	210	-190	-1100
3	Do	105Kg N + 26 Kg P /Ha/Crop	54700	1050	262	0	920	208	1199	130	55	-1200
4	Do	105Kg N + 26Kg P + 50Kg K/Ha/Crop	59300	1050	262	49	995	225	1299	55	37	-801

After Von Vexkull (1978)

*Source: Table-5&6, The Ecology of Tropical Food Crops. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. By MJT Normen, CJ Pearson and PGE Searle: Cambridge University Press.*

As a whole the natural fertility of the soil is going to be finished. Application of chemical fertilizer increased many times but in comparison production is not increased much. From 1950-51 to 2000-01 fertilizer application per hectare increased 181.22 times, percentage of irrigated area for food grains increased 2.39 times but yield of food-grains increased 3.11 times.

**TABLE-7**  
**All India Yields of Food Grains**

Year	Yield (Kg/Ha.)	Irrigated Area (%)
1950-51	522	18.1
2000-01	1626	43.4

*Source: Agricultural Statistics IFFCO New Delhi, in association with Directorate of Economics & Statistics, New Delhi.*

**TABLE-8**  
**Area Involved and Fertilizer applied For Agriculture (All India)**  
 (Area in Million Hectors, Fertilizer in Thousand Ton)

Year	Net Sown Area	Gross Sown Area	Net Irrigated Area	Gross Irrigated Area	Fertilizer Applied
1950-51	118.75	131.84	20.85	22.56	65.6
2000-01	141.10	187.94	54.68	75.14	16702.3

*Source: Agricultural Statistics IFFCO New Delhi, in association with Directorate of Economics & Statistics, New Delhi.*

Considerable amount of capital is invested in Indian agriculture and the intensity of capital investment is increasing. The commoditization of Indian agricultural product is done up to a considerable level. The marketed surplus ratio of different agricultural product also provides support to this inference (see Table-9). But it is an undeniable truth that in India the pre-capitalist land-lord classes have not been uprooted by force. The glorious peasant rebellions like *Tebhaga*, *Telengana*, *Naksalbari* were organized here but the land-lord

classes have not been uprooted, though some reforms were done to tackle peasant rebellions. Among those reforms, two are worth mentioning, e.g. land reforms (mainly through tenancy reforms and making a plastic land ceiling act) blue-printed by a World Bank theoretician Wolf Ladejinsky; and green revolution, invented by Nobel peace prize winner agronomist, Norman Bourlag. Ladejinsky's main goal was to prevent communist influences in rural areas by doing land reforms from above, not harming the interest of rural elite. The most conservative rural elite of India did not accept this; but the scheme was successfully utilized by CPI (M) in the rural areas under their influence, to combat revolutionary peasant movements, demanding the total land reforms. The goal of green revolution was two fold, firstly the economic goal for expanding market of chemical fertilizer, pesticide, agricultural machinery, seeds etc. throughout India. Secondly, the political goal of preventing recurrence of Chinese Revolution, through increasing food production for neutralizing peasants' hunger. By refuting cautions given by honest scientists like Dr. R.H. Richharia, the most unscientific green revolution was implemented throughout the country (17). As a result highly rich genetic diversities of indigenous crops eroded, agro-ecology jeopardized, and deadly poisons entered into the nutrient cycle. In this socio-economic condition it is necessary to assess the effect of jeopardized agro-ecology and invested capital in agriculture on production relation. In this connection we will first discuss about the relation between capital use and landholding patterns, and then its significance. Data from CMIE-EIS 2006, tells us that from 1971 to 1996, both the number and area under small, marginal & semi-medium holding increased gradually (see Tables 10, 11). On the contrary, both the number and area under medium and large holdings decreased. From the statistics given in the tables 10, 11, & 12, it can be seen very clearly that there is a neat erosion in medium & large holding (>4 hectare) up to a certain extent occurs in our country. As this erosion occurs in rich and agriculturally advanced states like Hariyana, it occurs in the state like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and backward states like Bihar, Orissa also. Only in Punjab the picture is different.

**TABLE-9**

**Marketed Surplus Ratio of Important Agricultural Commodities**

Name of the commodities	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Rice	61.7	73.8	73.6
Wheat	56.5	69.7	73.3
Maize	67.3	69.1	66.0
Bazra	61.7	62.1	56.9
Gram	71.8	74.5	81.2
Moong	74.6	83.2	74.7
Potato	47.6	78.9	91.1
Onion	98.5	96.9	100.0
Sugar Cane	96.4	100.0	98.3
Jute	97.5	88.9	93.2

*Source: Agricultural Statistics, IFFCO New Delhi, in association with Directorate of Economics & Statistics, New Delhi.*

Now it is necessary to determine the characteristics of those large & medium (>4He.) holdings, and also of those marginal, small & semi-medium (<4He) holdings. Through the analysis of the data from the Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of Farmers, conducted by the NSSO during January to December 2003, as a part of its 59<sup>th</sup> round, G.S. Bhalla, in relation to income and consumption of farmer household summed up that *“Both income and consumption of farmer households varied with the size of holding. There were also large inter-state differences in both the income and consumption levels. At the all-India level, a farmer household had to possess 4.01 ha. or more to be able to make ends meet. The proportion of such farmers was only 5.2 per cent; the rest namely, 94.8 per cent, were running in deficit. The situation differed in various states but on the whole a large proportion of small and marginal farmer households possessing less than 2.01-4.01 ha. were unable to earn enough to meet their consumption needs. At the all-India level, farmers’ households below 2 ha. accounted for above 80.5 per cent of total farmer households.”* (18) (See Table 13, 14). Thus we separate large & medium holding (>4ha.) in one category and small & marginal (<2ha.) in another.

It is found that except for regular labour, per hectare expenditure on all other inputs for agriculture declines with increase in the size of holding (19) (See Table 15, 16). This indicates that those large and medium holdings are not as capital-intensive as small and marginal holdings. Then what is the significance of this intensive farming in small holdings? In small holdings the capital required for intensive farming is not invested directly by the small farmer himself, instead he gathered the inputs like seeds, fertilizer, pesticide etc. on credit from local dealers, equipments like pumps tractors etc. He utilized on credit also. By selling the crop he has to repay them. When the farmer buys the inputs on credit, he has to pay more than that of market price. As there is pressure of repaying the credit, the small farmer has to sale the crop as soon as he reaps it. Through the tactics of the touts at the time of reaping the market price of the crops falls. If the poor farmer would be able to hold the crop for a considerable time, he could sale it at a better price; but due to his poverty and the pressure upon him to repay the credit, he cannot hold the crop and has to sale it soon after the harvest. The small farmer who gets institutional credit, the condition is to some extent better to him, but due to bureaucratic complexities and procrastination the institutional credit is not always available to small farmers. Often the rural oppressing section captures the lion’s share of the institutional credit and uses it in other business or brokery and hording

of agricultural commodities. Due to the jeopardized agro-ecology, attack of pests and pathogens, foul weather, etc. often the crop gets lost and the small farmer who is able to manage institutional credit, fails to repay it, and again falls in the clutch of local input dealers and touts of agricultural products. In this way the small peasant becomes a pauper and fails to accumulate capital to become a capitalist farmer. He/she is deprived of both the surplus profit and absolute ground rent. The main source of his/her income is selling of labour, thus his/her worker character becomes more prominent. Now what is the class character of those who make the small peasants pauper? Are they pre-capitalist exploiters? It is not that the rural India is free of pre-capitalist money lenders. They are present as usual. But there are little instances that they lend money at high interest in production process. The lion's share of total rural credit is expended in nonproductive purpose. The 27.6% of total rural credit is expended for household purpose, 24% for marriage and other ceremonies, 1% for repaying loans, 21% for purchasing land or making houses, and only 18.5% are utilized for production purpose. (20) Money lenders contribute 31.7% of the total rural debt. (21) So through simple arithmetic it can be shown that out of total rural credit the portion of loan given by the money lenders for production is only 5.86%. So it is clear that money lenders are not lending their money mainly for production but for other household purposes. This is not the sign of pre-capitalism. In the countries where capitalism was fully developed this type of usury was found. So it will be an over-simplification to say usury is equal to pre-capitalism. The sections that mainly give credit to the small farmers for production, i.e. the input dealers or the owners of agricultural machinery, are not the pre-capitalist exploiters. They are ready to use highest form of technology. They came into existence only after the settlement of this post-green revolution capital intensive agriculture. If the agro-ecology was not jeopardized due to the deadly effect of the green revolution their business would not flourish. There is not any prominent instance that they are exploiting their debtor as cheap bonded labour. They are not the pre-capitalist usurers, but the local agent of the most reactionary global capital. The same is true for the brokery of agricultural commodity. Recently the global capital has taken entrance in this brokery and retail business of agricultural commodities. The best management students are now engaged in doing research to find out smoother way to pauperize farmers. Giant companies like ITC have started to purchase agricultural commodities directly from the farmers. During the year 2000 to 2007, ITC opened 6400 internet kiosks throughout 9 states of our country. The name given to those kiosks are *E-choupal*. Near about 4million people of 3800 villages have come under the area of operation of those *E-choupals*. In the year 2006-07 ITC purchased 2 million tons of wheat, coffee,

soyabean, shrimp, pulses, etc. through those kiosks, the value of which comes to US\$400 million.<sup>(22)</sup> Companies like Metro Carry Cash, Reliance, etc. have also started their business directly with the farmers. Various supermarkets in different metropolises run by global capital are engaged in retail business of agro-products.

**TABLE-10**  
**Area Operated by Holdings in India.**

<b>'000 Hectare</b>	Dec.71	Dec.77	Dec81	Dec86	Dec91	Dec.96	%
Category							
Changes Over 71 to 96							
All	162120	163340	163800	164560	165600	163357	0.76
Marginal(<1.01)	14550	17510	19730	22040	24620	28121	93.27
Small(1.01-2)	19280	20900	23170	25710	28710	30722	59.34
Semi-Medium (2.01-4)	30000	32430	34650	36670	38350	38953	29.84
Medium(4.01-10)	48230	49630	48540	47140	45050	41398	-14.17
Large(>10)	50060	42870	37710	33000	28890	24163	-51.73

*Source: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy- Economic Intelligence Service, 2006.*

**TABLE-11**  
**No. of Operation Holdings in India**

<b>'000 Nos.</b>	Dec.71	Dec.77	Dec81	Dec86	Dec91	Dec.96	%
Category							
Changes Over 71 to 96							
All	70490	81570	88880	97160	105290	115580	63.97
Marginal(<1.01)	35680	44520	50120	56150	62110	71179	99.49
Small(1.01-2)	13430	14730	16070	17920	19970	21643	61.15
Semi-Medium (2.01-4)	10680	11670	12450	13250	13910	14261	33.52
Medium(4.01-10)	7930	8210	8070	7920	7630	7092	-
Large(>10)	2770	2440	2170	1920	1670	1404	-

*Source: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy- Economic Intelligence Service, 2006.*

**TABLE-12**  
**Average Size of Holdings in India**

Hectare.	Dec.71	Dec.77	Dec81	Dec86	Dec91	Dec.96
Category						
All	2.3	2	1.84	1.69	1.57	1.41
Marginal(<1.01)	0.41	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.4	0.4
Small(1.01-2)	1.44	1.42	1.44	1.43	1.44	1.42
Semi-Medium(2.01-4)	2.81	2.78	2.78	2.77	2.76	2.73
Medium(4.01-10)	6.08	6.04	6.01	5.95	5.9	5.85
Large(>10)	18.07	17.57	17.38	17.19	17.3	17.21

*Source: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy- Economic Intelligence Service, 2006.*

**TABLE-13**  
**Average Monthly Income and Consumption (in Rupees) per Farmer Household: All India.**

Size Class of Land Possessed (ha)	Total Income From all Sources	Total Consumption Expenditure
<0.01	1380	2297
0.01-0.40	1633	2390
0.41-1.00	1809	2672
1.01-2.00	2493	3184
2.01-4.00	3598	3685
4.01-10.00	5681	4626
>10.00	9667	6418
All size	2115	2770

*Source: G.S.Bhalla, Income, Consumption and Expenditure of Farmers. Performing Indian Agriculture, Edited By S.K.Bhounik. SAGE.*

**TABLE-14**  
**Average Monthly Income from Different Sources, Consumption and Net Investment in productive assets per Farmer Household (in Rs)**

Size Class of Land Possessed (ha.)	Income from Wages	Net Receipts from Cultivation	Net Receipt from Farming of Animals	Net Receipts from Non-farm Business	Total Income from all Sources	Total Consumption Expenditure	Net Investment in Productive assets
<0.01	1075	11	64	230	1380	2297	40
0.01-0.40	973	296	94	270	1633	2390	37
0.41-1.00	720	784	112	193	1809	2672	96
1.01-2.00	635	1578	102	178	2493	3148	151
2.01-4.00	637	2685	57	210	3589	3685	387
4.01-10.00	486	4676	12	507	5681	4626	685
>10.00	557	8321	113	676	9667	6418	737
All Size	819	969	91	236	2115	2770	124

*Source: G.S.Bhalla, Income, Consumption and Expenditure of Farmers. Performing Indian Agriculture, Edited By S.K.Bhounik. SAGE.*

**TABLE-15**  
**Average Expenses per Farmer Household by Size Class of Land Possessed: All India**

Size Class of Land Possessed	Seeds			Pesticides/Insecticides			Fertilizer/Manure		Irrigation		Labour
	Regular	Labuor	Casual	Other	Expenses		Interest	Lease	Rent for Land	Total Expenses	
<0.01	88	23	123	96	4	6	32	21	91	68	552
0.01-0.40	333	114	550	319	24	12	109	31	450	294	2235
0.41-1.00	924	350	1414	741	87	53	302	71	1244	735	5921
1.01-2.00	1716	722	2502	1352	198	133	471	156	2211	1264	10723
2.01-4.00	3004	1353	3961	2133	416	259	944	427	3643	2031	18166
4.01-10.00	5878	3185	8019	3777	851	548	2037	1305	7117	3970	36687
>10.00	11244	6128	13344	5755	1717	1151	5795	4684	12097	6525	68439
All Size	1404	625	1993	1038	170	108	463	209	1767	1017	8791
% Share	16	7	23	12	2	1	5	2	20	12	100

*Source: G.S.Bhalla, Income, Consumption and Expenditure of Farmers. Performing Indian Agriculture, Edited By S.K.Bhounik. SAGE.*

**TABLE-16**  
**Regression Results of Expenditure per Hectare for All India**

Elasticity of Rent	Significance of t		Seeds	Pesticides	Fertilizers	Irrigation	Repair	Interest
	Regular	Labor	Casual	Labor	Total	Labor	Other	Total
-0.238	-0.188	-0.070	-0.259	-0.321	-0.007	-0.050	-0.105	0.177
0.000	-0.183	-0.279	0.000	0.000	0.765	0.244	0.133	0.151
0.000	0.000	0.000			0.000			

*Source: G.S.Bhalla, Income, Consumption and Expenditure of Farmers. Performing Indian Agriculture, Edited By S.K.Bhounik. SAGE.*

In case of medium & large holdings (i.e. >4ha.) the income is greater than consumption (23). Particularly when the size of holding is greater than 10 ha. a considerable amount of surplus can be accumulated in the hand of the farmer. But in these holdings per hectare investment is lesser than that of small and marginal holdings. Simultaneously per hectare output is also less (24). In case of Punjab and Haryana, however the picture is different; per hectare value of output increases with increase in holding size. But according to G.S. Bhalla the results for Haryana are insignificant, and that for Punjab holds at 95 percent confidence level only (25). It doesn't mean that the total amount of capital invested in large and medium holding is negligible. In those holdings quite a large amount of capital, mainly in the form of costly agricultural machinery (i.e. tractor, power tiller etc.), is invested (26) (See Table 17). So it cannot be said that in those large and medium holdings pre-capitalist agriculture is practised. The capital investment vis-à-vis commoditization of agricultural

product is increased many times. The reinvestment of surplus is also found in those holdings (27). The capital intensive agriculture brings changes in the role of human labour in agriculture. This change should be studied meticulously. The tilling is mostly done by the tractors instead of plough now. For this the labour required for ploughing is decreased. Not only that, the cowboys also are not required to maintain the bulls throughout the year. After the introduction of threshing machine, the labour required to thresh paddy, wheat or other grains also decreased. After the introduction of rice mill or other food processing factories the quantity of labour required for making rice from paddy or other food processing also decreases. The neat result of it is a sharp decline in requirement of permanent labour (*Mahindor, Nagarekisen* etc) for large landholders throughout the year. But as the intensity of cropping has increased, the requirement of labour for shorter period of time in a particular season of the year has increased many times. For an example it can be said that in boro paddy cultivation many labours are required for planting and reaping, that is why even small farmers have to employ labour for those periods. The demand of free labour also increases for jute, wheat and other crops. So free labour is more desirable to the farmers engaged in intensive farming, and their demand cannot be met with local labor. On the other hand in the unirrigated districts and states of India where the multiple cropping is not practised, the labour remains jobless at the season of boro or wheat cultivation. So a seasonal migration of labour is observed towards the area of intensive cropping from those backward areas. Agricultural labour migrates seasonally to the states like Punjab, Haryana, from Bihar and to the districts like Hooghly, Burdwan, of West Bengal from the district like Bankura, Purulia, and Mursidabad. In this way intensive farming in one area makes free the labour of backward areas. Thus contradiction with the oppressing class of those backward areas becomes inevitable. In this contradiction often the ruling class of intensive cropping area stands against the oppressing class of backward areas.(28) Ben Rogaly, in his famous research paper “Dangerous Liaison? Seasonal Migration and Agrarian Changes in West Bengal” discussed about the seasonally migrated agricultural labour. In his work he has shown that due to such seasonal migration, the untouchability based on cast system is becoming weak. He studied 11 such seasonally migrated workers, and found that out of them two have repaid usury loan of their area and freed mortgaged land from the wages earned (29). This also indicates the erosion of pre-capitalist bondage. On the contrary, absence of any trade-union for these migratory workers, and their weakness in bargaining for wages (30), indicate the weak development of capitalism.

**TABLE-17**  
**Average Number of Tractors Possessed per 100 Households by Size**  
**Class of Land Possessed at All-India Level**

Area of Land Possessed (Hectare)	Number of Tractors
<0.01	0
0.01-0.40	0
0.41-1.00	1
1.01-2.00	3
2.01-4.00	8
4.01-10.00	18
>10.00	38
All Classes	3

*Source: G.S.Bhalla, Income, Consumption and Expenditure of Farmers. Performing Indian Agriculture, Edited By S.K.Bhoumik. SAGE.*

From the above discussion it can be said that a more or less capitalist farming is practised in those large and medium holdings. But there is a neat erosion of those large and medium holdings in all states of our country, except Punjab. In Punjab though this erosion has not occurred, but there is no prominent tendency of land centralization. Per hectare investment and output is also decreasing along with the increase in holding size. Cultivation of land with a considerable amount of capital investment on the one hand, and absence of capitalistic centralization of cultivable land on the other, makes a paradox. If this paradox cannot be explained, it will be difficult to assess the class characters of the owners of those large and medium holdings.

As agro-ecology is jeopardized, fertility vis-à-vis productivity of soil is decreasing. Agriculture becomes more vulnerable to the attack of pests and pathogens. This increases uncertainty in agricultural production. In Punjab, the state government had appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Professor S.S. Jhol, an agronomist, to look into this problem of the agrarian sector, in the year 1985. In the report submitted in 1986, the Jhol Committee expressed concern about stagnating productivity levels and deteriorating environment due to the cropping pattern dominated by paddy-wheat rotation (31). As a bourgeois agronomist Professor Jhol fails to touch the root of the problem. Actually the problem originates from Metabolic Alienation, an unavoidable catastrophe of capitalist society and aggravated due to the erosion of local crop varieties, and entrance of deadly poison into agro-ecosystem. This problem does not occur only in Punjab, but in most parts of our country.

The market of the agricultural commodities is dominated by touts and brokers. Recently global capital has entered this market. Due to the unholy nexus of the touts and government officials, often the farmers, not only small and marginal but also medium and large, fail to sale their product at a fair price. Surinder S. Jodhka, in his article under the title of ‘The Decline of Agriculture’ put a representative example of such unholy nexus in Punjab. In the year 2000, there was a bumper crop of paddy. But the procurement agencies refused to purchase the grain at the minimum support price (MSP) declared by the central government, on the plea that the grains were of inferior quality. The FCI chief went to the extent of saying that as much as 80 per cent of the Punjab paddy was spoilt, a claim that had no scientific basis. The private traders and rice millers were quite willing to buy the same paddy, but at a price much lower than the official support price (32). Surinder S. Jodhka points out that due to these stagnating productivity and market fluctuations the younger generation of rural Punjabis are losing their interest in agriculture (33) (See Table-18). Cotton cultivators of Andhra Pradesh, sugarcane cultivators of Uttar Pradesh, potato cultivators of West Bengal, tomato cultivators of Punjab in contract with Pepsico,..... a long list of farmers deprived due to agro-ecological debacle and market fluctuations, can be prepared. This is one of the major reasons why capitalistic centralization of cultivable land is absent. Through their experience the rural elite realizes that, it will be more profitable and secured to invest in the business of agricultural inputs and agricultural commodities instead of cultivation. The jeopardized agro-ecology makes agriculture vulnerable, but not the input business. In the imperialist countries the large farmers receive a fabulous amount of subsidies to over-come the problems of agro-ecological debacles, narrow genetic base of crops, and market fluctuations. Now some MNCs are willing to make large agricultural farms either by directly taking lease of agricultural land or in the form of contract farming. If it happens, they will ruin the ecosystem of those lands, finish their productivity and will fly away with their booty.

**TABLE-18**

**Perceptions of Desirability/Likelihood of Next Generation Doing Farming (Only Non-Dalit Rural Respondents)**

Total Number Surveyed	Preferred	Not-Preferred	Not Applicable/No Response
1008(100)	121(12.0)	635(63.00)	252(25.00)

*Source: Surinder S. Jodhka, The Decline of Agriculture. Reforming Indian Agriculture. Edited By S.K.Bhoumik. SAGE.*

**TABLE-19**  
**Perception of Rural Non-Dalit on the Future Economic Status of Farming Community in Punjab**

Total Number Surveyed	Certainly Better	Same as Now	Worse	Much Worse	No Response
1009(100)	88(8.72)	185(19.65)	28(2.77)	487(48.27)	221(21.90)

*Source: Surinder S. Jodhka, The Decline of Agriculture. Reforming Indian Agriculture. Edited By S.K.Bhoumik. SAGE.*

In Indian agriculture pre-capitalist right is diminishing. But we do not want to say that pre-capitalism is completely abolished, in many parts of our country pre-capitalist exploitation prevails. What we want to say is that, it does not remain the major trend. On the other hand capitalist farming is also not developing. Agricultural machinery decreased the demand of labour throughout the year, but surplus labours are not absorbed in industries, because employment generated per unit of capital investment in organized sectors is also reducing. Portion of rural surplus population is gathering in urban slum areas, some are absorbed in unorganized sector, deprived mostly of any sort of human facilities. They constitute the masses alienated from both means of production and nature. Global capital grabbing fertility, seeds, water, and knowledge for agriculture, makes inroads in wholesale and retail business of agricultural commodities. This situations undoubtedly erodes the power of the landlords, and is bringing the peasants in direct confrontation with the global capital more and more.

**Epilogue :**

In the world we are living, the most reactionary global capital refutes all of its democratic liabilities. Thus the highest form of technology is now co-existing with semi-bonded labour in SEZ, and the MNCs enter into hoarding of agricultural commodities. Global capital is now ready to enter even into usury business; the “glorious” example of this is the “Noble Usurer” Md. Unus of Bangladesh. So the absence of democratic environment is not only the crop of pre-capitalism, but global capital also is quite capable of promoting anti-democracy. These characteristics of global capital we are now finding in agriculture.

Several reformist views are put forward to run the human civilization between the Scylla of capitalist exploitation and Charybdis of environmental degradations by many agencies (specially by NGOs). These views are as follows.

Some speak at high pitch for organic farming. They point out that if only organic fertilizer is used and the soil organisms, playing vital role in the process of recycling, are restored (which are mostly abolished due to application of agricultural chemical) the whole problem will be solved. There is no doubt that organic farming and restoration of beneficial soil organisms are indispensable, but is it possible at large scale without changing the socio-economic condition? Beneficial soil organisms play vital role in the recycling of nutrients but they cannot create the nutrient from nothing. Sustaining this socio-economic system where crops are robbed of huge quantity of nutrients every season from the agricultural field, no sustainable agriculture is possible. Thus promoting organic farming without promoting revolution is nothing but drawing a round square, though the reverse is also true.

Another reformist view is to use city effluent (without breaking present hierarchy of cities!) as fertilizer in agricultural field. But in modern commodity fetish metropolises the effluent is a mixture of both organic matter and deadly poisonous chemicals and heavy metals. If we use it directly to the agricultural field we will allow those deadly poisonous elements to enter into the food chain, which will bring another disaster; and if we want to segregate the organic matter completely from those poisons, it will be nothing but to maintain a white elephant.

Some MNCs, to mask their plundering activities say that the use of poisonous agricultural chemicals can be put to an end by using Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). But the result of introducing Bt. Cotton is known to everybody now. How dangerous the application of GMOs in agricultural field is may be a subject of another article.

It is a matter of regret that in spite of the brilliant work of Marx and Engels the USSR failed to realize it, and the Americanized model of chemical farming promoted by a bureaucratic state brought disasters. But Fidel Castro's Cuba shows how organic farming can be used to the benefit of her citizens.

It is the duty of the communist revolutionaries of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries to realize and uphold the vision of the Communist Manifesto - "*Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the distinction between town and country by a **more equitable distribution of the populace over the country***" (Emphasis is ours).

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# **The Lalgarh Movement, the PCAPA and the CPI (Maoist)**

**Kushal Debnath**

The vast areas of Jangal Mahal including Lalgarh have been in the grip of unbridled state terror for the last few months. There is a total ban on any meeting or rally. The media persons also are debarred from entering into those areas. Three villagers were brutally killed by the joint forces on 2<sup>nd</sup> January last. In the name of arresting the Maoists, witch-hunting is going on in various villages. Very recently a meeting was taking place in the premises of Bulanpur High School organized by a newly formed platform of the peasants called “Chashi Banchao Committee”. The purpose of the meeting was to put forward some demands of the peasants. The Joint Forces encircled the meeting and carried on an inhuman torture on the peasants. Chhatradhar Mahato, the leader of the People’s Committee against Police Atrocities (PCAPA), arrested under UAPA was served with the charge-sheet within an astonishingly short time. A few days ago the Joint Forces arrested two members of the PCAPA, but they were not produced in the court. It is suspected that they were killed in cold blood. It can be said, in brief, that the Left Front government, aided by the Congress-led central government has unleashed an unprecedented state-terror in Jangal Mahal (including Lalgarh) to crush the resistance struggle that has been developing in the area for a year.

But still the protests and the resistance are continuing in multifarious forms. The entire Communist Revolutionary camp, too, is busy analyzing the role of the PCAPA as well as the CPI (Maoist) in this movement. The debates and discussions centering round the evaluation of this movement are giving rise to new thoughts and ideas. The communist revolutionary forces are being compelled to take some position vis-à-vis this unique movement of West Bengal. In this article we, on our part, will try to do the same. But definitely our appraisal of the movement will be of primary nature and incomplete, too, for the movement is still going on. We are giving our assessment of the movement on the basis of the information we have been able to gather and the evaluation of the movement of the CPI (Maoist) that we have got in their writings.

## **The Lalgarh Movement and the PCAPA**

There was a land-mine blast in Salboni on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008 when Mr. Buddhadev Bhattacharya, the Chief Minister of West Bengal was returning from there laying the foundation stone of the Steel-factory of the Jindals.

Following this incident a terrible police repression started taking place in the entire area. Chintamani Murmu, a tribal woman, lost her eyesight and fourteen other women including Panmoni Murmu and Anjamani Murmu were severely injured. These incidents gave birth to widespread reaction in the whole area. From 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 the struggle, without a parallel in the recent history of mass-movement in West Bengal started. The tribals in thousands rallied behind this resistance struggle, from Midnapore to Bankura, Purulia, and even to some fringes of Hooghly district. The movement took various forms like blockade of roads by tree-trunks, digging of roads, to debar the police from entering the villages, or to boycott them altogether, to snap the telecommunication lines and to organize very big rallies. That 'a single spark can start a prairie fire' was once again proved in the heart of West Bengal. At the very outset an organization named 'Bharat Jakat Majhi Maroa' was in the leadership of this movement, but it retreated in a few days owing to its compromising attitude. As we have seen in history, the need of the movements gives birth to the appropriate organization of the movement. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2008 the PCAPA was formed. 13 Point Charter of demands was prepared, focussing two of them as the main viz. i) The SP must have to apologize for his misdeeds, ii) The police who tortured the women must have to rub their nose on the ground as a mark of punishment.

Other demands included:

a) Alchiki script of the Santhali language has to be introduced as a medium of education from the primary to the university level from the academic year 2009-2010. b) Irrigation and drinking water has to be provided to the villagers gratis. c) Land has to be distributed among the poor and the landless peasants. d) 100 days work has to be ensured for those able to work. e) Primary schools and health centres have to be established in each village and Panchayat respectively, etc. Along with the demands, village committees also were formed, comprising 5 men and 5 women in each of them. Village centres consisting of ten villages were formed as well. The PCAPA comprised 35 members, 23 of them being men and 12 others being women. The democratic character of this organization evolved from the grass-roots level helped this struggle to extend far and wide. Although a local struggle, it exercised a deep influence among the people of the whole state. The movement put forward a simple question: if the police, "the saviour" of the State can oppress the people in such a barbaric manner, why would the police not apologize for this? On the other hand, there were social and economic demands that mobilized innumerable people around the movement. As we have stated before, the PCAPA showed extreme ingenuity and creativity in developing new forms of movements. This committee showed extraordinary skill in using every form of movement that a people's

movement can call for. Naturally, therefore, this struggle was able to create turmoil in the entire country. This much for the first phase of the movement.

There is a popular notion about the genesis of the Lalgarh movement and that is that this movement could develop mainly because of the underdevelopment of this region. And there would have been no Lalgarh movement if the question of underdevelopment could have been solved or at least a process could have been initiated to that end. This attitude belittles the importance of the Lalgarh movement. Most of the regions of West Bengal are victims of underdevelopment. But Lalgarh type of movement is nowhere to be found. The people of Jangal Mahal have organized themselves against the atrocities perpetrated by the state as well as for the protection of their sense of dignity and their rights. It is true that had there been no question of underdevelopment, i.e., the question of food, clothing, medical aid etc. the material basis of the movement would not exist. Apart from these problems, the social isolation and similar other highly sensitive factors also constituted the basis of this movement.

The Lalgarh movement has assumed great importance for another reason. The struggle of Singur and Nandigram has helped to do away with the long-standing drought of people's movement in West Bengal. One-party rule of CPI (M) weighed heavily on its people. These movements undermined the very foundation of this autocratic rule and an atmosphere of protests started prevailing throughout West Bengal. But what is important to note is that after a phase of the movement had passed, the dominance of CPI (M) was only replaced by that of Trinamool Congress. Land acquisition in Nandigram, carried on under SEZ Act was stopped by the West Bengal government under pressure of the movement, but with this the struggle came to an end. The people of Nandigram or the "Bhumi Uchhed Pratirodh Committee" are no more in need of raising the demand of repealing SEZ Act. Trinamool Congress has undoubtedly established its sway over the area. Almost all the parliamentary parties in our country are very adept at utilizing the mass movements as a means of attaining power. After having done that, they lose no time in protecting all the reactionary Acts existing in the country. During the movements of Nandigram and Singur the Trinamool Congress in a way raised the demand of cancellation of SEZ Act. But as soon as the party joined the UPA government, the demand was put to an end. In this backdrop the movement of Lalgarh and of Jangal Mahal as a whole has played an exceptional role. Till date, no parliamentary party representing the reactionary ruling classes has been able to utilize this movement to their own interest. It is, therefore, quite natural that the Central and the State governments, the Congress, the Trinamool Congress and the CPI (M) have been opposing this movement with all their might.

There may have differences among them so far as the forms of opposition are concerned; but in content all of them are the same.

The following are, in brief, the main points of our primary evaluation of the Lalgarh movement.

- (a) This struggle has essentially developed in course of a staunch opposition to the autocratic onslaughts of the government.
- (b) This struggle has built up the organizations of struggle after its own style, in conformity with the needs of the struggle.
- (c) Going to deal with the attacks of the police and the Harmads of the CPI (M) this movement has evolved various forms of people's movement and utilized them very effectively.
- (d) This movement has laid bare at least partially, the undemocratic character of the Indian government. It has also unmasked the real character of the ruling parties. This movement has clearly revealed how a reactionary government can unleash terrible oppression on the most downtrodden tribal people.
- (e) This movement has shown a great awakening of the women folk. They have not only played the role of mere participants, but they have surged forward in the role of leadership.
- (f) This movement has taken up various social initiatives. e.g. to run alternative health centres, sinking of tubewells in the villages, conducting movement against drinking of liquor, and also against the Sponge iron factories, the source of acute pollution.

On the contrary, the PCAPA has adopted many measures in their movement that were not at all helpful for them. Some of them are as follows:

- (a) This organization that developed in a democratic process and involved innumerable people, in the later phase imposed a blanket ban on other political parties, excepting, of course, the CPI (Maoist). This step went against the very spirit of the movement. Considering the fact that Lalgarh was never declared a liberated zone and that the PCAPA was conducting just a democratic people's movement, why such extreme step as necessary? We are not speaking here about the reactionary ruling class parties. Our question is why even some anti-imperialist anti-feudal parties and some vacillating political forces, too, were not allowed to operate?
- (b) Although the movement has explored various forms of mass movement, the leaders of the movement hardly explained the rationale of the indiscriminate individual killings and their relation with the mass movement.

(c) Many of the punitive measures adopted against the CPI (M) cadres did not call forth the support of the people.

### **The Lalgarh Movement and the role of the CPI (Maoist)**

If our scope of writing had remained confined to the role of the PCAPA vis-à-vis the Lalgarh movement, we would have stopped here. But we think without a discussion on the role of the CPI (Maoist) in this movement no evaluation is possible.

Before the present phase of Lalgarh movement broke out, there were activities of the CPI (Maoist) in that region. The party played an important role in inspiring the PCAPA to lead the movement, although it should be admitted that the initial revolt in Lalgarh was mainly spontaneous. Subsequently the party started controlling the movement fully. It is at the time of setting the house of Anuj Pandey, the CPI (M) leader, on fire that the Maoist leader Bikash appeared on the scene. It was at this time that the CPI (Maoist) declared that it was the party that was exercising the leadership. At this juncture the Joint Forces started its campaign and the role of the PCAPA leadership started to diminish. Kishanji assumed the supreme leadership and what happened from then on is known to all of us. We shall cite some excerpts from an interview of Com. Ganapati, the General Secretary of the party to understand its appraisal of the movement. In that interview given to Rahul Pandit, Com Ganapati said, "The Lalgarh mass uprising has no doubt raised new hopes among the oppressed people and the entire revolutionary camp of West Bengal". He further states, "The upsurge was beyond our expectation. In fact, it was the common people with the assistance of advanced elements influenced by revolutionary politics who played a crucial role in the formation of tactics. They formed their own organization, put forth their charter of demands, worked out various mass forms of struggle despite the brutal attacks of the police and social fascist Harmad gangs." Com. Ganapati continues to say, "The course of the development of the movement, of course, will depend on the level of consciousness and preparedness of the people of the region. The party will take this into consideration while formulating its tactics. The initiative of the masses will be released fully." Very pertinently he has informed us, "Lalgarh also has some distinctive features such as high degree of participation of women, a genuinely democratic charter and a wider mobilization of Adivasis."

We hardly find any wide difference of opinion with what Com. Ganapati says regarding the Lalgarh movement. But when the CPI (Maoist) declared that it was the party that was giving leadership to the movement and following that, the features that the movement started manifesting in the society drove a wedge

between our perceptions of the movement. Com Ganapati says, "They formed their own organization." Or, "The course of the development of movement of course, will depend on the level of consciousness and preparedness of the people of the region." But in reality what transpired was that a movement that had a revolutionary mass character, where people were building up their own organization, preparing their own charter of demands, creating new possibilities in developing class-struggle, was replaced by what can be loosely termed armed warfare. We know that CPI (Maoist) believes that the present phase of class struggle is one of war and considers the mobile guerrilla warfare as the principal form of the struggle. As a result, basing on that concept, the party took the initiative to convert the whole movement into an armed warfare. The PCAPA started losing its effectiveness. The role of the PLGA became more important than people's initiative. To determine the tactics of the movement in accordance with the level of consciousness and preparedness of the people was thus annulled. It is, therefore, evident that what Com. Ganapati said does not tally with the general line of the party. Com Ganapati says, "The upsurge was beyond our expectation." If it is a fact, the task was first to evaluate the prospects that the Lalgarh movement created and then to determine how this movement could be raised to a higher phase. In an endeavour to implement the line of the organization rather mechanically, the movement got confined in a small region and failed to create an impact on a larger political arena. Com. Ganapati says, "The Lalgarh mass uprising has no doubt raised new hopes among the oppressed people and the entire revolutionary camp in West Bengal. If it is true, why instead of continuing, consolidating and spreading this mass movement to newer and newer areas, the guerrilla warfare was made the principal form of struggle? Is the social polarization getting more and more intensified under the influence of Lalgarh? Is the revolutionary programme of the movement and differentiation between the friends and the enemies being clearer and clearer to the people? Admitted that in a country where the development is uneven, it will not happen in an even manner, but can we not expect its partial occurrence? Had the embarking on an armed struggle been the appropriate step, the solidarity movements and independent political movements of the workers, peasants and other sections of the toiling masses should have intensified. The dominance of the sham left and rightist forces also should have waned. The revolutionary politics should gradually take the dominant place. No, all this did not take place. Instead, successive political killings started. Either suspecting as the police agent, or in the name of meting out punishment, the CPI (M) cadres, or at times cadres of other parties also are being systematically killed one after another. All these killings were the actions of Maoist squads. These killings, the CPI (Maoist) argues, are not just individual killings. They were executed in accordance with the verdict of people's court. This argument, too, is hardly plausible, for these actions were

not accompanied by, not to speak of thousands, but even hundreds of people. It is obvious that these actions are the result of planned initiative of the party, not of the people. As a result the participation of the people, instead of increasing is dwindling day by day. The people are terrorized and scared, even in the adjoining areas. In our own investigation, we have come to know that the CPI (Maoist) is having recourse to intimidation to make the people join meetings, rallies and processions organized by them.

In this context, we would like to draw the attention of the CPI (Maoist) comrades to another problem. CPI (Maoist) is reluctant to understand that in the vast rural areas of our country including West Bengal, feudalism has been fast disappearing. We have also to keep in mind that the people (mostly tribals) living in hilly and jungle areas constitute 7% of the total Indian population (8 crore of the hundred fourteen crore). True they are the most oppressed in our country. This is one of the reasons why in these areas guerrilla warfare as an effective mode of struggle is becoming relevant, at times in Andhra Pradesh, or in Bihar, or in Karnataka. Later on these areas of struggle suffered heavy losses. Still later, their armed struggle in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa attracted much attention. But can these struggles in some pockets decide the course of revolution in such a vast country as ours? Can these struggles hold back the development of capitalism in India? Can these struggles rouse the millions of peasant masses throughout India? Can these struggles organize the peasant movements in the plains of India where innumerable peasants committed suicide in the recent past? Is it not noteworthy that the CPI (Maoist) could not play any important role in the anti-SEZ movement in India?

Despite all this, it has to be admitted that a resistance movement is going on against the terrible onslaught of the police and paramilitary forces of the state in Jangal Mahal including Lalgarh. But the emotional appeal that this movement created in its initial phase is now on the decline. This movement gave rise to great possibilities; but since it deviated into a different channel, it failed to rouse the people. The whole fight has been converted into one between a few Maoist cadres and the CPI (M), or one between the Maoists and the State. The armed intervention of the Maoist Party and its hyperactivity are becoming obstacles to the development of people's consciousness and their spontaneous participation in the movement.

The entire state-power is active to crush the Lalgarh movement. All the ruling class parties are united to destroy it. Under the circumstances, can the Party not evolve a different tactical line to save and further develop this movement? It has by now become already clear that a mechanical application of the CPI (Maoist) line would not solve the problem. What is needed is to be objective

in evaluating the movement and to be more creative in developing a set of tactics.

### **The Lalgarh Movement and some Reflections of the Communist Revolutionary Camp**

Different communist revolutionary groups and various democratic forces have taken up many programmes in support of the Lalgarh movement. Besides supporting, they have made friendly criticism of CPI (Maoist). We shall discuss some of them. "Sandhikshan" (in Bengali) in its article named "The Struggle of Lalgarh" has written, "Secondly, we should keep another thing in mind. The immediate objective of this struggle was to bring an end to police repression or emancipation from this repression to some extent. This struggle was not directed at the change of the social system. Nor was it possible for this struggle to assume the necessary momentum in isolation. As a result, it is inevitable that at some phase, this struggle has to be stopped, has to consolidate whatever has been attained and to be prepared for bigger struggles later on." (The underline is ours). We think this approach is erroneous. We object to the use of the term "Stop". The Lalgarh movement is not a trade union movement. It cannot be settled after some negotiations. The tribal people have mobilized themselves against the state atrocities in a movement with a strong sense of dignity and rights. This struggle was not meant for bringing about a change in the social system. But it was a struggle for attaining the social rights. This struggle could signal the beginning of a revolutionary political battle, however much partial. The struggles develop according to its own laws. The communists try to drive them to further development. If any particular struggle enters into the larger arena, if it opens up doors of new possibilities, the communists objectively evaluate the existing condition of the struggle and endeavour to raise it to a higher plane through continuous efforts. The question of 'stopping' does not come up at all. Marxism-Leninism does not teach us that any struggle has to be stopped for its consolidation and for its being raised to a higher phase. The same kind of thinking is reflected in an article written by the West Bengal State Committee of CPRCI (ML). It says, "Any democratic movement has to be led to an honourable settlement after a period. After having reached a positive solution as far as possible, the leadership has to put a stop to the movement so that a negotiation can start with those against whom the movement is directed. And that a preparation has to be made for the subsequent higher and wider phase of the movement." [Marxio Disha, October 2009, Page 16].

The basic error of both 'Sandhikkhan' and 'Marxio Disha' is that they are viewing all democratic movements in terms of 'negotiations'. Secondly, they have negated the possibility that some movements can go beyond its own limits

to create new prospects of movement and thereby further develop the class struggle. They try to analyze all the movements by casting them in a definitive dye. Thirdly, because of this error, they have fallen victim to rightist deviation. They complain that CPI (Maoist) has imposed its political thinking on the Lalgarh movement. But they are not considering the fact that they, too, are doing the same. They are viewing the movement in the light of “stopping” or “putting a stop to”, which means that when they take upon themselves the task of exercising leadership over any movement, they start thinking at the very outset when to ‘stop’, or ‘put a stop to’ the movement.

We are not now going into further details. But we would like to put forward some experience of Russian revolution. We hope the readers will pardon us for our long quotation from the book “History of the CPSU (B).”

“On April 4, 1912, during a strike in the Lena goldfields in Siberia, over 500 workers were killed or wounded upon the order of the tsarist officer of the gendarmerie. The shooting down of an unarmed body of Lena miners who were peacefully proceeding to negotiate with the management stirred the whole country. This new bloody deed of tsarist autocracy was committed to break an economic strike of the miners and thus please the masters of the Lena goldfields, the British capitalists. The British capitalists and their Russian partners derived huge profits from the Lena goldfields - over 7,000,000 rubles annually - by most shamelessly exploiting the workers. They paid the workers miserable wages and supplied them with rotten food unfit to eat. Unable to endure the oppression and humiliation any longer 6000 workers of the Lena goldfields went on strike.”

“We were so dazed and shocked that we could not at all find words to express our feeling. Whatever protest we made would be but a pale reflection of the anger that seethed in the hearts of all of us. Nothing can help us, neither tears nor protests, but an organized mass struggle.” - The workers of one group of factories declared in their resolution.

The furious indignation of the workers was further aggravated when the tsarist Minister Makarov, who was interpellated by the Social Democratic group in the State Duma on the subject of the Lena massacre, insolently declared: “So it was, so it will be!” The number of participants in the political protest strikers against the bloody massacre of the Lena worker rose to 3, 00,000.

The Lena events were like a hurricane which rent the atmosphere of “peace” created by the Stolypin regime.

This is what Com. Stalin wrote in this connection in 1912 in the St. Petersburg Bolshevik newspaper, Zvezda (star):

“The Lena shooting has broken the ice of silence and the river of the people’s movement has begun to flow. The ice is broken...! All that was evil and pernicious in the present regime, all the ills of much-suffering Russia were focused in the one fact, the Lena events. That is why it was the Lena shooting that served as a signal for the strikes and demonstrations.”

The efforts of the Liquidators and Trotskyites to bury the revolution had been in vain. The Lena events showed that the forces of revolution were alive, that a tremendous store of revolutionary energy had accumulated in the working class. The May Day Strikes of 1912 involved about 4, 00,000 workers, These strikes bore a marked political character and were held under the Bolshevik revolutionary slogans of a democratic republic, an 8-hour day, and the confiscation of all the landed estates. These main slogans were designed to unite not only the broad masses of the workers but also the peasants and soldiers for a revolutionary onslaught on the autocracy.

“The huge May Day strike of the proletariat of all Russia and the accompanying street demonstrations, revolutionary proclamations, and the revolutionary speeches to gatherings of workers, have clearly shown that Russia has entered the phase of a rise in the revolution” - wrote Lenin in an article entitled ‘The Revolutionary Rise’.

Although a struggle of just one mine, the event of Lena goldmine developed the political struggles of the entire country. The Bolsheviks played the principal role in advancing the whole process.

## **Afterword**

The struggles of Jangal Mahal including Lalgarh are still going on. The reactionary state-power is about to crush the mass uprising into smithereens. Our modest appeal to the leadership of the CPI (Maoist) is to reconsider and re-evaluate the tactics they have adopted basing on the assessment of the objective situation. The difference of opinion between the CPI (Maoist) and other Communist revolutionaries is one which is essentially a difference within the communist revolutionary camp. Keeping this in mind a debate should be continued mainly within the organizations and at times, for the promotion of ideological standard of the revolutionary cadres, it should partially come out in the open. We should keep this in mind that no difference of opinion can make the revolutionaries forget that “To rebel is justified”. We should, therefore, be on our alert that no criticism or self-criticism can strengthen the

hands of the enemy. In spite of the difference of opinion all revolutionary forces and revolutionary individuals should get united more strongly in support of the Lalgah movement. Basing ourselves on a definite political programme, we should keep trying to bring about a political polarization in the society. Let solidarity movements of the workers, peasants and other toiling masses surge forward in support of the movement on Jangal Mahal, including Lalgah.