

World Communist Movement and its lessons

Introduction

Comrades Marx and Engels have enunciated the tasks of the world proletariat in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* published in 1848..

They had declared unequivocally that the establishment of socialist system alone, throwing out the capitalist system lock, stock and barrel, would pave the way for the emancipation of the working class.

The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

“Workers of the world unite !”

This slogan was raised in 1848. Today it is resounding throughout the world. Of the world population, 100 crores have been liberated permanently from the capitalist system. It has started moving along the socialist path.

The imperialist system is collapsing.

Anti-colonial liberation struggles are surging forward like great hurricanes.

Under the leadership of the communist parties, the working class in capitalist countries is fighting heroically against the governments of the capitalist countries.

We are in the era when the world communist movement is in a position to achieve the final victory over the world imperialist system.

At this auspicious stage, serious differences have arisen in the world communist movement on the ideological issues concerning strategy and tactics to be adopted in today's context.

Today, every communist is giving a serious thought to the future of the world communist movement and about the forms of struggle, strategy and the tactics. A way could certainly be found for our problems of today

if the various events in the history of the world communist movement and the lessons drawn from it are carefully analysed.

The history of the world communist movement could be chronologically divided into five chapters and analysed.

1. The period from 1848 to 1871.
2. The period from 1871 Paris Commune to 1905 Russian Revolution.
3. The period from 1905 to 1917 Revolution.
4. The period from 1917 to 1949 Chinese Revolution.
5. The post - 1949 Chinese Revolution period.

Let us study in depth the successes that the communist movement achieved and the lessons to be drawn in all these five stages.

1. FIRST STAGE

The period from 1848 to 1871

In the 15th and 16th centuries many naval adventurers undertook sea voyages. They had discovered new continents and countries. New transport routes across the seas have come into existence. Trade and commerce developed tremendously. The development of science had laid the foundations for the development of heavy industries. Colonisation of the countries had earned the necessary capital for the industrial development of the West European countries. It laid the foundation for the industrial revolution in Western Europe.

In the middle of the 18th century the industrial revolution took place in England. Gradually it had extended to Europe.

The industrial revolution developed industries and commerce at a rapid pace. It created the modern bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie set out to smash the feudal system and its state machinery which had become an obstacle for the development of capitalism.

The bourgeois revolutions took place in 1649 in England, in 1776 in America, in 1789, 1830 and in 1848 and in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy.

As a consequence of these revolutions, capitalism had been finally established worldwide. In Europe modern bourgeois governments also had come into existence. With the advent of the industrial revolution, the industrial proletariat also had been created on a large scale.

The working class had revolted many times against the inhuman exploitation being perpetuated on it. Gradually it had started to build an organised trade union movement.

Chartist Movement

This laid the foundations for the first trade union movement in England. Between 1837-50, the British workers had conducted the Chartist movement which was mainly for the adult franchise of workers.

—Right to vote for men, constituencies with equal voting rights, convening of parliament annually, salaries for the members of parliament, secret ballot system, and cancellation of the condition of property as the pre-requisite for election to parliament.

On these demands a petition with 33 lakh signatures was submitted to the parliament which had rejected it. Strikes had taken place. In some places it had taken the form of armed struggle. Nevertheless it failed.

This was noted as the first political struggle waged by the British working class against capitalism. This has contributed tremendously to the onward march of the world working class movement.

1847 Communist League

Utopian socialist theories were much popular among the workers prior to the arrival of Marx and Engels onto the scene. These utopian socialist ideologues, without taking into consideration the class struggles and the principles inherent in the capitalist society, felt that the society could be changed by making the capitalists treat the workers with a liberal outlook without going to the extent of overthrowing capitalism. By the equitable distribution of profits to the workers and by running the industries in an ideal fashion—atleast by some industrialists, the utopian socialists had hoped that the entire bourgeoisie could be made to agree to this. They had dreamt that by this method the exploitation of the workers could be brought to an end.

In such a situation Marx and Engels had come onto the scene of working class movement. They had examined the principles of class struggle which has been continuously going in the capitalist society. They had arrived at the conclusion that the liberation of the exploited people could be achieved only by the overthrow of the capitalist system through class struggle by rallying all the exploited classes under the leadership of the working class.

Those were the days, when in western Europe bourgeois democratic revolutions were taking place against the feudal monarchistic and merchant classes. Those were the days when the revolutionaries who had participated in those revolutions were exiled from their countries by the governments. In 1847 all such revolutionaries assembled in England and founded the Communist League. On behalf of this League the **Manifesto of the Communist Party** written by Comrades Marx and Engels, was published.

—The Manifesto had declared that the history of the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

—It has stated that the contradiction between the collective production and private appropriation and the contradiction between the means of production and the distribution of production in the capitalist system would inevitably lead to crises. It has reiterated that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working class will get intensified and inevitably lead to the smashing of capitalist system and the triumph of the working class.

—It has sharply condemned the erroneous socialist theories hitherto in propagation among the working class.

The feudal socialism had criticised severely the decay and exploitation brought by capitalism into the society but it had stopped there itself. It had not shown the way for emancipation. It had tried to turn the thoughts of the people back towards the earlier feudal society. It had linked its propaganda with Christianity. It had consoled the workers that even if they undergo sufferings in this world, they would get bountiful happiness in the other world. The Manifesto has exposed the hollowness of this theory.

The petty bourgeois theory had reflected the demands of the peasantry and the middle classes. This theory also had roundly condemned the injustice in the capitalist society, but had not shown the way out. The aim of the protagonists of this theory was to ameliorate the conditions of the workers within the framework of the property relations of the existing society. The Manifesto has exposed the weaknesses of this theory.

The Manifesto has severely criticised all the liberal theories and other bourgeois theories which oppose class struggles.

It has given a call to the working class of the world to overthrow the world capitalist system.

1848 French Revolution

There was an upsurge in bourgeois revolutions all over Europe in 1848. Among them, the French revolution was of significance.

In 1847, a severe economic crisis had brought the industries to a grinding halt. Consequently, unemployment soared. The masses were subjected to untold sufferings.

The revolution of 1848 was a bourgeois democratic revolution conducted by the developing bourgeoisie, working class and the middle classes against the feudal, monarchic, and the merchant classes which were in power.

This revolution was started on 24th February, 1848. In Paris city, the working class had rebelled. The monarchic government was overthrown and an interim government was formed.

The working class had hoped that this interim government would settle their basic demands. But the bourgeoisie had frustrated the hopes of the working class. On seeing the working class revolutions, the bourgeoisie panicked and had compromised with the feudal classes. Both these classes together had suppressed the working class.

In the French bourgeois revolution of 1848, both the Marxian theory and the pre-Marxian bourgeois and petty bourgeois socialist theories were put to test. The role of different classes in accomplishing the bourgeois democratic revolution had become clear.

Comrade Marx had drawn valuable lessons for the working class from the failure of the 1848 French revolution.

Lessons

This was the first class struggle waged between the modern working class and the modern bourgeoisie.

In the revolutionary conditions, the role of each and every class had become clear.

—It had removed the illusions of the working class on the bourgeois parliamentary system.

—It was proved that in the event of a working class revolution, the bourgeoisie would abolish even the parliamentary system.

—It was proved that the emancipation of the working class and the other exploited masses would be possible only through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

—It made clear that the working class revolution would be successful only when there is unity between the workers and the peasantry.

—It had become clear that without the support of the working class, the middle classes cannot stand on their own.

—It was natural for the big bourgeoisie and the landlord classes to unite and oppose the working class. The contradiction between these two classes was a limited one.

—The success of the working class revolution in any country of the capitalist world depends on the world revolutionary situation.

It became clear that the working class alone would fight unswervingly for socialism.

Thus, in practice, through the experiences of the French revolutionary struggle, the Marxian theory on the historical role of the working class had triumphed over other bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theories.

On this subject, comrade Lenin says :

“The 1848 revolution had sounded a death knell to all the pre-Marxian mushroom theories.” (World Proletarian, Communist movement—Lenin, English Edition, p. 168).

Along with the French revolution, the German revolution and the other European bourgeois revolutions have failed owing to the betrayal of the bourgeoisie.

The Communist League as well as Marx and Engels had made serious efforts to make these revolutions successful. With the failure of these revolutions, severe repression was let loose on the activities of the League throughout Europe. On the other hand, factionalism had increased in the League. A temporary disillusionment had set in among the working class and as a result, the Communist League was wound up in 1852.

Comrades Marx and Engels nevertheless had written many classics which are essential for the working class movement during this period.

1864-Formation of the First International

The bourgeois democratic revolutions of 1848 were not in vain. The bourgeoisie had gradually captured power. Industrial development had taken place. As a result, the working class had grown in numbers.

The working class in England, France, America and Germany etc., had again got organised to fight. The necessity of an international body of the working class to co-ordinate and take forward these struggles going on in different countries was recognised.

In these conditions, the First International was established in London on 28th September, 1864.

The First International was not a monolithic body based on a single political theory. Those groups which were opposed to Marxism and class struggle were also constituents of this body. During this period, the Marxist theory had fought against all the erroneous socialist theories to gain the leadership of the working class movement.

During the entire period of the First International, Marx and Engels fought against the British socialist theories which advocated building of non-political trade unions, against Blanqui's adventurist theories of conducting armed struggle without any strong trade union movement, against the theories of Proudhon and Lasseley, who advocated that socialism could be established through co-operative societies, and against Bakunin's anarchist theories. On this struggle Marx says,

The whole period of the First International was the period of relentless struggle conducted by the General Council against the conspiracies of the small groups which were against a real trade union movement. (Marx - Engels' letters, page 326).

During this period, the First International had made serious efforts to unify the world trade union movement and to educate it on the basis of Marxist ideology.

The First International had formulated the policy and tactics of the working class towards bourgeois governments, trade unions, co-operative societies, general elections, women's issue, peasants, problems and national problems.

The First International had placed before the working class of the world-tactics of struggle on immediate issues, the tactics of armed struggle which were necessary for the final revolution of the working class, and the task of establishment of proletarian dictatorship.

It had co-ordinated the trade union movements of different countries and had developed internationalism among them. It had consolidated the small trade union movements of different countries which were scattered into a strong international working class movement and made it a strong and contending force against world capitalism.

1871 Paris Commune :

In 1870, Louis Bonaparte's government was in power in France. The working class was getting ready for another revolutionary struggle. To divert this struggle the government was scheming for another war with Germany on a border dispute. The Bismarck government in Germany was also waiting for such an opportunity. Consequently, on 9th July 1870, war started between these two countries. On 2nd September, 1870, the French armies had surrendered unconditionally.

On 4th September, a new republican government was established, throwing out the Bonaparte's government in France. In this government also the leadership was that of the bourgeoisie led by Theiers.

The government of Theiers, instead of continuing the war with Germany, had tried to compromise with the German government. The Paris working class, sensing the betrayal of the government, rebelled in Paris and on March 18, 1871 established the government of Paris Commune under the leadership of the working class.

The armies of Theiers and Bismarck had united and attacked jointly to overthrow the government of Paris Commune.

After three weeks of stiff resistance, the Commune government was defeated. On 28th of May, 1871 Paris Commune was smashed.

Marx had warned the working class even at the time of revolt that the time had not yet come for revolt. Yet, once the Commune was established, Marx and other leaders of the First International had tried their utmost to make the Commune a success.

Lessons of Paris Commune

Marx drew valuable lessons from the experience of the Paris Commune for the trade union and communist movements of the world.

In France, the process of development of capitalism was not yet completed. That was why, Marx said the Paris Commune had failed. He explained that since the working class had not rallied behind it the French peasantry completely, the Paris Commune had failed. He further explained that as the revolution started in Paris was not extended at once to other areas, it failed.

Paris Commune had provided the following lessons to the future trade union movement.

—Of all the exploited classes, it is the working class alone that has proved its capability for leadership.

—Without the unity of the workers and peasants no revolution can succeed.

—It has made clear how brutal the ruling classes could be to suppress the revolutions of the exploited people.

—Paris Commune has made clear that the bourgeoisie, being afraid of working class revolution, will be prepared even to sell away their motherland to alien countries.

—The working class could never utilise the old state apparatus for its liberation. It should be smashed completely and the government of proletarian dictatorship should be established.

—Paris Commune was the embryonic form of future proletarian dictatorship.

Though the Paris Commune was overthrown, it was the first ever victory, of the working class of the whole world. It was the first ever revolutionary action that had dealt a strong blow to the world capitalist system. It became a torch-bearer for the Russian revolution half a century later. The Russian revolution, which had made a breach in the fort of the world capitalist system, had drawn lessons from Paris Commune. "How ever many mistakes might have been committed, Paris Commune remains a historic blazing torch". (Lenin)

After the defeat of the Paris Commune, severe repression had been unleashed on the European working class movement. On the other hand,

a serious confrontation developed among the constituents of the First International between Bakunin's anarchist theory and Marxist class struggle theory. Under the leadership of Marx, the First International split into two. It had gradually become weak and in 1875 had come to an end.

Yet the struggles of this period had given the working class the revolutionary consciousness. Foundations were laid for a broad based trade union movement. In an embryonic form, working class parties and Social Democratic parties in different countries have sprouted.

Of all these developments, the most important was that Marx's theory of scientific socialism had triumphed over all other theories and had emerged as the only theory of the working class.

Com. Lenin explains these developments :

Marxist theory, in the modern society, makes the working class conscious and unites it. It makes clear the role of this class. It makes clear that in the process of economic development, the present society will be abolished and in its place a new society would definitely come into existence. But this theory, in the process of its development, have had to conduct serious struggle at each and every step against other opposing theories

Marxism had not established its position at once. In the first half of century (1840) Marxism has fought with the theories that fundamentally differed with it. In 1840 it has defeated the followers of Hegel, who have clung to philosophical idealism. After that, entering into the economic field by 1850 it has defeated the economic theories of Proudhon. In 1870s Marxism, from the realm of theory, has entered into the realm of practice in the working class. By defeating the theories of Bakunin, it has established its supremacy in practice. By 1890, Marxism has triumphed. The Second International, without any resistance, accepted the orientation of Marxism."

(Working class and communist movement of the world, Lenin, pp. 90-91).

2. SECOND STAGE

The period from 1871 Paris Commune to 1905

The First International came into being at the time when bourgeois democratic revolutions were taking place in Europe. With the 1871 Franco-German war, feudalism had collapsed in Europe and a new era of development of capitalist system had started,

During the period of 1871-1905 capitalism had developed to its zenith very rapidly. More over, by 1900, capitalism had developed into-full fledged imperialism which brought the entire world under its control. With this, gradually the era of downfall of the capitalist system also started.

Compared to the earlier period, the period from 1871-1905 could be said to be a peaceful period. In Europe by 1870, the bourgeois democratic revolutions were completed. In Asia, the bourgeois democratic revolutions were yet to start.

In these peaceful conditions, the Second International was formed in 1889 to lead the world trade union movement in the context of these new conditions.

During this period, the Marxist socialist theories were extensively propagated in the working class. On an independent basis, the socialist parties were formed in different countries. Utilising the bourgeois Parliamentary system, the socialist parties developed. They had established their own papers. They had developed broad mass-based trade unions and cooperative institutions. In many countries they had conducted militant strikes. To put it in a nutshell, during this period the trade union movement had developed into a mighty force. On this basis the socialist parties in various countries had developed into peoples' parties. Throughout this entire period, the German working class and the German socialist party had provided leadership to the Second International.

But during this period, a bad trend also had entered the trade union movement.

The bourgeoisie, from their super profits accruing mainly from the exploitation of their colonies, had been able to distance the upper strata of the working class by giving higher wages and turning it into its faithful agent. This upper strata, while remaining in the working class, had set out to divert it from the revolutionary path into reformist methods.

But these reformists in the working class could not put up open struggle against Marxism. As by that time Marxism had been accepted as the sole theory of the working class, these revisionists while accepting Marxism theoretically, had resorted in practice to take the path of opportunism. Seeing the development of capitalism at that time they had argued that socialism could be achieved without working class struggles.

We have to carefully observe the various trends introduced by revisionism in various fields.

—It had refuted Marxism in philosophy and made attempts to introduce bourgeois philosophy in its place.

—In the field of economics, the revisionists had introduced formulations opposed to basic Marxist tenets. They had refuted the theory of concentration of capital. They had started an argument that this does not hold good in agriculture. They had argued that the economic crises which are natural in the capitalist economy were gradually declining, and with the establishment of monopoly concerns the crises would eventually disappear. They had said that gradually the intensity of class antagonisms would be lessened.

On the political plane they had rejected the theory of class struggle. They had argued that as the opinion of the majority people would prevail in the bourgeois democracy, the idea that government is a symbol of class rule became obsolete. They had said that socialism can be achieved through parliament. They had said that the working class should not refuse to form a united front with the progressive bourgeois reformists.

That was why throughout the period of Second International, the international working class movement was divided between the genuine revolutionary Marxists and the pseudo Marxists. For the revisionists, all the leaders who were in responsible positions in the mass organisations and in parliament have become the main activists.

At this juncture, Lenin took the responsibility of opposing and resisting the revisionist path and safeguarding the purity of Marxism.

3. THIRD STAGE

From 1905 to 1917 Revolution

Lenin had torn into pieces the argument of the revisionists that Capitalism would be peacefully transformed into socialism. The peace that was visible in the capitalism, Lenin had said, was only ephemeral, Lenin further said that as capitalism had developed into imperialism, very soon class struggles and national struggles would definitely get intensified.

As Lenin predicted, the peace that was visible in the capitalist world was very soon shattered. Russia - Japan War in 1905, Russian revolution in 1905, and afterwards the bourgeois democratic revolutions in Turkey, Russia and China had shaken the capitalist society. Commenting on the significance of these developments, Lenin says :

“80 crores of Asian people coming into the struggle front for the same ideals for which the European working class is fighting is a fact that should not discourage us but instead enthuse us. The Asian revolutions also are confirming the uselessness of bourgeois liberal theories. They are making clear the independent role of the democratic minded people, and the difference between the working class and

various types of bourgeois leaders. Even after the experience gained in both Asia and Europe, if anyone even now talks about classless politics and classless socialism, he should be put in a cage, beside the Australian Kangaroo and exhibited."

New Strategy : New Tactics

At the outset of this revolutionary phase Lenin arrived on to the scene of the international working class movement. He tore into pieces the arguments of the revisionists in the working class movement. By creatively developing the basic tenets of Marxism and applying them to imperialist stage, he had placed before the workers of the world a new strategy and new tactics necessary for the success of the proletarian revolutions.

Marx and Engels belonged to the period of developing capitalism. Lenin belonged to the imperialist stage and the era of revolutions. It was the responsibility of Lenin to implement Marxist tenets by applying them to the imperialist stage.

Marx had said that the proletarian revolutions would come first in the countries where capitalism is highly developed. Marx could see proletarian dictatorship in an embryonic form in Paris Commune. It was the task of Lenin to formulate the strategy and tactics to achieve proletarian dictatorship, establish it and build socialism. Marx had created the scientific theoretical base for the proletarian revolution, Lenin had to develop it creatively and successfully complete the proletarian revolution.

Stalin had said about Lenin's theories :

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets. . . .

Against Kautsky and such other revisionists, Lenin had forged the organisation of a new Communist Party, which had complete unity, from top to bottom. He had formulated a principle that the working class should convert the imperialist war into a civil war.

He had analysed and asserted that Tsarist Russia was the weakest link in the world imperialist chain and hence the revolution would be successful there and he had utilised his time and energy to this end.

1905 Russian Revolution

As Lenin predicted, the bourgeois democratic revolution that had come in Russia in 1905, had shaken the capitalist society. It had cautioned that the time for socialist revolutions had come.

In order to divert the rising tide of people's discontent, the Tsar had entered into war with Japan on the Manchurian issue. In this war the armies of the Tsar had met with ignoble defeat. This war had contributed to the 1905 revolution in Russia. Under the leadership of Com. Lenin, the Bolsheviks led this revolution.

Owing to the intensification of struggle between Mensheviks who reflected the revisionist trends, and the Bolsheviks, who were the followers of Lenin and who were the strict adherents of basic Marxist tenets, the Russian Social Democratic Party split into two in 1903 itself. Under the leadership of Com. Lenin, the Bolsheviks had started to function as a separate party.

Two Tactics

In the revolution of 1905, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks had adopted two mutually opposed strategies and tactics.

—The Mensheviks had argued that since it was a bourgeois revolution, it should develop under the leadership of bourgeoisie and the working class should assist the bourgeoisie to overthrow the Tsarist government. The Bolsheviks had rejected this. They had said that this revolution could be successful only under the leadership of the working class.

—In the eyes of Mensheviks peasantry was not a revolutionary class. But the Bolsheviks were of the opinion that unless the unity of workers and peasants was achieved under the leadership of working class, the revolution could not succeed.

—Mensheviks had argued that after the success of bourgeois democratic revolution, for the full development of capitalism, the capitalist class, under the leadership of bourgeoisie should be given the necessary time. The Bolsheviks, while rejecting this, said that after the success of the bourgeois revolution, the struggle to achieve the socialist revolution should be launched immediately.

—When the Tsar, with a view to divert the revolution, had promised to form a parliament, the Mensheviks had argued that they should accept it and work in it. The Bolsheviks had rejected it and said that the Tsar should be overthrown through armed struggle.

On 9th January 1905 (bloody Sunday), when thousands of workers under the leadership of an archbishop went in a procession to submit a memorandum on their demands, the Tzar's troops ruthlessly opened fire on them. This incident triggered the 1905 revolution.

It gradually spread to all important towns. In many towns, the workers went on political strikes. The marines of the ship "Potemkin" had rebelled. From towns the revolution had spread to all the villages. The peasantry had started occupying the lands of the landlords. In December, 1905, the working class of Moscow had rebelled. Street fighting took place and barricades were erected. But this revolt was ruthlessly suppressed. Thus, with this, the 1905 revolution was finished.

After this, the Tsar had resorted to barbaric repression to crush the Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks, through guerilla struggle, safeguarded the revolution.

Reasons for the defeat

—Strong unity of workers and peasants was not achieved. Majority of the peasants were still having illusions on the Tsar.

—Though there were some revolts in the army, the majority of the army stood by the Tsar.

—Also, the entire working class had not come into the revolution at one time.

—The working class was divided between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Mensheviks had watered down the revolutionary struggle.

—The peace treaty between Russia and Japan, had helped the Tsar to brace himself internally.

—The difference of opinions between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on the forms of struggle, on tactics and strategy in Russia which came to the fore had started in the Second International also.

The internal contradictions in the imperialist system had become acute. The clash between the camps of imperialist countries for the re-division of the world had become intense. Consequently, in 1914, the First World War started between the two camps of imperialist powers i.e., Germany and its allies, and Britain and its allies.

As a result, the ideological differences in the Second International had come out as three distinct trends.

—Rightist group which constituted the majority-supported the reactionary governments.

—Centrist group—Kautsky and his followers—in practice helped the rightist group.

—Radical group—Lenin and his followers—said that the imperialist war should be converted into a civil war and worked for the overthrow of the capitalist government in their country.

With the outbreak of the first world war, the rightist group and the centrist group in the Second International which hitherto remained hidden, came out openly and in the name of defending their countries, started to support the imperialist war governments.

Lenin had rejected this policy and gave a call to convert the imperialist war into a civil war. He had said that throwing out the war governments and establishing the proletarian governments by the working class alone would pave way for world peace.

And with this, Com. Lenin and his followers came out of the Second International, which sold itself out to the capitalist class, and started separately organising revolutionary communist parties based on Marxist ideology.

November 7th, 1917 - Russian Revolution

In Russia, the Bolsheviks had launched serious efforts to turn the imperialist war into a civil war and overthrow the Tsar from power.

In February, 1917, the Tsar was thrown out of power. Under the leadership of bourgeoisie, the new government was formed.

This revolution was conducted against the feudal class represented by the Tsar. This revolution was conducted by the industrial capitalist class, working class, agricultural labourers and the peasantry.

Since the leadership of this revolution was in the hands of the bourgeoisie, power had passed into their hands. But at all places local soviets have been formed. As a result dual authority had come into existence in the country. In these soviets also, Mensheviks were in majority. The extremely petty bourgeois atmosphere existing in the country at that time, was responsible for this.

Lenin had cautioned the working class that the government formed in February was a bourgeois government, and that it was a government which would continue the war and not end it and hence the working class should not co-operate with it. He said that the working class should rally agricultural labourers, the poor and the middle peasantry and the middle classes under its leadership and overthrow the bourgeois government.

He had said that the socialist revolution should be achieved. Learning from their own experiences, the majority of the working class, peasantry, army and the majority of the soviets had swung toward Bolsheviks.

On 7th November, 1917, the socialist revolution in Russia was successful. For the first time in history, the government of the proletarian dictatorship was established.

Reasons for the success of the revolution

The Russian bourgeoisie had become weak financially as well as politically. Since it continued the policy of war it had lost the sympathy of majority people.

—The working class which had revolutionary consciousness had lead the revolution. It was able to rally around it majority of the agricultural labourers and poor peasantry.

—The iron - disciplined Bolshevik Party had come forward as the leader of the working class.

—The world situation—with the imperialist countries fighting against one another contributed to the success of socialist revolution in Russia.

4. FOURTH STAGE

The period from 1917 Russian revolution to 1949 Chinese revolution

Though the proletarian revolution was successful in Russia, owing to the betrayal of revisionists and due to lack of strong communist movements, the proletarian revolutions had failed in the West European Countries.

As a result of the First World War and due to the establishment of socialist government, capitalism had entered into a stage of general crisis. This had made even more acute, all the contradictions in capitalism. To resolve the contradictions among the imperialists and to get out of the general crisis engulfing the entire capitalist system, the imperialists had resorted to attack on Soviet Russia.

The internal reactionary forces in Russia, with the help of the international imperialists, had set out to overthrow the Soviet socialist government.

In these conditions, it became imperative to save Soviet Union, its socialist government, both from the internal and the international reactionary forces and build socialist society.

While protecting the socialist government it had become necessary to spread throughout the world the revolutionary message of Soviet Union and also provide necessary theoretical, political and practical leadership to the international working class movement.

It had become necessary to provide leadership to the world communist movement, and help build strong communist parties.

Proletarian revolutions broke out in Germany, Bulgaria and Hungary etc, but owing to the betrayal of revisionists, those revolutions could not succeed.

In such a revolutionary situation, in the year 1919, the Third International was established to fulfill the above tasks.

The Third International had made serious efforts to build up communist parties based on Marxist ideology in different countries. It had provided necessary theoretical and organisational experience for fulfilling this task. At this stage, one left deviation section among the communists—when the revolutionary conditions were at a low ebb—argued that communists should not participate in trade union activities and in the parliament. Lenin has criticised this line very severely. During this stage, in colonial and in semi-colonial countries, communist parties have been formed and were functioning. National liberation struggles started sprouting. The communist parties in these countries had set out to intensify the national liberation struggles. In this effort, the Communist Party of China had achieved glorious successes and had emerged as a strong force.

The death of comrade Lenin occurred in 1924. Under the leadership of comrade Stalin, the Third International carried out these international tasks.

The thesis (on Colonial Countries) of the 6th Congress held in 1928, was of much help for developing the international communist movement.

The failure of all the West European revolutions in the post-First World War, gave time for capitalism to brace itself. With this, the bourgeois politicians and the revisionists have once again started an argument that there will be no more crisis in the capitalism and that the atmosphere for gradual development of capitalism has been created.

The Sixth Congress of the Third International held in 1928 has flayed all these wrong theories. It has cautioned that the imperialism has entered into the crisis and that crisis and revolutions are inevitable and ultimately capitalism will crumble. It has formulated relevant tactics for the world communist parties. Similarly, it has reviewed the situation in colonial countries and has formulated tactics for communist parties for furthering national struggles.

It had pointed out the different types of crises the capitalist system was undergoing while the socialist society in Soviet Russia was developing without any crisis. At this stage, three special events should be mentioned.

—In the Soviet Union, defeating the theories of Trotsky and Bukharin, the programme of five year plans for building socialist society was started under the leadership of com. Stalin.

—In western Europe, the working class had resorted to widespread struggle against the ill-effects of the economic crisis.

—In China, opposing the betrayal of Chiang Kai-shek, under the leadership of the Communist Party, Libertated Area was formed in southern China and the armed struggle was started. When the Liberated Area in southern China could not be defended, the Red Army in 1934, under the leadership of Communist Party, undertook a long march of 6000 miles, reached northern China, formed a Liberated Area and started its struggle.

Fascism

The crisis that started in 1929, had intensified the revolutionary situation in Germany. The Communist Party made serious efforts to divert the working class into the revolutionarty struggles. But majority of the working class was still under the influence of social democrats who, at each and every step, watered down the working class struggle and compromised with the bourgeoisie. The capitalist class helped the fascist clique of Hitler, dissolved the parliament and brought Hitler to power on 30th January, 1933.

The fascist government of Hitler had suppressed the democratic, working class and the communist movements in Germany and sent thousands of people to gallows. The government itself set on fire parliament building and foisted a conspiracy case on com. Dimitrov and other communist leaders. The world-wide agitation compelled the government to release com. Dimitrov.

Fight against fascism

All the imperialists of the world had conspired to incite the fascist governments of Hitler, Mussolini and the Japan governments to attack Russia.

In 1931, Japan had declared war on Manchuria and occupied it. In 1935, Italy declared war on Abissynia.

Hitler had intensified the preparations for a new war with deadly weapons. The governments of England, France and America had helped him in his attempts.

The world communist movement had taken up the task of rallying and preparing for struggles all the democratic forces against the growing fascism and against the new war efforts.

The 7th Congress of the Third International held in 1935 had made clear the class character of fascism and gave a call to unite all the democratic forces and to resist through united front tactics the war efforts.

In response to this call the communist parties of different countries had set to the building up of a strong democratic movement. Of this, the following historic events are worth mentioning.

—In 1936, in France, all the democratic forces have joined hands and a popular front government was formed. The communist party extended support to this government.

—In 1936, in Spain, a republican government was formed by all the democratic parties including the communist party. General Franco had declared a revolt to overthrow this government. The governments of Hitler and Mussolini stood in support of him. In the name of neutrality, the governments of France, England and America had betrayed the Spanish Republican government. The Soviet government and the international communist movement alone stood in support of the Spanish Republican government. The Spanish republic put up a lone, heroic fight but in vain. General Franco had come into power.

—The Chinese Communist Party had built up a powerful movement in the entire country demanding the cessation of civil war waged by the Kuomintang Party against it and resisting the Japanese aggression unitedly. Kuomintang Party was compelled to accept to resist the Japanese aggression together with the Communist Party.

—The fifth-columnists in Russia who were conspiring to disrupt the building up of socialist society and to pull down it, were wiped out by the Communist Party.

SECOND WORLD WAR

As a result of the contradiction between the imperialist camps second World War broke out in 1939. Since the European countries did not put up a united resistance to the war efforts of the fascist governments, Soviet Russia had reached a no-war-pact with Germany.

The Soviet Union had foiled the conspiracies of the imperialists who had desired to incite Hitler to attack Soviet Russia. Hitler had declared war on the other imperialist powers. With a short time he had occupied the entire Europe. The Soviet Union had liberated the eastern region of Poland, Basarenia region, and Latwin countries. It had strengthened its western frontiers. In 1940, Hitler declared war on Soviet Russia. England and America could not but join hands with Soviet Russia against Hitler.

The heroic resistance of Soviet people, the resistance of the people of Europe and the unity between America, England and the Soviet Russia had led to the defeat of Germany in 1944, and in 1945 of Japan. With the

defeat of the fascist governments, the East European countries had taken to the path of socialism. In western Europe a strong communist movement had emerged.

With the defeat of fascist governments and with the weakening of the imperialist countries, imperialism as a whole weakened.

In 1949, under the leadership of the Communist Party, 70 crore Chinese people have overthrown the Chiang Kai-shek government and had hoisted the red flag.

In totality, what were the victories achieved in this period ?

— In Soviet Russia the socialist society was successfully established. On the basis of collective system, agriculture was reconstructed. Soviet Union had emerged as a strong force.

— In various countries, strong communist parties, with broad mass base were formed.

— East European countries have taken to the socialist path.

— 70 crore Chinese people had taken to the socialist path.

— World socialist system with 100 crores people had come into existence. During this period, in all the successes achieved by the international communist movement, com. Stalin had played a major role.

5. FIFTH STAGE

The post - 1949 Chinese revolution period

The defeat of fascist governments and the success of Soviet Union in the second World War, East European countries taking to the path of socialism, and the severe weakening of US & British imperialists—all these had weakened the imperialist system as a whole. National liberation struggles had surged forward.

The Chinese people under the leadership of Communist Party achieved complete success in the armed revolutionary struggle they were waging for 28 years. This victory achieved by China had led to the establishment of the communist governments in North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba.

The importance of Chinese revolution

Chinese revolution was the first revolution that had come in colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Russian revolution had shaken the foundations of the world capitalist system. It had made the first breach. The Chinese revolution had struck a death blow to the

imperialist system. Its backbone was irreparably shattered. It will inevitably crumble quickly and no knight-errant can save it from the doom.

—The Chinese revolution was one that took place in a country of 70 crores people. With it a socialist world of 100 crores had come into being. The socialist world, which could stand on par with the capitalist world in all the fields has appeared on the world arena.

—Chinese revolution was a revolution, which had shown the path of liberation to the people of backward colonial and semi-colonial countries. It was a revolution, which proved that the exploited people with revolutionary spirit, by following the people's war path and by conducting a protracted struggle against the imperialists with all their deadly weapons, and their puppets, can achieve their liberation.

—It was a revolution, which had given a new struggle form—initially liberating the villages and gradually liberating the towns—to the exploited people of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

It was a revolution, which had in practice, by implementing diligently Lenin's formulation on the conditions under which to unite with and to fight against national bourgeoisie in colonial and semi-colonial countries.

It was a revolution, which had given to the world New Democratic Revolution—a new form of the proletarian dictatorship government in backward countries.

It was a revolution, which has shown in practice how the socialist society should be established in the backward countries by smashing the existing exploiting system.

Present situation

With 1/3rd of the world transforming into socialist system, developing strong movements of working class and communist parties, and surging movements of national liberation struggles—all these have contributed to the complete weakening of imperialist system and its sliding down into a permanent crisis.

In such a situation the imperialism has no alternative except to get along by transforming the government into military apparatus and resort to aggressive wars. With the faster pace of the disintegration of imperialism, the national liberation movements surged. They are taking the form of armed struggle and also the role of the communist parties in these struggles is increasing

The weakened imperialist countries are unable to suppress these movements. That is why in the post-second World War conditions, many old colonial and semi-colonial countries have been able to achieve their

independence. India, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Algeria, Egypt, other Arab countries and many African countries have declared their independence.

American imperialism has come forward as a champion, to prop up the collapsing imperialist system. It has established hundreds of military bases and piled them up with deadly destructive weapons against national liberation struggles and against the socialist countries. It has set out to acquire financial control over the under-developed countries as well as weak capitalist countries. In the countries where the forces of the people are strong enough, it is inciting civil wars. In some cases, it is directly resorting to armed intervention and drenching the national liberation movements in blood. The naked atrocities of American imperialism in South Vietnam, Congo, Dominican Republic, Ghana and Indonesia etc. are before us.

The national liberation movements and the communist parties are marching ahead resisting the deadly weapons of American imperialism—the common enemy of the people of the world.

SPLIT IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

In such an auspicious situation, the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, held in 1956, has sown confusion in the world communist movement. The 20th Congress of the Soviet Party had made brand new formulations that there are conditions where war can be permanently put off even while the imperialism exists; that socialism can be established through parliamentary means without the necessity of armed revolt; that Stalin had behaved like a dictator destroying the socialist democracy.

In order to rectify the revisionist trends implicit in these brand new formulations and to safeguard the purity of the basic Marxist tenets, efforts were made by the Conference of the International Communist Parties, held in 1957, and the conference of 81 communist parties held in 1960.

After reviewing the present day world conditions, they tried to formulate new strategy and tactics necessary for the world communist movement. But they are in vain as serious differences have come forward in the world communist movement on various problems related to today's strategy and tactics.

These difference of opinions are nothing but the struggle going on between the modern revisionist principles and Marxist-Leninist principles. We should carefully examine the long history of the world working class movement and the communist movement, the experiences they have provided in different stages, the various problems confronting the communist movement today and the solutions offered and the lessons they teach us.

Lessons

In the development of the proletarian revolutionary movement, by conducting serious struggle against capitalism only, the working class movement was able to develop from one stage to a higher stage. In all the stages—1871-1905-1917-1949 only by conducting bitter struggles against the capitalist system the working class communist movements were able to develop.

While conducting these serious struggles, many opportunist and revisionist trends latent in the communist movement had come out openly. Only since Marxism had fought bitter struggles against these alien trends and defeated them, the communist movement was able to advance.

That was why Engels said thus :

“Working class movement will definitely develop in different stages. At every stage one section the movement will try to go ahead. The rest refuses to join with it. That is why among different sections, a life and death struggle ensues and a higher level of working class unity and development will be achieved”.

The revisionist trends that arise every now and then in the communist movement have their roots in the objective conditions of those countries and in some characteristic features of the economic development of the capitalist countries.

Lenin had made clear that revisionism would often rises its ugly head in the working class movement due to the following factors.

New generations of cadres from different classes joining the movement. Progressive and reactionary trends manifest at different stages of the development of capitalism will give rise to the revisionist trends in the working class movement. In the backward countries, due to the uneven development of capitalism, some sections in the working class movement will be affected easily by revisionist trends.

The two tactics adopted by the bourgeoisie to suppress the working class movement, in some cases giving some perks to the workers and some times severe repression, will develop revisionist and adventurist trends in the working class movement. In the capitalist society people from middle classes and peasantry will be joining the ranks of the working class. They give rise to revisionist trends in the working class movements. Objective conditions in the capitalist society often give rise to revisionist deviations in the communist movement and therefore Marxists had to conduct serious struggles against all such alien trends. That was way continuous ideological struggle had to be conducted by Marx against Bakunin's theories during

First International, by Lenin against the theories of Kautsky during Second International and by Stalin against Trotsky's and Tito's theories during the Third International.

Today also it has become necessary for the Marxists-Leninists to fight against the modern revisionists to protect the Marxist theory of class struggle.

2. The centre of contradictions of the world capitalist imperialist system often changed from one country to another. As a result, the centre of world working class movement also changed.

In 1830, Chartist movement in England, 1848-71 revolutionary movements in France, the 1871-1905 working class movement in Germany, since 1905 to the later period of Second World War, the Russian working class—like this, at different stages, the leadership had been changing from one country to another.

Lenin had cautioned that the revolutionary centre also would change.

In the different stages of 19th century, just as the leadership of the working class movement belonged for some time to Britain, and later to the German working class, the leadership of the international working class movement has come to the Russian working class. But undoubtedly this leadership will remain in their hands only for a short period. (International working class and communist movement, Lenin, p. 292).

Due to complete weakening of imperialism after the Second World War, the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin American countries are in the upsurge.

They are fighting against the attempts of the American imperialists to drench these movements in blood and suppress them. Thus it appears that the centre of revolutionary movements has shifted to Asia, Africa, and Latin America region. But the international revisionist leadership of today is refusing to see this reality. By counterposing the fundamental contradiction between the socialist and capitalist systems to today's contradiction between national liberation movements and the imperialism, it is refusing to recognise the key role of the national liberation struggle in ending imperialism.

The post-Second World War, especially post-Chinese revolution world history is the history of the struggle between the national liberation struggles and the imperialism. The national liberation struggles going on even today are making it clear that the centre of the contradictions of imperialism has shifted to Asia, Africa and Latin America region.

3. The ideological and political struggle between Marxists and revisionists at different stages have steeled Marxism and broadened it. In the struggle conducted at various stages, in the beginning, Marxists were in minority organisationally, compared to revisionists. But by bitter struggles Marxism defeated revisionism and was victorious. At various stages, Marxism, than revisionism, was able to adopt the correct strategy and tactics suitable to that particular stage and defeat revisionism and march ahead. In this struggle conducted at different stages, the Marxists had taken an uncompromising stand with revisionists. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin while conducting struggle against revisionists, never went for opportunistic unity with them. While stating that unity with revisionists is impossible, Lenin says :

Leaving the theories aside and getting down into the mud-pond along with the revisionists cannot be called as unity. It means the working class joining the national bourgeoisie. It means bringing a division in the international working class movement.

He has stated further :

“Without making a clean break with the revisionists and without exposing their hollowness, unity of the working class and socialism cannot be achieved nationally as well as internationally”.

This is the contradiction between Marxists and revisionists in the international communist movement today. Serious struggle is going on between these two trends on the role of national liberation struggles, ways of revolutionary transformation, peaceful co-existence, war, peace and many other issues. In this struggle also Marxism will definitely defeat revisionism and achieve complete victory.

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