

**Lenin**  
and  
**National  
Liberation**  
in  
**the East**



USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES,  
INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

# Lenin and National Liberation in the East



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS  
Moscow



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Ленин и национально-освободительное движение  
в странах Востока  
*На английском языке*

First printing 1978

© Translation into English. Progress Publishers 1978

*Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Leninism and the National Liberation Movement

Lenin analysed the great changes that had taken place in the world as capitalism entered its final, imperialist stage, and made an invaluable contribution to the Marxist doctrine of the world socialist revolution. The question of how the national-colonial issue fits into the context of the general struggle of the working class and all the working people against the capitalist system and imperialist oppression is a major ingredient of that doctrine. In his creative effort to develop the revolutionary theory of Marx and Engels, he laid the foundations for an integral and streamlined theory of a coherent world revolutionary process which, while being pivoted on the transition from capitalism to socialism, involves various democratic movements, the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples in particular. Taking as his point of departure the proposition of Marx and Engels that a nation oppressing another nation cannot be free, Lenin showed that the national question in the epoch of imperialism must be regarded on an international plane, because the world had been split into imperialist oppressor nations and oppressed nations. He countered the narrow, Euro-centrist standpoint (which confined it to the still outstanding national problems of the European continent) with a comprehensive approach covering the colonial and dependent countries as well. Lenin always emphasised that



the "national question is a *world-wide* phenomenon".<sup>1</sup> His profound theoretical analysis led him to conclude that imperialism would collapse as a result of two interconnected processes: socialist working-class revolutions in the advanced industrial countries and the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Ho Chi Minh, veteran of the Vietnamese people's liberation struggle, pointed out that "Lenin was the first to realise and emphasise the full importance of a correct solution to the colonial question as a contribution to the world revolution.... Lenin was the first to realise and assess the full importance of drawing the colonial peoples into the revolutionary movement.... With his inborn clear-sightedness, Lenin realised that in order to carry out work in the colonies successfully, it was necessary to know how to take full advantage of the national liberation movement which was gaining ground in these countries, he realised that with the support of the world proletariat for this movement we will have new, strong allies in the struggle for the socialist revolution."<sup>2</sup>

There is good reason why, in his effort to define the conditions for the victory of a socialist revolution, Lenin devoted so much attention to the right of nations to self-determination. In an article entitled "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (February 1916), he wrote: "The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by 'their own' nation. Otherwise, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words; neither confidence nor class solidarity would be possible between the workers of the oppressed and the oppressor nations...."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, he pointed out, the socialists of the oppressed nations should work for total and unconditional unity between the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressing nation.

The Great October Socialist Revolution—Leninism in action—was a vivid example of a blend between the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Hanoi, 1960, p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 147-48.

proletariat's struggle for socialism and the struggle of oppressed nations against the national-colonial yoke. The October Revolution in this vast multinational country showed that Lenin's doctrine on the national-colonial issue was scientifically valid and workable.

In contrast to the imperialist bourgeoisie which seeks to solve the national question through the use of force, the Russian proletariat solved this problem within the boundaries of its state and edged towards its solution on an international scale on the voluntary basis of socialist internationalism, in the common interest of all workers, all working people, and all nations.

The October Revolution brought social emancipation and national liberation to the enslaved peoples of tsarist Russia, both freeing them from tsarism and the Russian landowners and capitalists, and helping them to shed the yoke of "their own" feudal lords. Lenin's ideas yielded splendid results, giving rise to a great fraternal union of more than 100 nations and nationalities.

In his report "The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" on December 21, 1972, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, L. I. Brezhnev, told a ceremonial joint session of the CPSU Central Committee, the USSR and the RSFSR Supreme Soviets: "...We have every reason to say that the national question, as it came down to us from the past, has been settled completely, finally and for good."<sup>1</sup>

The example of the Soviet Union which has solved the national question in the interests of the working people has had a powerful revolutionising effect on the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As they watched the once oppressed nations rapidly overcome their backwardness and join in the creative work to set up a voluntary union of all nations, and to strengthen and develop the workers' and peasants' state, the colonial and dependent peoples came to take an ever more vigorous part in the fight for a new life. Lenin's theory on the national and national-colonial questions inspired the working people of widely differing nationalities both in Russia and throughout the world.

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Moscow, 1972, p. 19.



The breach made by Russia's proletariat in the imperialist chain, the establishment of the first workers' and peasants' state, its economic and cultural gains and its Leninist national policy created a favourable setting for an upswing of the anti-imperialist struggle in the countries of the East. "The Great October Socialist Revolution dealt a crushing blow at the whole system of imperialist colonial rule, and gave a powerful impetus to the national liberation movement."<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

Objective historical development under imperialism was adding importance to the problem of joint action by the revolutionary forces of West and East, a major question of the world revolutionary process.

As he evolved Marx and Engels' theory of proletarian internationalism, Lenin outlined the main aspects of the international solidarity of all the anti-imperialist forces and the interaction of all the streams within the world revolutionary movement.

Lenin showed—and 20th-century revolutions have borne this out—that if the peoples of the colonies and semicolonies were to overcome their strong and well-organised enemies—imperialism, colonialism and local reactionary forces—they had to join forces with the proletariat waging class battles in the advanced capitalist countries, and draw on the all-round support of the socialist countries—the decisive force of the world revolutionary process. Even before the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin pointed out that the connections between the workers of the West and the peasants of the East were bound to grow, deepen and become more extensive, and that the forward-looking revolutionary workers, the most consistent fighters against social and national oppression, would do their best to draw closer to the oppressed colonial peoples and merge with them in a common struggle against imperialism.<sup>2</sup>

After the October Revolution, Lenin also repeatedly

<sup>1</sup> *Fifty Years of the Great October Socialist Revolution*, Theses of the CPSU Central Committee, Moscow, 1967, p. 55 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 67.

emphasised that a world-wide socialist revolution could win out only when the proletariat of the capitalist countries and the peoples of the colonies and dependencies rallied round the socialist countries for a joint struggle against imperialism.

In his report at the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East on November 22, 1919, Lenin stressed that the "revolutionary movement of the peoples of the East can now develop effectively, can reach a successful issue, only in direct association with the revolutionary struggle of our Soviet Republic against international imperialism".<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, he noted that "final victory can be won only by the proletariat of all the advanced countries of the world, and we, the Russians, are beginning the work which the British, French or German proletariat will consolidate. But we see that they will not be victorious without the aid of the working people of all the oppressed colonial nations, first and foremost, of Eastern nations."<sup>2</sup>

The call for a closer alliance of all revolutionary and national liberation movements with Soviet Russia runs through all the documents Lenin drafted for the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920) and his speeches at the Congress. In his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", he pointed out that "the Communist International's entire policy on the national and the colonial questions should rest primarily on a closer union of the proletarians and the working masses of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners and the bourgeoisie".<sup>3</sup>

Lenin particularly emphasised that one should never confine oneself to "a bare recognition or proclamation of the need for closer union between the working people of the various nations; a policy must be pursued that will achieve the closest alliance, with Soviet Russia, of all the national and colonial liberation movements. The form of this alliance

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 151. He also expressed this idea in his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" for the Second Congress of the Comintern. See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 146-47.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 161-62.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 146.



should be determined by the degree of development of the communist movement in the proletariat of each country, or of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants in backward countries or among backward nationalities.”<sup>1</sup>

Since then the long years of experience have fully borne out the great viability of Lenin's ideas on internationalism and the unity of the world anti-imperialist movement, whose inexorable revolutionary onslaught has virtually razed the colonial system to the ground. He gave all the scientific reasons for the need for all the anti-imperialist forces to work together and solidly unite with the international working class as their leader and vanguard.

In its creative application of Lenin's revolutionary theory to present-day conditions, the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties emphasised: “*The world socialist system is the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle. Each liberation struggle receives indispensable aid from the world socialist system, above all from the Soviet Union.*”<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has made a consistent effort to carry out Lenin's behests on all-round support for the national liberation struggle in Asia, Africa and Latin America. “In international affairs, the USSR is a force that follows a firm and consistent policy of peace and friendship, maintains Lenin's principles on the equality of nations, and takes a resolute stand against colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism, against every form of national oppression.”<sup>3</sup> Besides encouraging the national liberation forces by just being there, the Soviet Union has also given and continues to give them various political, ideological, economic, cultural, scientific technical and military assistance in their courageous struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, Prague, 1969, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Towards the 50th Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Decision of the CPSU Central Committee of February 21, 1972, Moscow, 1972, p. 21 (in Russian).

In its early difficult years, even while the Civil War was still on, Soviet Russia rendered active assistance to the peoples fighting against imperialism. It gave some important economic and military support to Turkey, helped Iran to strengthen its political and economic positions through the 1921 Soviet-Iranian Treaty, and did much to help Afghanistan win its independence. In the 1930s, the Soviet Union worked for effective sanctions against fascist Italy which had attacked Ethiopia, and helped China to fight the Japanese aggression by providing it with loans and military hardware, and sending over Soviet military experts. Its Leninist policy of proletarian internationalism, friendship, equality, mutual assistance and brotherhood has been of inestimable value for the Mongolian people, helping the Mongolian People's Republic to leave its backwardness well behind and, in the course of a few decades, to develop into an advanced socialist state.

The historic victories of the world's anti-fascist forces led by the Soviet Union in the course of the Second World War opened up a new phase in the strengthening of the anti-imperialist unity of socialist and national liberation revolutions. As the world socialist system emerged and grew stronger, building up its material potential, the ideas of proletarian internationalism have been evolved still further, and the socialist system's co-operation (in the economic, military, cultural, scientific, diplomatic and other areas) with the young states of Asia, Africa and Latin America has been strengthening and gaining in scope.

Since the war, the Soviet Union and other states of the world socialist system have time and again taken firm and resolute action to protect the national sovereignty of India, Indonesia, the Lebanon, Syria, Cuba, Cambodia, Egypt, Iraq and many other young states.

Imperialist ideologists and strategists have been straining to slow down the process of national liberation and social emancipation, and to stand in the way of stronger and deeper unity between the revolutionary forces. Hence the US imperialists' criminal war against the Vietnamese people, Israel's aggression in the Middle East, and so on. Military-political action of this kind is chiefly aimed to obstruct the recent positive processes in the national liberation movement and to entrench neo-colonialism.



In their attempt to divide the revolutionary, anti-imperialist forces, imperialist ideologists have alleged that it is the Communists, rather than the imperialists, colonialists and local reactionaries, who are the chief enemies of the developing nations' freedom, independence and social progress. Bourgeois ideologists and propagandists have been using anti-communism to distract the peoples from their struggle against imperialism and cut off the national liberation movement from its allies—the world socialist system and the international working-class and communist movement.

The facts show, however, that their desperate attempts to hamper the consolidation of the revolutionary forces always end in failure. The defeat of the imperialist aggression in the Middle East, as well as in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, provides vivid and convincing proof to that effect.

Ever since the 1967 Israeli aggression, Western imperialist propaganda has been doing its utmost to sow dissension between the Arab peoples and the socialist countries. Its lies have been taken up by various adventurist and Leftist elements. But their attempts to drive a wedge between the Arab countries and the Soviet Union have come to nothing. The Soviet Union and other socialist states have stood firm on the side of the Arab countries. Even though the latter suffered a military setback, the aggressor has been unable to attain its chief political objectives: to overthrow the revolutionary-democratic governments in Egypt and Syria or set the Arab countries at odds with each other, so depriving them of their unity, the main instrument in the struggle against neo-colonialism.

In Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese people—one of the advance contingents of the present-day liberation movement—displaying greatness of spirit, massive heroism and unity for the sake of their great purpose, frustrated the aggression of the US militarists, which involved the waste of hundreds of billions of dollars, cost the lives of thousands of US soldiers who died an inglorious death, and caused the USA's international prestige further to decline. Its vast economic and military potential notwithstanding, the biggest and strongest imperialist power has been unable to subjugate the people of a fairly small country.

What are the origins of the Vietnamese people's strength in rebuffing the ceaseless imperialist attacks?

On the one hand, this sprang from the understanding that they were fighting for a just and noble cause; their wish to be free and build a new life without any oppressors, foreign or local; the unity of all workers, peasants and intellectuals, all Vietnamese patriots—their united national front; the unity of all patriots in the North and the South; and the leadership of the people by the experienced Marxist-Leninist Party seasoned in class battles.

On the other hand, their strength lay in the large-scale fraternal assistance rendered to the Vietnamese people by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and the world's communist, working-class and national liberation movement. It was all this that finally forced the US aggressors to sign the Paris Agreement and stop the war in Vietnam.

The USSR's ever stronger and more extensive economic, scientific and cultural co-operation with the developing states is a new important factor in international relations. The Soviet Union's historical record has confirmed Lenin's memorable words that once the revolutionary proletariat came to power, it would render selfless and all-round assistance to the oppressed peoples of the East.

The CPSU's loyalty to Lenin's precept about strengthening the alliance between socialism and the national liberation movement has been put down in clear-cut words in the Party's policy-making documents.

The documents of the 25th Congress of the CPSU (February-March 1976) emphasised that in the present conditions imperialism, neo-colonialism and reaction are gradually losing their foothold in the areas of national liberation movement, while the newly independent countries are playing a growing role in the world revolutionary process and international relations.

Over the past few years, the fight for national liberation and social emancipation on the African continent has continued to gather momentum, with the colonial system entering the final stage of its disintegration.

The liberated peoples have been coming out ever more forcefully for radical socio-economic transformations aimed to strengthen their political and economic independence in



the interests of social progress. Many governments have been working to pivot their industrial development on the state sector, eliminate feudal landownership, nationalise foreign enterprises and train their own personnel in order to establish effective sovereignty over their national resources. Since national liberation revolutions tend gradually to develop into social liberation revolutions, many liberated countries have been advancing along these lines.

Class forces in many young Eastern states are going through the complicated process of polarisation, and the class struggle there is on the increase. This may take different forms. Thus, new and progressive changes have taken place in the economic and political life of many socialism-oriented Arab, African and Asian countries, while other countries have continued to follow the capitalist road.

A bird's-eye view of the present-day international scene will show that the one-time colonies and semi-colonies have come to carry substantial weight.

Most of these, it is safe to say, have been stepping up their fight against imperialism in an effort to protect their political and economic rights, strengthen their independence and raise their peoples' social, economic and cultural levels.

The non-alignment movement and the work of the Organisation of African Unity and the various economic associations set up by the developing countries are an expression of their growing influence on world development and their strengthening positions vis-à-vis the imperialist states. L. I. Brezhnev emphasised in his Report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU: "It is quite clear now that with the present correlation of world class forces, the liberated countries are quite able to resist imperialist diktat and achieve just—that is, equal—economic relations. It is also clear that their already considerable contribution to the common struggle for peace and the security of the peoples is quite likely to become still more substantial."<sup>1</sup>

In the period between the 24th and 25th Congresses (1971-1976), the Soviet Union strengthened its relations with the developing countries. A major point to note here is

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy. XXVth Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1976, pp. 16-17.*

that these relations have been filled with fresh political content. The significant changes that have occurred in international affairs and the liberated states' internal life have doubtless helped them to strengthen their co-operation with the Soviet Union. Soviet-Indian relations are a case in point. The Central Committee's Report to the 25th Congress said: "The Soviet Union's attitude to the complicated processes taking place within the developing countries is clear and definite. The Soviet Union does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and peoples. It is an immutable principle of our Leninist foreign policy to respect the sacred right of every people, every country, to choose its own way of development. But we do not conceal our views. In the developing countries, as everywhere else, we are on the side of the forces of progress, democracy and national independence, and regard them as friends and comrades in struggle."<sup>1</sup>

But the forces of imperialism, neo-colonialism and reaction are reluctant to relax their hold and are even mounting occasional counter-offensives in a bid to reverse the tide of history and suppress national liberation movement. Domestic and foreign reaction is using high-pressure methods against some regimes and political organisations in the national liberation areas which have proclaimed socialist goals and embarked on progressive transformations.

One thing to note in analysing the latest situation in the national liberation zone is that newly liberated countries face grave problems in many fields, notably, the economy in most of them. Since they remain within the framework of the world capitalist economy, the developing countries, particularly, those looking towards capitalism, are to some extent exposed to the difficulties besetting the world capitalist system which is in a state of profound crisis. Moreover, some Asian and African countries have recently had several years of severe drought, the consequences of which have yet to be overcome.

If the developing countries are to solve complicated socio-economic problems, they must naturally have a lasting peace. Hence, the broad response to the Soviet proposal for

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...XXVth Congress of the CPSU, p. 16.*



a collective security system in Asia. "The Soviet Union," L. I. Brezhnev said at the 25th Congress of the CPSU, "intends to continue its active participation in the search for ways of consolidating peace and security on the Asian continent, and of developing equal co-operation there as well."<sup>1</sup>

Neo-colonialism continues to present a grave danger for the young national states. Now that they have taken the road of independent development and aim to take a historically short cut out of the economic and technical backwardness they have inherited from their colonial past, they badly need outside assistance. The monopolies, the imperialist circles seek to use this to regain their grip on the young states. Many of these still lie within the orbit of unequal economic and military-political agreements imposed on them by the former metropolitan countries. Vestiges of the colonial past are also very much alive in social, ideological and political spheres.

Life itself has pointed out the way for the young states to overcome their difficulties: the former colonial peoples are developing an ever more conscious striving for socialism, which spells complete national liberation and social emancipation. The documents of the 25th Congress of the CPSU emphasise that mankind's social progress is now being determined by the growing might of the socialist countries and by the beneficial influence of their international policy.

The 24th Congress of the CPSU confirmed once again this policy of the Communist Party. In pursuance of its decisions, the CPSU Central Committee has steadily strengthened and continues to strengthen its ties with the Communist and revolutionary-democratic parties in the young Asian and African states. The mutual visits by Party delegations and a broad exchange of experience have enabled the Communist and revolutionary-democratic parties to make a deep study of the various aspects of the CPSU's activity, which has undoubtedly helped them to raise the level of their own ideological and organisational work.

The CPSU and the international communist movement attach great importance to the revolutionary-democratic

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...*, XXVth Congress of the CPSU, p. 19.

forces fighting for a progressive line towards the eventual construction of a socialist society. The 24th Congress of the CPSU instructed the Central Committee to go on strengthening and extending its "ties with the revolutionary-democratic parties of the developing countries".<sup>1</sup> In dealing with this aspect of the CPSU's work, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, L. I. Brezhnev, told the 1969 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties: "At present, the CPSU has contacts and ties with 18 national-democratic parties, while Soviet mass organisations have connections with democratic organisations in all countries of that part of the world. We believe everything has to be done to promote close relations between the Communist Parties and the revolutionary-democratic parties."<sup>2</sup>

The CPSU and the Soviet state have kept to Lenin's precepts, following a steady line for further development of all-round co-operation with newly independent countries, and providing them with continued and diversified assistance.

At the same time, all consistent fighters against imperialism, colonialism and international reaction believe that solidarity with the Soviet Union and the world socialist community is their internationalist revolutionary duty. Secretary of the National Council of the Communist Party of India, S. G. Sardesai, was quite right in saying that proletarian internationalism is not a one-sided phenomenon. The national liberation movement, the international working-class movement and, above all, the Communists of all the capitalist countries should also come out in defence of the socialist countries whenever their socialist gains are threatened by the imperialists.

Now that nearly all the former colonies have won their national sovereignty, the economic and social problems of the national liberation movement are increasingly coming to the fore, with more distinct lines being drawn between class and political forces.

As the young states have developed their industry,

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<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1971, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 154.



transport and construction, their working class has grown in numbers, has become more united and better organised, and has gradually gained an awareness of its historical role in the process of national and social revival. The influence of its communist vanguard has increased accordingly. The CPSU Programme says: "A new contingent of the world proletariat—the young working-class movement of the newly-free, dependent and colonial countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America—has entered the world arena. Marxist-Leninist parties have arisen and grown. They are becoming a universally recognised national force enjoying ever greater prestige and followed by large sections of the working people."<sup>1</sup>

It is, of course, not merely a matter of the size of the Communist Workers' parties, which have grown markedly over the past few decades, although it is a very important indicator of social processes in the Third World. The main thing is their growing ideological and practical influence on the whole revolutionary process of national liberation, their greater role as an advance force, as the most resolute fighters against imperialism and reaction. All this has a major importance for the future of the new phase in the national liberation movement.

The 24th Congress of the CPSU said: "Imperialism is being subjected to ever greater pressure by the forces which have grown out of the national liberation struggle. The main thing is that the struggle for national liberation in many countries has in practice begun to develop into a struggle against exploitative relations, both feudal and capitalist. The countries, which have taken the non-capitalist path of development, that is, those which have taken the long-term line of building socialist society, are the advance contingent of the present-day national liberation movement."<sup>2</sup>

The political complexion of the national bourgeoisie in Asian and African countries is very uneven. The big bourgeoisie and the military and civilian bureaucrats, who have made fortunes at the expense of the state and the people, together with the landowners are now in power in

<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, Moscow, 1962, p. 480.

<sup>2</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 215.

many young states that have taken the capitalist road. These classes, groups and sections have managed to make the utmost of the results of the masses' anti-imperialist struggle, and are now working for their own, capitalist way of development and looking to the state-monopoly capital of the imperialist powers.

But the contradictions between imperialism and the national bourgeoisie as a whole still persist, for they are now engaged in fairly intense economic and political struggle. While the upper sections of the local bourgeoisie are highly inclined to co-operate with the Western monopoly bourgeoisie, its lower and sometimes even middle sections often take an anti-imperialist and democratic stand. They are still capable of playing a progressive role and taking part in the solution of nation-wide problems.

Petty-bourgeois and semi-proletarian sections (peasants, urban and rural handicraftsmen, small tradesmen, and the rank-and-file intelligentsia) make up something like three-quarters of the gainfully employed population in most of the developing countries. These working sections, which are being oppressed both by foreign and big national capital, are an important reserve of the revolutionary forces.

The historical experience shows that the non-capitalist way of development is a type of transition to socialism in the epoch of the existence of a world socialist system under which the stage of democratic transformation—a stage no backward country can escape—is being carried out under the leadership of revolutionary democrats, some of whom may adopt scientific socialism in the course of these transformations. A point to note is that revolutionary democrats can play the leading political role in the countries with a relatively weak proletariat. This very possibility, however, stems from the proletariat's world-wide struggle and the whole of present-day historical development which is being increasingly determined by the progressive evolution of the socialist system.

The Marxist-Leninist proposition concerning the historical role of the working class in the revolutionary transformation of the world has been borne out by the many decades of class struggle and is still fully relevant today. A thing to emphasise is that the world socialist system is the decisive anti-imperialist force. Were it not for the socialist



countries' inspiring example and their material and political backing, the progressive potentialities of revolutionary democracy would have lacked the socialist prospects they now have. Consequently, unity and co-operation between the revolutionary-democratic forces in power in some of the young states and the countries of the world socialist system are a vital condition for their successful advance to socialism.

The progressive patriotic forces (the working class and the revolutionary-democratic circles), on the one hand, and the reactionary forces (the bourgeois-landowner bloc), on the other, have been waging an intense struggle for the political leadership of the bulk of the population in the developing countries: the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois sections in town and countryside. The choice of development ways, and the pace and methods of solving cardinal economic and social problems will largely depend on whom these sections are going to follow.

Communist and Workers' parties in the developing countries have been applying the Marxist-Leninist doctrine to their specific local conditions in an effort to establish and strengthen a broad national-patriotic front for the chief purpose of rallying the masses for the fight against imperialism, neo-colonialism and local reaction, and for a solution of pressing socio-economic problems.

Marxist-Leninist parties in Asia and Africa take a realistic view of the results attained in bringing the various contingents of the revolutionary process closer together, and realise that, depending on concrete conditions, this complicated process runs a different course in different countries. They realise that in some young national states this process has met with considerable difficulties, and that the working masses and all the revolutionary parties, sections, groups and alliances have to make an ever greater effort to strengthen, develop and raise it to a higher level. They frame their strategy and tactics, their plans and action programmes in accordance with that realisation.

The long years of struggle against imperialism show that besides being selfless fighters for the cause of the working class, whose vanguard they are, the advocates of Marxism-Leninism in Asia and Africa have also vigorously worked to protect the basic interests of their own nations, which they see in a true light. By creatively using the Marxist-Leninist

theory in specific national conditions, Communist and Workers' parties in the young states have been making a contribution to the common theoretical treasure-house of the world revolutionary movement.

Lenin said that unity of the international tactics of the communist and working-class movements does not mean that variety should be done away with or national distinctions ironed out, but that the basic principles of communism should be correctly modified in their particulars and correctly applied to national and national-state specific features. Lenin urged the need "to seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the *concrete manner* in which each country should tackle a *single* international task".<sup>1</sup>

These days, Lenin's call has a particularly urgent ring, for Communist and Workers' parties now have to work in widely differing conditions: some parties are in power, others have to work underground; some operate in countries where the proletariat makes up the bulk of the population, and others—where the working class is still in the making, and so on. One of the chief and most complicated problems facing the world communist, working-class and national liberation movement is to obtain a correct combination of social, national and international tasks.

In other words, far from putting the general regularities of the anti-imperialist movement in opposition to national specifics, Lenin's theory of national liberation revolution proceeds from the need for their dialectical interconnection.

There are some features that are common to all the widely varying processes going forward in the countries that have shed or are trying to shed the colonial yoke, and this eventually brings together into a single tide (no matter what individual classes, sections, groups and men may wish) all the streams and rivers of the liberation movement running at different levels. What unites them is their fight against the common enemy: world imperialism, neocolonialism and international reaction, headed by US state-monopoly capital; their common powerful friends: world socialism, led by

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 92.



the Soviet Union, and the international working-class movement; and also the natural striving of hundreds of millions of men and women in Asia, Africa and Latin America towards lasting peace, and economic, spiritual and social progress.

Unity of action within the framework of the national liberation movement and the whole world emancipation movement is by no means a mere makeshift campaign or tactical move by some party or bloc of parties, but an objective need of the present epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism, a natural regularity which determines the long-term strategy of the national liberation movement.

More than a half-century ago, Lenin gave his wholehearted support to the militant international call: "Workers of all countries and all oppressed peoples, unite!" The international revolutionary movement has now formulated on the basis of Marxism-Leninism a fresh and creative slogan: "Peoples of the socialist countries, workers, all democratic forces in the capitalist countries, newly-liberated and oppressed peoples, unite in joint struggle against imperialism, and for peace, national independence, social progress, democracy and socialism!"<sup>1</sup> Wherever the forces of socialism, the international working class and national liberation fighters have worked together, they have scored fresh victories, effectively rebuffed every counter-attack by imperialism and reaction, and promoted social progress. Unco-ordinated actions tend to slow down the forward movement as a whole and movement in individual sectors, enabling the imperialist forces to step up their activity.

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Imperialism is capitalism nearing its end amidst the deepening general crisis; it is an eve of world socialist revolution. But the doomed exploiting classes will never relinquish power or leave the historical arena of their own free will. They must be made to do so—a task resting with the united revolutionary forces of the present day: the

<sup>1</sup> *On the Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin*, Theses of the CPSU Central Committee, Moscow, 1969, p. 50 (in Russian).

revolutionary proletariat of the capitalist countries, the world socialist system, the ever stronger forces of national liberation, and all the progressive forces of the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism.

International socialism, and the working-class and national liberation movements have now become so strong that neither imperialist aggression nor betrayal of Marxism-Leninism by "Left" or Right opportunists can do anything to stop their advance. Despite all the furious enemy attacks, the alliance of the forces of socialism, the international working-class and the national liberation movement has been gaining in strength.

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The book has been written by a group of authors: the Introduction—by Academician B. G. Gafurov, Chapter 1—G. F. Kim, Chapter 2—P. M. Shastitko, Chapter 3—S. N. Rostovsky, Chapter 4—V. F. Li (including material contributed by A. G. Belsky), Chapter 5—S. K. Roshchin, Chapter 6—T. N. Akatova and L. P. Delyusin, Chapter 7—F. I. Shabshina, Chapter 8—A. G. Budanov, Chapter 9—R. T. Akhramovich, Chapter 10—M. N. Ivanova, Chapter 11—A. A. Shamsutdinov, Chapter 12—T. F. Devyatkina, Chapter 13—Y. I. Zakaznikova, G. I. Levinson, and A. N. Uzyanov, Chapter 14—R. G. Landa, and the Conclusion—G. F. Kim.

This edition is a translation of the revised Russian edition of the book published to mark the centenary of V. I. Lenin's birth (1970).



## **PART ONE**

### **Leninism and Some Regularities of the National Liberation Movements in the Epoch of Transition from Capitalism to Socialism**



## CHAPTER 1

### **LENIN ON THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION REVOLUTION**

#### **The World Revolutionary Movement and the National-Colonial Question Before the October Revolution**

Now that the world revolutionary process has swept across the world and peoples everywhere have been bursting the chains of oppression with increasing vigour, the questions of the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions have come to feature prominently in the Marxist-Leninist science of the radical revolutionary transformation of the world.

The colonial question came to the fore in world politics with the onset of imperialism, when Lenin started his revolutionary career. True, some people at the time believed that no power on earth could dispel the colonial gloom. But the victory of the world's first socialist revolution which shed a light on the road leading towards national liberation and social emancipation, worked a radical change in the historical destiny of the oppressed peoples. The tide of liberation revolutions which has rolled across the colonial world in the period since the October Revolution has shattered the system of foreign rule in Asia and Africa.

The collapse of the colonial system ushered in a period of the liberated peoples' national revival. Looking back on the rough stretch of road they have now covered, one is faced with the question of the motive idea behind the revolutionary changes and the collapse of the colonial system, and of the strategy and tactics of present-day anti-imperialist



national liberation revolutions. Distortion and falsification of these questions both by neocolonialist ideologists and Right revisionists, and Left-opportunist elements make a study of this matter all the more necessary.

Many bourgeois scientists seek to prove that the Asian and African peoples have been granted independence by the colonialists themselves, in other words, that the colonial system has disintegrated because the colonial powers have given up their possessions of their own free will. Thus, Professor Rupert Emerson of Harvard University, a leading bourgeois ideologist on national-colonial problems, keeps saying that colonialism in Asia and Africa had played a "beneficial" role, paving the way for the peoples' independence.<sup>1</sup>

In an apparent attempt to affect an objective scientific analysis, the well-known US columnist, Cyrus Sulzberger, expresses his regrets that "de-colonialism was not prepared for sufficiently in advance and, having been finally decided, came too abruptly".<sup>2</sup> Leaving aside Sulzberger's natural feeling of bitterness about de-colonialism arriving "too soon",<sup>3</sup> all his reasoning also hinges on the assertion that the colonial powers had decided to "give up" their possessions of their own free will.

Such statements by bourgeois political scientists dealing with the national liberation movement are far from being accidental: they are part of a well-devised line in the strategy and tactics of imperialism aimed to tone down the deep-going contradictions between the former colonial powers and the newly liberated nations, and to take the edge off the latter's present-day anti-imperialist struggle.

Right-wing revisionists, Right-wing Social-Democrats above all, have also been doing the bourgeois ideologists a good turn. Their programmes for so-called democratic socialism are in effect aimed to confuse the national liberation movement and make the masses lose their bearings in the struggle for genuine progress.

Lenin's theory is also being subjected to furious attacks from the other, Left-opportunist wing.

<sup>1</sup> See R. Emerson, *From Empire to Nation. The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1960, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, February 10, 1964.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

While laying claim to original scientific thinking, revisionists of every stripe have been seeking to pervert the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, its propositions on the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions in particular. Subjective concepts like that of a "world town" in the midst of a "world village", a "loss of revolutionary spirit" by the working class in the advanced capitalist countries, or a shift of the "revolutionary storm centre" into the zone of the national liberation movement, have little in common with the Marxist-Leninist, class approach to social phenomena.

One should also bear in mind all the complexities of the present-day struggle for national independence and social progress in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the dialectical contradictions in the struggle between various classes, political parties and social bodies. This struggle is wide-ranging and its forms varied. If one is to unravel all these complexities and, what is most important of all, to work out the correct strategy and tactics based on a knowledge of actual life, the logic of the class struggle, and the mechanism of interaction between the various trends of the anti-imperialist struggle, one cannot do without Marxist-Leninist methodology. In this context, one is reminded of a statement by Engels, who said that "to accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism."<sup>1</sup>

In dealing with the prospects of the peoples' struggle for national liberation and social emancipation, the founders of scientific socialism gave paramount attention to the close interconnection between the struggle of the European proletariat against "its own" bourgeoisie and that of the oppressed peoples against colonial slavery. Marx and Engels, who worked in an epoch when capitalism was on the upgrade, were naturally unable to make any concrete

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 151.



predictions about the forms and methods of the colonial peoples' liberation. They projected the main regularities of the national liberation revolutions in the colonial and dependent countries that were subsequently to develop under imperialism. In the mid-19th century, when the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—the two main antagonistic classes in Europe and North America—were lining up for their decisive battle, the peoples of Asia and Africa, to quote Lenin, were regarded as the object of history.

In the 19th century, the national liberation movement in the colonies and the working-class movement in Europe had yet to establish direct ties with each other. These began to emerge at the turn of the 20th century, when, on the one hand, an organised national liberation movement first began to take shape and, on the other, the antagonism between international capital and the international working-class movement became pivotal to the struggle going on in the world.

As a world system of "colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries",<sup>1</sup> imperialism emerged in the final quarter of the 19th and the early 20th century.

Lenin estimated that by 1876, the colonialists had occupied 51.5 per cent of all the territory of Asia, 100 per cent of Australia, and 27.5 per cent of Central and South America, while Africa was in the tragic period of partition. In the final third of the 19th century, following the construction of the Suez Canal, which brought Africa and Asia closer to Europe, colonial conquests were particularly intensified. From 1870 to 1902, Britain alone occupied 4,474,000 square miles of African territory with a population of almost 90 million. France, at the time the second largest colonial power, established its rule in Tunisia (1881), Central Africa, and a large part of the Congo basin. German imperialism, too, was now making a vigorous bid for colonies, occupying Cameroon, Togo and some East African lands. While carving up Africa, the imperialist powers also sharply intensified their fight over the Far East and Southeast Asia. In 1884 and 1885, France occupied

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 191.

Indo-China, and Britain—Burma. Japan was making a long arm for Korea, and China was being divided into spheres of interest. Here is how the three major colonial powers—Britain, France and Germany—enlarged their empires.

From 1876 to 1914, Britain's colonial empire swelled from 22.5 million square kilometres with a population of 251.9 million to 33.5 million square kilometres with a population of almost 400 million.

Over the same period, France's colonial empire multiplied tenfold (from 0.9 million square kilometres with a population of 6 million to 10.6 million square kilometres with a population of 65.6 million). And Germany, which in 1876 had no colonies at all, by the start of the First World War had laid hands on 2.9 million square kilometres with a population of 12.3 million. In other words, by the turn of the 20th century, the division of the world was complete.

The imperialist epoch brought to the fore two historical tendencies in the national question. On the one hand, developing capitalism inevitably engendered a feeling of national self-awareness among the people and gave rise to national movements aimed against foreign rule. On the other hand, it tended to strengthen and develop the interconnections between nations, to break down national barriers, and establish the "international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin described these tendencies as a "universal law of capitalism", emphasising that "the former predominates in the beginning of its development, the latter characterises a mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society".<sup>2</sup> This means that under imperialism it was the second tendency—the international unity of capital—that began to gain the upper hand, exerting a profound influence on the proletariat's class struggle and the national liberation movement. The "internationalisation" of political life comprises two opposing elements: it tends to unify the policy of imperialism as a whole (its colonialist policy in particular) and also to cement the organic links between the anti-imperialist forces.

In the colonial world, the two tendencies inherent in

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



imperialism manifested themselves somewhat differently than in the metropolitan countries. In Asia, Africa and Latin America, capitalism at that time also gave rise to the first tendency, with the imperialist epoch setting off a massive national "awakening" in these areas.

A vital need now was to work out a correct Marxist-Leninist approach to the national-colonial question and an effective strategy for national liberation movements. One difficulty here was that the official ideologists of the Second International falsified the national-colonial question in various anti-Marxist ways.

As the anti-colonial tide continued to swell, there was an urgent need for unity between all the anti-imperialist forces, which implied formulation of a broad general-democratic programme, unconditional support for national movements among other things. But the Right-wing opportunist leaders of the Second International were in effect opposed to the Marxists' main demand: the need to ensure the right of nations to self-determination, including secession, that is, the establishment of an independent state. They aimed to limit this inalienable right to "national" or "cultural-national" autonomy, which meant a veiled attempt to "constitutionalise" reactionary nationalism, to secure "the separation of all nations from one another by means of a special state institution",<sup>1</sup> and eventually to divide the proletariat of the different nations and link it up with "the reactionary and bourgeois elements of the separate nations".<sup>2</sup> Such a "solution" of the national question would have inevitably strengthened bourgeois-nationalist tendencies, led to a split among the anti-imperialist forces, in the multinational countries in particular, and objectively helped the bourgeoisie to fight the proletariat.

Besides, a split within the proletariat on a national and international scale was now particularly dangerous in view of the feverish preparations by the imperialists of various countries for a redivision of their colonial possessions—for the first imperialist world war. These preparations were coupled with a sharp step-up in chauvinistic propaganda by the imperialist bourgeoisie. In these conditions, proletarian

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 248.

ideologists were faced with a vitally important task: consistently to expose the imperialists' colonial plunder and strengthen the alliance of the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial forces. But what about the ideological leaders of the Second International, what did they do? They began to give way to those among them who were increasingly inclined to back imperialist chauvinism, and this showed in their attempts to justify the peoples' colonial exploitation.

Lenin laid bare the social roots of their policy. He wrote that "the European proletariat *partly* finds himself in a position when it is *not* his labour, but the labour of the practically enslaved natives in the colonies, that maintains the whole of society".<sup>1</sup> Under these conditions, he went on, "in certain countries this provides the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism".<sup>2</sup> To cover up its chauvinistic aspirations, the imperialist bourgeoisie made extensive use of demagogic ploys. The thesis about the "advanced nations'" so-called civilising mission in the backward countries was particularly popular. It was taken up by many leaders of the Second International, whose Stuttgart Congress (1907) was most characteristic in this respect. "Socialists", like van Kol, Bernstein and David, maintained that it was "possible as a matter of principle" to recognise colonial policy because, they said, under socialism the latter could well have a civilising effect. In his official report on the colonial question, van Kol said that one had to start out by "putting Africa in order" weapons in hand, that is, by subjugating the weak peoples, and then to implant "civilisation". The British imperialists Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II and many other out-and-out colonialists could well have put their name to van Kol's statement.

Lenin also took part in the Stuttgart Congress, and it was thanks to his vigorous efforts that the Congress finally rejected these opportunist views.

The anti-Marxist stand taken by the ideologists of the Second International, notably, on the colonial question, which they at first tried to cover up with various plausible

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



slogans, subsequently led to its collapse when the leaders of the Second International raised a false banner of patriotism, betrayed the great principle of proletarian internationalism, the principle of the unity of all the progressive forces in their fight against imperialism, and adopted the chauvinism of the imperialist bourgeoisie aiming at stirring up a world war.

In dealing with the factors which hampered the consolidation of the anti-imperialist forces, one should also take an objective view of the divisive role played by bourgeois nationalists in some colonial and dependent countries, particularly in Asia.

As Lenin worked to elaborate the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions, he formulated his scientific criterion for assessing bourgeois nationalism at the various stages of the anti-colonial liberation movement. Marxist-Leninist science maintains that, being the ideology of the bourgeois class, bourgeois nationalism contradicts the class interests of the proletariat, whose ideology is that of internationalism.<sup>1</sup>

It is, therefore, only the question of the proletarian party's attitude towards specific manifestations of bourgeois nationalism in this or that historical situation. Lenin repeatedly pointed out that in bourgeois society nationalism was a historically inevitable principle and that from this standpoint Marxism quite recognised the historical legitimacy of national movements. He warned, however, against slipping from such recognition into an apology of nationalism. Such recognition, he said, "must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness".<sup>2</sup>

What were Lenin's major criteria for a scientific assessment of nationalism, criteria that ruled out both Left- and Right-opportunist deviations from the correct strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions?

Lenin showed that the historical basis for the "legality of nationalism" lay in the fact that in the struggle against feudalism and its medieval survivals bourgeois nationalism

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 34.

had played a historically progressive role. He said that "the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Western, continental Europe embraces a fairly definite period, approximately between 1789 and 1871".<sup>1</sup>

The epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Asia started with the Russian revolution of 1905-1907. Marxism says there is a binding need to distinguish between nationalism on the upgrade, when it is being expounded under the slogan of struggle against feudalism and foreign rule, that is, when it helps the masses to acquire their political self-awareness and plays a progressive role as an important instrument of the anti-imperialist movement, and nationalism as an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the proletariat and the masses' revolutionary movement. Though supporting, in specific conditions, bourgeois-led national movements, the proletariat should always look to its own class interests and the tasks of its own struggle.

An interesting thing to recall here is the stand taken on the eve of the First World War by many Asian bourgeois nationalists, who had largely succumbed to the racist-chauvinist propaganda carried on by Japan's imperialist bourgeoisie.

There is no doubt at all that in Asia as a whole, at a time when national awakening there was spreading, bourgeois nationalism, spearheaded against imperialist oppression, was a historically progressive phenomenon. But the swiftly rising Japanese imperialist bourgeoisie sought to vest that nationalism with racist features, so as to turn it to its own selfish expansionist ends. It made use of the Asian peoples' natural hostility towards the European colonialists. That is the light in which one should see the "pan-Asia" doctrine, which centred on the racist thesis about the need for the "unity of the yellow race" in its fight against "the imperialism of the white race", the theories of "the Asian peoples' common destiny", which were an instrument in the hands of Japan's chauvinistic bourgeoisie in its struggle for a redivision of the colonial world.

The chauvinistic tendencies in Asian bourgeois nationalism, as well as the support given by the ideologists of the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 405-06.



Second International to the imperialists' colonial policy, were fraught with the very grave danger of a split within the anti-imperialist forces and a weakening of the peoples' democratic, anti-imperialist struggle. That is why Lenin's elaboration of the national and national-colonial question under imperialism was extremely important both for the struggle against the falsification of Marxism-Leninism by the ideologists of the Second International, and against the bourgeois-nationalist trends in which racial-chauvinistic attitudes had gained the upper hand.

Lenin based his brilliant theoretical propositions on real, concrete facts, on the rich experience of the oppressed peoples' liberation struggle, notably that in the East.

The 20th century opened with large-scale anti-imperialist action by the colonial and dependent peoples. The 1905 events in Russia generated a revolutionary wave in Iran, Turkey, China, Korea, India and other countries.

Under these conditions, Lenin first of all showed the place and historical role of the national-colonial question in the proletariat's struggle for the victory of a socialist revolution. The new approach to the formulation and tackling of the national-colonial question stemmed from an important theoretical discovery made by Lenin on the basis of his analysis of contemporary capitalism: his law of uneven development under capitalism enabled him to arrive at the very important conclusion that a proletarian revolution could first win out in several or even one individual country. That is also the context in which Lenin characterised the world revolutionary process. Thus, he formulated and substantiated the thesis that "the social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations".<sup>1</sup> This meant that under imperialism, the struggle of the proletariat in the advanced countries for a victory of the socialist revolution should be closely linked with various democratic movements, the national liberation movement of the oppressed nations in particular. Lenin's formula

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 60.

expresses a major regularity of the world revolutionary movement: if the proletariat in the advanced countries and the oppressed colonial peoples are to win out, all the anti-imperialist forces must fight together in close unity.

Lenin said that in order to ensure international unity in the fight against capitalism and any forms of national oppression, the proletariat of the imperialist countries should always lend resolute support to the oppressed nations' right to self-determination. "On the other hand," he emphasised, "the socialists of the oppressed nations must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organisational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation."<sup>1</sup> Unless they did so, they could never hope to uphold the proletariat's independent policy and class solidarity in the fight against the bourgeoisie. That was a vivid expression of proletarian internationalism.

Lenin showed that in its all-out support for the self-determination of nations, the proletariat should have a clear idea of how the national question fits into the common struggle against capitalism. The proletariat should never regard the national question outside the context of its own class struggle and the tasks of proletarian revolution. In other words, Marxism-Leninism views the national question as part of the overall question of social emancipation.

Besides showing the place and role of the national-colonial question in the world revolutionary process, and the mechanism and principle of joint action by the anti-imperialist forces on a world scale, Lenin also laid bare the deeper roots of the national liberation movement and its motive forces. It was he who substantiated the extremely important proposition on the correlation of class, social forces within the national liberation movement, a proposition of lasting historic value that is fundamental to the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions.

For one thing, even before the October Revolution, Lenin showed that national movements could not escape from the bourgeois-democratic framework of their own accord because, among other things, the overwhelming mass of the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 148.

population in the backward countries consisted of peasants,<sup>1</sup> so that the latter made up the main social basis of national liberation movements.

As the world revolutionary process developed, this basis expanded more and more. After the October Revolution, however, the situation was markedly different: the world's peasantry now had socialism to look to, and the international working class came to exercise an ever greater influence on the semi-proletarian and non-proletarian masses of all countries. In his report at the Third Congress of the Comintern, Lenin pointed out these changes, which would eventually help to turn the national liberation movement against capitalism, and said that although "the masses of toilers—the peasants in the colonial countries—are still backward, they will play a very important revolutionary part in the coming phases of the world revolution".<sup>2</sup> Lenin's prediction has now come true, for the peasantry in the Third World countries has been taking vigorous action for revolutionary change relying on the support of the world socialist system and international working-class movement.

In Lenin's day, however, the colonies and semi-colonies, most of them backward countries with a very weak industry or without any industry at all, had no broad socio-economic prerequisites for the rapid emergence and growth of an industrial proletariat. Still, Lenin attached great importance to the prospect of a proletariat arising in the colonies and semi-colonies, for he believed it to be the most consistent force of the national liberation movement. "There can be no doubt that the age-old plunder of India by the British, and the contemporary struggle of all these 'advanced' Europeans against Persian and Indian democracy, will *steel* millions, tens of millions of proletarians in Asia to wage a struggle against their oppressors which will be just as victorious as that of the Japanese. The class-conscious European worker now has comrades in Asia, and their number will grow by leaps and bounds."<sup>3</sup> Such internationalist unity, Lenin believed, marked the beginning of a new and much higher stage of the proletariat's international

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 482.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 184-85.

struggle, which would bring together the workers of oppressed and oppressing nations in a world-wide proletarian front.

Lenin maintained that the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries in the East was yet another force capable of taking an active part in the national liberation movement. His assessment of its role, as well as his treatment of other questions, was a model of the revolutionary, dialectical approach to complex socio-economic and political phenomena.<sup>1</sup>

The imperialist epoch as a whole, he said, was "decaying" capitalism, capitalism, "on the downgrade". The bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries, which embodied these obsolete ways, naturally, acted as a retrograde force and was "prepared to go to any length of savagery, brutality and crime in order to uphold dying capitalist slavery".<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Lenin said, in the colonial and dependent countries, whose local bourgeoisie was itself being oppressed by the imperialist bourgeoisie, the situation was different. He made a concrete study of the broad democratic movement in the colonies and dependent countries, notably, in China, and showed that in Asia the bourgeoisie was "as yet siding with the people against reaction",<sup>3</sup> and that while the Western bourgeoisie was reactionary through and through, in Asia there was "still a bourgeoisie capable of championing sincere, militant, consistent democracy".<sup>4</sup>

That bourgeoisie derived its main social support from the peasantry, and was capable of historically progressive action. At the same time, having analysed China, Lenin showed that a liberal bourgeoisie had already emerged in Asia as well, and that it was capable of betraying the interests of the democratic struggle. But on the whole, he maintained, the national bourgeoisie was capable of bold anti-imperialist moves. Hence Lenin's tactics of working-class support for action by the national bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries. Lenin drew a clear line at which this

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 399-400.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 165.



support had to stop. "Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, *in favour*, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, even before the Great October Socialist Revolution, Lenin made a comprehensive analysis of the proletariat's revolutionary strategy and tactics in the national and national-colonial question, which subsequently helped the Bolsheviks<sup>2</sup> to prepare and carry out a socialist revolution in this multinational country. Even before the October victory, Lenin and the Bolsheviks foresaw a powerful revolutionary upsurge in the enslaved countries of the East, and so fought hard to end all national oppression.

The address to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries on April 21 (May 4), 1917<sup>3</sup>, written by Lenin, said that so long as the capitalists were in power, it was impossible to ensure "really democratic, non-coercive peace based on a real renunciation of all annexations, i. e., on the liberation of all colonies without exception, of all oppressed, forcibly annexed or underprivileged nationalities without exception, and the war will in all likelihood become still more acute and protracted".<sup>4</sup>

During the First World War, chiefly owing to the revolutionary efforts of Lenin's Bolsheviks, the more healthy forces within the international socialist movement, which were subsequently to make up the core of the Third, Communist International, began to come to the fore and consolidate their efforts. That was when some spokesmen for the revolutionary wing of European Social-Democracy began to show a tendency towards denying the role and

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 411-12.

<sup>2</sup> When the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (RSDLP) in 1903 voted to elect the Party's central organs, the revolutionary Marxists headed by Lenin got a majority ("bolshinstvo") and so were called "Bolsheviks", while the opportunist delegates remained in a minority ("menshinstvo") and were subsequently known as "Mensheviks". At the Sixth (Prague) Conference of the RSDLP (1912), the opportunists were expelled from the Party.

<sup>3</sup> The double dating is due to the fact that at the time Russia had the Julian calendar. The new calendar (the bracketed figure) was adopted in February 1918.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 188.

importance of the national-colonial question for the proletariat and the possibility of any just national liberation wars under imperialism.

Lenin's article, "The Junius Pamphlet", written in July 1916, explained a great deal about the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions, and national liberation wars under imperialism.

During the First World War, when most of the ideologists of the Second International came out in support of the chauvinistic bourgeoisie, German Social-Democracy developed a new trend, the *Internationale* group, with two wings inside it: one revolutionary, and the other inclining to Kautskyism.<sup>1</sup>

The group's policy-making principles were set out in fullest detail by Rosa Luxemburg (Junius) in her pamphlet *The Crisis of Social-Democracy*. On the whole, Lenin had a high opinion of that pamphlet, but said it contained some essential mistakes in the matter of assessing the possibility of progressive wars under imperialism. According to Junius, under imperialism, national wars were no longer possible, and "national interests serve only as an instrument of deception, in order to place the working masses at the service of their mortal enemy, imperialism".<sup>2</sup> In this instance, the *Internationale* extrapolated the characteristics of the First World War onto all possible wars under imperialism, dismissing "the national movements *against* imperialism".<sup>3</sup>

Its thesis that since the world was divided among a handful of great powers, "any war, albeit national at the outset, is bound to turn imperialist", had no substance to it, for it was not based on the concrete historical approach. Lenin used extensive historical material to show the need for an understanding of the dialectics of war. His dialectical approach enabled him to formulate a fundamental principle of the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions, the principle that under imperialism, national wars waged by colonies and semi-colonies were "not only probable but inevitable".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 308.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 309.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 310.

Besides showing that progressive, revolutionary national wars under imperialism were possible and inevitable, Lenin also pointed out the likely ways towards their victory. He said that if they were to win out, they required "either the concerted effort of huge numbers of people in the oppressed countries (hundreds of millions in our example of India and China), or a *particularly* favourable conjuncture of international conditions (e. g., the fact that the imperialist powers cannot interfere, being paralysed by exhaustion, by war, by their antagonism, etc.), or the *simultaneous* uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in one of the big powers (this latter eventuality holds first place as the most desirable and favourable for the victory of the proletariat)".<sup>1</sup>

The important thing here is what Lenin said about a proletarian uprising in one of the major powers being the most favourable condition for the success of the national liberation movement. His idea was brilliantly confirmed by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the world's biggest country, whose ruling circles had time and again put down national movements both inside the country and abroad.

### **Lenin's Strategy and Tactics on the National-Colonial Question After the October Revolution**

The emergence of the world's first multinational workers' and peasants' state without any national or social oppression had a powerful influence on the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Great October Socialist Revolution took place in a country which, owing to various conditions, epitomised all the principal contradictions of imperialism in their most acute form. It combined the ugliest forms of capitalist exploitation and feudal ways; it was being plundered both by local and West European capitalists; and the population of its national outskirts was being cruelly oppressed by tsarism.

The October Revolution, therefore, did not only spell social emancipation for the working people, but also aimed

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 312.

to solve—and did solve—the tasks of eliminating national-colonial oppression.

From the very start, the Soviet state followed a steady, step-by-step Leninist national policy. The first decrees and practical measures it adopted by way of carrying out Lenin's national programme were extremely important in that respect.

The Decree on Peace, drafted by Lenin and adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets on October 26 (November 8), 1917, made it quite clear that the stand taken by the new, workers' and peasants' government on every international issue was well in line with the peoples' vital interests. The Soviet Government denounced the imperialist war in the most resolute terms, describing it as a grave international crime, and demanded a "just and democratic peace", "a peace without any annexations or indemnities". The Decree specified (and this had a direct bearing on the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies) that "in accordance with the legal consciousness of democracy in general and the working classes in particular, the Government takes annexation or the seizure of the lands of others to mean any incorporation with a big or strong state of a small or weak nationality without any clear, precise and voluntary expression of that nationality's consent and desire, regardless of when such forcible incorporation has been carried out and also regardless of how developed or backward the nationality being forcibly incorporated or forcibly held within the borders of the given state is, and finally, regardless of whether that nationality lives in Europe or in distant countries beyond the seas".<sup>1</sup>

This definition of annexation reflected some basic principles of the new, socialist foreign policy: denunciation of aggression in any form, respect for the peoples' right to self-determination, establishment of the principle of equality between big and small nations, and resolute denunciation of any expansionist policy.

Since Russia was a multinational country (where the oppression of non-Russians under tsarism was such that Lenin called Russia a "prison for nations"), great interna-

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1957, p. 12 (in Russian).



tional importance attached to the solution of the burning national question in the young Soviet Republic. Its historical Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, published on November 2 (15), 1917, was among its earliest documents aimed to solve the national question and formulating the basic principles of its national policy. It set out a concrete, clear-cut programme for all-round liberation and national revival of the formerly oppressed nations of Russia, proclaiming the basic principles of the young Soviet state's national policy:

"1. The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.

"2. The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, including secession and the establishment of an independent state.

"3. Abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions.

"4. Free development of national minorities and ethnic groups living on Russia's territory."<sup>1</sup>

The lasting importance of that historical document, adopted on Lenin's initiative, lay in the fact that the young Soviet Republic enacted legislation to eliminate all national inequalities, proclaimed the freedom and sovereignty of every nationality in Russia, and established a policy to ensure unity, friendship, trust and mutual respect among all fraternal peoples.

While carrying out Lenin's national policy in respect of the peoples living on the outskirts of Russia, the Soviet Government also took steps to establish equitable, good-neighbour relations with Asian states bordering on the Soviet Republic.

The Soviet Government's appeal To All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East, published on November 20 (December 3), 1917, was of particular importance in helping all the oppressed nations to see the essence of the Soviet state's new policy. The appeal reaffirmed and further elaborated the basic principles of the Soviet state's foreign policy in respect of the oppressed peoples, which were first proclaimed by the Decree on Peace and the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, namely, the principles of the

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 15.

peoples' freedom and equality, and the Soviet Republic's readiness to give them all-round assistance in their just struggle.

The Soviet Republic did what it could at the time under a programme of practical assistance to the national liberation movement. It is widely known now that it backed the liberation struggle of the peoples of China, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran, Mongolia, Egypt and other countries.

All the early documents and practical measures adopted by the Soviet state in its national policy both inside and outside the country provide vivid examples of the practical implementation of Lenin's strategy and tactics on the national-colonial question. It was Lenin and the Communist Party he led that initiated these major acts.

Lenin's notes "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'", which he wrote in late 1922, showed that he attached great international importance to a solution of the national question within the Soviet Republic. He wrote in respect of the imminent liberation battles in Asia: "It would be unpardonable opportunism if, on the eve of the debut of the East, just as it is awakening, we undermined our prestige with its peoples, even if only by the slightest crudity or injustice towards our own non-Russian nationalities."<sup>1</sup>

After the victory of the October Revolution and the establishment of the world's first proletarian state, Lenin continued his creative theoretical work on the national-colonial question, elaborating its strategy and tactics in the new historical conditions.

He devoted much attention to elaborating the proposition on the need for an alliance between all the anti-imperialist forces. "The Russian revolution showed how the proletarians, after defeating capitalism and uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants, rose up victoriously against medieval oppression. Our Soviet Republic must now muster all the awakening peoples of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism."<sup>2</sup> Lenin further developed this idea in many of his writings. The success of the world's revolutionary liberation process, he wrote, now depended on the strength of the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, pp. 610-11.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

alliance between the world's first Soviet state, the international working class and the national liberation movement.

"The world political situation has now placed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day. World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities..."<sup>1</sup>

The problem of unity between the world's working-class and national liberation movement became particularly important in the light of Lenin's new, post-October formulation of the question of a non-capitalist way of development.<sup>2</sup>

Having established that with the help of the victorious proletariat of the advanced countries the backward countries could bypass the capitalist stage, Lenin did not think it possible to determine in advance all the specific features of the transitional period of these countries on their road to socialism. So, while pointing out the need to give theoretical backing to the possibility of non-capitalist development, he also emphasised: "The necessary means for this cannot be indicated in advance. These will be prompted by practical experience."<sup>3</sup>

To substantiate the possibility of a non-capitalist way of development for backward countries, Lenin drew on revolutionary practice, the evolution of the once-backward peoples of Russia above all. In his report to the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, Lenin spoke of the establishment and strengthening of the Bukhara, Azerbaijan and Armenian Soviet Republics, emphasising: "These republics are proof and corroboration of the fact that the ideas and principles of Soviet government are understood and immediately applicable, not only in the industrially developed countries, not only in those which have a social

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> For details see Chapter 3 of this book.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.

basis like the proletariat, but also in those which have the peasantry as their basis."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin put forward the key principles for an international alliance between the world proletariat and the peasantry of the backward countries which had no proletariat to speak of. Lenin's idea about such an alliance at the first stage of the general crisis of capitalism was brilliantly confirmed by the Soviet Republics of the East and the Mongolian People's Republic.<sup>2</sup> Mongolia's experience proved that a genuine people's revolution could win out even in a backward country with no working class of its own to head the peasant masses.

In defining the first practical steps that had to be taken towards an alliance between the international working-class and national liberation movements, Lenin said that in the backward countries it was possible "to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent".<sup>3</sup> This task had to be assumed by a vanguard revolutionary party based on Marxist-Leninist principles and taking the stand of scientific socialism. Of course, Lenin clearly realised that in backward, largely peasant countries without any proletarian basis it was difficult to set up a party with a science-based socialist ideology and it would take a long time.

Another important question bearing on the tactical and strategic principles of Lenin's doctrine on the national-colonial question is that of the forms of revolutionary struggle. This question has become particularly urgent in view of the attempts to turn a single form of struggle—armed struggle, by the peasants in particular—into an absolute. Lenin took a strong stand against setting up any form of struggle as an absolute, and pointed out the need to realise two important things: "first, that in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or aspects of social activity", and "second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> For details see Part Two of this book.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 96.



Consequently, every earnest and politically mature party should master all the forms of struggle—armed and peaceful, overt and covert—so as to be able to switch to another form if the changing conditions should so require. Unless they did this, Lenin said, the revolutionary forces could be doomed to very great defeats.

In other words, Lenin elaborated a comprehensive theory about the ways and means for the oppressed peoples' national liberation and social emancipation, a theory with covered a broad range of the most important aspects of the strategy and tactics of the national liberation movement under imperialism. Among these are:

— the role and joint action of the chief contingents of the world revolutionary liberation movement—the working class (and after the October Revolution—the socialist system as the main force of the revolutionary process) and the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies in their anti-imperialist struggle;

— the balance of political, class forces in the national liberation movement and the need to establish broad anti-imperialist coalitions;

— the need for all-out support by the socialist system and the international working class for the oppressed peoples' national liberation struggle;

— the possibility that in the new historical conditions (following the victory of the October Revolution), the lagging nations could take a "shortcut" to socialism;

— the importance of equipping the national liberation movement with advanced ideology and establishing a vanguard party to operate on the ideological basis of scientific socialism.

This brief list shows that Lenin made a Marxist elaboration of the fundamental problems of the national liberation movement, laying down the main guidelines for the liberation of the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. His doctrine is of lasting importance, especially now that the formerly oppressed peoples have taken the great road of national revival.

## Leninism and Social Progress in the Developing Countries

The turbulent events of the 20th century have proved beyond any doubt that Leninism has exerted and continues to exert an exceptionally profound influence on world history. That is why many bourgeois ideologists have been casting about for some ideological doctrine that, they hope, would offset the growing influence of Marxist-Leninist ideas on the minds of the broad masses, of all progressive forces. Major importance is considered to be played by nationalism as a kind of antidote against the spread of Marxism-Leninism.

One notable trend here is their attempt to "modernise" the ideology of nationalism and use it for their own class purposes. Thus, Hans Kohn, a leading US sociologist, has described the 20th century as "the age of nationalism",<sup>1</sup> an age in which a powerful burst of national movements has allegedly become the main motive force of social development.

Prof. Roger Hilsman, a well-known US authority on Asia, regards nationalism in the developing countries as "the great barrier to the spread of communism or any outside ideology which is not in tune with nationalism".<sup>2</sup>

Bourgeois ideologists have good reason to seize upon nationalism (particularly in the newly liberated countries) as a means of "warding off" the so-called "communist threat". The world has never had an ideology more attractive than Marxism-Leninism, or more effective from the standpoint of its influence on the revolutionary transformation of the world. The international revolutionary movement of the working class, which emerged and has grown strong on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and its chief creation—the world socialist system—have become the most influential political force of the present day.

The inexorable offensive of the Leninist alliance of the socialist countries, the international working class and the

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism*, New York, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *United States Policy toward Asia. Report and Hearings Held by Subcommittee of the Far East and the Pacific—January 25, 26, 27, February 1, 2, 3, 15, 16, March 8, 9, and 10, 1966*, Washington, 1966, p. 101.

national liberation movement shattered the colonial system with more than 80 sovereign national states springing from its debris to reshape the political map of the world. Colonialism has still survived in individual enclaves, while the decisive battles for the elimination of the system of foreign rule have already been won by the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, who enjoy the broad and all-round support of the world socialist system and the whole international working class.

The collapse of the colonial system of imperialism and the emergence of numerous national states marked the end of a very important stage of national liberation revolutions. The system of colonial rule in the vast deep-rear areas of imperialism has been broken up beyond all repair, and the national liberation movement has achieved one of its main objectives, that of national liberation.

The question now is whether national liberation revolutions have come to an end with the achievement of political independence.

The international communist movement has formulated the conclusion that national liberation revolutions do not end with the achievement of political independence, but, on the contrary, enter a new and much more complicated phase of development, that of struggle against the colonial aftermath.

At the present stage of the national liberation revolution, the newly free nations are confronted with the vital question of the ways of further social development: how are they to leave behind in a relatively short historical period their socio-economic and cultural backwardness and the masses' crying indigence?

The historical record of many newly liberated countries has shown that the capitalist way cannot provide any answers to the urgent problems of the developing nations.

The Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in June 1969 made a thorough analysis of the development of the Third World and formulated this proposition: "Countries which have taken the capitalist road have been unable to solve any of the basic problems facing them. Confronted with rising popular discontent, the internal reactionary forces in these countries are intensifying with imperialist support their assault on democratic freedoms. In

a number of cases they are brutally suppressing the mass democratic and patriotic movements."<sup>1</sup>

The obvious ineffectiveness of the capitalist way has given exceptional importance to the experience of the world socialist system and to the USSR's successful development in particular. "Soviet experience in setting up a multinational socialist state, building a full-scale socialist society through a joint effort by all our nations, and solving the very complicated national problems has met with world-wide recognition and is of invaluable assistance to all fighters for national liberation and social emancipation."<sup>2</sup>

More than a half-century ago, Lenin outlined the prospects for the national liberation movement, emphasising that the anti-colonial struggle of the peoples of the East was bound to develop into a fight against capitalism and for social emancipation.<sup>3</sup> Now that the logic of our day has put forward a historical alternative to the line taking shape in most developing countries, the alternative of a socialist orientation, the relevance and viability of Lenin's methodology for the effort to determine the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions have stood out most clearly. The fight among various trends over the fundamental question of the way ahead is due to opposing class interests. In the broader context, this is an expression of the fight between the forces that want a further deepening of national liberation revolutions and those that want to bring the revolutionary process to a close.

In saying that national liberation revolutions in many countries have been developing a more distinct socialist tenor, one should naturally never oversimplify this complicated phenomenon. Practice shows that if a national liberation revolution is to develop into a socialist one, the masses and all the progressive forces must put in a great deal of strenuous effort. Marxists-Leninists have always faced the task (which has now become particularly urgent) of concentrating all their efforts and attention on "the

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Towards the 50th Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 482.



search after forms of the *transition* or the *approach* to the proletarian revolution".<sup>1</sup>

Ways of development are determined in the course of complicated international and internal political struggle. Different tendencies of social development prevail, depending on the concrete balance of social and political forces and the overall situation inside the country and abroad. On the whole, this process has yet to be completed, but the main groups of countries can already be singled out. First, there are countries which opted for a people's democratic way even while the national liberation struggle was still on; second, those which chose the socialist prospect upon the achievement of political independence and, under revolutionary-democratic leadership, have entered upon the non-capitalist road; third, those whose road is on the whole a capitalist one; and fourth, those which are still at the crossroads, with the question of development way being decided in the course of acute struggle.

In other words, the socially multifaceted Third World is being stratified along several lines.

As we have already mentioned, nationalism—a bourgeois ideology—has its own historical phases of development. It has played an important role in the struggle for national independence. It is obvious, however, that in some countries, where upon the winning of national independence power fell into the hands of the national bourgeoisie, bourgeois nationalism is going through a crisis. The reactionary wing of the national bourgeoisie—chiefly the big bourgeoisie—seeks to overcome this crisis by strident insistence on a stronger alliance with the imperialist bourgeoisie, which is being regarded as less and less of an enemy and more and more of a "class partner". In other words, now that the developing countries have entered upon the stage of socio-economic transformations, which are designed to ensure their economic independence, and that bourgeois nationalism has fulfilled its historically progressive role in the struggle for political independence, its narrow, bourgeois class message and limitations stand out in ever stronger relief. Many ideologists of the national bourgeoisie have acknowledged the crisis of bourgeois-nati-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 92.

onalist ideology and the existence of a so-called "ideological vacuum", and have been urging a renewal of their ideological arsenal.

The growing crisis tendencies in bourgeois-nationalist ideology show that the bourgeoisie in the developing countries cannot carry through the vital tasks of liberation revolutions to the very end. When the development of a national liberation revolution poses the task of consistent implementation of a general democratic programme, bourgeois-nationalist ideology is no longer as effective as it used to be. Consequently, the aggravating crisis of bourgeois nationalism stems from the contradiction between the objective need to complete the national liberation revolution and carry out radical socio-economic transformations, and the bourgeoisie's inability (or reluctance) consistently to tackle these tasks.

That contradiction lays on objective basis for the emergence of essentially new, revolutionary-democratic ideological concepts, which not only do not defend capitalism, but level resolute criticism against it and uphold a programme of non-capitalist development. Although these concepts are not always consistent, they reflect the democratic, progressive aspirations of petty-bourgeois revolutionary democrats in countries, who have already rejected various anti-communist preconceptions and reactionary policy at home and abroad, and have to some extent decided to co-operate with the Communists.

This recent development within the national liberation movement reflects the transitional nature of the developing countries' system and the greater revolutionary potentialities of the intermediate sections after the winning of national independence. These sections are being increasingly caught up in the whirlpool of class struggle, but, though taking an objectively progressive stand, have yet to realise fully and correctly the political meaning and character of this struggle, to say nothing of solving the problem of development prospects from the standpoint of scientific socialism. Their ideology embodies the masses' spontaneous striving towards social justice, material well-being, and "socialised" forms of production and distribution. At the same time, this ideology is burdened with various preconceptions and religious-idealistic views and is sometimes a

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mélange of utopian socialist ideas and bourgeois reformism.

Under the vast and ever growing impact of the world socialist system, revolutionary democrats in the newly liberated countries have put forward a general democratic programme, which is bound to deepen the national liberation revolution and lead to a whole range of democratic transformations aimed at a non-capitalist future.

The theory and practice of political leaders guided by transitional ideological concepts, while still being fairly progressive in historical terms, is full of deep-going inner contradictions. As the revolutionary democrats improve their ideology and gradually come to realise the great importance of scientific socialism and the historical role of the working class, this progressive process may open up broad new prospects for the spread and establishment of Marxist-Leninist ideology among the working people of the developing countries.

The objective historical processes going forward in the developing countries, the steadily shrinking sphere of influence of bourgeois Right-nationalist ideology, its weakening impact, the growing influence of revolutionary-democratic forces, and the existence of a truly scientific, revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theory have created favourable conditions for adapting "to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries", and applying "that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's words are still relevant today, for the peasantry is still the most massive social force in the developing countries.

L. I. Brezhnev said to the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in June 1969: "The central question of the revolutionary process in Asia and Africa today is that of the attitude of the peasantry, which make up a majority of the population." He went on to point out that the peasantry there was still a spontaneous force and put forward the most important task of setting up a lasting alliance between the working class and the peasantry in these countries. "The alliance of the working class and the peasantry makes it

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

possible to carry the national liberation revolutions to the end, totally eliminate the legacy of colonialism, and make the movement to socialism more confident and purposeful."<sup>1</sup>

Under the vast and ever growing all-round influence of the world socialist system, now that socialist ideas have won over the minds of the broadest masses throughout the world and that the transition from capitalism to socialism is the main content of the present epoch, revolutionary democrats in the newly liberated countries have come out with a general democratic programme aimed to overcome the limitations of bourgeois nationalism, going beyond its framework, and providing for concrete forms and methods of deepening the national liberation revolution and carrying out a whole range of democratic transformations by way of non-capitalist development.

"*Socialist orientation*" is a term that is now coming into general use. What is its essence and socio-political content?

The "socialist orientation" of some newly liberated countries is a type of transition to socialism in the epoch of the existence of a world socialist system, a type under which the historically inevitable and relatively long stage of democratic transformations in the lagging countries is being carried out under the leadership of non-proletarian revolutionary democrats (rather than the bourgeoisie or the proletariat). As these transformations are being carried out in the course of acute struggle and constant stratification within the ranks of the revolutionary democrats, their most consistent and revolutionary section is objectively capable of taking the stand of scientific socialism and will apparently gradually do so.

All these transformations will lay the groundwork for actual transition to socialism only where this kind of evolution does occur. Unless it does, the revolutionary petty-bourgeois dictatorship tends to merely pave the way for the subsequent establishment of political rule by the bourgeoisie and abolition of progressive achievements.

Naturally, in every individual instance, the progressive evolution of the petty-bourgeois democracy will be distinct

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 153.

in form, method, and duration. Another point to emphasise is that the evolution of revolutionary-democratic dictatorships and the peaceful forms of transition to socialism it involves do not mean that there is no political struggle. Quite the contrary: non-capitalist development is not only an advance along the road of economic and social progress, but a long drawn-out process of class struggle, which is influenced both by internal and external factors.

Whether the class limitation of the petty-bourgeois dictatorship is fully overcome, and the non-capitalist way ends with transition to socialist construction proper, depends on the vigour, awareness and organisation of the urban and rural sections of the working people and the progressive intelligentsia, on their unity and the skill of all true democrats and revolutionaries in using all the factors that are favourable to socialism, tilting the balance of forces in their favour, and securing the support of the bulk of the people.

At the present stage of the national liberation movement, when pressing radical social tasks are being tackled and socialist orientation is shaping out as the highroad for the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, particularly great attention attaches to Lenin's doctrine on the national-colonial question, Lenin's plan of socialist construction, with resolute struggle against "Left"- and Right-wing opportunism, and against any deviations from the correct line.

## CHAPTER 2

### LENIN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST SECTARIANISM AND DOGMATISM ON THE NATIONAL-COLONIAL QUESTION<sup>1</sup>

#### Lenin on the International Importance of the Soviet Republic's National Policy

Right after the October Revolution, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government headed by Lenin began implementing the political strategy and tactics on the national-colonial question which Lenin had worked out before the October Revolution. The very first decrees and declarations issued by the Soviet power denounced colonial oppression in resolute and unconditional terms, and proclaimed the full equality of all the nations and nationalities of former tsarist Russia.

Lenin always devoted close attention to state, economic, and cultural construction, and the work of Party and Soviet organs in the national areas and republics, and took a direct part in tackling the complicated problems of their all-round development.

On January 7, 1918, Lenin received a group of Moslems—deputies of the Constituent Assembly. He proposed the establishment of a central Moslem agency. Sharif Monatov, one of the Moslem group, wrote in his memoirs that "four or five days later, Lenin signed a decree on the Central Moslem Commissariat [the decree was signed on January 17, 1918.—*Author.*], and we set to work under the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter deals largely with Lenin's work in elaborating the national-colonial question at the Second Congress of the Comintern.



great leader”<sup>1</sup>. The Central Moslem Commissariat (headed by M. Vakhitov<sup>2</sup>) and its organs in the localities did a great deal to help the Communist Party and the Soviet Government in their work among the formerly oppressed nations of the East.

On June 14, 1918, Lenin and Vakhitov addressed all the working Moslems of Russia, urging them to stand up in defence of their own rights and together with the working class, to rebuff the whiteguards<sup>3</sup> and interventionists<sup>4</sup>. The Central Moslem Commissariat set up an International Propaganda Department, aimed to “involve the backward peoples of the East in social life, for which purpose the Department shall carry out agitation among these peoples on an international scale to organise the young proletarian forces of the East. In its efforts to realise Karl Marx’s slogan—to unite the workers of all countries—the Department shall publish in Turkish the newspaper *Yeni Dünya*.”<sup>5</sup>

The First Congress of Moslem Communists (Bolsheviks) (that is, Communists from nationalities professing the Moslem religion) opened in Moscow on November 4, 1918. It was attended by 46 delegates from the eastern areas of former tsarist Russia, and from the Volga and the Urals areas (according to the Credentials Committee, they spoke for more than 21,000 Moslem Communists). In its resolution “On the Programme”, the Congress said: “The First Congress of Moslem Communists (Bolsheviks) has resolved to adopt in full and without debate the programme of the RCP(B).”<sup>6-7</sup> The Congress decided to set up a 26-member

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from “At the Cradle of the Sister-Republics”, an article by R. Lavrov and M. Saidasheva in *Druzhiba narodov*, No. 8, 1964, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Mulla-Nur Vakhitov (1885-1918)—a Tatar revolutionary, member of the Kazan Military Revolutionary Committee, Commissar of the Central Moslem Commissariat under the People’s Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities. Shot by the whiteguards in Kazan on August 18, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> The whiteguards were members of armed counter-revolutionary units, which fought together with the interventionists against the Soviet power and were crushed by the Red Army.

<sup>4</sup> See *Decrees of the Soviet Power*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1959, p. 436 (in Russian).

<sup>5</sup> Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU Central Committee (elsewhere, CPA IML).

<sup>6</sup> RCP(B)—in March 1918 the RSDLP(B) was renamed RCP(B)—Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

<sup>7</sup> CPA IML.

Central Bureau of Moslem Organisations of the RCP(B) (in 1919, it was renamed the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East).

The progressive part of the working people of Russia’s eastern areas came to realise the profound significance of the October Revolution, and saw that their peoples’ genuine national revival was possible only in alliance with and under the guidance of the Russian working class. In mid-November 1917, following a victorious uprising of the working people and with the help of Soviet Russia, a Turkestan<sup>1</sup> Council of People’s Commissars was set up in Tashkent, and in April 1918, the working people of Turkestan proclaimed its autonomy and the incorporation of the Autonomous Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic in the RSFSR.

Lenin, who believed that the way to establish direct and fruitful relations with the national liberation movements in the colonial East was to solve the national question within the boundaries of the old Russian Empire, played the leading part in elaborating the essential propositions and also in the practical implementation of the national policy to be followed by the Communist Party and the Soviet Government, a policy of vast international importance.

At the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East (Moscow, November 22-December 3, 1919), convened by the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East under the RCP(B) Central Committee, Lenin summed up the first practical results of the Party and Government’s national policy.

The Congress was attended by 71 delegates with vote and 11 with voice from the Communist organisations of Turkestan, Azerbaijan, Khiva, Bukhara, Tataria, Chuvashia, Bashkiria and other areas (45,000 Moslem Communists in all). Lenin addressed the Congress on its opening day. In defining the place of the national liberation movement in the world revolutionary process, Lenin emphasised: “The subject of my address is current affairs, and it seems to me that the most essential aspects of this question at present are

<sup>1</sup> Turkestan comprised the territory of the present-day Soviet Republics of Central Asia and Southern Kazakhstan.

the attitude of the peoples of the East to imperialism ... this revolutionary movement of the peoples of the East can now develop effectively, can reach a successful issue, only in direct association with the revolutionary struggle of our Soviet Republic against international imperialism.”<sup>1</sup>

He pointed out that the ways of revolution in the colonial and dependent countries were novel and complicated and said: “The period of the awakening of the East in the contemporary revolution is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not to be simply objects of the enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, the need for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.”<sup>2</sup>

The Congress adopted a resolution on Lenin’s report which said: “Rumblings of indignation against the oppressive Entente have been spreading across the East, and it is not long before the peoples of the enslaved East will rise up together with the West European working class to overthrow the dictatorship of World Imperialism for good.”<sup>3</sup>

Another resolution (on the Party-organisational question) said that a Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East was to be established under the RCP(B) Central Committee,<sup>4</sup> which was to be responsible for “agitation and propaganda among the peoples of the East, elaborate questions of Party and Soviet construction, and raise these before Party and Soviet institutions”. It was to be “directly subordinate to the Central Committee as a functional department”.<sup>5</sup>

After the Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, the Party stepped up its efforts in solving the national problem. Lenin pointed out the most democratic and effective form of statehood to ensure the elimination of national oppression and inequality, which

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> CPA IML.

<sup>4</sup> CPA IML.

<sup>5</sup> CPA IML.

was to unite the various nations in a Soviet federation—an integral state entity, a union of equal nations.

On May 19, 1920, Lenin signed a decree “On the State System of the Autonomous Soviet Bashkirian Republic”, and on May 27—“On the Autonomous Tatar Socialist Republic”. A Soviet of People’s Representatives met in Khiva on May 27, 1920, and proclaimed the establishment of the Khorezm People’s Soviet Republic. By the end of the Civil War (1918-1920), four Soviet Socialist Republics had already been established: the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR, and the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (TSFSR), which comprised Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia; two People’s Soviet Republics, and also the Far Eastern Republic.<sup>1</sup>

The Bukhara and Khorezm People’s Soviet Republics<sup>2</sup> were a transitional form of Soviet national-democratic statehood on the way to socialist statehood. Soviet national-democratic statehood helped to lay the groundwork for a gradual emergence of new, socialist relations among the peoples of the national outskirts still dominated by feudal relations. A number of autonomous socialist republics and areas (including those for the Eastern nationalities) were established on the territory of the RSFSR.

Relations of equality, fraternal solidarity and friendship were gradually taking shape among the nations of former tsarist Russia, and the Communist Party was scoring its first successes in the establishment of new national relations within the multinational state of proletarian dictatorship. This was of great international importance, for in socio-economic development level, culture, national traditions, everyday life and often in religion as well, the peoples of the Soviet East had much in common with those of the colonial and dependent countries of Asia and Africa.

<sup>1</sup> The Far Eastern Republic (FER) was a democratic state set up in 1920 under Bolshevik leadership in the course of the working people’s struggle against the foreign intervention and the whiteguards in the Soviet Far East. In 1922, it was incorporated in the RSFSR.

<sup>2</sup> When the state boundaries of the Central Asian Soviet Republics were later fixed according to the national principle, the territory of the Bukhara and Khorezm Republics was incorporated in Uzbek, Turkmen and Tajik Soviet Socialist Republics.



## Lenin's View of the Specific Revolutionary Task of the National Liberation Movement

The extremely valuable historical experience of the October Revolution and national construction in Soviet Russia was a most important theoretical and practical discovery for the national liberation movement. The world's Communists now had to set up organisations working within a common anti-imperialist front in the colonial and dependent countries, and also to determine the prospects of national liberation revolutions. Life itself urged a consideration of the national and colonial questions in the Comintern.

In the course of socialist construction in Soviet Russia, the communist doctrine was being used to ensure the genuine liberation and all-round development of the peoples still living in medieval conditions. To tackle this problem on an international scale the Communists had to work out special tactics and choose specific forms of struggle, and the Second Congress of the Comintern met in July and August 1920 to elaborate these on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

On March 2, 1919, an International Communist Conference opened in Moscow. On March 4, the Conference resolved to constitute itself as the Third, Communist International, with Marxism-Leninism as its ideological basis. Lenin became the ideological leader of the new organisation of world proletarian solidarity and brotherhood. The Conference continued its work as the first, constituent congress of the Communist International. Considering the political situation at the time, it drew the conclusion that the chief and decisive battles between the international proletariat and the world bourgeoisie would be fought in Europe, and addressed a manifesto to the peoples of the East, which said: "Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship striking in Europe will sound your liberation as well!"<sup>1</sup>

In 1918, 1919 and 1920, the anti-imperialist movement spread far and wide across Asia and Northern Africa, from Korea to Morocco. In February 1919, a revolution was carried off in Afghanistan, and was followed by a defensive war against the British aggression; in March, a massive

<sup>1</sup> *First Congress of the Communist International*, Minutes, Moscow, 1933, p. 207 (in Russian).

anti-British national liberation movement started in Egypt, and the Korean people rose up against the Japanese. From 1918 to 1922, all India seethed in a massive anti-British movement. The May 4 Movement started in China; in March 1920, an anti-imperialist war broke out in Turkey, and in April, there was an uprising in Iranian Azerbaijan; in June, a revolutionary government was formed in Northern Iran, and in July, the people of Iraq rose up against the British rule.

These turbulent events meant the opening of another broad front in the fight against imperialism. A special feature here was that the national liberation movement was headed by the national bourgeoisie, bourgeois intellectuals, anti-imperialist officers and even patriotically-minded feudals.

The peasantry and the working class made up the massive basis of the anti-imperialist struggle. Now and again they refused to take orders from the national bourgeoisie, but as a rule still followed in its wake. No influential Communist parties had yet emerged anywhere in the East, and the working class itself had yet to realise its special historical mission. The ideology of scientific socialism was just beginning to penetrate the working-class movement in the Asian countries.

There was a sharp surge of interest in the Russian revolution among the peoples of the East and national liberation leaders. Dozens of delegations from Asian countries were being sent over to Soviet Russia to find out the truth about the October Revolution and establish contact with the Soviet Government. The People's Commissar<sup>1</sup> for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, had every reason to report to the VTsIK<sup>2</sup> on June 17, 1920: "We have been gradually establishing direct contacts with peoples in the East fighting against capitalist oppression."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> People's Commissar—head of a People's Commissariat, the central state organ of the Soviet country or of its Republics, in charge of an individual sector of state administration. In 1946, the People's Commissariats were reorganised into Ministries.

<sup>2</sup> VTsIK—the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, the RSFSR's supreme legislative, administrative and controlling organ of the day.

<sup>3</sup> G. V. Chicherin, *Articles and Speeches on International Politics*, Moscow, 1961, p. 168 (in Russian).



Back in the summer of 1918, Sun Yat-sen, the Chinese national-democratic leader, said in a telegram to Lenin: "The Kuomintang expresses its high respect for the hard and remarkable struggle of the members of your country's revolutionary Party, and hopes that the revolutionary parties of China and Russia will unite to wage a joint struggle."<sup>1</sup> On April 26, 1920, the head of independent Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, sent a message to Lenin, which said: "We pledge to join all our work and military operations with those of the Russian Bolsheviks, whose purpose is to fight the imperialist governments and liberate all the oppressed from their power."<sup>2</sup> Many other leaders of the national liberation movement also voiced their desire to be friends and co-operate with the Soviet Republic in their anti-imperialist struggle.

No doubt, one difficulty was that while agreeing to establish friendly relations with the state of proletarian dictatorship, some national liberation leaders refused to carry out any socio-economic transformations in the interests of the broad masses and often persecuted Communists and patriots in their own countries. Bourgeois and feudal nationalists sought to fan nationalist and religious fanaticism so as to bar the way to Marxism and internationalism. Their efforts, however, were all in vain.

The first, small Communist parties and groups were now beginning to emerge in some Asian and African countries. Their leaders had to make up their mind about their attitude to the national-revolutionary forces heading the liberation process. The Comintern was thus faced with the urgent need to determine the stand to be taken by the world communist movement in respect of the national liberation movement led by bourgeois nationalists, and with the questions of the strategy and tactics of the Communist parties and groups in the liberation movement in various countries.

Lenin, who even before the October Revolution had provided the world working-class and national liberation movements with a brilliant theoretical analysis of the

<sup>1</sup> Sun Yat-sen, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1964, p. 29 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in A. N. Heifets, *Soviet Russia and Neighbouring Countries of the East (1918-1920)*, Moscow, 1964, p. 107 (in Russian).

specifics of development in the colonial world, and with a Bolshevik programme on the national question, kept a close watch on the turbulent and complicated events taking place in the East, and made a profound study of the new balance of forces in the world arena, which had taken shape with the emergence of another vigorous front of struggle against imperialism—that of the colonial outskirts. In doing so, Lenin took a resolute stand against any mechanistic application of the Marxist propositions that were relevant in capitalist Europe to the semi-feudal countries of Asia and Africa.

The post-October upswing in the national liberation movement in Asia and Northern Africa had thus given rise to an objective need to study and generalise the latest valuable experience of struggle, and to help the young working class and all the revolutionary forces in the colonial and dependent countries to work out their own strategy and tactics. The Communists had to decide upon their attitude to the multiclass liberation movements in Asia and Africa, and the Communist International had to work for a solution of these complicated problems.

In early 1920, the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) resolved to hold its Second Congress in July 1920. The national and colonial questions were put on the agenda, and Lenin was to give a report on the subject.

At the time he devoted much attention (as a leader of the world revolutionary movement) to two major problems: the fight against sectarianism and dogmatism, and the definition of the chief motive forces of the national liberation movement (in the East above all) and its role in the world revolutionary process. He made a close study of various writings on these very complicated questions.

In the first few days of June 1920, he drew up a rough plan for his report at the Congress, and by June 5 had written his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions (for the Second Congress of the Communist International)". A thing to note is that most of the items in the draft dealt with the national question in the developed capitalist countries (he mentioned Austria, the Balkans, the Polish, Jewish and Ukrainian questions, Alsace, Lorraine, Belgium, national relations on the territory of the former Russian Empire, the American Negroes, and so on),



and only the last two of the 15 items dealt with the colonies and semi-colonies proper.

As he worked on the draft, however, he changed the balance, in effect merging the national and colonial questions into one, national-colonial question. On June 5, Lenin circulated his original draft among a group of comrades, asking them to let him "have their opinions, amendments, addenda and concrete remarks *in the most concise form (no more than two or three pages)*".<sup>1</sup> By June 14, he had received reviews from G. V. Chicherin, N. N. Krestinsky, J. V. Stalin, Y. A. Preobrazhensky, N. D. Lapinsky, the Bulgarian Communist I. Nedelkov (N. Shablin), and a group of Communists from Turkestan, Bashkiria and Kirghizia, and later also from M. G. Rafes.

In his review, G. V. Chicherin drew the wrong conclusion that national uprisings under super-imperialism were pointless and illusory. Lenin thought this to be wrong. He maintained that a major task of the international communist movement was to set up and strengthen an alliance between the proletariat of the West and the peasantry of the colonial and dependent countries. He repeatedly emphasised the importance of work among the peasantry, and of establishing a worker-peasant alliance both on a national and an international, world scale. He wrote in the margins of Chicherin's review: "I lay *greater* stress on the alliance with the *peasantry* (which does *not quite* mean the bourgeoisie)." <sup>2</sup> Chicherin also said that an alliance between the forces of national liberation revolutions and the national bourgeoisie would only do where they had to eliminate local feudalism propped up by the colonial powers' bayonets, as, say, in Persia. Lenin replied that Persia was not alone and that the bulk of the colonies and semi-colonies were in a similar situation.

Stalin wrote a short review, suggesting a confederation instead of a federation as the basis for the organisational form of union of fraternal nations, because the former, he thought, would be more in line with a future union of advanced socialist nations. But Lenin did not agree.

He came out strongly against the remarks made by

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 555.

Preobrazhensky, who did not agree with Lenin's proposition on the unconditional need for a close and voluntary economic alliance between the Soviet Republics within a future federation. Preobrazhensky wrote: "...if it proves impossible to reach economic agreement with the leading national groups, the latter will inevitably be suppressed by force and economically important regions will be compelled to join a union of European Republics." Lenin's objection was categorical: This "goes too far. It cannot be proved, and it is wrong to say that *suppression* by force is 'inevitable'. That is radically wrong."<sup>1</sup>

Having considered all these reviews, Lenin made some minor changes and made the theses available to the press. On June 14, 1920, they were published by *The Communist International* (No. 11).

What are Lenin's main ideas as set out in his famous theses? He later said to the Second Congress: "... what is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasise this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish the concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems." He further emphasised that "this idea of distinction, of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through the theses..."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin also said that "the second basic idea in our theses is that, in the present world situation following the imperialist war, reciprocal relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia. Unless we bear that in mind, we shall not be able to pose a single national or colonial problem correctly, even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world. The Communist parties, in civilised and backward countries

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 555.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 240, 241.



alike, can pose and solve political problems correctly only if they make this postulate their starting-point.”<sup>1</sup>

“Third, I should like especially to emphasise the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries.”<sup>2</sup> His theses emphasised “the need, in backward countries, to give special support to the peasant movement against the landowners, against landed proprietorship, and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism, and to strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character by establishing the closest possible alliance between the West-European communist proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East, in the colonies, and in the backward countries generally”.<sup>3</sup>

In elaborating his thesis on the specifics of the balance of class forces in the colonial and dependent countries, Lenin pointed out that the Communist International had to support bourgeois-democratic national movements in the colonial and backward countries. But, he said, that support did not imply any abandonment of independence by the communist movement. The working class, he wrote, had to fight for “a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form”.<sup>4</sup>

### Lenin's Fight Against Left-Wing Opportunism in the National-Colonial Question

The Second Congress of the Comintern opened in Petrograd on July 19, 1920. Lenin gave a report on the international situation and the Comintern's main tasks.

By July 23, the Congress and its bodies had moved to Moscow, where the delegates heard and approved the report of the Credentials Committee. The Congress was attended by 169 delegates with vote and 49 delegates with voice representing 67 workers' organisations and Commu-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 149

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 150.

nist parties from 37 countries, among them China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Iraq, Turkey and some other Eastern countries.

On the following day, July 24, Lenin was elected spokesman for the RCP(B) delegation to the following commissions: on the international situation, on the Comintern's main tasks, on the national and colonial questions, and on the agrarian question.

The Commission on the National and Colonial Questions, headed by Lenin, had 20 members—spokesmen for the Communists of Austria, Britain, Bulgaria, China, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, the USA and Yugoslavia. On July 25, the Commission started its work by discussing Lenin's theses and some additional theses drawn up by the delegate of the Mexican Communist Party, Roy.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the proceedings in the Commissions were not taken down in shorthand. The minutes of the debate taken by M. Pavlovich briefly stated: “The Commission on the National and Colonial Questions, which debated Comrade Lenin's theses on these questions, heard reports by all the members of the Commission—delegates from Korea, China, India, Persia, Bulgaria, Hungary, America and Britain. These interesting reports would make up a full book.”<sup>2</sup> The Commission's sittings were the scene of a sharp and fundamentally important debate between Lenin's and Roy's supporters.

The ideological contradictions between Lenin and Roy bore on the major, cardinal questions of the Communists' strategy and tactics in the national-colonial question. First, Lenin and Roy gave a different assessment of the specifics of the socio-economic structure in the colonial and dependent countries. Lenin emphasised: “The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries”,<sup>3</sup> and “a large part of the population are *peasants under medieval exploitation*”.<sup>4</sup> Lenin

<sup>1</sup> Manabendra Nath Roy (actual name Narendranath Bhattacharya, 1889-1954) began his political career in 1910 in India.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, July 27, 1920 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 202.



believed that the main task of national liberation revolutions was to fight against foreign imperialism and the local feudalism it was trying to preserve.

As for Roy, he started from the *a priori* prerequisite that "as we know, there is no feudalism in India.... Feudalism as the basis of social economy received its first blow—which was also its death-blow—in the first years of the British rule (in the middle of the 18th century)",<sup>1</sup> and so reduced the main task of the national liberation movement to that of struggle against foreign imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. Roy later wrote in his memoirs that he had disagreed with Lenin's thesis that imperialism was keeping the colonial countries within the framework of feudal social relations, which "hindered the development of capitalism and thwarted the ambition of the native bourgeoisie".<sup>2</sup> Such was the chief contradiction between Lenin and Roy on one of the major problems of the strategy and tactics of national liberation revolutions.

Second, Lenin believed that "the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries" and "enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries",<sup>3</sup> always maintaining the independence of the proletarian movement in the struggle against imperialism and local feudalism. It followed from Lenin's thesis that if the Communists were to become a massive and revolutionary force, they had to work in alliance with the other liberation forces, lending effective support to various anti-imperialist movements.

In opposition to this, Roy said that "support for the colonial bourgeois-democratic movement would mean promoting the development of the national spirit, which would undoubtedly make it harder for the masses to awake to a class awareness, whereas encouragement and support of massive revolutionary action through a proletarian Communist Party would awaken the real revolutionary forces to doing things that would not only enable them to overthrow

<sup>1</sup> M. N. Roy "India in a Transition Stage", *The Communist International*, Vol. III, No. 19, 1921, p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, p. 379.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 149-50.

foreign imperialism, but would also lead to the development of the Soviet power". Roy's point was the sectarian proposition that "the national movement in India inasmuch as the broad movement concerned, has nothing in common with the national liberation movement".<sup>1</sup> An item in the Congress signed "G.S." (G. Safarov) quoted Roy as saying "the nationalist movement chiefly rests on the middle masses.... The revolutionary strike movement of the masses makes its own way."<sup>2</sup> So, having drawn a contrast between these two major contingents of the anti-imperialist movement, Roy thought that the struggle for national independence had no connection. Moreover, he proposed that a paragraph on the Communist parties to support the bourgeois-democratic movement in the Eastern countries should be drawn from Lenin's theses. Pavlovich's minutes of the Congress sitting said that Lenin took a resolute stand against Roy's views. Roy wrote in his memoirs: "I disagreed with Lenin's view that the nationalist bourgeoisie played a revolutionary role and therefore should be supported by the Communists."<sup>3</sup> In other words, Lenin and Roy differed on the question of the motive forces behind national liberation revolutions and the class alliances with these. Consequently, the Congress brought out two diametrically opposite attitudes to some fundamental questions of liberation revolutions in colonial and dependent countries.

Third, even before the Second Congress, Lenin had clearly established that Communists in the countries of the East would have to base themselves "on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken those peoples, and which has its historical justification".<sup>4</sup> Lenin believed that bourgeois nationalism in colonial and dependent countries was objectively progressive and that bourgeois nationalists were capable of consolidating the masses and rallying them to the fight against imperialism under their own slogans. But Roy cut across this

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of the Second Congress...*, July 27, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 355.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 162.



known historical facts and said that "the masses of India are not infected by the national spirit" and that "tens of millions of people are absolutely not interested in bourgeois-nationalist slogans".<sup>1</sup> He wrote in his *Memoirs*: "I disagreed with Lenin's view that nationalism was a revolutionary force."<sup>2</sup> That basic difference in the assessment of bourgeois nationalism in the colonial and dependent countries was a reflection of the two diametrically opposite attitudes to national liberation movements.

Fourth, Lenin took a realistic view of the situation in the countries of the East, and this is how he analysed the question of the prospects for the emergence and development of proletarian parties<sup>3</sup> in the colonial and dependent countries: "It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties in these backward countries, if indeed they can emerge in them, can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support."<sup>4</sup> Where Communist parties after all emerged, he advocated the need to "adjust... the Communist Party (its membership, special tasks) to the level of the peasant countries of the colonial East.

"This is the crux of the matter."<sup>5</sup>

Some time later (on November 5, 1921), in replying to a question from a Mongolian delegation, who asked him if the People's Revolutionary Party should be transformed into a Communist Party, Lenin said: "I should not recommend it, because one party cannot be 'transformed' into another.... The revolutionaries will have to put in a good deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities before the herdsman elements become a proletarian mass, which may eventually help to 'transform' the People's Revolutionary Party into a Communist Party. A mere change of signboards is harmful and dangerous."<sup>6</sup>

Roy was convinced that India had "elements for the

<sup>1</sup> *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. I, 1917-1922, New Delhi, 1972, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, p. 355.

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 241-42.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 361.

creation of a strong Communist Party".<sup>1</sup> He engaged in wishful thinking and sought to prove that "where leadership in the colonies is in the hands of a communist vanguard from the very start, the revolutionary masses cannot lose their way".<sup>2</sup> Hence his sectarian conclusion that "the Communist International should help solely to create and develop the communist movement in India, and the Communist Party of India must concern itself only with organising the broad masses to fight for their class interests".<sup>3</sup>

And finally, fifth, Lenin believed unity of action of all the anti-imperialist revolutionary forces to be a basic prerequisite for the successful advance of the world liberation movement. Attaching much importance to the national liberation movement in the anti-imperialist struggle, Lenin said: "...the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism."<sup>4</sup> In other words, Lenin saw the national liberation movement as a stream of the world anti-imperialist movement. As for Roy, he believed that the future of the European revolutionary movement entirely depended on the course of the revolution in the East. Unless there was a revolution in the Eastern countries, he said, the communist movement in the West could amount to nothing. Naturally, Lenin could not agree with this anti-Marxist thesis, which turned upside down some important problems of the world revolutionary process.

The advocates of creative Marxism-Leninism and the Left sectarians were locked in sharp polemics, with almost all the delegations setting out their own views. Lenin and his followers managed to maintain their line, notably on the national-colonial question. Lenin's corrections altered the wording and the spirit of Roy's theses to a considerable degree. Here is an indicative episode. Lenin knew that the

<sup>1</sup> *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. I, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin of the Second Congress...*, July 27, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. I, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 159.



Italian delegate Serrati<sup>1</sup> had some objections to his theses, but the latter decided not to attend or speak before the Commission. So Lenin sent him a note saying: "Why hasn't any Italian comrade been attending the colonial commission to stand up for your idea that *the bourgeois-democratic movement should not be given any support?*"<sup>2</sup>

On July 26, Lenin delivered to a plenary sitting of the Congress a short report (which he described as an introduction) on the work of the Commission. He said: "Our commission have unanimously adopted both the preliminary theses, as amended, and the supplementary theses. We have thus reached complete unanimity on all major issues."<sup>3</sup>

He outlined the major propositions of the theses and gave an account of the main changes and addenda and the most controversial issues. He said: "We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the 'bourgeois-democratic' movement.... The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary."<sup>4</sup> Lenin said to the Commission in this context: "The use of *medieval particularism*? Too dangerous; not Marxist.

"*Modern* national movements should be distinguished from 'movements' (so-called *movements*) of a medieval nature."<sup>5</sup>

Lenin's report at the plenary session gave an all-round theoretical assessment of the potential possibility for the economically backward nations to take the non-capitalist way.

<sup>1</sup> Giacinto Menotti Serrati (1872-1926)—Italian Socialist and later Communist. Head of the Italian delegation at the Second Congress of the Comintern.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 51, p. 244 (5th Russ. ed.).

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 241, 242.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 203.

When Lenin ended, the floor was taken by H. Maring, delegate from Dutch India and the Secretary of the Commission, who spoke of the editorial changes in the theses. After that, Roy read out his "Supplementary Theses", which, to quote Maring, the Commission "had thoroughly considered". Roy continued to insist on his erroneous views, which he had set out in his theses and which the Commission had rejected. Thus, it had rejected the thesis that the masses did not support bourgeois-nationalist leaders and went their own way towards revolution, a way independent of the bourgeois-nationalist movement. In his speech now, Roy ignored the facts and sought to prove that a mass movement had emerged in India which was "not controlled by the revolutionary nationalists, but is developing independently in spite of the fact that nationalists are endeavouring to make use of it for their own purposes".<sup>1</sup>

On Lenin's proposal, the Commission had deleted Roy's Thesis No. 10, which gave a sectarian assessment of the stand taken by the National bourgeoisie. Still, Roy told the plenary session: "Until lately there were in the colonies only bourgeois national revolutionary movements, whose only aim it has been to replace the foreign exploiters in order to be able to do the exploiting themselves."<sup>2</sup> In other words, although Roy had partially corrected his theses, on the whole he continued to maintain his Left-opportunist stand.

In the debate that followed, Iranian deputy Sultan-Zade said that the thesis on the need to support bourgeois-democratic national movements in the colonial countries was incorrect. He had not drawn any correct conclusions from Lenin's remarks, and so his speech abounded in Left-sectarian mistakes. He said that to support such movements "would mean leading the masses to counter-revolution", and urged the need to "create a purely communist movement in opposition to the bourgeois-democratic movement".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.



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<sup>2</sup> *Second Congress of the Communist International*, Minutes, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.



decided to set forth his views before the plenary session, was also opposed to Lenin's line. He said that he saw the theses on the national-colonial question as "a grave danger for the communist proletariat", because "the entire struggle for national liberation carried on by the democratic bourgeoisie, even when insurrectionary methods are employed, is not a revolutionary movement".<sup>1</sup> He denied the possibility of a broad anti-imperialist front, and said that "the class struggle in the so-called backward countries can be carried on only when the proletariat preserves its independence of the exploiters, even of those bourgeois democrats calling themselves revolutionary nationalists.

"Only, by means of a proletarian revolution and through the Soviet regime can the subject nations obtain their freedom. This cannot be done by temporary alliances of the Communists with the bourgeois parties called nationalist revolutionists."<sup>2</sup> Serrati rounded off his speech by proposing a resolution which emphasised that the working class "must not support the bourgeoisie even in backward countries, on peril of losing one's class position and class consciousness".<sup>3</sup>

In this way, two fairly definite tendencies in the approach to the national-colonial question now came to light within the world revolutionary movement: one of these, the tendency of political realism, which reflected the real needs of the movement, took creative account of the concrete socio-economic conditions and the balance of class forces in the East; the other was Left-sectarian, dogmatic, and fraught with the danger of the Communists' self-isolation from the national liberation movement.

The Comintern Congress showed a high level of ideological maturity. It gave its vigorous support to Lenin's analysis, conclusions and tactics on the national and colonial questions. A resolution adopted on Lenin's report said that imperialism was the chief enemy of the colonial peoples, and that the paramount task of the national liberation movement was to fight against it for national independence. "Foreign domination has obstructed the free development of the social forces, therefore its overthrow is the first step

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Second Congress of the Communist International*, Minutes, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

towards a revolution in the colonies."<sup>1</sup> The sectarian line of aiming directly at the victory of a socialist revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies was rejected as anti-Marxist and adventurist.

Here is the basic tactical proposition on the balance of class forces and the advisability of setting up anti-imperialist coalitions: "The Communist International must establish temporary relations and even unions with the revolutionary movements in the colonies and backward countries, without however amalgamating with them, but preserving the independent character of the proletarian movement."<sup>2</sup>

The Congress gave a high assessment to the national liberation movement as a stream of the world revolutionary movement. The Congress Manifesto said that the "growing army of colonial rebels is becoming a grand historic force and a mighty reserve for the world proletariat.

"The national sentiments frequently blend with the social sentiments in the movement of the colonial countries. Both these however are directed against Imperialism."<sup>3</sup>

So, in the matter of the national-colonial question the Second Congress of the Comintern ended in total victory for the Leninists and failure for the sectarian, dogmatic elements. The Congress took Lenin's ideas as a point of departure to determine the place of the national liberation movement in the world revolutionary process. On Lenin's initiative, it gave profound substance to the idea about a broad, united revolutionary front of struggle against international imperialism, a front based on a militant alliance of the Soviet Republics and the working class of the advanced countries with the multiclass national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples.

The Congress came up with a clear prospect for the development of Asia and Africa along the non-capitalist road, determined the proletariat's allies within the national liberation movement, and pointed out the possibilities for alliance between the bourgeois-nationalist forces, the peasantry and the proletariat.

<sup>1</sup> *Communist International. Second Congress. Theses and Statutes*, Moscow, 1920, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> *The Capitalist World and the Communist International*, Manifesto of the II Congress of the III, Communist International, Moscow, 1920, p. 25.



## The Struggle for the Comintern's Leninist Line on the National-Colonial Question

The Second Congress of the Comintern discussed and adopted a resolution on the national-colonial question, whose practical implementation started at the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East.

On June 29, 1920, the Politburo of the RCP(B) Central Committee resolved to convene a congress. At the same time, the Comintern's Executive Committee and spokesmen for some Communist parties issued an address, which said that the Congress was designed to unite the proletariat of the West with the peoples of the East for a struggle against imperialism, the common enemy. The address went on: "The Executive Committee of the Communist International, as the representative of the English, French, American, German and Italian workmen, will come to Baku in order to discuss the question—how to join the efforts of the European proletariat with yours for the struggle with the mutual enemy."<sup>1</sup>

The Organisation Bureau, consisting of Y. D. Stasova, A. I. Mikoyan, N. N. Narimanov, and Said-Galiev, and headed by G. K. Orjonikidze, launched energetic preparations, issuing invitations, arranging for the passage and accommodation of delegates from the Soviet Republics and Eastern countries, drafting an agenda, drawing up a list of speakers, and so on.

The First Congress of the Peoples of the East opened in Baku on September 1, 1920. It was attended by 1,891 delegates from 37 nationalities (chiefly from the Transcaucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East); 1,273 delegates were Communists, and the others represented national-revolutionary parties and groups.

The Congress was opened by the Azerbaijanian Nariman Narimanov, a prominent functionary of the Communist Party and the Soviet state. He said: "Comrades! It is a great happiness for me today to open the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, a Congress the like of which the world has never known! The hoary East, which was the first to give people an idea of morals and culture, is to voice its suffering

<sup>1</sup> *The Communist International*, No. 11-12, 1920, p. 2515.

and deep wounds: all the peoples of the East shall know the truth and join their efforts to break the capitalist chains."<sup>1</sup>

The Congress elected a 30-member presidium, with Lenin as an honorary chairman. The questions on the agenda were as follows: the purposes of the Congress; the international situation and the tasks facing the working masses of the East; the national-colonial question and the Third International; the agrarian question in the East; forms of future statehood in the East; elections and organisational matters.

Having discussed these questions, the Congress expressed its full solidarity with the Communist International's line on the problems of the international revolutionary and national liberation movement. A new slogan emerged at the Congress: "Workers of all countries and all oppressed peoples, unite!" When asked whether that slogan contradicted the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, Lenin replied: "Of course, the modification is wrong from the standpoint of the Communist Manifesto, but then the Communist Manifesto was written under entirely different conditions. From the point of view of present-day politics, however, the change is correct."<sup>2</sup>

In its unanimously adopted Appeal to the Peoples of the East, the Congress called on the working masses of Africa and Asia to fight against colonialism. "We are now calling on you to fight the first genuine Holy War under the red banner of the Communist International."<sup>3</sup> In their effort to spread the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern, the authors of the Appeal put forward this slogan: "Long live the unification of all peasants and workers in the East and the West, of all the working, oppressed and exploited people!"<sup>4</sup> The Congress also adopted an address to the workers of Europe, America and Japan, urging them to support the national liberation movement as a part of the world revolutionary movement.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in G. Z. Sorkin, *First Congress of the Peoples of the East*, Moscow, 1961, p. 24 (In Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 453.

<sup>3</sup> *Communist International*, No. 15, 1920, p. 3148 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3150.



The Congress adopted a resolution on organisational issues providing for the establishment of a Propaganda and Action Council, a standing body under the Comintern Executive, to be based in Baku. Forty-seven members from 21 nationalities, chiefly from the Eastern countries, were elected to the Council. Lenin welcomed the new Comintern agency, wished it success in its work to spread Marxism, and emphasised the importance of an alliance between the international working class and the national liberation movement. He wrote: "The destiny of all Western civilisation now largely depends on drawing the working masses of the East into political activities."<sup>1</sup> The Propaganda Council decided to publish its own periodical, *The Peoples of the East*, in Russian, Turkish, Persian and Arabic. In 1921, it was decided to set up in Moscow a Communist University of the Working People of the East.

In showing the historic significance of the victory of the creative line within the Comintern on the national-colonial question, Lenin said: "Communist parties and groups in the East, in the colonial and backward countries, which are so brutally robbed, oppressed and enslaved by the 'civilised' league of predatory nations, were likewise represented at the Congress. The revolutionary movement in the advanced countries would in fact be nothing but a sheer fraud if, in their struggle against capital, the workers of Europe and America were not closely and completely united with the hundreds upon hundreds of millions of 'colonial' slaves, who are oppressed by that capital."<sup>2</sup>

On October 15, 1920, Lenin spoke before a conference of Soviet officials. In analysing the major events of the past year, he spoke about the Comintern Congress and the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East: "These were international congresses which united the Communists and showed that in all civilised countries and in all the backward countries of the East, the banner of Bolshevism, the programme of Bolshevism, the line of Bolshevik action are an emblem of salvation, an emblem of struggle to the workers of all civilised countries and the peasants of all the backward colonial countries."<sup>3</sup> Lenin went on to emphasise

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 329-30.

the importance of the national liberation movement for the strengthening of Soviet Russia's international positions. He said: "That which was achieved by the congress of Communists in Moscow and by the Baku congress of Communist representatives of the peoples of the East cannot be immediately assessed or directly calculated, but it has been an achievement of greater significance than some military victories are ... that which was achieved in Moscow in July and in Baku in September will for many months to come provide food for thought and assimilation by the workers and peasants of the world."<sup>1</sup>

To sum up, the Second Congress was a major step towards uniting all the great revolutionary forces of that day, drawing new social forces into the struggle against imperialism, enhancing the masses' political consciousness, setting up the first Communist and Workers' parties in the East, and strengthening these in organisational terms. Lenin's great achievement was that he had been able to assess on a profound scientific basis the real and potential strength of the national liberation movement, and also to map out the ways for involving the millions of the colonial East in the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. If the struggle for the elimination of the colonial system was to succeed, the first socialist country, the working-class movement in the advanced capitalist countries, and the national liberation movement had to join forces for a common offensive. Lenin showed that sectarianism and the Left doctrinaire approach were harmful, and that it was dangerous to refuse to take account of concrete national specifics of Eastern countries, in the complicated and peculiar social-political, economic and religious setting in the Eastern countries. He repeatedly emphasised the vital need to fight for the masses, for the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces, and for flexible tactics at every stage of the national liberation movement.

Lenin said that a victory over colonialism and imperialism was impossible without long and persistent struggle. The brilliant theoretician of scientific communism did not agree with the over-optimistic view that a world socialist revolution could win out within a few months or years, and believed

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 330.



that a whole epoch full of great class and national liberation battles had to elapse before socialism would triumph throughout the world.

Lenin opened up before the peoples of the East a bright and realistic prospect: the possibility of social development bypassing the painful capitalist stage.

### CHAPTER 3

#### LENIN ON THE QUESTION OF NON-CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

##### **The Possibility of Bypassing or Cutting Short the Capitalist Stage of Development: Pre-October Reading of the Question**

The theory of non-capitalist development is an organic component of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the world revolutionary process and socialist construction. Now that the colonial system has fallen apart and a large group of new sovereign states are striving to overcome their economic and cultural backwardness, the problem of non-capitalist development has become one of the more acute and pressing problems of the present day. Lenin's ideas on the non-capitalist way have thus acquired exceptional theoretical and practical importance for an assessment of the prospects before national liberation revolutions and the world revolutionary movement.

Before the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin sharply criticised the Narodniks' illusions about the Russian commune being "unique" and capable of independently bypassing the capitalist stage of development. But that is not to say that Lenin in general took a negative view of the possibility of economically backward countries bypassing or cutting short the capitalist stage of development with the support of the victorious proletariat.

Lenin had a good knowledge of what Marx and Engels had said about the Russian commune and Narodnik<sup>1</sup> views

<sup>1</sup> The Narodniks—a petty-bourgeois trend in the Russian revolutionary movement which emerged in the late 1860s and early 1870s.



on the possibility of its original non-capitalist development. In some of his writings, Lenin referred to Marx's letter to the editors of the magazine *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, setting out his own and Engels' views on that question. Lenin also knew of Engels' critical remarks about the Russian Blanquist Tkachov, formulating for the first time the conditions for bypassing the capitalist stage. Lenin also undoubtedly knew about Vera Zasulich's letter to Marx and his reply, the foreword written by Marx and Engels for the second Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, and also Engels' Afterword to his work, *On Social Relations in Russia*, where he spelled out his and Marx's views on the evolution of the Russian commune.

Marx and Engels believed that the non-capitalist way was possible, if, first, a socialist revolution took place in the developed capitalist countries of Western Europe, the proletariat took power and gave the lagging peoples the necessary political, material, organisational, cultural and every other kind of assistance. Second, they believed that the lagging peoples themselves had to be released through revolution from all manner of "corrupt influences", as Marx put it, which hampered their development and which, in particular, could prevent the correct use of assistance from the socialist countries.

Marx and Engels looked to an early outbreak of socialist revolution in the countries of Western Europe and expected the rise of the revolutionary movement in Russia in the 1870s and 1880s to have positive results. At that time, these hopes were not justified, for developments took a somewhat different turn. Engels remarked on this in the Afterword to his work *On Social Relations in Russia* which he wrote shortly before his death in 1894.<sup>1</sup>

However, the basic principles underlying the problem of non-capitalist development expressed by Marx and Engels remain meaningful to this day.

In the 1890s, when Lenin began his revolutionary political activity, Russia was already well launched on the capitalist road of development, although considerable survivals of serfdom had yet to be lived down, and many of

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, p. 410.

the nationalities across the vast country were still living under precapitalist relations. Meanwhile, the socialist revolution in the West European countries had been delayed, and their Social-Democratic parties were leaning towards opportunism. Russia, on the contrary, was facing the prospect of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, which could develop into a socialist one. A fierce ideological fight was going on in the country between scientific communism and petty-bourgeois Narodnik socialism over the goals and content of the Russian revolutionary process.

In the 1890s, the Narodnik movement had changed together with Russia's socio-economic situation. Lenin wrote about the Narodniks of the 1870s: "*Faith in a special social order, in the communal system of Russian life; hence—faith in the possibility of a peasant socialist revolution—that is what inspired them and roused dozens and hundreds of people to wage a heroic struggle against the government.*"<sup>1</sup> But in the 1890s. Lenin wrote, "the countryside long ago split up completely. And the old Russian peasant socialism split up with it, making way for workers' socialism, on the one hand, and degenerating into vulgar petty-bourgeois radicalism, on the other." Tracing the further evolution of the Narodnik ideology, Lenin wrote: "From the doctrine that peasant life is a special social order and that our country has taken an exceptional path of development, there has emerged a sort of diluted eclecticism.... From a political programme calculated to arouse the peasantry for the socialist revolution against the foundations of modern society there has emerged a programme calculated to patch up, to 'improve' the conditions of the peasantry while preserving the foundations of modern society."<sup>2</sup>

The idealistic, subjectivist notions of the latter day Narodniks (like the notions that Russia would escape "the sores of proletarianism", and would make its own, exceptional way to socialism—through its communes; or that historical personalities could channel a country's development wherever they liked, regardless of the development of the productive forces and the material interests of different classes) were a big obstacle in the way of the Marxists' truly

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 263-64.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 264-65.



revolutionary activity. Narodnik theories about Russia's special development way had become harmful and reactionary, serving to perpetuate the "stagnation and Asiatic backwardness".<sup>1</sup> In effect, they were hindering the transition of Russia's revolutionary movement to a new, proletarian stage of struggle, which would pave the only correct way for the country's advance to socialism.

At the end of the 19th century, Lenin and his associates were faced with the task of preparing a Russian revolution in theoretical and practical terms. They had to analyse the degrees, forms and conditions of the development of capitalist relations of production in the various sectors of the country's economy, to assess the objective conditions and subjective factors of the revolution, to bring out its motive forces, to establish a Marxist revolutionary party, elaborate a programme and its organisational and practical principles, find a way to the masses, organise them, and lead them forward to fight tsarist autocracy.

In analysing the experience of the first Russian revolution, Lenin repeatedly returned to the views about the possibility of bypassing the capitalist stage. That was largely due also to the fact that Narodnik-type theories had been emerging in various countries similar to Russia in social and economic backwardness and prevailing precapitalist relations. Thus, Lenin wrote in his article on "Democracy and Narodism in China" that despite their sincere and militant-democratic spirit, Sun Yat-sen's views were those of "a petty-bourgeois 'socialist' reactionary. For the idea that capitalism can be 'prevented' in China and that a 'social revolution' there will be made easier by the country's backwardness, and so on, is altogether reactionary."<sup>2</sup>

Later, in 1914, Lenin wrote in his article, "Narodism and the Class of Wage-Workers", that Mikhailovsky's<sup>3</sup> theory saying that Russia could bypass the capitalist phase was a "theory of utopian, petty-bourgeois socialism, i.e., the *dream* of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who sought a way of escape

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 516.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, pp. 166-67.

<sup>3</sup> N. K. Mikhailovsky (1842-1904)—Russian sociologist, publicist and literary critic, prominent ideologist of the liberal Narodniks and enemy of Marxism.

from capitalism *not in the wage-workers' class struggle* against the bourgeoisie, but in *appeals* to the 'entire nation', to 'society', *that is, to that very same bourgeoisie*'.<sup>1</sup> Lenin went on to point out that such ideas had prevailed in all countries prior to the emergence of a working-class movement, and that the latter should resolutely refute these utopian theories. In other words, before the October Revolution, Lenin did not come out against the idea of non-capitalist development as such, but against the theories that the lagging peoples could take the socialist way solely on the strength of national traditional precapitalist institutions, without any alliance or co-operation with the world working-class movement and before the establishment of any socialist states.

That was a very logical stand for a revolutionary Marxist to take and the only possible one at the time, when the proletariat had not yet come to power anywhere in the world and when the course and direction of the world's social development were still being determined by capitalism. The possibility of escape from capitalism was no more than a vision for the oppressed and lagging peoples. Besides, public leaders in these countries were apt to idealise the distant past as a "golden age" in a classless society. These dreams and illusions were a hopeless attempt to reverse the tide of history. The idea that precapitalist countries could build socialism solely by relying on their own strength, without any direct support from advanced socialist countries, has always been and continues to be a petty-bourgeois, subjectivist and nationalist idea, which could well damage the interests of national revival and social progress.

Lenin and his fellow-fighters came out strongly against the Narodniks' utopian views, and worked to elaborate a revolutionary strategy and tactics for the working class in the course of an intense ideological fight against various opportunist trends. Lenin's doctrine on the national-colonial question, which includes the theory of non-capitalist development as a component part, took shape in the course of acute struggle with the nationalist, chauvinist

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 106.



or even racist views of numerous reactionary "theoreticians" on the national problem.

Right-wing Social-Democrats denied any possibility for the backward peoples to bypass the capitalist stage, and believed the theoretical proposition on this score put forward by Marx and Engels to be incorrect and unfeasible. Thus, a Social-Democratic theorist on the national-colonial question, van Kol, told the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in 1904: "Marx's hypothesis that some countries could, even partially, bypass the capitalist period in their economic evolution, has not been realised. The primitive peoples will reach civilisation only via this Golgotha. Consequently, it is our duty not to slow down the development of capitalism—a necessary link of mankind's history. Indeed, we can even help it to emerge and so ease the birth pangs." He added: even the future socialist society in the highly developed countries will "have to pursue a colonial policy".

The views of the Right-wing Social-Democrats boiled down to this: capitalism was an inevitable stage in the economic evolution of mankind as a whole and every people in particular. There was no other way to reach socialism. Marx and Engels had been wrong in saying that some countries could avoid capitalism. Consequently, instead of hindering capitalist development, notably, in the colonies, the Social-Democrats had to promote it in every way. Unhampered capitalist development could best proceed in big, economically advanced states, which could carry on active operations on the world market. Advanced capitalist countries could no longer do without the raw materials, foodstuffs and other goods supplied by the colonies, so that depriving them of their colonies would mean putting a brake not only on their own development, but also on that of mankind as a whole.

Besides, the Right-wing Social-Democrats argued, the "civilised nations" wanted the sparsely populated colonial territories to settle their own surplus population. Consequently, the advanced capitalist states were quite justified in their urge to expand in territorial and economic terms, and the colonies were necessary for the "progress" of the whole of mankind and would exist for at least another few centuries. The future socialist states would also have to have

"their own colonies". Big and economically advanced states would assimilate the smaller nationalities, and that would also be "progressive". If any peoples perished in the process, they would do so out of historical necessity. As regards the demands that every people should have the right to self-determination, these amounted to no more than a "petty-bourgeois utopia" which had infected the proletariat.

Such, on the whole, were the views of the Right-wing Social-Democrats, which in effect got the upper hand in the Second International. They used their theory in particular to cover up their chauvinistic slogans about protecting their imperialist "fatherlands" and supporting the military efforts of their "own" governments in the First World War. Lenin branded the advocates of such theories as social-imperialists and downright traitors to the working-class cause, urging an immediate break with them and denunciation of their betrayal. He believed that this question was the most vivid indication of the collapse of the Second International.

Having rejected both the utopian-Narodnik and the Right-opportunist approach to the question of non-capitalist development, Lenin concentrated in the pre-October period on the struggle for the political liberation of the oppressed peoples. The Bolshevik Party's programme on the national-colonial question served the same purpose. The task now was to unite the revolutionary struggle of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries with the national liberation movement.

### **Lenin on the Non-Capitalist Way of Development in the Post-October Period**

The October Revolution in Russia ushered in the epoch of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism, radically changed the whole international balance of forces, and opened up new ways, prospects, and possibilities for the national liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries.

Lenin saw the world revolution against imperialism as a long-term, complicated and multiform process comprising



various forms of proletarian struggle, all manner of democratic liberation movements by the oppressed masses, and also struggle by other social categories against imperialism. The historical mission of the international working class was to organise, co-ordinate, consolidate and enlighten the various trends and streams of the world anti-imperialist movement, and lead them forward to victory. This long and complicated struggle could be successful only provided the revolutionary, anti-imperialist democratic forces of a country maintained close links with the world working-class movement and world socialism.

Lenin's concept of the world proletarian revolution, as against the concept formulated by the Right-wing Social-Democrat van Kol in the early 20th century ("all peoples have to go through the Golgotha of capitalism"), showed the backward peoples a prospect of transition to socialism bypassing capitalism altogether or cutting short the process of capitalist development that had already started. Here, the October Revolution meant the realisation of a key international condition for the practical implementation of this transition; the emergence of a strong socialist state prepared to give the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries the assistance they needed in the fight for national liberation and social progress.

As has already been said, the theoretical possibility of such a way was indicated by Marx and Engels. Marx ridiculed those who claimed that he had produced a "historico-philosophical theory" of a universal way along which all nations were destined to travel, whatever the historical conditions in which they find themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin took up Marx's general theoretical propositions on this problem, developed them, and made them more concrete. In his notes "Our Revolution", Lenin wrote that the heroes of the Second International had "completely failed to understand what is decisive in Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics. ...Up to now they have seen capitalism and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe follow a definite path of development, and cannot conceive that this path can be taken as a model only *mutatis mutandis*,

<sup>1</sup> Marx, *Engels and Revolutionary Russia*, Moscow, 1967, p. 79 (in Russian).

only with certain amendments (quite insignificant from the standpoint of the general development of world history)."<sup>1</sup>

Having denounced the dogmatic absolutisation by the Right-opportunist leaders of the Second International of the path of socio-economic development followed by the West European states, Lenin advanced the concept that national liberation revolutions could take place in different concrete historical forms. He emphasised: "... they are complete strangers to the idea that while the development of world history as a whole follows general laws it is by no means precluded, but, on the contrary, presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development.... Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater distinctions than the Russian revolution."<sup>2</sup> Lenin's approach to this question implied an all-round analysis of every aspect and expression of the concrete situation, its dialectical development.

It was only the radical change in the concrete historical situation in the world resulting from the October Revolution which made it possible to give a new reading to the problem of non-capitalist development. Now that the Soviet country was there, a powerful bulwark of the world liberation movement, some oppressed and backward peoples could well follow a non-capitalist road once they threw off the imperialist yoke. It was now quite possible and necessary for Soviet Russia and the whole revolutionary proletariat to join forces with the oppressed peoples of the world for the struggle against imperialism. If the proletariat of Soviet Russia could establish links with the national liberation movements, the nationalities that were "being rent to pieces",<sup>3</sup> would become its allies. The problem of non-capitalist development was thus becoming a part of the broader problem, that of liberation of the oppressed nations from imperialist rule through an alliance

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 476, 477.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 477, 480.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 40.



between national liberation movements and the proletarian revolution.

It was neither the Narodniks nor the petty-bourgeois radicals, but the leader of the revolutionary proletariat, V. I. Lenin, the Comintern and the CPSU that elaborated a scientific theory of non-capitalist development. The theoretical forecasts of Marx and Engels were finding their expression in Lenin's theory and practice of struggle for national liberation and social emancipation of the masses.

None of the social systems preceding socialism became universal and dominant throughout the world—neither the slave-owning, nor the feudal, nor even the capitalist system. Of course, once capitalism developed into imperialism, it spread across the world, became a world system. Many nations, however, were still living under prevailing pre-capitalist relations.

The working masses of a country that is ripe for socialist revolution naturally cannot wait until all the other nations are "ripe" as well. The proletariat and the other revolutionary forces of each country launch their own revolutionary offensive against imperialism and carry it through to the end, depending on the concrete situation. Where the proletariat wins out in one or several countries, it is bound by its internationalist duty to carry on socialist construction without waiting for other peoples to rise to the level of socialist revolution.

It is also natural that where the proletariat has won power in a big multinational country, with some of the nationalities there still living under a precapitalist setup, it considers its duty to help these nationalities to catch up with the advanced nations, to bypass the painful capitalist phase. A passive or indifferent stand of the victorious proletariat in respect of the lagging nationalities would not only be at odds with the humanistic principles of Marxism-Leninism, but this policy would mean the artificial preservation of obsolete social ways, a narrower field of action for the victorious proletariat and a retardation of socialist construction.

The non-capitalist way—an alternative to capitalist development—means that precapitalist structures are being rapidly transformed on socialist lines through various transitional stages and with the use of various special forms and methods of struggle. Here is how the Comintern

Programme summed up the earliest experiences of non-capitalist development: "In still more backward countries (as in some parts of Africa) where there are no wage workers or very few, where the majority of population still live in tribal conditions, where survivals of primitive tribal forms still exist, where the national bourgeoisie is almost non-existent, where the primary role of foreign imperialism is that of military occupation and usurpation of land, the central task is to fight for national independence. Victorious national uprisings in these countries may open the way for their direct development towards socialism and their avoiding the stage of capitalism, provided real, powerful assistance is rendered to them by the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship is established."<sup>1</sup>

The prospect outlined in the Comintern Programme is just one version of non-capitalist development. Another and equally important version is to cut short the ongoing capitalist development before it has had time to become predominant, and gradually to switch it to socialist lines. There are many more such countries than those where capitalism has not evolved at all. The Soviet Union's experience in restructuring the socially and economically backward areas, which could not be fully taken into account when the Comintern Programme was being drawn up, has now proved beyond any doubt that such a process is quite possible and necessary.

Lenin's approach to the problem of non-capitalist development is substantiated scientifically and based on a profound dialectical analysis. His lucid statements on this subject bring out two aspects of the problem: first, the reshaping on socialist lines of various precapitalist structures in Soviet Russia's backward areas and, second, a socialist prospect for the development of the emergent nations in the colonial world. These two aspects will be traced through many of Lenin's works not only where he deals with the non-capitalist way proper, but also where he analyses the national-colonial question, the prospects of the world proletarian revolution, and socialist construction in general.

<sup>1</sup> *Programme of the Communist International*, New York, 1933, p. 58.



## Non-Capitalist Transformations in the USSR

The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, published on November 2 (15), 1917, formulated the idea about the need for and possibility of a close alliance between Russia's oppressed nationalities and the victorious proletariat, which was granting them full freedom of self-determination, including secession, so manifesting its sincere and consistent desire to set up an alliance on a new, voluntary basis. The Declaration guaranteed not only the full equality of all the nations of Russia, but also the free development of all its national minorities and ethnic groups.

Lenin was categorical about the need for strict and unconditional implementation of the Communist Party's national programme as expressed, in particular, in the Soviet Government's Declaration. That policy, he said, was long-term and as a result of it the nations would draw closer together and later merge of their own free will. He regarded their federation as a stepping-stone to a conscious and closer unity between the working people.

Lenin's cabled reply to some questions put by Said-Galiev, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Tatar SSR, is most interesting and important in this respect:

Q. Is there need for the existence of small autonomous republics within the Russian Soviet Federation in general, and of the Tatar Republic in particular?

A. Yes.

Q. If the answer is "yes", then for how long, or, in other words, until the fulfilment of what tasks or the attainment of what goals?

A. For a long time yet.

Q. Is it right to say that the Communists of the formerly dominant nation ... should play the part of pedagogues and nurse-maids to the Communists and all other working people of the formerly oppressed nationalities...?

A. Not pedagogues and nurse-maids but helpers.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of socialist revolution in Russia showed, as Lenin had foreseen, that the bulk of the oppressed natives trusted in the Russian proletariat more than in their own bourgeoisie. Whenever it happened that under pressure

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, pp. 541, 703.

from foreign and local bourgeois-landowner counter-revolution any area seceded from proletarian Russia, its "independence" turned out to be the subjugation to world imperialism.

During the short and precarious breathing spell that followed the signing of the Brest Peace,<sup>1</sup> Lenin put forward a broad programme for transition to socialist construction, notably for the solution of the national question, which he set out in an article published on April 28, 1918, and entitled "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", and also in some other works.

His article did not give any direct instructions on the ways and forms of non-capitalist development, but the main task he was now setting before the Party and the state provided for involvement in socialist development of all the nations of Soviet Russia, regardless of their socio-economic level at the start of the revolution. He wrote: "...the principal task of the proletariat ... is the positive or constructive work of setting up an extremely intricate and delicate system of new organisational relationships extending to the planned production and distribution of the goods required for the existence of tens of millions of people. Such a revolution can be successfully carried out only if the majority of the population, and primarily the majority of the working people, engage in independent creative work as makers of history."<sup>2</sup>

New forms of struggle against the bourgeoisie, development of Soviet statehood, all-round control and accounting, higher labour productivity, use of the latest achievements in science, technology and organisation, development of emulation among the working people, struggle against petty-bourgeois anarchy, self-seeking, and speculation, a new location of the productive forces across the country,

<sup>1</sup> The Brest Peace—a peace treaty between Soviet Russia, on the one hand, and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria, on the other. Signed in Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, on plunderous terms imposed on Soviet Russia by the German imperialists, who made predatory use of the young Republic's temporary weakness. Was abrogated by a decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR on November 13, 1918, following the revolution in Germany, which overthrew Wilhelm II and his government.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 241.



notably a boosting of the economy of the national outskirts with their great natural resources, and many other aspects of Lenin's plan for transition to socialist construction brought up the problem of non-capitalist development, which was becoming a part of the theory and practice of socialist construction in the multinational Soviet state.

The Soviet country's breathing spell was cut short by imperialism and internal reaction, but even during the fierce Civil War the new national structure was taking shape. Lenin came up with a number of essential propositions, which laid the groundwork for the Soviet power's national policy in general and non-capitalist development in particular.

On various occasions, Lenin repeatedly drew the attention of the Party and Soviet organs to the need to be extremely careful and tactful in respect of the peoples' national specifics, their customs, way of life, and so on. Thus, he wrote in his letter to the Communists of Turkestan: "It is no exaggeration to say that the establishment of proper relations with the peoples of Turkestan is now of immense, epochal importance for the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

"The attitude of the Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Republic to the weak and hitherto oppressed nations is of very practical significance for the whole of Asia and for all the colonies of the world, for thousands and millions of people."<sup>1</sup>

He came out very forcefully against any, albeit the slightest, manifestations of great-power chauvinism, and emphasised that "it is terribly important ... to prove that we are not imperialists, that we shall not tolerate any deviation in that direction.

"This is a world-wide question, and that is no exaggeration.

"There you must be especially strict.

"It will have an effect on India and the East; it is no joke, it calls for exceptional caution."<sup>2</sup>

Only when the Civil War was over could the country get down to implementing Lenin's plans for socialist construc-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 298.

tion. In the course of the war, the exploiting classes' armed resistance had been crushed, and they had been deprived of their major economic and political positions. Many feudal survivals had been swept away, for the proletarian revolution was at the same time, incidentally tackling the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, the national-colonial question in particular. It should be recalled that Lenin regarded the monarchy, the estates, landowner property rights and land tenure, the unequal status of women, and religious and national oppression as the main survivals of feudalism in Russia.

The October Revolution put an end to all these survivals of serfdom in a prompt, resolute and conclusive way. Lenin wrote: "We have granted *all* the non-Russian nationalities *their own* republics or autonomous regions.... But in order to consolidate the achievements of the bourgeois-democratic revolution for the peoples of Russia, we were obliged to go farther; and we did go farther."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet power had, of course, inherited a most complicated, multistructural economy. Lenin mentioned this in his article "The Tax in Kind" in April 1921. He wrote: "Let us enumerate these elements:

"(1) patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent natural, peasant farming;

"(2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);

"(3) private capitalism;

"(4) state capitalism;

"(5) socialism."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin went on to mark out the areas of prevailing precapitalist socio-economic relations: "Look at the map of the R.S.F.S.R. There is room for dozens of large civilised states in those vast areas which lie to the north of Vologda, the south-east of Rostov-on-Don and Saratov, the south of Orenburg and Omsk, and the north of Tomsk. They are a realm of patriarchalism, and semi- and downright barbarism. And what about the peasant backwoods of the rest of Russia, where scores of versts of country track, or rather of trackless country, lie between the villages and the railways,

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 53, 54.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 331.



i.e., the material link with the big cities, large-scale industry, capitalism and culture? Isn't that also an area of wholesale patriarchalism, Oblomovism,<sup>1</sup> and semi-barbarism?"<sup>2</sup>

The first thing was thus to transform the natural patriarchal structures, those of the nomads in particular, on non-capitalist lines. A special way of development was also open to small commodity production, which, though not being a capitalist structure in itself, was connected with capitalism and was a constant source of massive capitalism.

In class terms, these two structures largely drew on the peasants, handicraftsmen and artisans. Consequently, the proletariat and its Party had to establish correct relations with the working peasantry. Lenin emphasised that to arrive at large-scale socialised machine farming, Soviet Russia had to go through a long range of gradual transition stretches, and that all the nations involved in the social revolution would have to come to grips with that arduous task.

The devastated country had to tackle the task of socialist reconstruction entirely on its own, in a hostile capitalist environment, without any assistance from other states, and at a time when international capital had managed to tide over the first postwar revolutionary upsurge and achieve temporary stability.

How did Lenin see the transformation of the above structures on socialist lines? He said: "...the transition from capitalism to socialism is conceivable in different forms, depending upon whether big capitalist or small production relationships predominate in the country.... Direct transition to communism would have been possible if ours was a country with a predominantly—or, say, highly developed—large-scale industry, and a high level of large-scale production in agriculture...."<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, it had become obvious that Russia lacked the necessary material basis for direct transition to socialism, which is usually established by capitalism in the period before a socialist revolution, or has to be established by the proletarian state itself.

<sup>1</sup> Oblomov—title hero of a novel by the Russian writer I. A. Goncharov—a lazy, apathetic serf-owner. Lenin often used the term "Oblomovism" to denote social stagnation, inertia, and obsolete social views.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 349-50.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 233.

"Is an immediate transition to socialism from the state of affairs predominating in Russia conceivable? Yes, it is, to a certain degree, but on one condition, the precise nature of which we now know thanks to a great piece of scientific work that has been completed. It is electrification. If we construct scores of district electric power stations ... and transmit electric power to every village, if we obtain a sufficient number of electric motors and other machinery, we shall not need, or shall hardly need, any transition stages or intermediary links between patriarchalism and socialism."<sup>1</sup>

While attaching such exceptionally great importance to the rapid advance of the productive forces and the scientific and technical revolution as having a profound influence on the social revolution, Lenin never tired of saying that socialism was an organic outgrowth of the masses' vital needs and could not be "introduced" from above, could not be handed down to the people "on a platter". Socialism was to be built by the masses, who would transform themselves, as well as the world around them, in the process of its construction.

Lenin wrote that building socialism had to be started practically not from any fantastic or specially created human material, but from that which had been left over by capitalism.

Lenin's methodology in the analysis of the problems of the transition period proceeded from the need to make a thorough study of concrete conditions and consider all the circumstances bearing on the implementation of any major social measure. General economic considerations made it necessary to switch all the economically backward areas of the Soviet country from precapitalist to socialist economic methods. But while the political vanguard realised this full well, the broad masses had yet to see this for themselves. The vanguard now had to make a correct assessment of the situation, bring out the practical possibilities for solving some particular problem, get a clear idea of the masses' attitude to the undertaking in question, and explain a great deal to convince broad sections of the working people that the proposed undertaking would serve their own vital

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 350.



interests. That was the only way to draw the masses into socialist construction.

Lenin said that the Communists should make a very thorough study of the practical experience in the construction of a new life, to learn from that experience, and also to take into account the various specifics of a people's advance to socialism. Thus, he emphasised the need for such an approach in his letter "To the Comrades Communists of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Daghestan, and the Mountaineer Republic", written in April 1921.

He said that if the Communists of the Transcaucasus were to solve the tasks they were facing, they had to be "fully alive to the *singularity* of their position, and of the position of their Republics, as distinct from the position and conditions of the R.S.F.S.R.", and to "appreciate the need to refrain from copying our tactics, but thoughtfully vary them in adaptation to the differing concrete conditions". One difference, Lenin believed, was that "the Caucasian Republics have an even more pronounced peasant character than Russia", so that state and Party leaders there had to "practise more moderation and caution, and show more readiness to make concessions to the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and particularly the peasantry". The transition to socialism there had to be "slower, more cautious and more systematic".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin said that the point was to look to the spirit, and not the letter, of socialist construction in Soviet Russia, and to learn from its experience.

Lenin's advice and instructions were reflected in the decisions of the 10th and 12th Congresses of the RCP(B), which formulated the task of non-capitalist development as that of achieving actual equality between the various nations of the multinational Soviet state.

The 10th Congress of the RCP(B) in March 1921 pointed out that "any automatic application in the distant outskirts of various economic measures being carried out in Central Russia, which are only fit for a higher economic stage, has to be rejected".<sup>2</sup> Lenin took a vigorous part in the preparation

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 316, 317.

<sup>2</sup> *The CPSU in Decisions and Resolutions of Its Congresses, Conferences and CC Plenary Meetings*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1970, p. 254 (in Russian).

and holding of the 10th Congress, notably in the CC Politburo's commission set up to edit the theses on the national question.

The 12th Congress of the RCP(B) in April 1923 was held without Lenin's participation, for his health had taken a grave turn for the worse. This is how the Congress formulated the problem of non-capitalist development: "The legal national equality instituted by the October Revolution is a great gain of the peoples, but does not solve the national problem as a whole. Some republics and peoples which have had very little capitalism or no capitalism at all, have no proletariat to speak of, and have consequently lagged behind in economic and cultural terms, cannot make full use of their rights and the possibilities being opened up before them by national equality, they cannot rise to a higher stage of development and so catch up with the more advanced nationalities without any long-term and effective outside assistance."<sup>1</sup> The programme of assistance for the fraternal nations mapped out by the 10th and 12th Congresses laid the groundwork for the long-term and purposeful activity of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government over all the subsequent stages of socialist construction in the country.

It would take much too long to describe, even in general terms, the multifaceted activity of Soviet Russia's working class carried on under Party and Government leadership and aimed at the socialist reconstruction of the country's backward areas, the activity that was flexible, persistent, and unprecedented in scale. Let us merely list some essential transformations and measures in that area. (Many other nations that have taken or are about to take the non-capitalist road will also apparently have to carry out measures of that kind.)

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government have proclaimed and effected the full equality of all nations and nationalities in this country in every legal respect. Lenin's principle of self-determination was taken as a basis for the establishment of Soviet national statehood, which the working masses understand and regard as their own. The

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.



Soviet form of statehood is being constantly improved and developed.

They did their best to promote the establishment among the lagging nations of Communist and various other mass organisations within the framework of country-wide organisations. These served as a vanguard, giving the lead to the bulk of the working people.

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government followed a systematic policy to eliminate the actual inequality between the country's nations. National cadres were being trained for every sector of the national economy and culture.

Industrial centres were being established in the newly instituted national republics, areas and regions on the country's outskirts, and a systematic effort was being made to locate the country's productive forces in a rational way. As a result, new industrial, cultural and administrative centres were going up in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, where semi-barbarism or downright barbarism, as Lenin put it, had once reigned supreme; the local population was being drawn into socialist reconstruction; the once illiterate peasants, nomads, fishermen and hunters were being schooled and involved in social affairs, and the gap between the economic and cultural levels first narrowed down and then disappeared altogether.

A vigorous effort was being made to boost farming, with land improvement and broad co-operation of every type, notably producer co-operation, which meant a radical swing towards socialism. A real cultural revolution—national in form and socialist in content—was also carried out. Alphabets were devised for many formerly illiterate peoples, who now had their own institutes, universities, and academies of sciences, to say nothing of schools.

All these successes were scored in the course of struggle against great-power chauvinism, as well as local nationalism.

L. I. Brezhnev said: "Such assistance, and the readiness to put in a great effort and even, let us plainly say, to make sacrifices so as to overcome the backwardness of the national outskirts and help them to develop at an accelerated pace was bequeathed by Lenin to the proletariat of Russia as a prime internationalist duty. The Russian working class and the Russian people have fulfilled this duty with honour.

This was, in effect, a great achievement by a whole class, a whole people, performed in the name of internationalism. This heroic exploit will never be forgotten by the peoples of our country."<sup>1</sup>

Any measures common to various backward areas and nationalities were carried out with a view to local specific features, and hence differed in form and time-scale. Wherever there were any attempts to apply these measures indiscriminately that usually resulted in difficulties and mistakes, which had to be corrected later on. On the whole, non-capitalist development in the USSR, was characterised by the following features.

First, it was carried on within the framework of a proletarian state, under a proletarian dictatorship, in a country with a largely peasant population, and was an integral part of the overall process of country-wide socialist transformations. The successful non-capitalist development was a concrete expression of the proletariat's leadership of the peasantry, and the political alliance between the proletariat of the country's advanced areas with the peasantry of its outskirts, which had been living under prevailing precapitalist relations or relations leading to capitalism. The socialist state was now in command of all the main economic levers, and the Communist Party—the leading force of social development—was the ruling party. Since the socialist revolution was also solving "in its stride" the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, this facilitated and speeded up the non-capitalist transformation of the precapitalist structures into socialist ones.

Second, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government helped as much as they could the lagging peoples in the construction of socialism on the basis of the principle of proletarian internationalism, fraternal mutual aid and assistance, through a constant exchange of experience. This was expressed most vividly in the rational and balanced location of the country's productive forces with a particular view to the interests of the formerly oppressed peoples, and in the heroic struggle of all the country's peoples against the

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, pp. 21-22.



nazi aggression, their close union on the principle of proletarian internationalism and fraternal solidarity.

Third, the Soviet state and the Communist Party always abided by the principle that development rates in the lagging areas had to be higher than those in the more developed areas of the country. This major principle made it possible to bring up the lagging peoples to the level of the more advanced peoples in the shortest historical period.

The peoples which were at the level of the patriarchal and tribal system or the early forms of class society succeeded in bypassing not only capitalism but also feudalism as the prevailing system of social relations. The peoples living under feudal relations or in incipient transition to capitalism (before capitalism became the prevailing system of social relations) succeeded in eliminating feudalism and avoiding the torments of capitalism or cutting short its development which had started, so bypassing the capitalist stage.

As a result, the Soviet people, led by their Communist Party and Soviet Government, transformed on socialist lines all the precapitalist structures that had existed in the old Russia.

The backwardness that was overcome in the USSR, in effect, had three tiers. First, the Bolsheviks carried the whole of Russia, which at one time lagged behind the leading countries some 50-100 years, into the front ranks of modern states. Second, they helped to pull up to that level the peoples earlier living in feudal society. Third, they helped to do away with backwardness among the peoples that lagged behind at the patriarchal and tribal stage.

In his report *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* on December 21, 1972, L. I. Brezhnev gave some vivid and convincing examples of the overwhelming changes in the life of the once backward national outskirts. He said: "Since the formation of the Union, Kazakhstan's industrial output has increased 600-fold, Tajikistan's over 500-fold, Kirghizia's over 400-fold, Uzbekistan's about 240-fold and Turkmenia's over 130-fold. The gross cotton crop in Uzbekistan has gone up 120-fold and in Turkmenia 90-fold. Kazakhstan now produces almost 30 times more grain than it did in 1922.

"The cultural development of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Republics is equally striking. They have

achieved virtually 100 per cent literacy. Almost half the population in each Republic are men and women with a higher or secondary (complete or incomplete) education. In Uzbekistan alone there are now more specialists with a higher or specialised secondary education than the Soviet Union had working in its economy in the late 1920s. Modern science has been firmly established in these Republics, and in their national academies there are thousands of scientists engaged in valuable research."<sup>1</sup> The USSR's experience is of great theoretical and practical importance for the liberation movement throughout the world, and amounts to a great contribution to the treasure-house of the world proletarian movement. The proletariat of Russia has shown the whole world how to go about it, and Lenin's prediction that the "revolutionising effect of this example will be immense"<sup>2</sup> has come true.

That was how the Communist Party, led by Lenin, was doing its utmost for a radical, final and all-round solution of the national question in the USSR. At the same time, Lenin had also worked out a concrete programme for the solution of the national and colonial questions, the problem of non-capitalist development in particular, on a world scale.

### **The International Aspect of Lenin's Doctrine on the Non-Capitalist Way**

Even before the October Revolution, Lenin emphasised that socialism was aimed at bringing the nations closer together and then merging them completely. Where a Social-Democrat, he said, came out in support of the imperialists' predatory colonial policy, he objectively became an ally and champion of the imperialist bourgeoisie. A Marxist had to demand freedom of self-determination, including secession, for all the oppressed and underprivileged nations, bearing in mind that such complete freedom for every nation to decide its own future was the best guarantee of closer fellowship between nations and their

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 448.



subsequent union. Lenin wrote: "In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede."<sup>1</sup> This dialectic of historical reality lies at the root of the Marxist-Leninist parties' dialectical approach to the strategy and tactics on the national-colonial question. The proletarian Party of an oppressing nation has to put forward and consistently stand up for the need to grant the right to self-determination, including secession, to all the oppressed nations, and this is an expression of internationalism on the part of the proletarian Party in a metropolitan country. At the same time, the proletarian Party of an oppressed nation should view the self-determination slogan in the context of a prospective advance towards socialism. Thus, whenever a once oppressed nation is vested with the right to secede from a metropolitan country where the proletariat has won out, the Marxist-Leninist vanguard of that nation should vigorously advocate the closest possible alliance with the victorious working class of the ex-metropolitan country, and this is an expression of true internationalism on the part of the Marxist-Leninist Party in a formerly oppressed country.

In this way, the Marxist-Leninist leadership of the proletarian parties of the oppressed and oppressing nations work in close accord with each other to fulfil their internationalist duty and advance towards their common revolutionary goal in their fight against any imperialist colonial oppression. Lenin's strategy and tactics on the national-colonial question was brilliantly borne out before and during the October Socialist Revolution in Russia.

The revolution confronted the Communists of all countries, those of the East in particular, with new and unparalleled tasks, and at the same time opened up fresh prospects. Lenin formulated these new tasks and prospects in his report at the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East in November 1919. He said: "In this respect you are confronted with a task which has not previously confronted

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 147.

the Communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism." He called the delegates' attention to the need for a creative, concrete historical approach to the solution of the urgent tasks of the national liberation movement. He emphasised: "You must find specific forms for this alliance of the foremost proletarians of the world with the labouring and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval. We have accomplished on a small scale in our country what you will do on a big scale and in big countries."<sup>1</sup>

This titanic programme, so arduous and large-scale, was an integral part of Lenin's overall theory on the world socialist revolution.

Lenin said that the main task facing the Communists of the East was "to arouse the working masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; to translate the true communist doctrine, which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries, into the language of every people; to carry out those practical tasks which must be carried out immediately, and to join the proletarians of other countries in a common struggle".<sup>2</sup> A part of that task was to elaborate programmes for non-capitalist development wherever the necessary prerequisites had matured, doing this in ways that were best suited to the concrete conditions in a country.

At the Second Congress of the Communist International, Lenin spelled out the question of non-capitalist development still further.

In his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", he re-emphasised his point about the tendency towards the establishment of a common world economy, to be regulated by the proletariat of all the nations under a general plan. This objective tendency, which stems

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 162.



from the needs of the development of the modern productive forces, has an ever stronger effect on world development.

This tendency also comprises the objective need for and possibility of non-capitalist development.

In his report at the Second Congress of the Comintern, Lenin formulated his classical idea of the question of non-capitalist development. He said: "The question was posed as follows: are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, Lenin rejected the fatalistic and in effect bourgeois stand of the Right-wing Social-Democrats, who, as it was pointed out above, believed that every nation was simply bound to go through the capitalist stage. Lenin also formulated the conditions for non-capitalist development: "If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development." On the basis of the new law he had discovered, Lenin set the Comintern a task of paramount importance: "Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasant Soviets and strive to adapt them to the pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin thus determined in theoretical form the conditions necessary for non-capitalist development. Lenin's essential

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

precepts are of vast theoretical and practical importance for many nations in the present period.

In summing up the early experience of socialist construction in the Asian parts of the former Russian Empire, where communist tactics and policy had to be adapted "to the pre-capitalist conditions", Lenin came to the conclusion that the Soviets were also fit to organise the masses for the purposes of non-capitalist development. They could and did serve to organise the masses living under prevailing feudal and tribal relations, and made it possible not only to involve them in active political, economic and cultural construction, but also to carry them through various transitional stages in moving up to and taking the non-capitalist, socialist road.

In view of the great advantages inherent in the Soviets, Lenin recommended their extensive use in the revolutionary and liberation struggle. A point to emphasise, however, is that Lenin always warned against any dogmatic, unimaginative borrowing of various cut-and-dried rules and methods of revolutionary struggle. While pointing out the deep-rooted advantages of the Soviets as a new form of popular government discovered by the masses themselves, Lenin said that every nation had to be free to choose the kind of Soviet state system it wanted. Thus, every nation could naturally combine the Soviets in a creative way with various national forms of statehood that would be more in keeping with its own traditions. The practice of revolutionary struggle and state construction in various countries that have rejected capitalism has provided many examples where the experience and essential features of the Soviets have been applied, although the organs of power in these countries have taken a different form, are known under a different name, and often reflect a different balance of class forces than those in Russia.

In other words, in the early years after the October Revolution Lenin formulated the main conditions for and ways of non-capitalist development. After Lenin's death, the Comintern, the CPSU and other fraternal parties continued to elaborate his doctrine of non-capitalist development.

The downfall of the colonial system ended the first stage in the oppressed peoples' struggle for real freedom and national independence, and ushered in the stage of internal



social transformations, elimination of the colonialist aftermath and all outmoded social structures, the strengthening of sovereignty and independence, elimination of economic and cultural backwardness, and a fight for genuine all-round equality with the more advanced nations.

The current scientific and technological revolution, on the one hand, makes it more difficult for the poorly developed countries to close the age-old gap and catch up with the advanced industrial states, and on the other, offers unprecedented opportunities for their accelerated advance along the way of boosting their productive forces. Everything depends on the conditions in these countries, their political leadership, and the road they choose.

In an article entitled "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", written back in 1917, Lenin said that "it is *impossible* to advance from *monopolies*... without advancing towards socialism",<sup>1</sup> that "monopoly capitalism develops into state-monopoly capitalism",<sup>2</sup> that "socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly", and that "socialism is now gazing at us from all the windows of modern capitalism; socialism is outlined directly, *practically*, by every important measure that constitutes a forward step on the basis of this modern capitalism".<sup>3</sup>

The world's reconstruction on socialist lines is a process that cannot be the same in all countries, for it always bears the stamp of the socio-economic conditions of the given country. Hence the inevitable diversity of the ways of advancing towards socialism on the basis of the major laws of that process, formulated in Lenin's works and the documents of International Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties. Lenin said in his closing speech on the report on the Party Programme at the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B): "...at present, the essence of the question of the self-determination of nations is that different nations are advancing in the same historical direction, but by very different zigzags and bypaths, and that the more cultured nations are obviously proceeding in a way that differs from that of the less cultured nations."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 357.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 358-359.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 195.

Non-capitalist development must also differ in form, pace, and transitional stages, although its fundamental principles, whose elaboration was started by Marx and Engels and carried on by Lenin, are always immutable. To understand and guide this revolutionary process, one has to take these principles as a basis.

The world revolutionary movement of our day has vast experience—experience which has stood the test of time—in restructuring precapitalist relations on socialist lines without going through capitalism as a ruling system.

The historical experience has brought to light various versions of the non-capitalist way. First, there is the multiform experience of the Soviet Republics, and then there is also that of the Mongolian People's Republic, the other Asian socialist countries, and the young sovereign states that have taken the non-capitalist road.

It has also become quite obvious that the problem of non-capitalist development is a world-wide problem. Just as the Soviet Union has solved it through the establishment of a close alliance between the proletariat of the country's more advanced areas and the peasantry and other working sections of the backward outskirts, its successful solution on a world scale calls for a lasting alliance between the world proletariat and the peasantry and other working sections in the backward countries. The international working class has played the leading role in this alliance, rendering to the lagging nation's any material, organisational, ideological or cultural assistance they may need. That is an expression of its loyalty to Lenin's internationalist behests. The anti-imperialist, progressive tendencies among the lagging nations will show most forcefully in their desire for an alliance with the world socialist system and the international proletariat.

The situation in Asian and African countries taking the non-capitalist way is obviously quite different. Many of them lack a numerous, organised and revolutionary proletariat, like the one Russia had, and some have no Communist Party. Their independent economy is, as a rule, only in its infancy, while imperialist influence and colonialist survivals still have a great impact on social life. Nevertheless, in their efforts to escape from colonial dependence and secure equality and genuine independence, the peoples of the



countries seeking to separate from capitalism go well beyond the framework of conventional bourgeois-democratic revolutions in their anti-imperialist struggle, opt for socialism and pave the way for socialist development.

To sum up, the non-capitalist way of development is an aggregate of different and specific transitional stages, forms and methods that make it possible gradually to channel the development of nations living under conditions characterised by prevailing precapitalist relations, or relations leading to capitalism, along the socialist road, bypassing altogether or cutting short the capitalist phase. This process can lead to success only if there is a close alliance between the peoples of the lagging countries and the advanced proletariat of the developed socialist countries, with the latter's vigorous all-round support and the intensive purposeful efforts of the country in question aimed at a radical transformation of the old, outmoded system....

The Soviet experience in overcoming the backwardness among various peoples of the USSR along the path of non-capitalist development is undoubtedly of international significance in Lenin's understanding.

The peoples of many countries liberated from colonial dependence have made a thorough study of and seek to apply the experience of the Soviet peoples in their own concrete conditions.

The international experience so far accumulated in non-capitalist development has to be considered profoundly, analysed in theoretical terms, further tested in practice and developed in a creative manner.

It is also very important for the Communist and Workers' parties and all the progressive forces of the present day to continue working together to elaborate that problem from Marxist-Leninist positions.

CRITICISM OF THE IDEOLOGICAL CONCEPTIONS  
OF NEOCOLONIALISM<sup>1</sup>

For many years now, neocolonialist ideologists have been trying to launch a broad counter-offensive against the growing influence of Marxist-Leninist ideas on the main class forces of the current national liberation revolution. These attempts have been particularly persistent since the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the national liberation movement began to show evident signs of going over to the stage of socialist transformations, while colonialist ideology, which draws on anti-communism, racialism and chauvinism, proved to be utterly helpless in the struggle against progressive ideas.

L. I. Brezhnev said to the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties: "Imperialism is actively working to slow down the advance towards independence and social progress, to keep its former colonies within the framework of the capitalist system, and to retain them as objects of exploitation, even if in modified form."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This chapter deals essentially with the attempts by bourgeois political science in the USA to counter Lenin's doctrine on the national-colonial question with its own "positive" conceptions of "intercepting" present-day national liberation revolutions and of the "revolution of growing expectations".

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, p. 153.



The crisis of colonialist ideology has given rise to a new and peculiar neo-colonialist doctrine, that of "intercepting" national liberation revolutions and carrying out a so-called "revolution of growing expectations" in the newly independent countries. Having recognised that some of the traditional, outdated ways and methods of struggle against the Marxist-Leninist doctrine are no longer effective, a section of the neocolonialist ideologists came up with a comprehensive political programme, seeking to make use of the popular slogans of national liberation and social progress.

### **Interception-of-Revolution Concept— a New Trend in Neo-Colonialist Ideology**

Present-day bourgeois ideologists have sought to present the USA as a "bulwark" of the peoples' national liberation revolutions, and the other imperialist powers—as the USA's allies in its struggle against some kind of mythical "communist imperialism".

Pseudo-revolutionary phraseology has recently been popular with many leading bourgeois ideologists (like Walt Rostow, John Galbraith, Robert Strausz-Hupé, William Kintner, Arthur Schlesinger, Chester Bowles, Rupert Emerson, Cyril Black, Thomas Thornton, Robert Waelder, Hugh Seton-Watson, and others).

According to the US sociologist Robert Waelder, the United States now has "to be not only in the forefront of modernisation, but also in the forefront of political revolution."<sup>1</sup>

Chester Bowles amplified this idea, saying that "the real basis of the world revolution is not Marxism but our own American Revolution."<sup>2</sup> Cutting across historical facts, bourgeois scientists say that the imperialist West has a "traditional right" to "steer" the peoples' social revolutions in the Third World because Lenin and his associates had for a long time "ignored" the national liberation movement of the East and took notice of it only after they had been

<sup>1</sup> Robert Waelder, *Progress and Revolution*, New York, 1967, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> *The Department of State Bulletin*, May 15, 1961, p. 706.

"disillusioned" with the Western proletariat in elaborating the strategy and tactics for a world socialist revolution.<sup>1</sup>

The advocates of the new, "socio-revolutionary trend" in neocolonialist ideology have been emphasising their "sympathy" for and "devotion" to anti-colonial liberation revolutions, seeking to impose on the latter their new, "positive" ideological programme—a "revolution of growing expectations", presented as a contrast to Lenin's "outdated" theory of the national liberation revolution.

Many reactionary bourgeois sociologists keep saying that "Lenin applied the dialectical theory of Engels and Marx primarily to social, political, and economic problems in Russia", and that their methodology does not fit exactly to any analysis of the tasks of national liberation revolutions.<sup>2</sup> Some bourgeois theorists, like the English economist Tom Kemp, have been attacking Lenin's theory of the revolution while posing as advocates of Marxism-Leninism who are dissatisfied with the "fact" that after Lenin's death, his doctrine on imperialism and the national-colonial question has not been developed and has been "debased ... to a lifeless ideology".<sup>3</sup>

In actual fact, this theory alone gives the key to an understanding of the specifics of contemporary imperialism. In particular, Lenin's methodology helps men to realise that imperialism has only lost its direct control over the young states' political superstructure, with no more than marginal changes in their economic basis. In many countries, anti-imperialist struggle in this area has only just started. The meaning of this struggle will be seen from Lenin's extremely important remark about imperialist policy giving rise to "the diverse forms of dependent countries which, politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence".<sup>4</sup> Lenin also emphasised that imperialist ideologists kept "talking of *national* liberation ... leaving out

<sup>1</sup> See Donald M. Lowe, *The Function of "China" in Marx, Lenin and Mao*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966, pp. 78-80.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Elliott-Bateman, *Defeat in the East*, London, 1967, p. 190; Donald M. Lowe, *The Function of "China" in Marx, Lenin and Mao*, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Kemp, *Theories of Imperialism*, London, 1967, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 263.



economic liberation. Yet in reality it is the latter that is the chief thing."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's methodology thus enables us to see the substance and the major expression of the imperialists' neo-colonialist policy, which combines old and new, armed and peaceful, economic and ideological forms, methods and ways of expansion, aimed to narrow down the socio-economic content of the peoples' liberation movement and to keep the developing countries as an inferior element within the framework of the capitalist economic system.

The monopoly bourgeoisie has gone over to neo-colonialism owing to the collapse of the colonial system and the weakening positions of imperialism, the latter's inability to build its relations with the developing countries on the basis of naked violence alone. At the same time, neo-colonialism is a product of present-day state-monopoly capitalism, which seeks to establish effective machinery to suppress the world national liberation movement or take it under control.

Neo-colonialist policy is flexible and mobile. Whenever indirect methods of control prove to be inadequate, the neo-colonialists often continue to resort to outright armed force. On the whole, however, in their efforts to undermine the sovereignty of the newly liberated countries and keep these within their orbit, they prefer to work to install in power in the independent countries social elements they can rely upon, enlisting the support of a part of the bourgeois elite and the new bureaucracy and making use of the weapons of Right-wing nationalist ideology to disarm the fighters for national liberation in ideological terms.

This new approach was notably reflected in a collective work put out by the Brookings Institution which contained a set of practical recommendations to the US ruling circles on various questions of neo-colonialist strategy and tactics.<sup>2</sup> In face of the irrefutable historical fact—the collapse of the colonial system—a group of leading bourgeois ideologists had to admit that the former Asian colonies and semi-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> *The Changing Environment of International Relations. A Major Problem of American Foreign Policy*, Brookings Lectures, 1956, Second Printing. The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1957.

colonies had been swept up for good into the broad stream of the revolutionary movement. Willard Thorp said: "It is obvious that one of the great revolutions in man's history is taking place in Asia."<sup>1</sup>

Nearly all the contributors to the book had to admit in one form or another that "nationalist", that is, liberation movements, had given the masses a much bigger say in deciding their own future. Grayson Kirk said that "their attitudes and aspirations can no longer be ignored",<sup>2</sup> something that gave rise to the urgent need to "modernise" US policy in accordance with the latest revolutionary changes in those "turbulent" parts of the world.

Another fundamental collective study put out by 17 researchers at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania, and edited by Robert Strausz-Hupé and Harry Hazard, said that the task was to "forestall" "violent revolutions" and "colonial guerrilla wars" in the former colonies and dependent countries<sup>3</sup> or to direct the latter's development into the calmer waters of a bourgeois-reformist movement so as to safeguard "the interests of the free world in their entirety" and ensure its "global economic development and military security".<sup>4</sup>

Another book that stood out among the numerous neo-colonialist writings of that period was a voluminous study put out by Professor Rupert Emerson of Harvard University, whose thinking made him a part of the Harvard-Massachusetts "brain trust". He set out to substantiate a "new regularity" in the development of the national liberation movement, whose emergence and development, he said, had no organic connections with the world's split into two opposite social systems. Here is his ideological credo: "I have made one unifying theme the central core of the book: the rise of nationalism among non-European peoples as a consequence of the imperial spread of Western European civilisation over the face of the earth."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *The Idea of Colonialism*, ed. by Robert Strausz-Hupé and Harry W. Hazard, New York, 1958, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> R. Emerson, *From Empire to Nation. The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*, p. VII.



It is a high "virtue" of the old-type colonialism, the author believes, that it has served to spread "liberal Western democracy" in the East and "in various ways to predispose the colonial peoples toward democratic political systems".<sup>1</sup> "Western conceptions of the dignity and equality of man, slow enough to become living reality at home, moved ahead at a snail's pace in the lands under imperial control. Consciously or unconsciously, however, the Western administrators brought these conceptions with them in their mental baggage and in the institutions which they introduced."<sup>2</sup>

The imperialist powers claimed a moral-political "right" to steer the social revolution in the former colonies on the plea that the West (the United States above all) had resolutely swung away from the grosser forms of imperialism to good-neighbour "equality".

Before the Kennedy-Johnson grouping took over the political helm in the USA, the idea of "steering" national liberation movements was virtually confined to academic circles connected with US neo-colonialism. Chester Bowles was one of the few officials of the Eisenhower-Dulles Administration who made fairly wide use of "revolutionary" phraseology. Some of the books he put out in the latter half of the 1950s, notably a book with the characteristic title, *American Politics in a Revolutionary World*, advocated the "liberal-democratic" idea of the bourgeois revolutions in Europe and America. For nearly 300 years now, he said, that idea had been "confidently on the offensive" and could offer a fresh "challenge" to the theory of Marx and Lenin, despite the fact that hundreds of millions of people had come to believe in it.<sup>3</sup>

Under the Eisenhower-Dulles Administration, Washington's official circles were usually either dissatisfied with or ironical about any "revolutionary" appeals on the part of some bourgeois ideologists, who voiced the disquiet among the more flexible and sober-minded sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie. That was quite natural, for it was hard to

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> See Ch. Bowles, *American Politics in a Revolutionary World*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1956, pp. 127-28.

square the sophisticated and flexible game of "social revolution" with the tough "cold war" line, the frontal-attack policy, and the sustained attacks on the neutralism of the young states as an "amoral policy".

But when the Kennedy-Johnson grouping took office, there were some marked changes in this area of neo-colonialist expansion. The idea of "interception" and "steering" the developing peoples' liberation revolution, which had long been mooted among reactionary ideologists to cater for the interests of state-monopoly capital, was gradually adopted by the US political rulers as their official neo-colonialist doctrine.

In giving substance to the expansionist concept of the USA's "leading role" in the zone of the developing countries, John Kennedy urged the US ruling circles to offer Third World peoples what would amount to political, economic and social revolution, a revolution which would far surpass anything the Communists might offer. In other words, from the very outset, the "positive" neo-colonialist concept of "intercepting" national liberation revolutions meant an all-out ideological offensive against the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the national-colonial question.

Neo-colonialist ideologists have been doing their utmost to present national liberation revolutions and socialist revolutions as opposites. Dean Rusk, for instance, said in an address at the University of Tennessee that only two "genuine" revolutions were going forward in the present-day world: a "revolution of freedom" in the capitalist West and a "revolution of progress" in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and that to offset these, the Marxist-Leninist parties have been carrying on a "counter-revolution of coercion", whose purpose is to "destroy freedom".<sup>1</sup>

Vulgarised classification of liberation revolutions as "positive" and "negative" is another favourite trick used by neo-colonialist ideologists in their struggle against Lenin's doctrine. "The real choice lies between two kinds of revolution—one which brings about human progress and

<sup>1</sup> See *The Department of State Bulletin*, June 4, 1962, pp. 896-97.



justice by means which respect law and order and human life, and the other which does not."<sup>2</sup>

Bourgeois theorists maintain that revolutions of the second kind are headed by "radicals", that is, advocates of Marxist-Leninist ideology, and those of the first kind—by "traditionalists", who want to maintain broad "traditional links" with the West. "Negative" revolutions are said to look to the experience of the Soviet revolution and lead to total "violence", violations of law and order, of economic stability and state power, and suppression of genuine, "nationalist revolutions". The "positive" ones are aimed to achieve a "revolution of peace",<sup>2</sup> to maintain the boundaries of freedom, and so on. Neo-colonialist ideologists thus seek to discredit any consistently anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic revolutions, which mean a break-down of the whole colonial set-up—first political and then socio-economic, and lay the groundwork for the young states' withdrawal from the world capitalist system.

Neo-colonialist ideologists have been making a vigorous effort to pervert the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the balance between revolution and evolution within the national liberation movement. They have insisted that Lenin's doctrine makes a cult of armed violence and stops just short of denying any evolution.

US politician G. W. Carleton wrote that any Communist-led "domestic revolution" tended to upset stability and slow down economic-production growth in the poorly developed areas.<sup>3</sup> Anti-communist ideologists say that even when Communist parties have opted as an exception for a peaceful, evolutionary line of revolution, this is no more than a tactical ploy. Bourgeois political science has given this very biased reading of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine about the correlation between evolution and revolution in order to offset the growing influence of the ideas of scientific socialism on the developing countries.

Having proclaimed evolution to be the universal instru-

<sup>1</sup> Philip H. Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Educational and Cultural Affairs*, New York and Evanston, 1964, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Five Goals of US Foreign Policy*, Washington, 1962, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> See G. W. Carleton, *The Revolution in American Foreign Policy*, New York, 1964.

ment of their "revolution", neo-colonialist ideologists seek to impress on the politically inexperienced masses the idea that the exploiting system can be transformed in a peaceful way. But this tactical manoeuvre actually leads to diametrically opposite results: the national liberation forces come to see for themselves that neo-colonialism does not want any radical changes in the obsolete political and socio-economic institutions. In the course of social struggle, the forces of national and social progress come to realise that evolution as such (whatever its importance as a form of quantitative change) can do nothing to alter the substance of the old socio-economic system. It is impossible to establish new social relations without any deep-going qualitative changes, which neo-colonialist ideologists seek to avert. Lenin wrote: "Revolutions are festivals of the oppressed and the exploited. At no other time are the mass of people in a position to come forward so actively as creators of a new social order, as at a time of revolution. At such times the people are capable of performing miracles, if judged by the limited, philistine yardstick of gradualist progress."<sup>1</sup>

In their subversive activity, present-day neo-colonialist politicians have also been plugging the ultra-reactionary thesis about "the neo-colonialism of the communist powers".<sup>2</sup> C. L. Sulzberger writes that the Soviet Union, "the greatest of existing empires", has "managed to convince hundreds of millions of people" that it is a "freedom champion", while the USA—"scarcely an imperial power"—is being presented as "the bell-wether of the imperialists."<sup>3</sup>

The thesis of "communist neo-colonialism" is the crudest and most vulgar attempt on the part of neo-colonialist ideologists to play down the international importance of Lenin's national doctrine and to blunt the revolutionising impact of the socialist countries' international practice on the peoples' liberation struggle.

Nor is there any ground for the anti-communist tricks used by the ideologists of neocolonialism who tried to distort

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *The Department of State Bulletin*, February 4, 1963, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> C. L. Sulzberger, *Unfinished Revolution. America and the Third World*, New York, 1965, pp. 15, 18.



some propositions of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine or the national-colonial question, subjectively contrasting them with the new problems of the national liberation movement.

The prominent Democratic Party leader, Robert Kennedy, used to argue that the Marxist-Leninist doctrine was outdated, because since the days of the *Communist Manifesto* the capitalist economy had made a big stride forward, leaving the "era of brutal capitalism" well behind.<sup>1</sup> One-time State Secretary of the USA, Dean Rusk, claimed that the theory of Marx and Lenin was "inadequate" because the disintegration of the colonial system had not resulted in an automatic "collapse" of the economy of the metropolitan countries, although it is common knowledge that creative Marxism-Leninism has never simplified the matter in those terms.

All these "arguments" are aimed to create the impression that the Marxist-Leninist theory is outdated. It is obvious, however, that a theory that gives an analysis of the principal laws governing the development of capitalism cannot be outdated as long as capitalism survives. Moreover, it is being developed and enriched constantly on the basis of a creative analysis of new phenomena in social life.

### **Against the Distortions of Lenin's Doctrine on Wars of National Liberation**

As the world positions of the neo-colonialist policy of US imperialism weakened towards the late 1950s and early 1960s, its ruling circles made haste to refurbish not only their ideological, but also their military-political programme of struggle against national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Thus, they came up with the doctrine of "counter-insurgency", which provided for "local" suppression of the peoples' anti-imperialist revolutionary movements. Here is how *The Wall Street Journal* (May 16, 1961) spelled out this problem: "As it was realised the Soviet Union had created its own atomic arsenal complete with missile delivery system, US military doctrine stepped down. Nuclear warfare became 'unthinkable'; the American

<sup>1</sup> *The Department of State Bulletin*, May 7, 1962, p. 761.

strategic armaments were retained and augmented but with altered function.... The idea blossomed that for most purposes the US must move down to 'conventional' weapons and prepare to employ them in limited wars."

The concept of anti-guerrilla warfare in effect boiled down to that of counter-revolutionary warfare, a neo-colonialist attempt to formulate the basic military-political principle for carrying out special operations in the zone of the national liberation movement in order to frustrate the objective deepening of nation-wide revolutions, and to prevent these turning against imperialism and capitalism in general.

Neocolonialist ideologists and politicians start by perverting Lenin's doctrine about the correlation of war and revolution, and also about national liberation wars in the present epoch. The main "arguments" set out in various bourgeois historical and military-political writings on this question usually run as follows.

First, Lenin's historical methodology is said to "identify" the nature and substance of war and revolution. Cyril Black, Professor of History at Princeton University, says that "the Soviet theorists have thus concluded from their own experience that wars and military crises have provided the most fertile soil for revolution".<sup>1</sup> *Modern Guerrilla Warfare*, edited by F.M. Osanka, who is on the staff of George Washington University, makes the absurd claim that Lenin believed war to be a means of spreading the revolution across the rest of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Bourgeois ideologists use this kind of "scientific argument" to twist the genuinely humanistic essence of Lenin's theory of revolution, which gives preference to revolutionary force without the use of arms proper, maintains in accordance with historical experience that there is no fatal connection between war and revolution, and, moreover, does not regard world war as a way to achieve the great working-class goals.

Counter-insurgency advocates have been making wide use of Left-opportunist concepts to pervert the social and

<sup>1</sup> *Communism and Revolution. The Strategic Uses of Political Violence*, ed. by C. E. Black and Th. P. Thornton, Princeton, N. Y., 1964, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> See *Modern Guerrilla Warfare*, ed. by F. M. Osanka, Washington, 1962.



political essence of revolutionary national liberation wars. Lenin formulated his clear-cut internationalist stand on this question way back during the First World War. He said: "The history of the twentieth century, this century of 'unbridled imperialism', is replete with colonial wars. But what we Europeans ... call 'colonial wars' are often national wars, or national rebellions of these oppressed peoples."<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1915, Lenin wrote in his well-known letter to A. M. Kollontai: "I think it mistaken in theory and harmful in practice *not* to distinguish types of wars. We cannot be against wars of national liberation"<sup>2</sup> Some of his other works classify the most important specific feature of national liberation wars, which is that their political message coincides with that of the peoples' anti-colonial revolution. Hence Lenin's formulation of the tasks facing the international revolutionary working-class movement: "Socialists must ... render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their uprising—or revolutionary war, in the event of one—*against* the imperialist powers that oppress them."<sup>3</sup>

Historical experience has plainly shown that national liberation wars break out owing to internal developments in the colonial and dependent countries, an extreme aggravation of the contradictions between the oppressed peoples and their imperialist oppressors, and are a form of retaliation, a form of the unquestionably just, legitimate and progressive revolutionary struggle against colonialist and neo-colonialist rule.

What do neo-colonialist ideologists read into wars of national liberation? Their views on this matter are extremely biased, with the expansionist substance of the neo-colonialists' military policy standing out in strong relief. Counter-insurgency theorists deny that national liberation uprisings have any independent, national basis, and say that these are due solely to "foreign communist infiltration". Insurrectionary wars in the Third World, President John Kenedy had insisted, are not a logical outcome of the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 151-52.

development of a revolutionary situation inside a country, but happen because foreign Communists "send arms, agitators, aid, technicians and propaganda to every troubled area".<sup>1</sup> On other occasions, Kenedy said that wars of liberation supported by the Kremlin involved seizure of power by a minority in defiance of the people's will, and were a new form of "aggression" perpetrated "without communist troops ever crossing any international frontier".<sup>2</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, who claims to be a more or less realistically-minded bourgeois historian, maintains that what Marxists-Leninists term "subterranean war" is in fact "the major form of communist aggression".<sup>3</sup>

Neo-colonialist ideologists regard the emergence of the socio-political motive forces of national liberation wars in the light of this reactionary and subjectivist prerequisite, which is groundless and unscientific.

In face of the irrefutable historical facts, bourgeois theorists have had to admit that the insurrectionary movement for national liberation could not have existed without the broad backing and sympathy of the local population. They go on to say, however, that the population is being terrorised into such support.<sup>4</sup> Counter-insurgency theorists use this fib, which has nothing to do with political realism, to formulate their general conclusion that national liberation uprisings boil down to political terrorism, and their fighting forces to guerrilla bands.<sup>5</sup>

This is not the first time that reactionary bourgeois propaganda has been trying to defile the revolutionary, liberation movements in defence of the people's interests. At the time of the first Russian revolution, Lenin emphasised: "Guerrilla operations are not acts of vengeance, but military operations. They no more resemble adventurous acts than the harassing of the enemy's rear by

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Record*, September 28, 1962 to October 4, 1962, p. 21456.

<sup>2</sup> *The Department of State Bulletin*, June 26, 1961, p. 994.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, Boston (Massachusetts), 1965, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> See *American Defence Policy*, Baltimore, 1965, p. 310; *Modern Guerrilla Warfare*, ed. by F. M. Osanka, p. 430.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 341, May 1962, p. 50.



raiding parties of huntsmen during a lull on the main battlefield resembles the killing of an individual in a duel or by assassination. Guerrilla operations conducted by fighting squads ... undoubtedly reflect, clearly and directly, the temper of the masses."<sup>1</sup> This continues to be true of present-day insurrectionary wars for national liberation. Particularly in view of the fact that the social basis of its supporters does not contract; on the contrary, the national liberation movement involves not only the poorest, but also other most diverse classes and social sections which bear the brunt of colonialist and neo-colonialist oppression: the broad peasant masses, various sections of the industrial and agricultural proletariat, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia; and also the national bourgeoisie and sometimes various patriotically-minded feudal-monarchist elements.

At the second (social) phase of the liberation revolution, when the latter centres on the social contradiction between neo-colonialism and reactionary nationalism allied with it, on the one hand, and the broad masses, on the other, the anti-imperialist, democratic movement mainly involves the working class, the peasantry, and other revolutionary-democratic forces. Far from narrowing down the socio-political basis of the revolution, the ideological and organisational stratification within the motive forces of the national liberation movement (at its second phase) tends to broaden that basis through the involvement of fresh contingents of the working people, which earlier on had not taken any part in the struggle against neo-colonialism and domestic reaction.

Catering for state-monopoly capital, US counter-insurgency theorists have deliberately given a twisted reading to the origins of national liberation wars, seeking to outlaw the oppressed peoples' movement and justify the most brutal (even from a bourgeois standpoint) and unlawful means of fighting that movement. But the US neo-colonialist line for total militarisation of the struggle against the national liberation movement and for the use of blanket terrorism against fighters for national liberation

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 117-18.

and social emancipation does not mean that the monopoly bourgeoisie has strong positions.

It can well happen, of course, that with the help of a set of emergency measures currently developed, the US neo-colonialists will for some time hold back individual contingents of the national liberation movement against domestic and foreign reaction. But the decisive tendency here is such that even the most crafty neo-colonialist ploys cannot overwhelm the genuine insurrectionary movements emerging in the conditions of a nation-wide revolutionary crisis.

The anti-imperialist movement is invincible (and South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and various countries in the Arab East and Africa have proved this to be true) because from the very beginning, the struggle against imperialism and domestic reaction is not only being waged by military means, but couples a wide range of measures—political, ideological, diplomatic and economic, which involve in various ways broad sections of the masses, which know themselves to be a part of the world-wide anti-imperialist, liberation front and rely on the creative example and effective support of world socialism.

L. I. Brezhnev said: "No matter what senseless brutalities the modern colonialists may commit, imperialism no longer possesses its former ability to dispose of the destiny of the peoples unimpeded. The socialist cause, the national liberation movement are invincible. In our time, the international solidarity of the socialist states, of all revolutionaries, of all fighters for peace and progress, has become a tremendous force."<sup>1</sup>

### **Neo-Colonialist Programme for Pre-Emptying Genuine Social Revolutions**

Traditional colonialist ideology centred on a negative criticism of the Marxist-Leninist national-colonial concept and had no positive ideas to offer the fighting peoples except, of course, those of "Westernisation", "interdependence", and the like, but now neo-colonialist theorists have

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, pp. 47-48.



been trying to work out a constructive programme for a "revolution of growing expectations".

Neocolonialist theorists do not care about the real factors behind national liberation revolutions like the world's division into two antagonistic social systems, class differentiation and class struggle, and the contradictions between the oppressed peoples of the former colonies and the imperialist bourgeoisie of the former metropolitan countries. They just divide the world subjectively into economically backward (proletarian) nations and industrialised (bourgeois) nations. One collective study defines proletarian nations as having three major characteristics: "poverty, landlordism, and corruption."<sup>1</sup>

Neocolonialist strategists have naturally avoided making any objective analysis of the real causes behind the socio-economic and cultural backwardness of the Eastern peoples, which is connected, Lenin said, with the dire effects of their ruthless age-old colonial exploitation, and the conservation of the most backward social relations in the colonies and semi-colonies. Lenin said that the imperialist bourgeoisie "is prepared to go to any length of savagery, brutality and crime in order to uphold dying capitalist slavery.

"And a more striking example of this decay of the *entire* European bourgeoisie can scarcely be cited than the support it is lending to reaction in Asia in furtherance of the selfish aims of the financial manipulators and capitalist swindlers."<sup>2</sup>

The division of the world into "rich" and "poor" nations, which ignores the existence of classes, is at the bottom of the imperialist concept of "intercepting revolutions" and the "revolution of growing expectations", which says that poverty tends to breed "dangerous political instability", "communist infiltration", "communist uprisings", and so on.

So, bourgeois theorists conclude, the revolutionary ferment in the developing countries is not due to their brutal colonial enslavement, their continued neo-colonialist exploitation, or their class oppression, but to their age-old

<sup>1</sup> *The United States and the Far East*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962, p. 3.  
<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 99.

"poverty" and the resulting "communist infiltration". Consequently, the argument goes, if the basis for social upheavals in Asia, Africa and Latin America is to be eliminated, the thing is to carry out an "industrial revolution", or a "revolution of modernisation",<sup>1</sup> that is, to introduce new technology into production and the services industry<sup>2</sup> and piecemeal socio-economic reforms (to be controlled from the top).

As we trace out the intricate logical process of the emergence of the "revolution of growing expectations" concept, we find that neo-colonialist ideologists and politicians have been trying hard to make use of the scientific and technological revolution (which is indeed facing the developing countries as an ever more urgent problem) to suppress the anti-imperialist, democratic and social revolution in the Third World. Here is a typical "theoretical discovery" in this area: Dean Rusk believes that the technological revolution is meant to transform social, economic, and political relations in the former colonies and semi-colonies.<sup>3</sup>

The ideologists and strategists of "interception" and the "revolution of growing expectations" would like to gear the current scientific and technological revolution to their own expansionist designs, their global social revenge-seeking aimed at a "revival" of imperialism as a world social system, just as the industrial revolution at the dawn of capitalism was used to consolidate the bourgeois system. US neo-colonialist advocates have even come up with something of a regular formula about a second industrial revolution under capitalism. But in the present epoch of the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism, this kind of design is bound to lead up a blind alley.

Under the present inequitable system of imperialist division of labour, the developing countries, owing to their age-old backwardness, have no access to many modern scientific and technological achievements, which are in effect often being made to work against them through the

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernisation*, New York, Evanston and London, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Department of State Bulletin*, August 20, 1962, p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> *Business Week*, March 25, 1961, p. 104.



terms of trade on the world capitalist market as another factor of exploitation. Thus, the explosive development of synthetic substitutes has led to a catastrophic plunge in the prices of natural raw materials produced in the former colonies. It has also been established that general technological progress in the capitalist world has been widening the gap between the labour-productivity level of the industrial and backward states.

Besides, even the very limited progress in the former colonies and semi-colonies has continued to cause some concern in Western neocolonialist circles.

Reactionary theorists have in fact been denying the objective, indissoluble, dialectical connection between the scientific and technological revolution and the social revolutions of the present day. But, as Lenin had brilliantly predicted, given the effective backing of world socialism, the newly independent nations can go over to "the use of machinery to the lightening of labour, to democracy, to socialism".<sup>1</sup> The rich experience of the world revolutionary, notably national liberation, movement goes to show that Lenin's thesis about the inherent interconnection between scientific and technological progress and social revolution is profoundly correct. The scientific and technological revolution is of real benefit for the broad masses only where it goes forward against the background of a victorious social revolution by the working people, a revolution aimed against imperialism and domestic reaction, and towards all-round progress. The socialist republics of the Soviet East are a vivid example of the creative blending of scientific and technological progress and social revolution.

The scientific and technological revolution, which is well in line with the vital needs of socialist and national liberation revolutions, and the new productive forces it tends to generate cannot fit into the straitjacket of the obsolete capitalist relations of production, which the neo-colonialists have been seeking to impose on the young states. Consequently, in virtue of the antagonistic contradictions between the former colonies and their metropolitan countries within the framework of the world capitalist economy, national revolutions objectively tend to develop into social,

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 67.

anti-capitalist revolutions, something that is a logical need of the present day.

This pretended urge on the part of US neocolonialism to change the status quo in the developing countries has involved some tactical concessions to the national liberation movement. Thus, neo-colonialist advocates have thought it best to reckon with the extreme unpopularity of the word "capitalism", which the broad masses equate with colonialism and consider a threat to freedom and independence.<sup>1</sup> To neutralise the anti-capitalist feelings and the influence of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, "interception" theorists have been talking of the need to recognise the developing peoples' right to choose their own form of economic organisation,<sup>2</sup> and their own versions of modernisation, which would take into account "their own unique histories, cultures, and aspirations".<sup>3</sup>

The US philosopher and student of international affairs J. S. Gibson revealed the actual meaning of these concessions aimed to "prevent" (or rather to curb) the revolutionary movement in the developing countries. He said that it was high time to drop the rigid and, consequently, often ineffective tactics of frontal pressures, which usually caused violent opposition in the liberated country, and to adopt in its stead a "Trojan policy", penetrating the national liberation movement in a slow, gradual and flexible way.<sup>4</sup>

Gibson went on to say that it would not do to pressure the developing countries, which are now at a political crossroads, into making too sharp a turn towards the "free world". The USA, he said, could well be satisfied with these countries' initially accepting some principles of the Western political and economic system, and, instead of shying at terms and concepts like "national socialism", "social reforms", "economic planning", and so on, should accept and adapt these to the needs of "democratic", that is capitalist development.

<sup>1</sup> See *Southeast Asia: Problems of United States Policy*, ed. by W. Henderson, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1963, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> H. S. Reuss, *The Critical Decade. An Economic Policy for America and the Free World*, New York, 1964.

<sup>3</sup> *American Foreign Policy. Current Documents 1961*, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> John S. Gibson, *Ideology and World Affairs*, Boston (Massachusetts), 1964, pp. 292-93.



“Utmost adaptation”, to the local, national, specific conditions of the multifaceted developing world is a major ingredient of the “interception” concept and the “revolution of growing expectations”. It was only recently, while the oppressed peoples were fighting for their political independence, that Western reactionary bourgeois science took a stubborn stand against Lenin’s concept of the historical role of nationalism in the national liberation movement, dismissing the nationalist ideology of the anti-colonial movement as “negative” and “destructive”. But once the national bourgeoisie came to power in many countries (as an independent force or in coalition with other class groupings), neocolonialist theorists have changed their tune.

They have continued to wage a fierce struggle against the progressive aspects of nationalism, which are aimed to eliminate the colonial system altogether and to protect national sovereignty, economic progress, and national culture and specifics. They say that progressive movements pursuing these purposes are an expression of the young nations’ “aggressive” nationalism.<sup>1</sup> According to the US sociologist T. Durdin, the emotional mood of extreme nationalism spearheaded against the West could well turn into a new kind of imperialism.

But while fighting against the progressive aspects of nationalism, neo-colonialist ideologists have been doing their best to promote its reactionary, anti-democratic aspects, which are particularly intensified as the objective and subjective prerequisites take shape for the development of general national revolutions into social revolutions. US neo-colonialists have been doing their utmost to support the Right-wing nationalist forces in their brutal suppression of any progressive, particularly communist, movements, and to help reactionary groupings of the local bourgeoisie to strengthen their political, military, economic, social and other instruments of class rule.

On the strength of these reactionary principles, neo-colonialist theorists have been eulogising the Right-wing

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<sup>1</sup> US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *United States Policy...*, p. 201.

nationalist ideology of the pro-imperialist bourgeois circles in the young states.

Prominent theorist of US neocolonialism Roger Hilsman insists that “if this new nationalism moves into constructive channels, it can be a fantastically powerful force.... It can excite the peoples of Asia and Africa as can no political ideology or religious fervour.”<sup>1</sup> He believes that Right-wing nationalism is particularly “valuable” because it can be turned into an instrument of struggle against the ideas of scientific socialism and revolutionary democracy: nationalism, he says, is a great barrier in the way of communism or any other internal ideology not connected with nationalism.<sup>2</sup>

Imperialist strategists and ideologists have thus been trying to regulate the internal processes in the developing countries, which have recently entered a stretch of fierce class battles, with a sharp aggravation of the conflict between the working class, the peasantry, and the other democratic forces, including the patriotically-minded sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the elements within the national bourgeoisie and local reaction that have been leaning more and more towards a deal with the forces of international reaction.

The neo-colonialists’ ideological stake on Right-wing nationalism makes them look to the bourgeois-parliamentary system. The line towards imposing the bourgeois-parliamentary system on all the developing countries implies, on the one hand, a withdrawal of unconditional support for manifestly pro-imperialist regimes—ultra-rightist, rotten through and unpopular—and, on the other, isolation and suppression of revolutionary-democratic regimes.

These attempts on the part of Western neo-colonialists to switch their support from military-police terrorist regimes to “centre parties”, operating on the principles of the bourgeois-parliamentary system, show that their tactical approach is being remoulded on fairly new lines: they have been casting off the outworn forms of political rule by the local reactionary elite and resorting to bourgeois-

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<sup>1</sup> US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *United States Policy...*, pp. 136-37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.



parliamentary democracy in an effort to establish more secure guarantees for protecting the monopolies' interests.

Bourgeois parliamentarism naturally represents a higher stage of socio-political development as compared with crumbling monarchies and the reactionary dictatorial regimes of the compradore-feudal elite. Still, it can do nothing so solve the pressing problems of the current national liberation revolution, which wants to break away from the framework of bourgeois revolution and so is latent with a tendency towards more fundamental social change, developing an ever sharper edge against neo-colonialism and domentic reaction. Lenin emphasised: "The domination of finance capital and of capital in general is not to be abolished by *any* reforms in the sphere of political democracy; and self-determination belongs wholly and exclusively to this sphere."<sup>1</sup>

The political programme for the "revolution of growing expectations", formulated in virtue of the neo-colonialists' forced tactical withdrawal, is meant to forestall any radical transformations in the young states' political superstructure. Bourgeois ideologists and politicians have said so quite openly. Cyril Black, for instance, believes that if the developing countries are to solve the problems of the social revolution, all they have to do is to adapt the traditional political institutions (i.e., the old superstructure) to the requirements of the present epoch of modernisation.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Modernisation Theory: Ideological Cover for Neocolonialism**

In the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s, bourgeois ideologists and politicians began to cast about for new ideological doctrines and concepts of socio-political development in the liberated countries to substantiate the neo-colonialist strategy of "pre-empting revolution" in the national liberation areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The theory saying that the former colonial countries in Asia and Africa are to be "modernised" has been elaborated in

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> See *Communism and Revolution...*, p. 427.

particular detail. The point of departure here is that there are two distinct types of society in the present-day world: "agrarian", "backward", "traditional" society and "industrial", "developed", "modern" society. The chief watershed in the present-day world, say the advocates of the "modernisation" theory, runs between the "developed" and the "backward" countries (otherwise known as the "rich" and the "poor" nations, the "North" and the "South", and so on).

The modernisation theory is spearheaded against the Marxist-Leninist teaching about socio-economic formations, and is aimed to blur the fundamental differences between socialism and capitalism. Its chief political and ideological purpose is to persuade the young nations to "model" their socio-economic development on the main aspects of present-day bourgeois society.

So, as the imperialist theorists put aside their "cold war" doctrines about the need to "save" the young Asian and African states from communism by means of "deterrence", "roll-back" or "position of strength" policies, they set out to produce a theory which would offer an alternative to the "communist model" and could attract the attention of the developing nations and their leaders and influence their historical choice.

In putting forward their "social strategy" for the developing countries, the imperialist theorists sought to make capital out of the urgent problems actually facing the liberated countries. Virtually all the Asian and African nations have proclaimed their desire for all-round socio-economic and cultural development, and insistent demands for modernisation for the sake of national revival and social progress are being heard across a wide spectrum of social forces and political trends. Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal remarked that "the modernisation ideals ... have become the 'official creed', almost a national religion, and are one of the powerful strands of the 'new nationalism'".<sup>1</sup>

Some Western theorists at first believed that all they had to do to start off the developing countries along the capitalist road was to provide them with an "economic

<sup>1</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama. An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Vol. 1, New York, 1968, p. 54.



growth model" and assure them of favourable financial, technical, and economic conditions, which would enable them to reach the point of economic "take-off". It has turned out, however, that the development of the young Asian and African states does not amount to straightforward "economic growth" or smoothly running "modernisation", but is a complicated, contradictory, spasmodic and painful process, with qualitative as well as quantitative changes; there is nothing smooth about this development, which is full of conflict, turbulence and bitter struggle between various social forces and political tendencies. Some Western sociologists have had to admit that life has blasted the idyllic picture of a "quiet industrial revolution".

Bourgeois theorists have not come up with any tidy doctrine of "modernisation" or even with a single, generally recognised definition of "modernisation", and this is because they seek to cover up the bourgeois substance of the various "modernisation" theories and substitute a bourgeois-apologetic reading of the developing countries' social prospects for the Marxist, scientific reading.

Whatever the differences between the various bourgeois concepts of modernisation, most of these have several points in common: first of all their authors regard modernisation as a complex process embracing the significant changes going on in various spheres of the Eastern countries' social life: economics, politics, culture and social mentality.

Western theorists note the interplay in the course of modernisation of many internal and external factors, which determines the substance, forms, direction and pace of the modernisation process and results in a complicated and contradictory combination of Western bourgeois political institutions, financial resources, modern technology, ideas and social norms, and local national customs, socio-cultural patterns, traditional norms and values, all of these allegedly blending together to produce something utterly new, unexpected, and almost unpredictable.

A closer look at the various Western attitudes to social development in the East will show, however, that "modernisation" here boils down to a kind of "Westernisation", that is development of Western models with, no doubt, "Western assistance".

As for the growing anti-imperialist feelings in the developing countries, these are seen as manifestations of "aggressive nationalism", as a painful response to colonialism, which has allegedly long since become a thing of the past.

Meanwhile, more and more people in the developing countries expounding different ideological and political views were beginning to criticise the "modernisation" doctrines. First of all, there were the "golden age" advocates, who wanted to protect their countries' national identity and revive the cultural traditions of the pre-colonial past.

The Left wing of the national liberation movement accused the capitalist West of having had a pernicious effect on their peoples' development, blamed colonialism for their backwardness and emphasised that continued (and even growing) economic dependence on the world capitalist economy could well perpetuate that backwardness. The Left radical circles in the West joined in this criticism and elaborated on the problem from anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist positions, insisting that the developing countries could never hope to leave their backwardness behind unless they restructured their inequitable relations with the capitalist West, and that modernisation along capitalist lines could only serve to sustain their backwardness.

Over the past few years, the critics of "modernisation" theories have shown renewed vigour in exposing "cultural imperialism". "This is the imperialism," writes French sociologist Gilbert Blardone, "which induces it [the West.—*Author.*] to think that only its motivations, its types of organisation can lead mankind to progress, imperialism which assimilates all progress in the Western visions of progress ... and, in the final count, regards progress *solely* as an attribute of Western civilisation..., imperialism which seeks to crush the spirit of innovation in his interlocutor, substituting for it an inferiority complex and plunging him into desperate revolt."<sup>1</sup>

Criticism of the "modernisation" doctrine was particularly intensified in the late 1960s, when a whole range of objective factors came to the fore and showed up the doctrine for what it was. The numerous economic difficul-

<sup>1</sup> G. Blardone, *Progrès économique dans le Tiers-Monde*, Paris, 1972, p. 44.



ties besetting the developing countries, the growing gap between them and the industrial countries, the disproportion between economic growth and the backward social structures, the deepening inequalities in the distribution of material values, and so on, exacerbated the social tensions and political instability in the developing countries. None of this fitted into the straightjacket of "modernisation", so that somewhere in the mid-1960s its theorists began to say that it was "erratic", was in "decline", or had failed altogether.

As one neo-colonialist project for "development aid" flopped after another and the imperialists kept failing in their attempts to force Western development models on the countries of Indochina, Afro-Asian opinion began to have doubts about the "modernisation mission of the West" and its ability to promote genuine development in the liberated countries. Finally, the internal, particularly, racial, conflicts in the USA, and the worsening economic and spiritual crises in the capitalist countries undermined the widely advertised bourgeois concepts that the "less developed countries" had to strive to resemble the United States. The idea that there was no point in trying to catch up with the destruction-bound West, first mooted among national liberation fighters in the early 1960s, suddenly acquired a most urgent ring.

Since "modernisation" concepts provided an ideological and theoretical basis for bourgeois "development sociology", the realisation that these concepts were faulty and were at odds with the historical processes entailed a re-assessment of this entire section in Western Orientalology.

Some prominent Western theorists have sought to elaborate the "modernisation" concepts by complexifying the existing schemes. Most Western sociologists, however, are beginning to think that "'development' or 'modernisation' does not constitute a 'unilinear' demographic, social, economic or political process which leads—even if haltingly or intermittently—to some plateau whose basic contours, whatever the differences in detail, will be everywhere the same".<sup>1</sup> Rather, they are coming to see modernisation as a "multiple" process and social development as "multilinear".

The review of "modernisation" concepts, the switch from

<sup>1</sup> S. Eisenstadt, "Studies of Modernisation and Sociological Theory", *History and Theory*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Middletown, 1974, pp. 225-52.

manifest "Westernisation" to the idea of multiple social development in Asia and Africa means not only that the real historical process has turned out to be much more complicated than bourgeois "development sociologists" believed, but also that Western statesmen and ideologists have been trying to adjust to the new situation in the former colonial world, which is marked by some resounding defeats for the imperialists' neo-colonialist policy. The process also reflects their urge to adjust to the constantly growing role of the young national states in the political and economic structure of the present-day world. The idea of "multiple variations" is not only a concession to public opinion in the liberated countries, which is always apt to lay stress on its own values and development models, but also an attempt to play up the anti-colonial nationalism and even "national socialism" in order to use these for neo-colonialist purposes.

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### **Evolution of the US Imperialists' Foreign Policy Concepts**

In elaborating the various ideological concepts of neo-colonialism, Western statesmen and academic circles have not only sought to provide the liberated countries with socio-political development ways that would suit the imperialists and work out various doctrines for "pre-empting revolution", but have also done their best to formulate military-strategic foreign policy concepts for the major imperialist powers. The USA has been particularly active in this area.

Over the past few years, US statesmen, politicians, students of society, businessmen, career military, scientists and others variously involved in elaborating foreign policy concepts for the US imperialists and substantiating these in ideological terms, have focussed their attention on international problems and US foreign policy. This is chiefly due to the fact that the global strategy followed until recently by the US imperialists has suffered crushing defeats owing to a number of objective factors and circumstances, and the radical changes going on in the modern world.



Now that the USA's standing in the world has fallen very low as a result of its aggressive policy, US propaganda will go to any lengths to whitewash US imperialism.

In view of the bicentenary of the USA's independence, bourgeois ideologists, politicians, propaganda outfits and academic circles have been straining to prove that US capitalism is exceptional, presenting the USA as a "model" of political democracy, a "bulwark" of peace and the national independence of the peoples, the chief defender of the "forward lines of freedom", and so on.

Seeking to capitalise on the historical fact that the USA emerged in the course of persistent anti-colonial struggle for independence from British rule, the apologists of US imperialism want to convince the world that the USA is an anti-colonial power and has always sided with the oppressed colonial peoples. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

The hard facts refute all the US bourgeois propaganda myths. From the very start, the US bourgeois state took the road of expansion and seizure of foreign territories. At the turn of the 19th century, the USA emerged in the world arena as an imperialist power and at once fell to fighting with other imperialist states over colonial sources of raw materials and spheres of capital investment. The US ruling circles varied their expansion methods from one part of the world to another: in Latin America, they relied on a new reading of the Monroe Doctrine; in the Far East, they applied the "open-door" policy, which started the so-called "dollar drive"; in 1898, they fought a war against Spain for possession of the Philippines—the world's first imperialist war.

On the eve of the First World War, the USA's industrial superiority was paradoxically coupled with a secondary role in international affairs. US monopoly capital determined to resolve that contradiction by switching to a "global" strategy, that is, broad economic, political and military expansion. The USA's foreign policy line after the Second World War continued to be based on "globalism".

Another premise for the emergence of the USA's "global strategy" was that, in the final count, armed force was the crucial ingredient of the country's foreign policy and had to be used to "fill" the various economic, political and other "vacuums" resulting from the collapse of the colonial

system of capitalism: the traditional idea that the USA had a "mission" to spread the US way of life (as the best possible way of life) across the world. In December 1945, the then US President Harry Truman declared that the victory in the war had brought the US nation face to face with the burning need to provide world leadership.

The expansionist nature of US imperialism has been particularly obvious in the three decades since the Second World War, when US monopoly capital has proved its clear economic and military superiority in the capitalist world. One needs merely recall the USA's policy "from positions of strength", its armed intervention in Korea in the early 1950s, its repeated interference in the internal affairs of Middle East countries, its numerous aggressive moves against the Latin American peoples, its "dirty war" against the heroic people of Vietnam and other Indochina peoples, and so on. In their efforts to justify the USA's blatantly aggressive foreign policy, US bourgeois politicians and theorists insisted that as Pax Britanica once came to supplant the Pax Romana, so the Second World War ushered in a Pax Americana, the "American Age".

US foreign policy over the past three decades may be divided into three main stages. Stage one (1945-1955) saw the USA embrace the "cold war" policy, strive to dictate its will to other nations, urge the "containment" or even "rolling back" of socialism and "liberation" of East and South-East European countries from "communist rule", and attempt to suppress the movement of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples by force of arms on the plea of fighting communism. That was when US military strategists formulated their "massive retaliation" concept, based on the idea that the USA had a decisive lead over the USSR in atomic weapons and means of their delivery.

When the Soviet Union launched its first satellite, laying low the notion that the USSR lagged behind the USA in scientific and technical terms, one of the chief arguments propping up the "positions of strength" policy fell to the ground. At the same time, US militarist leaders continued to press for a more intense arms drive and for the need to prepare a preventive war against the USSR and other socialist countries, but the more sober-minded US ideologists and politicians were beginning to urge the



need to renounce war as a means of solving international disputes.

Throughout stage two (1955-1969), the incipient realistic trend in US foreign policy continued to gather momentum. US strategists did not abandon their "cold war" policy, but shifted their emphasis in "rolling back" socialism and the progressive movements to the "periphery", that is, to the zone of national liberation movement, adopting a more cautious approach to the problems of "central conflict" (an armed clash between the USA and the USSR). They cast aside their tattered "massive retaliation" strategy and developed a strategy based on "flexible response", which provided for a possible "choice" between various types and methods of aggressive armed action depending on the concrete international setting.

The "flexible response" strategy, which spelled out as ceaseless armed struggle against any attempt by any people to break the bonds of national or social oppression, stipulated a special need for "secret" war, so-called "guerrilla tactics", which actually amounted to all-out "counter-guerrilla warfare" and "counter-insurgency operations". Eventually, the "flexible response" concept evolved into the doctrine of "escalation" of the conflict between the nuclear powers.

When President John Kennedy was installed in the White House, the openly aggressive and reactionary "flexible response" concept was adopted as the theoretical basis for the USA's military and political planning. But life kept driving home the point that the concept was bound to lead the country up a blind alley both in the socio-political and the military-technical plane. From the mid-1960s on, US political and military circles increasingly came out against the military doctrine pivoted on the use of nuclear weapons. George E. Lowe wrote: "...Total war no longer has any real social value.... The United States may no longer secretly wish for global hegemony implemented by an enlightened Pax Americana, nor can she expect to be supreme in the universe, nor hope to convert all of the earth into English-speaking democratic gentlemen governed by Judaic-Christian beliefs and Anglo-Saxon law."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Army*, April 1965, pp. 58, 59.

The historical record convincingly showed that purely military means and methods did not help the US imperialists attain their chief political goal and establish world rule. As a result, US foreign policy showed an ever stronger leaning towards equitable negotiations with the USSR and other socialist countries and a readiness to take steps to curb the arms race.

Stage three in the US foreign policy, which started in 1969, is marked by a more critical approach to the possibility of using armed force in the world arena, recognition by the US ruling circles of the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, and the USA's gradual involvement in co-operation with the USSR and other socialist countries in the economy, science, culture and the adjacent areas.

In the theoretical plane, a new concept urging "realistic deterrence" (to the inclusion of so-called "limited strategic nuclear war") has come to supplant the "flexible response" concept, which held sway from 1961 to 1968.

So, at the start of the 1970s, the world faced a new historical situation, when, to quote the US policy-makers, the world had reverted from "bipolarity", that is, confrontation and contest between the USA and the USSR, to "multipolar balancing;" the USA now had neither the strength nor the opportunity to "police" the world on its own and "restore order" in various outlying parts of the world, to say nothing of realising the global goals of US imperialism and establishing a Pax Americana.

The failure of the US aggression in Indochina reverberated throughout the US economy and plunged the country into a socio-political crisis. US losses in the Vietnam war, which lasted from 1965 to 1970 and cost the United States 108,500 million dollars, came to more than 45,000 killed and about 300,000 wounded, and as it neared its inglorious end, Washington began casting about for ways to extricate itself from the war in South-East Asia. These efforts resulted in a new doctrine, the Nixon, or the Guam Doctrine, which was proclaimed during President Nixon's visit to Guam in June 1969.

The word "doctrine" denotes public foreign policy statements by US Presidents. Since the turn of the century, US doctrines have always had an offensive edge and been



closely tied in with the various wars, notably, the "cold war" against the USSR and other socialist countries. General Secretary of the US Communist Party, Gus Hall, emphasised that "US imperialism at this stage in history is the most aggressive, most warlike and most predatory of all imperialist powers.... It is the centre of the drive towards war. It is the central military, financial and political pillar for all reactionary, fascist-military movements and governments throughout the world.... Its armaments programme and military alliances lead in the direction of increased reliance on war and the threat of nuclear war as an instrument in its relations with the world, especially with the underdeveloped sectors."<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of the USA's foreign policy activity in Asia over the past few years shows that resistance to any progressive changes in the life of the Asian peoples and an effort to retain its military, political and economic positions continues to be its chief goal in that region. But the ways and means of achieving that goal are being constantly modernised and adjusted to the changing historical reality. Thus, Walter F. Hahn of the Foreign Policy Research Institute (Philadelphia) wrote in connection with the Nixon Doctrine: "...Reverberating in the Nixon Administration's pronouncements are the positive strains of a new 'American mission'. The implicit message is that not only must global change be recognised and accommodated to, but the United States is uniquely outfitted by history to push these changes to their logical conclusion and thus to take the lead in fashioning a new international structure."<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1960s, the US political leadership began to move away from direct confrontation with the socialist states in the Far East to a system of "multilateral military deterrence." In accordance with the new line, elaborated within the framework of the Guam Doctrine, the USA meant to avoid any direct military involvement in regional conflicts, but rather to pit "Asians against Asians", confining themselves to general control and adjustment of the situation.

The subsequent course of events showed that the Nixon

<sup>1</sup> *World Marxist Review*, No. 10, October 1965, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Orbis*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Philadelphia, 1972, p. 370.

Doctrine, which proposed "Vietnamisation" of the war in South-East Asia, that is, a replacement of US troops by local armed forces fitted out with US weapons, was altogether worthless. The resounding defeat of the US military aggression in Indochina induced the US ruling circles to launch into another "agonising reassessment" of their Asian policy. That led to the framing of a "New Pacific Doctrine", which was proclaimed by President Gerald Ford in a speech at Honolulu (Hawaii) on December 8, 1975, to mark the 34th anniversary of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

An analysis of its major propositions shows that while retaining the "multipolar" approach to the Asian political scene, Washington has given a somewhat different reading to the concept of a "multipolar Asian structure". The proposition that a "stable balance of power" has to be maintained in the Pacific plainly implies the need to strengthen the military and political alliance with Japan and use the Maoist splitters' anti-Soviet policy. More open use of the nuclear-missile "argument" in Washington's regional diplomacy signifies another notable shift of accent in its Asian policy.

Whereas the sponsors of the Guam Doctrine maintained that the "nuclear deterrence" should be used only in exceptional circumstances (which meant a departure from the virtually unlimited nuclear blackmail of the "massive retaliation" days), after the US defeat in Indochina, some influential circles in Washington adopted a radically different stance. The concept put forward by the former US Secretary of Defence, James Schlesinger, says that if a non-nuclear conflict breaks out in any part of Asia recognised as vital to US interests, the US armed forces may resort to the use of tactical nuclear weapons on a strictly limited scale.

In the second half of the 1960s, the USA's foreign policy activity centred on the aggression in South-East Asia, whereas over the past few years it has again switched its priorities to global strategy. At the same time, the sponsors of US foreign policy emphasise Asia's vast importance for the USA and the USA's "special role" in Asia. This was pointed out by the US President during his tour of the People's Republic of China, Indonesia and the Philippines, in December 1975.



True, Asia has recently been the scene of some momentous changes, which have made it one of the most dynamic areas in the world, and it is in Asia that US diplomacy has had to deal with many of the bigger and influential states having a particularly strong impact on the present-day international situation. It is only natural, therefore, that the US imperialists have been trying to make up for their historical defeats on the Asian continent by rallying all their allies and throwing out transparent hints to the effect that "in certain instances" their "new friends" in Peking could be made "a party to the US Pacific stability system". Obviously, this can only serve to harm the cause of peace.

Life shows that stronger peace, security and equitable international co-operation on the Asian continent are not to be achieved on the lines of confrontation between states, but only on the lines of a collective security system. The Soviet Union has repeatedly come forward with initiatives to that effect, emphasising its sincere readiness to "treat with the utmost attention any proposals prompted by a concern for lasting peace and security in Asia, and for assuring them by collective effort."<sup>1</sup>

Posing as champions of the peoples' "social progress", neo-colonialist ideologists and politicians have in fact been seeking to prevent the emergence of revolutionary-democratic and socialist regimes in the newly liberated countries in order to deprive them of a powerful instrument in their struggle to effect deep-going revolutionary changes in society, boost the productive forces, reduce and eliminate altogether their dependence on the shackling system of international capitalist division of labour, and win economic independence.

Such are the main features of the latest "positive" ideological doctrine of US neo-colonialism, a doctrine mostly based on the neo-colonialists' attempts to "identify" themselves with the forces of genuine social revolution and use its noble ideals to further diametrically opposite goals.

The practice of the national liberation movement has itself shown this far-reaching ideological and political dodging to be quite untenable. The fiasco of the imperialist

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...*, XXVth Congress of the CPSU, p. 19.

aggression in Indochina and the Middle East, the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, and the moral and political isolation of the racist regimes in the South of Africa all add up to incontrovertible evidence of the failure of the neo-colonialist positions-of-strength policy. Although over 10 million people<sup>1</sup> have been killed in so-called "local" wars and conflicts started after the Second World War by international and domestic reactionaries in the zone of the national liberation movement, imperialism and its agents have failed to win any considerable military-political victory. The socio-economic strategy of neo-colonialism has turned out to be even flimsier.

The bulk of present-day neo-colonialist theorists have taken up the posture of "social-reformists" and advocates of "social revolution". This is most indicative and, in the final count, is due to the fact that socialism is steadily gaining in influence and has become the decisive factor of international development, to the great triumph of Marxist-Leninist ideas throughout the world. Even the more zealous champions of the peoples' imperialist enslavement can no longer afford to come out into the open, but have to disguise their expansionist aspirations and talk "social revolution" in the style of genuine fighters for national liberation and social progress.

Despite this masquerading, however, it is quite obvious that the "interception" concept and the attempts to carry out the so-called "revolution of growing expectations" do not provide for any radical break-up of the old socio-economic basis or its replacement with a new one, a basis more in line with the objective needs of the developing peoples' national and social revival. Even at its highest "revolutionary" pitch, the neo-colonialists' latest ideological programme is confined to shallow reforms aimed to eliminate some of the more glaring survivals of colonialism and patriarchal-feudal relations in order to prevent genuine social revolutions and strengthen the positions of local capitalism.

A progressive Indian magazine has bared the real class substance of the new trend in neo-colonialist ideology. It

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<sup>1</sup> I. Kende, *Local Wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America 1945-1969*, Budapest, 1972, p. 14.



wrote that US "interception" advocates had a very simple design: having launched a demagogic campaign for social reform, they want to forestall genuine radical socio-economic transformations, especially nationalisation of US capital; they also want to use the new situation to groom obedient puppets from among the bourgeois elite.

Stepped-up implantation of capitalism in the newly liberated countries of the Third World does not, of course, mean, even in the present conditions, that the development of the productive forces is being stemmed. But since this development has been going forward in the current epoch of general transition from capitalism to socialism, with world capitalism having entered the stage of general decline, it cannot be equated with genuine social progress.

Alongside victories, the dialectically complicated and contradictory process of national liberation revolution naturally involves temporary defeats and failures. Lenin emphasised this specific feature of the revolutionary movement in the East: "It is a hard school, and its complete course *necessarily* includes victories for the counter-revolution, the unbridled licence of the infuriated reactionaries, the savage reprisals of the old government against the rebels, etc. But ... it is one that teaches the oppressed classes how to wage civil war and how to carry the revolution to victory. It concentrates in the masses of contemporary slaves the hatred which downtrodden, benighted and ignorant slaves have always carried within them, and which leads to the supreme history-making feats of slaves."<sup>1</sup>

The imperialist concept of "interception" and the "revolution of growing expectations" is an expression of the neocolonialists' dangerous expansionist designs, their global social revenge-seeking in the developing world. It seeks to tie in imperialist strategy with the current scientific and technological revolution. In the long run, however, this doctrine is doomed to fail, for it is aimed against the irreversible historical processes going forward in the zone of the national liberation revolution—a stream of the world anti-imperialist revolutionary movement.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 183.

## PART TWO

### Lenin and the Victory of Socialist Revolutions in Asian Countries



**LENIN AND MONGOLIA'S NON-CAPITALIST WAY****Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Their Struggle for the Peoples' Independence and Mongolia**

Mongolia was the first country of the East outside the Soviet Republics to implement Lenin's ideas of non-capitalist development. Its record refutes the reactionary bourgeois fibs about the so-called "export of Soviet revolution" and confirms Lenin's principles of the natural development of the revolutionary movement depending on the conditions inside a country.

The Mongolian revolution started out as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution, for it was primarily aimed to secure national independence for the country and eliminate the political and economic rule of the feudals. At the same time, from the very outset, the Mongolian revolution had an essential specific feature: it was also aimed against capitalism. It rejected capitalism as a development prospect and opted for advance towards socialism via the non-capitalist way. It was now possible to carry out a revolution of this kind in an economically backward country without any working class because the October Revolution in Russia had ushered in a new historical epoch.

After the victory of the 1921 people's revolution in Mongolia, Lenin continued to devote unflagging attention to events in that country and its development prospects, and to render great assistance to the Mongolian revolutionaries with his advice. The programme of the Mongolian People's



Revolutionary Party says: "The meetings and discussions between Mongolian revolutionaries and the great Lenin, his advice on the fundamental problems of the Mongolian people's revolutionary struggle were of extreme importance for the victory and development of the Mongolian people's revolution and consolidation of the Party on Marxist principles."<sup>1</sup>

On November 5, 1921, Lenin met Sukhe Bator and other delegates from the Party Central Committee and the Mongolian People's Government. When asked about his opinion on the establishment of the People's Party<sup>2</sup> and on the Mongolian revolutionaries' main task, Lenin answered that the only correct way for every Mongolian working man was to fight for Mongolia's state and economic independence in alliance with the workers and peasants of the Soviet state. He said: "This fight could not be carried on isolatedly, therefore the establishment of a party of Mongolian arats was a pledge of success in their struggle.... Although Mongolia is a cattle-breeding country and the bulk of her population are nomad herdsmen, she has achieved great progress in her revolution, and most important of all, has made good these successes by creating a People's Revolutionary Party of her own, whose aim is to become a mass party uncluttered by alien elements."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin unfolded his idea on the need for and possibility of non-capitalist development for Mongolia, pointing out that the main condition for that was for the People's Revolutionary Party and the Government to make more vigorous efforts to strengthen their influence so as to effect the establishment of co-operatives, introduce new forms of administration and national culture, and rally the arats round the Party and the Government in the struggle for the country's economic and cultural development. A new, non-capitalist system of arat Mongolia could only emerge on the basis of the enclaves of the new economic structure to be

<sup>1</sup> *15th Congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party*, Moscow, 1966, p. 168 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> In 1925, the Mongolian People's Party was renamed the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 360.

established through the influence of the Party and the Government.<sup>1</sup>

A member of the Mongolian delegation at the 1921 talks, B. Tserendorj, who was then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and later Prime Minister of the MPR, recalls: "Lenin had a long talk with us delegates. He was very attentive, showed a keen interest in various aspects of life in people's Mongolia, and gave us useful advice. Thus, he called our attention to the need to raise the Mongolian people's educational and cultural level, and emphasised that we had to develop our own economy in every way in order to satisfy the people's needs."<sup>2</sup>

In January 1922, Lenin met another Mongolian delegation at the Congress of the Working People of the Countries of the Far East. Going back to the question of Mongolia's non-capitalist development, he emphasised that co-operation was a constituent of that development.

The MPRP took Lenin's advice and his doctrine on non-capitalist development for backward countries as a basis for its further work.

From the very start, the MPRP followed a firm line towards strengthening its internationalist links with the Comintern and the CPSU. It was admitted to the Comintern as a sympathiser. The Comintern's assistance, and the MPRP's unity with the international communist movement enabled it to overcome its numerous difficulties and develop into a mature Marxist-Leninist party.

Marxist-Leninist ideas reached Mongolia through various channels. First of all, the MPRP maintained direct links with the CPSU and the Comintern: its leading functionaries and specialists were trained at a School for Party and State Cadres, set up in 1924, and other institutions, as well as at Soviet institutes and universities. Marxist-Leninist ideas were also widely publicised in the press.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid: Lenin's meetings with Mongolian delegates are described in B. Z. Shumyatsky, "Lenin on the Mongolian Revolution"; B. Tserendorj, "A Meeting with Lenin"; both articles are published in *V. I. Lenin Mongolyn Tuhai*, Ulan Bator, 1960 (in Mongolian); L. Y. Berlin, "At the origins of Soviet-Mongolian Friendship", *Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 2, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> *About Lenin, Reminiscences of Foreign Contemporaries*, Moscow, 1966, p. 461 (in Russian).



Mongolia was being won over to Marxism-Leninism in the course of a long and hard struggle against the grave feudal aftermath—lamaist ideology,<sup>1</sup> stagnation, and hidebound notions and traditions.

The victory of the Mongolian revolution and the country's entry upon the non-capitalist road were tied in with an all-round strengthening of revolutionary Mongolia's interstate connections with the first country of the victorious proletariat. The MPRP Programme says: "It was our friendship and all-round co-operation with the first socialist country, its all-round assistance, that enabled the Mongolian people to win and strengthen its freedom and independence, to overcome the country's age-old backwardness and build a new life."<sup>2</sup>

Soviet-Mongolian relations inaugurated a new, socialist type of international relations, based on the principles of proletarian internationalism. These were written into the Soviet-Mongolian Agreement on the establishment of friendly relations, signed in Moscow on November 5, 1921. Lenin had taken part in working out the Agreement, which was the first equitable international act in Mongolia's history.<sup>3</sup> The Soviet Government reaffirmed its decision to waive the exclusive rights and privileges that tsarist Russia had enjoyed in Mongolia, and handed over to Mongolia without any compensation various property that had once belonged to Russia.<sup>4</sup> The Agreement did a great deal to strengthen Mongolia's domestic and international position, and guaranteed its national independence and its further advance along the way of social progress.

The Red Army units which were brought into Mongolia at the request of the Provisional People's Government had an important role to play in ensuring the victory of the people's revolution and crushing together with the Mon-

<sup>1</sup> Lamaism—a form of Buddhism in Mongolia.

<sup>2</sup> *15th Congress of the MPRP*, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> On November 3, 1921, Lenin asked the Chairman of the Little Sovnarkom (a standing commission set up by Sovnarkom for preliminary examination of problems) to consider the draft agreement with Mongolia. The Little Sovnarkom did so and approved the agreement (see *Lenin Miscellany*, Vol. XXXV, Moscow, 1945, pp. 289-90, in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> *Soviet-Mongolian Relations. Collected Documents. 1921-1966*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 13-16 (in Russian).

golian People's Army the whiteguard bands on the country's territory. The Red Army Address to the Mongolian people (June 21, 1921) said: "The Red troops of workers' and peasants' Russia are entering the Mongolian people's *khoshuns*<sup>1</sup> as its friends.... The workers and peasants of Russia want to see the fraternal Mongolian people free of any foreign oppression."<sup>2</sup> On August 10, 1921, the Mongolian Government requested the Soviet Government not to withdraw its troops from Mongolia, where they stayed on until early 1925. The presence of Soviet troops averted the danger of imperialist intervention, facilitated the struggle to deepen the revolution, and prevented a civil war breaking out.

On February 27, 1925, in a message to the USSR Government in connection with its decision to withdraw the Red Army units from Mongolia, the MPR Government said: "With a deep feeling of gratitude and satisfaction over the incalculable services rendered by the Red Army to the Mongolian people in the course of its liberation from the yoke of the plunderers, and its entry upon the road of free and modern cultural, economic and juridical development and genuine people's power, the MPR Government requests you to express the Mongolian working people's heartfelt thanks to your workers and peasants, the heroic Red Army, which is the world's only army to come out in consistent defence of the oppressed and enslaved masses, its ruling organs, and the Government of Your Country, and to assure them of our unfailing friendship and gratitude."<sup>3</sup>

Where a country goes over from feudalism to socialism bypassing capitalism, it has to go through various intermediate, additional stages of development linking pre-capitalist relations with socialism. Lenin said: "...successfully to solve the problem of our immediate transition to socialism, we must understand what *intermediary* paths, methods, means and instruments are required for the transition from *pre-capitalist* relations to socialism."<sup>4</sup> Deter-

<sup>1</sup> *Khoshun*—an administrative unit in Mongolia at that time.

<sup>2</sup> G. Kungurov, I. Sorokovikov, *The Arat Revolution*, Irkutsk, 1957, pp. 200-01 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Soviet-Mongolian Relations...*, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 349.



mining these intermediate ways and means is an important feature of Mongolia's socio-economic development.

Since the country had no working class or bourgeoisie, the working arats led by the People's Party were the only class that could come to power in the course of a peasant anti-feudal revolution. Lenin did not rule out the possibility of the peasantry's accession to power. He wrote: "Whence does it follow that *this stratum cannot* come to power, thus 'completing' the bourgeois-democratic revolution? Why should this be impossible?..."

"My reply is that it is quite possible."<sup>1</sup>

In Mongolia, this possibility was in effect realised. When the revolution won out, the arats became the ruling class and started exercising their dictatorship over the class of feudals. Up to 1924, however, Mongolia nominally remained a limited monarchy headed by the Bogdo-Gegen, the supreme hierarch of the Lamaist Church, which was largely a concession to the masses' backwardness, their blind faith in the sanctity of Lamaist hierarchs, and was also due to the fact that the People's Party at the time was following a policy of involving patriotically-minded feudals in the anti-imperialist, national liberation struggle. The people's democratic system was becoming stronger, and the Party's prestige and influence continued to grow, so that in 1924, upon the death of the Bogdo-Gegen, it was possible to abolish the monarchy. The First People's Great Hural adopted in November 1924 the country's first Constitutions which proclaimed Mongolia to be a "People's Republic enjoying full rights, with supreme state power vested in the working people."<sup>2</sup>

Over the subsequent two decades, Mongolia's state apparatus had a mostly peasant complexion. The newly formed People's Hurals were an embodiment of Lenin's idea that "peasants' Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a weapon which can be employed, not only in capitalist countries but also in countries with pre-capitalist relations."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Revolutionary Acts by Mongolia's People's Government in 1921-1924*, Documents, Moscow, 1960, p. 192 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 243.

Having come to power, the arats would not have been able to ensure the country's development along the non-capitalist way were it not for the alliance with the international working class, the latter's all-round support, and correct Marxist-Leninist leadership by the MPRP. In analysing the importance of the revolutionary links between the working people of Russia and Mongolia, Tsedenbal said that "this was, in effect, a class alliance between the victorious working class of Russia and the Mongolian arats, which ensured the victory of our people's revolution, the country's subsequent launching on the non-capitalist way leading towards socialism, and our successful advance along this way".<sup>1</sup> At the democratic stage of the transition from feudalism to socialism, state power rested with the working arats, who exercised a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the MPRP and with the support of the Soviet working class and the international communist movement. That kind of dictatorship was a necessary intermediate stage in the development of Mongolia's statehood towards a working-class dictatorship.

Lenin repeatedly emphasised that all countries entering upon the socialist road had to go through a more or less lengthy transition period, in the course of which they eliminated the survivals of the old society and laid the groundwork for socialism. That is a general regularity. But in countries that have to start from precapitalist formations, the transition period has many distinctions: first of all, these countries have to go through various additional stages of development as compared with those that start from capitalism. It took Mongolia almost two decades to solve the general democratic tasks of the revolution, something that was due, first, to the country's extreme economic and cultural backwardness, the low initial level of the productive forces, and, second, to the very complicated international situation at the time.

Another major task of the general democratic stage was to ensure the country's political and economic independence, to edge out foreign capital.

The central general democratic task, however, was to

<sup>1</sup> Y. Tsedenbal, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1962, p. 278 (in Russian).



fight against the feudals. From the very start of the revolution, the people's government launched a resolute offensive against their political and economic positions.

The people gave their all-out, enthusiastic support to the expropriation of the feudal class, taking an active part in the commissions that confiscated the feudals property, exposing the former masters, and suppressing their attempts to resist the changes. This expropriation amounted to a major stride in the Republic's socio-economic life.

Another important issue of the general democratic stage was to offset the influence of the Lamaist Church, to solve the lama question. An important thing here was that the MPRP pursued a differentiated policy in respect of the lamas. While fighting against the senior church feudals, the Party at the same time used persuasion to win over the lower lamas to the people's side, for they were themselves oppressed by the church elite. As a result of that policy, the bulk of the rank-and-file lamas were drawn into socially useful labour, and went to work in farming, producer co-operatives, and so on.

The successful solution of the lama question was an important achievement, which furthered the country's economic and cultural development.

It also meant a victory for Marxist-Leninist ideology over lamaist ideology. From the early years of the revolution, the Party waged a struggle against religious obscurantism, spreading the scientific outlook among the masses. The Party's Central Committee repeatedly met in plenary session to discuss ideological matters, notably the struggle against lamaist influence. A point to emphasise is that the struggle against lamaism was very hard and complicated, for the church had very strong positions both in the material and the spiritual sphere. The MPRP sought to reckon with the specific status of the church in Mongolia, its vast influence among the masses. The Party had to be very careful, to carry out a well-thought-out set of measures, and to do its best to persuade and explain. Lenin's works, which were used in a creative way and with a view to concrete Mongolian reality, were invaluable in helping to solve that problem.

Mongolia's policy in respect of the capitalist elements in the economy was another essential ingredient of the non-capitalist line. In the transition period, these elements

inevitably emerged in farming, and the sphere of the arats' small commodity production, which was now free from any feudal fetters. The main trend in farming was towards a growth of the middle sections among the arats, but there was also some stratification. Some large arat farms were in effect capitalist-type outfits, which exploited the labour of other arats under the cover of ties of kinship, traditional forms of common nomad settlements, and so on. The farms of the former feudals, who had been deprived of the right to own pasture land or use extra-economic coercion, also tended to develop into private capitalist outfits. Some exploiting elements were also active in trade, the handicrafts, and the carting trades.

In view of the need to develop the productive forces and of the socio-economic situation at the time, with the struggle being spearheaded against colonialism and feudalism, the people's democratic state did not put any ban on capitalist activity. At the same time, however, it used various economic instruments, like taxes and credits, and relied on the growing socialist sector to limit the growth of the capitalist sector. Under the people's democratic system, the capitalist elements were thus unable to develop into a class. They were few and played a fairly small part in the economy.

The state and co-operative sectors were the state's mainstay in its struggle for non-capitalist development. These two socialist sectors emerged at the democratic stage of the revolution in every branch of the national economy, and took over the commanding heights. Since the basic means of production were held as national property, and state power rested with the working people, the relations of production at state and co-operative enterprises developed on socialist lines.

The establishment of a socialist sector at the democratic stage of Mongolia's transition period was an objective economic regularity. At the time, that sector already provided a solid economic foundation for the people's democratic system. The small commodity sector was another economic mainstay of the people's power, for it was the biggest sector of the economy and the main thing at the time was to carry out democratic transformations. The state and co-operative sectors, however, were essential if the



country was to carry out the revolution's democratic programme in full and create the prerequisites for transition to the next stage.

The socio-economic changes were being effected against the background of bitter class struggle. Lay and clerical feudal lords wanted to restore the old set-up, to discredit the Party's policy, and get a grip on the country. Their resistance took various forms, ranging from petty sabotage and provocations to large-scale counter-revolutionary plots and open action. In the early 1930s, when the people's power was expropriating the feudals, the class struggle reached the highest pitch. The counter-revolutionaries tried to profit by the leadership's mistakes and Leftist deviations, and took open action against the people's power. But the mutineers were crushed, and the people came out in support of the Party's general line for non-capitalist development.

Lenin repeatedly warned about the specifics and complexities of class struggle in peasant countries. In Mongolia, counter-revolutionary plots were mostly hatched among the former lay and clerical feudal lords and their agents. Their express purpose was to overthrow the people's power and restore their one-time rule. At the same time, the nascent capitalist elements were also putting up some resistance to the Party's line. They could not fail to see the anti-capitalist tenor of many undertakings launched by the people's government, and tried to switch the country onto the bourgeois road. Former Defence Minister Danzan (who had been exposed at the Third Party Congress in 1924) and his supporters were particularly active in that respect: they banked on the capitalist elements, sought to give foreign capital access into the country, and wanted to see a growth of capitalism. The Party took a resolute stand against that capitulationist line.

The Right-wing (1926-1928) and "Left"-wing (1929-1932) deviations within the Party were an expression of the class struggle. The Right-wing deviation showed an aggravation of the struggle between the two ways of development: capitalist and socialist. In their domestic policy, the Right-wingers aimed to stem the offensive against the feudals and to scrap the line to restrict the capitalist elements, that is, they wanted to send the country along the capitalist way. In

their foreign policy, they sought to curtail Mongolia's co-operation with the USSR, and to strengthen its links with the capitalist countries. At the 7th Congress of the MPRP in 1928, the Right-wingers suffered an ideological defeat and were removed from leadership.

The "Left"-wing deviation in 1929-1932 presented as grave a danger to the cause of the revolution as the Right-wing deviation before it. It was an expression of the petty-bourgeois "revolutionary spirit" and political adventurism, and had developed within the Party owing to the inadequate Marxist-Leninist training of the Party cadres, and blind imitation of the socialist transformations going forward in the USSR. In their utter disregard for the realities, the "Left"-wingers declared that the Mongolian revolution had entered its socialist stage and that the task now was to collectivise farming on a massive scale. The third emergency plenary session of the Party's Central Committee and Central Control Commission in June 1932 denounced the "Left"-wing deviationists and laid down a "new course" to ensure the implementation of the Party's general line for non-capitalist development.

Besides these internal difficulties, there was also the tense international situation, which put a heavy brake on the country's socio-economic development. The aggressive imperialist states, militarist Japan in particular, were getting ready to unleash another world war. The situation along Mongolia's eastern frontier was very tense, so that a big part of Mongolia's budget had to go into defence, something that naturally had a slowing effect on the country's economic and cultural construction.

From 1935 onwards, the Japanese military, who had launched a sweeping aggressive campaign across the Asian continent, stepped up their subversive action and armed provocations against Mongolia, with one border violation following upon another. In May 1939, a big Japanese detachment invaded Mongolia's territory in the Khalkhin Gol area, posing a grave threat to Mongolia's independence.

But the Soviet Union once again came to stand by the Mongolian people: the Mongolian-Soviet troops dealt a crushing blow at the Japanese aggressors and drove them out. The defeat of the samurai troops at Khalkhin Gol showed the strength of the people's democratic system and



Mongolian-Soviet friendship, and also struck a blow at the plottings of the international reactionaries on the very eve of the Second World War.

The Mongolians were putting through the general democratic programme of the revolution in close co-operation with the first socialist country.

Even before the October Revolution, Lenin said: "We shall exert every effort to foster association and merger with the Mongolians, Persians, Indians, Egyptians. We believe it is our duty and *in our interest* to do this, for otherwise socialism in Europe will *not be secure*. We shall endeavour to render these nations, more backward and oppressed than we are, 'disinterested cultural assistance', to borrow the happy expression of the Polish Social-Democrats. In other words, we will help them pass to the use of machinery, to the lightening of labour, to democracy, to socialism."<sup>1</sup> Soviet-Mongolian relations provided convincing evidence of the successful implementation of Lenin's precept. The two countries co-operated in every sphere: political, economic, cultural and military. In politics, they maintained inter-party and inter-state links, and the Soviet Union helped Mongolia to strengthen its people's democratic system. The CPSU helped the MPRP to become a true Marxist-Leninist Party. The CPSU and the Comintern gave it a hand in working out and following a correct political line, which was of particular importance in the initial stages of its work. The CPSU and the Comintern also helped the MPRP to overcome its Right-wing and "Left"-wing deviations in good time, and to put down the resistance of the nationalist and opportunist elements.

Soviet economic assistance was also very important. From the early years of the Mongolian revolution, the USSR gave Mongolia a good deal of financial aid, granting it many easy credits, helping it to organise the Mongolian Bank, to introduce a national currency, and so on. All the major industrial enterprises were being built with Soviet material and technical assistance. The Soviet Union provided Mongolia with machinery to fit out its newly established state farms and hay-harvesting mechanised stations, and took part in establishing a modern transport and communi-

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 67.

cations network in Mongolia. Foreign capital was ousted with the help of Soviet trade organisations. Mixed Mongolian-Soviet enterprises and organisations played an important role in industry, transport and commodity-money circulation. In view of the acute shortage of national cadres, experience and resources, these proved to be a very useful form of co-operation. As the Mongolians trained their own cadres and mastered the running of the enterprises, these were handed over to Mongolia to be held as its own property.

In the cultural sphere, the Soviet Union helped Mongolia to build and equip schools, hospitals, and other cultural establishments, and regularly sent over teams of Soviet doctors, teachers and other specialists, who worked together with the Mongolians to solve the urgent problems of cultural construction.

Mongolia's fraternal unity with the Soviet Union was decisive for ensuring the inviolability of its borders. In November 1934, the two countries made a verbal agreement on mutual support. Their military alliance was reaffirmed in March 1936 through the signing of a Protocol on Mutual Assistance. The Japanese samurais at Khalkhin Gol were at the receiving end of these agreements.

As Mongolia shed its colonial dependence and did away with the feudal system, free scope was given for the development of the productive forces. Little by little, the country raised the level of agriculture, overcame the economic aftermath of colonialism and feudalism, and established new economic sectors like industry and mechanised transport. It had to face many grave difficulties along that way, but the determined efforts of the Party and the whole people, and the Soviet Union's fraternal support enabled it to score considerable successes in the development of its national economy.

At the democratic stage of the revolution, the socio-economic structure of Mongolian society was altered on radical lines: the feudal class, which had dominated the country for many centuries, was no longer there, and the once-oppressed arats were now free to build a new society under the guidance of the MPRP.

A national working class was taking shape in industry, transport and construction. A specific feature here was that



the working class was not emerging at the capitalist enterprises, but from the very first was connected with the socialist sector. It did not rise as an exploited class, but as a class free of any exploitation, a class that was to play the vanguard role in the construction of the new, socialist society.

Mongolia was also bringing up a working intelligentsia: the number of doctors, teachers, technicians and other specialists, and workers in science, literature and the arts was on the increase.

The 10th Congress of the MPRP and the Eighth People's Great Hural in 1940 summed up the results of the democratic changes in every sphere of social life. The Party Congress said that the general democratic programme of the revolution had been successfully fulfilled, and pointed out the historical importance of the struggle to implement the Party's general line for non-capitalist development. It adopted a new Party Programme, which set the major targets for the following period: the country was to work for comprehensive development of the productive forces, to go on building up every branch of the national economy, to strengthen working arat farms, increase the state and co-operative sectors, limit and edge out the capitalist elements, and ensure a steady rise in the working masses' living standard.

### **Lenin's Programme for Socialist Construction and the Socialist Stage of the Mongolian Revolution**

Lenin wrote: "...certain fundamental features of our revolution have a significance that is not local, or peculiarly national, or Russian alone, but international. ...It is the Russian model that reveals to *all* countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future."<sup>1</sup>

Mongolia's experience has proved this beyond any doubt. Even though countries like Mongolia advance towards socialism in a very individual way, they are also subject to

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 21, 22.

the general laws of socialist construction discovered by Lenin (like socialist industrialisation, the co-operation of farming, and the cultural revolution).

In the early 1940s, Mongolia entered a new period, the period of socialist construction, which was a logical continuation of the general democratic period. Mongolia's record shows that there was no clear-cut division between these two stages of the transition period, for the general democratic stage gradually developed into the socialist stage, the latter being a logical outgrowth of the former. The transition here was peaceful and evolutionary, for both stages were part of the overall transition period, the overall revolutionary process. At the same time, however, these stages were different from each other, for each had its own distinct goals and content.

Mongolia entered its new stage in the complicated international conditions of the Second World War. The Mongolian people did not choose to stay out of the great battle of the peace-loving forces against fascism, but rendered moral and material assistance to the Soviet Union and took a direct part in routing imperialist Japan.

After the war, the Party and the whole Mongolian people concentrated on the solution of the various tasks of socialist construction. That did not mean, however, that the country was made to rush into full-scale socialist construction: the MPRP followed Lenin's instructions on the need for a circumspect, cautious approach to the tackling of revolutionary tasks, and began working to consolidate the gains that had already been achieved, root out the feudalist survivals in the economy and in people's minds, and create the material and spiritual prerequisites for broad socialist construction. All-round preparations had to be made if the country was to solve the major problem of the second stage of the transition period: remoulding agriculture on socialist lines and establishing a single socialist economic system.

In 1948, Mongolia made an important move: it went over to long-term planning (before that, it had had annual planning only). Long-term planning was an economic necessity, for the socialist sector was growing, it played the leading part in the economy, and the economic laws of socialism were having an ever stronger effect. Plans were above all drawn up for the state and co-operative sectors.



which operated in accordance with the objective law of proportional and balanced development. At the same time, targets were also being set for the small commodity sector, which was possible owing to the leading role of the two socialist sectors and the state's active influence in economic affairs. Mongolia's experience shows, however, that planning becomes truly nation-wide only when socialist relations are established throughout the whole economy. Before socialist co-operation among the arats was completed, planning in agriculture naturally met with substantial difficulties.

The main task of the socialist stage of the transition period was to recast agriculture on socialist lines. As the country developed in socio-economic terms, there was an ever greater need for producer co-operation among the arats, and this was now the pivotal problem of socialist construction.

Marx wrote: "If parcelled labour in agriculture, the source of private appropriation, is to give way to collective labour, two requirements must be met: there has to be an economic need for such a switch and material conditions for effecting it."<sup>1</sup>

Small-scale individual farming could not ensure high rates of production, so that cattle-breeding was increasingly lagging behind the growing requirements. In 1957, the country's livestock population was less than 90 per cent of the 1940 figure. From 1947 to 1957, state purchases of livestock wool and hides increased very little. Small-scale production had exhausted its possibilities and was marking time. This had a negative effect on the manufacturing industry and the national economy as a whole.

Besides, the predominance of small-scale production in agriculture was also bad for the working arats' living standards: property inequalities between various groups of arats were still conspicuous.

Lenin emphasised: "The solution lies only in socialised farming.... The way to escape the disadvantages of small-scale farming lies in communes, artels of peasant associations. That is the way to improve agriculture, economise forces and combat the kulaks, parasites and exploiters."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, S. 391.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 175.

It is always difficult for any country to switch its agriculture to the socialist road, but in Mongolia the difficulties were compounded by the fact that farming was the chief sector of the economy and employed the bulk of the population. Besides, these people were not settled farmers, but nomad cattle-breeders. Hence, it was particularly important to create the political, material and cultural prerequisites for co-operation, something that took Mongolia a fairly long time. As the feudals were eliminated as a class, the arat farms were strengthened, socialist industry and the whole socialist sector in the economy made headway, the working class developed, and cultural construction gathered momentum, the groundwork was gradually laid for massive and voluntary producer co-operation among the arats, which started in the mid-1950s. A further stimulating factor was that socialism was scoring decisive victories in the agriculture of other people's democracies.

Socialist transformations in agriculture—a general regularity of development in all the socialist countries—went forward in Mongolia in accordance with Lenin's co-operative plan. Co-operation here was a gradual and consistent movement from lower to higher forms. At first, the arats were brought together in the sphere of circulation through various consumer societies. In the 1930s, collective elements were also introduced into production, but it was only labour that was collectivised, while most of the means of production were still held as private property. Then there was a transition from these primitive-type associations to socialist co-operatives, based on social property in the means of production. There was nothing haphazard about the co-operation process, which was carried on under the Party's guidance and with the state's financial, technical and organisational assistance. The Party devoted much attention to creating the prerequisites for co-operation and strengthening the alliance between the working class and the arats.

Farming associations involved every section of the arats, including the more well-to-do farmers, for there were virtually no restrictions on the admission of the larger farms. This was possible owing to the soundness of the people's democratic system, the Party's prestige among the broad masses, and the leading role of the socialist sector.



Then there was also the beneficial example of socialist construction in the fraternal socialist countries. Besides, the larger farms made up no more than 5 per cent of the total, and by no means all of these were exploitative. These farmers had grown prosperous under the people's power and were by and large loyal to it.

Socialist co-operation in Mongolia had its own specific features. Thus, the country had no agricultural engineering, and it was the industrial socialist countries that helped it to fit out its farming with machinery. In virtue of its close co-operation with the socialist countries and the international socialist division of labour, Mongolia can afford to do without establishing some branches of production, like mechanical engineering, for which it lacks the necessary prerequisites. What with the existence of the socialist community, the absence of some branches in the economy of an individual country is not an insurmountable obstacle to the successful implementation of radical socio-economic transformations in that country.

The completion of producer co-operation among the arats and the establishment of a single socialist economy meant a total victory for the non-capitalist way in Mongolia, it meant that Mongolia had laid the foundations for the socialist mode of production. That historic victory of the Mongolian people was written into a new Constitution, adopted by the First Session of the Fourth People's Great Hural on July 6, 1960.

The Constitution's Preamble says that "the Mongolian People's Republic has risen and become strong with the Soviet Union's fraternal socialist assistance, as a result of the effort to strengthen its political and economic independence, persistent struggle against imperialist aggression and domestic reaction, a fight to overcome the grave aftermath of the old system of the people's national and social oppression, elimination of the feudal class, and establishment of a socialist national economy and culture".<sup>1</sup> The Constitution laid down the nature of the state and set out the changes in the class structure: "Mongolia shall be a socialist state of the workers, the co-operated arats (cattle-

<sup>1</sup> Here and elsewhere: *The Constitution of the Mongolian People's Republic*, Ulan Bator, 1961 (in Russian).

breeding arats and land farmers) and the working intelligentsia, based on an alliance between the working class and the co-operated arats."

In July 1961, the MPRP held its 14th Congress in Ulan Bator. At that time, the Mongolian people were marking the 40th anniversary of the people's revolution, and summing up the country's remarkable achievements. In the 40 years, the country had covered a whole historical epoch, moving from feudalism and colonial dependence straight into socialism, without going through the capitalist stage.

Under the new, socialist relations of production, the country now had to boost the development of the productive forces in all the sectors of material production in order to complete socialist construction and make gradual headway towards communism. A resolution of the Central Committee's Report to the 14th Congress of the MPRP said: "Since the adoption of the new Constitution in 1960, this country has entered a new period of its development, the period of completing socialist construction. The substance of this period is to develop in every way and complete the process of the establishment of the material and technical basis of socialism."<sup>1</sup>

The spread of socialist relations throughout the whole economy opened up fresh and much broader prospects for full-scale economic construction.

Upon the completion of co-operation, cropping branched out into a separate sector. At its March Plenary Session in 1959, the Central Committee put forward the task of developing the virgin lands and making the country self-sufficient in grain. The Soviet Union was to help Mongolia to tackle the task. It organised a complex expedition to mark out the areas set for ploughing, and sent over a consignment of machinery and a large team of Soviet specialists. It took Mongolia a very short time to develop vast virgin areas: in 1960, for the first time in its history, Mongolia became self-sufficient in grain and was even able to export a part of the crop.

In industry, Mongolia has also scored some major successes. From 1940 to 1972, its total industrial production increased 17-fold.

<sup>1</sup> *14th Congress of the MPRP*, Moscow, 1962, p. 154 (in Russian).



The process of industrial construction, its direction and the sectoral structure of production are determined by a whole range of factors. On the one hand, there are the internal conditions for industrial development. It has been pointed out that before the revolution Mongolia had no industry at all, and started building one up only upon the establishment of the people's power. It lacked experience, traditions, cadres, and resources, which clearly had an effect on the nature of its industrial development. Mongolia's small population is another drawback: at the present level of the productive forces, a limited manpower pool makes it impossible to establish a large industrial complex ranging over a broad spectrum of sectors in the light and heavy industries. On the other hand, Mongolia is part of the world socialist system, and its industry, as well as the whole national economy, has been developing under the favourable international socialist division of labour, which involves specialisation and co-operation of production, with the result that Mongolia can well do without a full-scale industrial complex. It can concentrate on the establishment of an optimal national-economic complex, with industry as a part of it, so as to produce the maximum economic effect. Mongolia has successfully developed its fuel and power industries, mining, construction, the light, food and other industries. Its meat-and-dairy, wool, and tanning industries, which process animal raw materials, also have a promising future both inside the country and abroad. Mongolia has also been working its rich mineral deposits on a growing scale, something that meets the interests of Mongolia itself and the socialist community as a whole.

In other words, Mongolia's industrialisation involves the establishment of branches both in the light and heavy industries, but only where the country has the necessary internal and external prerequisites and sound economic grounding for their development under the international socialist division of labour. While building up its national industry in every way, the Mongolian Government takes a firm stand against any universalism, duplication, or the theory of isolated and all-embracing economy supported only by internal resources and potential.

The cultural revolution, Lenin believed, is a major component of socialist construction.

Mongolia is going through a genuine cultural revolution. It has wiped out illiteracy and introduced compulsory primary education in the rural areas and seven-year education in the towns and aimak centres.

In 1961, the government established an Academy of Sciences on the basis of the former Science and Higher Education Committee, something that was a major event in the country's cultural life. Mongolian scientists have been working on various urgent problems in the economic field, history, philology and the natural sciences.

Mongolia has regularly published large editions of writings by the classics of Marxism-Leninism. It has recently put out a fourth Mongolian edition of Lenin's works, an event of great importance for the Marxist-Leninist education of the working people.

Literature and the arts—national in form and socialist in content—have also scored considerable successes. There is a growing network of theatres, cinemas, libraries, palaces of culture, clubs and recreation rooms.

The 15th Congress of the MPRP in June 1966 summed up the results of the creative work carried on by the Party and the people, formulated the directives for the Fourth Five-Year Plan of Economic and Cultural Development (1966-1970), and adopted a new Party Programme, which is aimed to ensure the total victory of socialism in the MPR. It formulated the Party's general line for the completion of socialist construction, and mapped out concrete ways and means for its implementation. The main task now, it said, was to develop in every way the productive forces of socialist society using the achievements of present-day scientific and technological progress, to ensure a high rate of economic and cultural development, improve socialist social relations, strengthen the working people's communist education, and on that basis to work for a further rise in the people's material and cultural level. The Programme said: "The central economic problem of the period ahead is to complete the build-up of an optimal-type material and technical basis of socialism by working for the country's further industrialisation, mechanisation of agricultural production, and a higher technical equipment level in every sector of the national economy. The Party aims in the near future to turn the MPR into an industrial-agrarian country



with a rational structure of the extractive and manufacturing industries, and a correct and advantageous balance between the major sectors of the socialist economy."<sup>1</sup>

The initial results in fulfilling these tasks were summed up at the 16th Congress of the Mongolian Revolutionary People's Party, which was held in June 1971. It approved the directives for the Fifth Five-Year Plan of Economic and Cultural Development for 1971-1975.

At the present stage, as in the past, Mongolia's economic and cultural achievements are tied in with its close and all-round co-operation with the fraternal socialist countries, the Soviet Union above all. The USSR and other socialist countries have held fast to Lenin's precepts, the traditions started by Lenin, and the principles of proletarian internationalism, and so have worked to strengthen and extend the various forms of socialist interstate co-operation, like financial and technical mutual assistance, help in the training of personnel, mutual trade, and the co-ordination of national-economic plans.

The socialist countries' financial and technical assistance continues to be of great importance for the fulfilment of Mongolia's national-economic plans and for its more rapid development. The socialist countries have been granting Mongolia easy credits, which are an important source of finance for the national economy.

Thus, Soviet assistance has played an important role in the building and running of the Ulan Bator Railway Line, and also in the development of the mining industry. In 1949, the two countries established a joint-stock company, Sovmongolmetall, which brought together several mining outfits, and also the Mongolneft trust in the oil-extracting and oil-refining industry. In 1957, when Mongolia had trained enough specialists of its own in these branches of industry, the Soviet Union handed over—of its own accord and without compensation—its Mongolneft enterprises to be held as Mongolian property, and also its share of the stock in the Sovmongolmetall company.

The Soviet Union helped Mongolia to erect a housebuilding and a woodworking combine, several flour-mills, machine-and-livestock stations in Ulangom and Yihe Ula

<sup>1</sup> 15th Congress of the MPRP, p. 117.

and other projects. It has also given Mongolia technical assistance in building a new industrial centre in Darhan: the centre now has an electric-power station, a high-voltage electric-power line and a railway line running from Darhan to Sharyn Gol, a building combine, a coal pit, and a large elevator. The USSR has also been helping Mongolia to build houses, fit out its agriculture with machinery, and carry on prospecting and exploration.

In January 1966, a Soviet Party and Government delegation, headed by L. I. Brezhnev, paid a visit to Mongolia. The visit proved to be a major landmark in the further development of the fraternal ties between the two countries: they signed a new Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance.

At the present stage, Soviet-Mongolian co-operation under the Treaty has acquired even greater scope. Broad use is being made of new and progressive forms of economic co-operation, like the co-ordination of annual and long-term national-economic plans, the establishment of direct links between ministries and departments of the USSR and Mongolia, and the establishment of joint enterprises. In particular, work is now in progress on the construction of a giant Mongolian enterprise, a copper-and-molybdenum combine at Erdeni, which will be one of the biggest plants of its kind in the world.

Mongolia has also been drawing ever closer to the other fraternal countries, which have been giving it long-term credits and technical assistance.

Mongolia, for its part, has also been rendering economic assistance to other countries of the socialist system. Thus, it helped the Korean People's Democratic Republic to rehabilitate its national economy, supplying it free of charge with large quantities of foodstuffs and other goods. A good deal of Mongolian livestock and foodstuffs has also been sent over by way of gift to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The development of Mongolia's trade links with the socialist countries has also been successful. Trade between them is being conducted under long-term agreements and is an important form of economic co-operation and mutual assistance. Mongolia has been exporting farm produce (livestock, wool, hides, and grain), minerals (tungsten,



fluorite), light industry products (woollen cloth, kidskin, chevette, leather coats), and furs, and importing machinery, equipment and consumer goods.

Mongolia's entry into the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance<sup>1</sup> in June 1962 opened a fresh chapter in its relations with the fraternal countries. It meant that Mongolia was joining in the multifaceted economic co-operation between the fraternal CMEA countries, so broadening its opportunities to accelerate its economic development.

When national plans for Mongolia are being elaborated and co-ordinated with those of other socialist countries, much importance attaches to the evening-out of economic levels. However tangible its achievements in economic construction, Mongolia has yet to catch up with the economically advanced socialist countries in labour-productivity level, degree of mechanisation in livestock farming (the main economic sector), and some other indicators. Co-operation within the CMEA has been helping Mongolia to do away with the lag, speed up its economic development, and bring up its production level to that of the other fraternal countries. The Comprehensive Programme of Socialist economic integration provides for a number of special measures aimed to fulfil these tasks.

In looking back on the road they have covered, the Mongolian people took a well-justified pride in the great successes they had achieved in every sphere of social life. Y. Tsedenbal told the ceremonial meeting: "Republican Mongolia's half-century is a portentous jubilee for the Mongolian people, a festival marking its selfless struggle and heroic labour, and its inviolable friendship with the Soviet people and the other peoples of the socialist community."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet delegation's visit was a fresh contribution to the further deepening and development of the all-round co-operation between the USSR and the MPR, and to stronger unity among the socialist community countries. In

<sup>1</sup> The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)—an inter-governmental economic organisation of the socialist countries established in 1949 to promote all-round development of economic co-operation between them.

<sup>2</sup> *Under the Banner of Fraternal Friendship*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 13-14 (in Russian).

a speech addressed to his Mongolian friends, L. I. Brezhnev emphasised: "Your half-century is a major gain for revolutionary thinking and action. It is here, in your country, as in a number of Soviet republics, that Lenin's idea about transition to socialism without going through capitalism has been realised. In this way, the Mongolian Communists and the whole Mongolian people have made a vast contribution to world social development."<sup>1</sup>

The 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union provided fresh proof of the unity and solidarity between the fraternal socialist countries. In the Central Committee's Report to the Congress, L. I. Brezhnev showed the natural drawing closer together of the socialist countries, as manifested in the strengthening of bonds between them, the growing common elements in their political, economic and social life, and the gradual evening-out of their development levels. L. I. Brezhnev said: "In its relations with the socialist countries, the CPSU firmly follows the tested rule of conducting affairs in the spirit of true equality and interest in each other's successes, of working out decisions that meet international, as well as national, interests."<sup>2</sup> Y. Tsedenbal, who headed the delegation of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party at the 25th Congress of the CPSU, told the Congress that over the past few years, the friendship and fruitful all-round co-operation between the MPRP and the CPSU, the MPR and the USSR has acquired new breadth and depth, has been filled with fresh content and embraced new forms, rising to a new stage in their development. He reaffirmed the Mongolian Communists' steadfast loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, and their complete solidarity with all the forces waging a courageous struggle for peace, national independence and social progress, and pointed up the need for a resolute fight against Maoism.<sup>3</sup>

Mongolia takes a firm stand for all-round consolidation of the world socialist community, the socialist countries' unity and solidarity.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> L. I. Brezhnev. *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...*, XXV Congress of the CPSU, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> See *Pravda*, February 27, 1976.



The MPRP and all the working people have seen for themselves that unity with the USSR, with all true internationalists—an idea bequeathed by Lenin—is a necessary condition and sound guarantee of their successful development along the non-capitalist road, the road of socialist construction, and are doing their best to help ensure the unity of the world communist movement and the socialist community, stronger friendship and solidarity with the Soviet Union and the other fraternal countries.

Mongolia's international positions are becoming increasingly stronger. By virtue of its policy of peaceful coexistence and international co-operation, and its firm support for the peoples' national liberation struggle, Mongolia has won many friends on every continent. It has been developing friendly relations with India, Burma, Algeria, Guinea, and other independent states in Asia and Africa, strengthening its cultural co-operation with these countries, establishing economic links, extending the exchange of government and social delegations, and so on.

The celebration in 1974 of the 50th anniversary of the Third Congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and the establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic, which was attended by a Soviet Party and Government delegation led by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee L. I. Brezhnev, was a stirring manifestation of the indissoluble friendship between the Mongolian people and the peoples of the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries.

Many bourgeois observers visiting Mongolia have had to admit that the radical socio-economic changes there have been fruitful and progressive. Mongolia's successes can no longer be hushed up. The policy of discrimination against Mongolia long followed by imperialist circles in the USA and other Western powers has ended in utter failure. In 1961, the Mongolian People's Republic took its rightful seat in the United Nations, and this opened a period of its recognition by the capitalist world. In 1963, Mongolia established diplomatic relations with Britain, and in 1965—with France. At present, it maintains normal diplomatic relations with more than 40 countries, and takes an active part in many international agencies. Its foreign

economic links have also been expanding: it maintains trade relations with dozens of countries.

Mongolia's experience is of great international importance. Its development is an embodiment of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of non-capitalist development in the backward countries, and a vivid example of transition from feudalism to socialism bypassing the capitalist stage. The newly independent states in Asia and Africa that opt for a socialist orientation, even while remaining a part of the world capitalist economy, can learn many useful things from Mongolia's experience.

The first revolutionary transformations that mark a switch-over to the non-capitalist road involve the establishment of a genuine democratic system, elimination of the foundations and survivals of feudalism, the ousting of foreign capital, restrictions on national capitalist elements, and the establishment of a state and a co-operative sector. The non-capitalist way provides for a further stratification of class and political forces and the gradual rise of the working class to the position of social leader, a steady boosting of the productive forces, and a radical transformation of the whole economy. In contrast to the developed capitalist states, the backward countries have to start their advance to socialism without an adequate material basis. What with the political and economic pressure from the imperialist powers, such a basis can be created and the productive forces raised to the present-day level only with the selfless fraternal support of the socialist countries and close co-operation with them.

Mongolian experience also proves that whatever the deep-going specifics of socialist development in the formerly backward countries, they are also subject to the general regularities socialist construction, which are basic to their development.

Above we described the manifestation of these general regularities in Mongolia's specific conditions. Naturally, these are somewhat modified in line with the deeply specific situation in the country, which invests socialist construction with some purely national features. Thus, Mongolia did not start out as a working-class dictatorship, for it had no national working class at all: proletarian leadership here was provided by the MPRP, a Marxist-Leninist Party, and was



due to the close connections between Mongolia's revolutionary peasantry and the international working class. Mongolian experience shows that at a certain stage, in the absence of a national proletariat, an alliance between the international working class and the peasantry of a given country can well operate in place of a national alliance between workers and peasants.

It was not the abolition of capitalist property that led to the establishment of a socialist sector in Mongolia's economy, for in the sphere of production there was no capitalist property to speak of: the socialist sector was established through a gradual transformation of the national economy as a whole, and creation of a new economic structure based on socialist principles and on a new technical groundwork.

The transition period in Mongolia was on the whole particularly long and had many stages. Its farming was for a long time run on semi-subsistence and small commodity lines with the socialist sector playing a fairly small role.

These and other national features in Mongolia's socialist construction are manifestations of its specific non-capitalist way, which carried the country through a whole range of intermediate, additional stages of development.

To sum up, the record of the people's revolution in Mongolia has provided convincing proof of Lenin's theory about the non-capitalist way, and has also made an important contribution to the Marxist-Leninist theory of the national liberation revolution.

## CHAPTER 6

### LENINISM AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

Chapter 6 is, first, an analysis of Lenin's approach to the questions of the Chinese revolution; second, a study of the advance Leninism has made in China, and the use and assimilation of Lenin's theoretical legacy and political experience by Chinese revolutionaries in the interests of the national-democratic revolution; and third, a survey of the struggle between Leninist and petty-bourgeois, nationalist ideas.

#### Lenin and the Problems of the Chinese Revolution Before 1917

The downfall of the Ching monarchy in 1911 ushered in a new stage in the Chinese people's struggle to eliminate foreign rule and internal reaction, and to transform the country's economic and political system on new and radical lines. That stage ended in 1949 in the establishment of People's Republic of China. Over that period, the Chinese revolution fought its way through many ups and downs, now forging ahead at full speed, and now suffering grave setbacks, its main aims being to win national independence and establish a politically unified state based on democratic principles, and also to eliminate the various political and



economic barriers holding back the development of the country's productive forces.

Revolutionaries in other countries naturally kept a close watch on the struggle for a new China being waged by the country's vanguard forces. Lenin devoted much attention to the study and analysis of the problems facing the Chinese revolution.

The Hsinhai revolution, which toppled the Manchu Dynasty and started the republican era, met with sympathy among revolutionary democrats throughout the world. The Russian Bolsheviks also gave it their warm welcome.

The awakening from "medieval stagnation" of "hundreds of millions of the downtrodden and benighted"<sup>1</sup> gave ground for much hope as well as sympathy. The Chinese revolution was believed to hold great promise, and this made foreigners very attentive to what the Chinese revolutionaries did and the theories they developed. Thus, a resolution drawn up by Lenin and adopted by the Prague Conference of the RSDLP in January 1912 said: "The Conference ... notes the world-wide importance of the Chinese people's revolutionary struggle, which spells Asia's liberation and undermines the domination of the European bourgeoisie. The Conference welcomes China's republican-minded revolutionaries, bears witness to the great enthusiasm and complete sympathy with which Russia's proletariat has followed the successes of the revolutionary people in China, and condemns Russian liberalism, which has supported the tsarist policy of aggrandisement."

In July 1912, the Bolshevik newspaper *Neuskaya Zvezda* carried an article by the Chinese revolutionary democrat, Sun Yat-sen, entitled, "The Social Significance of the Chinese Revolution".<sup>2</sup> The same issue carried an article by Lenin entitled "Democracy and Narodism in China", which analysed and gave an assessment of Sun Yat-sen's views.

Sun Yat-sen's article gives a brief account of his political programme. At that time, he believed that the Hsinhai revolution had led to the implementation of two of the three

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Y. M. Garushyants pointed out that the article is an abbreviated version of Sun Yat-sen's speech of April 3, 1912, known as "The Principles of the People's Welfare and the Social Revolution" (see *Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 1, 1965).

principles making up his socio-political doctrine (nationalism, people's power, and the people's welfare). That was the prevailing view among the Chinese revolutionaries, who thought that the Manchurian emperor's abdication and the nominal establishment of republican rule meant a completion of the revolution, which, they believed, was a once-for-all act rather than a long-drawn-out process. Having left the post of caretaker president, Sun Yat-sen said: "In China, the principles of nationalism and people's power have already been put into effect, and it is only the principle of the people's welfare that has yet to be implemented."<sup>1</sup>

This idea recurred in the article carried by *Neuskaya Zvezda*. It said: "The first two principles have been implemented through the abdication of the Manchu Dynasty. We now have to carry out an economic revolution."<sup>2</sup> The much too categorical spirit of these statements stands out most clearly in the light of his subsequent statement that "since the revolution we have seen some even more negative phenomena than under the Ching Dynasty".<sup>3</sup>

Lenin gave a high assessment of Sun Yat-sen's article, describing it as the platform of the great Chinese democracy. It offered a convenient occasion for looking into the question of correlation between democracy and the Narodnik movement in bourgeois revolutions in Asia.

For Lenin, Sun Yat-sen was something of a familiar figure, a Narodnik, though a Narodnik bred on Chinese soil. In analysing his views, Lenin continued his old controversy with the theorists of the Russian Narodnik movement.

What was the crux of the controversy? Lenin viewed the Narodniks and their ideas from the standpoint of the revolutionary working class. In arguing against them, he sought to solve the question of the proletariat's attitude to the petty bourgeoisie and its programme.

He recognised the progressive message of the Narodniks' petty-bourgeois theories, for they put forward general democratic demands for eliminating the survivals of serf-

<sup>1</sup> Sun Yat-sen, *Selected Works*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.



dom and medievalism. The working class had to support these general democratic demands, which, however, had nothing socialist about them, looked to the past rather than to the future, being "ABSOLUTELY reactionary INASMUCH AS they claim to be socialist theories".<sup>1</sup> While levelling just criticism against the vices of the capitalist system and pointing out the numerous evils engendered by capitalism, the Narodniks made the mistake of taking a one-sided, metaphysical view of capitalism, refusing to recognise that, as compared with savage medieval ways and serfdom, the establishment of capitalist relations would be a step forward in social development. Back in 1897, Lenin described the Narodnik theories as romantic and said that Marxism most valued capitalism for "its inherent striving for development, its irresistible urge onwards, its inability to halt or to reproduce the economic processes in their former, rigid dimensions".<sup>2</sup> Lenin remarked that in their fight against capitalism, "the Narodniks throw all historical realism overboard and always compare the *reality* of capitalism with a *fiction* of the pre-capitalist order."<sup>3</sup>

As we see, Lenin's attitude to capitalism was scrupulously scientific and consistently dialectical. He denounced its vices and waged a tireless struggle against it, but pointed out that in economically and politically backward countries, capitalism at that period was "an enormously progressive factor, one which accelerates social development, draws larger and larger masses of the population into the whirlpool of social life, compels them to ponder over its structure, and to 'forge their happiness' with their own hands"<sup>4</sup>.

Lenin believed that the Narodniks were mistaken in trying to rely on "the *undeveloped state* of the contradictions of the existing system, upon the *backwardness* of the country".<sup>5</sup> Sun Yat-sen, too, pinned his hopes on the undeveloped state of China's socio-economic relations, on the country's backwardness. There he was like the Russian Narodniks, although on various other points the distinctions were most pronounced. Like the Russian Narodniks, he

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 517.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 214.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 246.

wanted China to forestall and bypass capitalism. But in China, as well as in Russia, this was out of the question. Capitalist relations had already emerged in China, and that was a progressive development in that backward country. Sun Yat-sen himself wrote that "China was on the verge of explosive industrial development; trade will develop here on a giant scale, and in 50 years' time we shall have a host of Shanghais".<sup>1</sup> But trade and industrial development in China at that time could only go the capitalist way, and it was impossible to avoid that, or to "touch up" this historical regularity. Russia's experience made that abundantly clear, and Lenin had every reason to assess Sun Yat-sen's theories as reactionary, "for the idea that capitalism can be 'prevented' in China and that a 'social revolution' there will be made easier by the country's backwardness, and so on" was altogether reactionary.<sup>2</sup>

In analysing Sun Yat-sen's "socialist" views, Lenin kept emphasising their reactionary nature. One must bear in mind, of course, that Lenin used the term "reactionary" "in its *historico-philosophical* sense, describing only the *error* of the theoreticians who take models for their theories from *obsolete* forms of society. It does not apply at all to the personal qualities of these theoreticians, or their programmes."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin believed that Sun Yat-sen's theory about preventing capitalism was typical of petty-bourgeois "revolutionist socialism". The dream about China's transition to "state socialism" was a utopia, for it was only based on subjective sympathies and aspirations, on Western socialist ideas borrowed and interpreted without due consideration, rather than stemmed from the social conditions in the "backward, agrarian, semi-feudal country". In Europe and America, the order of the day was to eliminate capitalist exploitation and establish socialism, whereas China had yet to eliminate feudal oppression through a bourgeois-democratic revolution. China still lacked the real political force capable of fighting for socialism. Lenin wrote: "The dialectics of the social relations in China reveals itself

<sup>1</sup> Sun Yat-sen, *Selected Works*, p. 566.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, pp. 166-67.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 217.



precisely in the fact that, while sincerely sympathising with socialism in Europe, the Chinese democrats have transformed it into a reactionary theory, and *on the basis* of this reactionary theory of 'preventing' capitalism are championing a *purely capitalist*, a maximum capitalist, agrarian programme!"<sup>1</sup>

The anti-feudal edge of Sun Yat-sen's agrarian platform gave it a revolutionary-democratic turn. Far from saving the Chinese countryside from capitalism, its implementation would have accelerated the advance of capitalism in farming. Lenin made some penetrating remarks on the contradiction between Sun Yat-sen's subjective intentions and the objective content of his agrarian programme.

Sun Yat-sen denied the need for any class struggle, he did not see the meaning of the contradictions between the peasants and the landowners, but nevertheless his programme was progressive, for objectively it led up to bourgeois-democratic transformations in agriculture, regardless of the author's intentions.

Lenin's analysis of Sun Yat-sen's agrarian programme hinged on the idea he expressed in his article "A Comparison of the Stolypin and the Narodnik Agrarian Programmes". He wrote: "...the more a country is lagging behind world capitalism, the greater the effort it must make to overtake its neighbours, the more it has 'neglected' its 'disease', the disease of medieval landownership and small-scale bondage farming, and the more imperative that country's need for a *radical* break-up of *all* its relations of landownership, of all its agrarian system, the more natural will be the rise and wide dissemination in that country, among its agricultural population, of all sorts of ideas and plans of land nationalisation."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin maintained that the establishment of a fixed tax on land in accordance with its price—the main plank of Sun Yat-sen's agrarian platform—was a form of nationalisation.

"To make the 'enhanced value' of land the 'property of the people' means transferring the rent, i.e., land ownership, to the state, or, in other words, nationalising the land."<sup>3</sup> Lenin believed that such a reform was possible

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

under capitalism as well; moreover, it was not only possible but it represented "the purest, most consistent, and ideally perfect capitalism".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's criticism of Sun Yat-sen's views was one of goodwill. He showed that Sun Yat-sen's views were erroneous and utopian, and laid bare their real substance, which had nothing to do with scientific socialism, but even so these views were progressive for China at the time.

Lenin believed that the essential distinction between democrats and the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie was that while the liberal was afraid of the mass movement, "the democrat has faith in the people, in the movement of the masses, and he helps this movement in every way, although he fairly often has (as have the bourgeois democrats, the Trudoviks) a wrong notion about the significance of this movement within the framework of the capitalist system".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin emphasised that Narodnik utopias (and this also applies to Sun Yat-sen's views on the agrarian question) voiced a striving on the part of the peasant masses to go into battle, promising "them a million blessings in the event of victory, while this victory will in fact yield them only a hundred blessings. But is it not natural that the millions who are marching to battle, who for ages have lived in unheard-of ignorance, want, poverty, squalor, abandonment and downtroddenness should magnify tenfold the fruits of an eventual victory?"<sup>3</sup>

In dealing with this kind of theory, Lenin was always careful to "extract the sound and valuable kernel of the sincere, resolute, militant democracy of the peasant masses from the husk of Narodnik utopias".<sup>4</sup>

Under certain conceptions, Lenin regarded bourgeois democrats as allies of the revolutionary proletariat. He said: "We fight side by side with all bourgeois democrats as long as they are true to their democratic principles."<sup>5</sup>

It was the democratic spirit of Sun Yat-sen's views that Lenin sympathised with.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 358.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.



Sun Yat-sen, Lenin thought, had come from that part of the Asian bourgeoisie which was still capable of representing sincere, militant and resolute democracy, and was a revolutionary democrat, noble and heroic.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin emphasised that Sun Yat-sen's democratic ideas originated in the very mainstream of history, in "the deep-going revolutionary movement of the hundreds of millions who are finally being drawn into the stream of world capitalist civilisation",<sup>2</sup> and, with genuine respect and admiration, described these ideas as the great ideology of a truly great people, "capable not only of lamenting its age-long slavery and dreaming of liberty and equality, but of *fighting* the age-long oppressors of China".<sup>3</sup>

The peasantry was a social mainstay of bourgeois democracy in the Hsinhai revolution,<sup>4</sup> but it was not involved in vigorous struggle to any adequate extent. In his article, "The Struggle of Parties in China" (1913), Lenin made a thorough analysis of the configuration of social forces in the Chinese revolution, pointing out that the weakness of Sun Yat-sen's party lay in the fact that it had "not yet been able *sufficiently* to involve *broad masses* of the Chinese people in the revolution. The proletariat in China is still very weak—there is therefore no leading class capable of waging a resolute and conscious struggle to carry the democratic revolution to its end. The peasantry, lacking a leader in the person of the proletariat, is terribly downtrodden, passive, ignorant and indifferent to politics."<sup>5</sup>

Lenin said that the really broad masses had yet to be drawn into more vigorous support for the Chinese Republic, "but without such *massive* support, without an organised and steadfast leading class, the Republic *cannot* be stable".<sup>6</sup>

In other words, as early as in 1912-1913, Lenin was already saying that if the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China was to be completed, there had to be a growth and strengthening of the working class in the course of capitalist

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Vol. 41, p. 282.

<sup>6</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 282.

development, and the broad peasant masses had to be roused and involved in revolutionary struggle.

Lenin wrote: "Lastly, the Chinese proletariat will increase as the number of Shanghais increases. It will probably form some kind of Chinese Social-Democratic labour party which, while criticising the petty-bourgeois utopias and reactionary views of Sun Yat-sen, will certainly take care to single out, defend and develop the revolutionary-democratic core of his political and agrarian programme."<sup>1</sup>

For various international and domestic reasons (the most important of these being the support rendered by international imperialism to the Chinese counter-revolutionaries, the weakness of the revolutionary bourgeois-democratic group, and the insufficient activity of the popular masses), the Hsinhai revolution, though abolishing the Ching monarchy, was unable to fulfil the main socio-economic tasks of a bourgeois revolution.

Power in the country fell into the hands of the reactionaries, who joined up with the imperialist forces in an effort to obstruct the ongoing revolutionary process, and prop up the shaky structure of the old, outdated system. But the revolutionary ferment could not be stopped.

There was a growing movement for the revival of a powerful and unified Chinese state. Some new socialist-oriented political groups emerged alongside the Sun Yat-sen group: the anarchists, the Tolstoyans, and, finally, the Marxists. The Chinese intelligentsia and the students were gaining a broader outlook. The trade and industrial bourgeoisie was also taking an ever more active part in the political struggle. The slogans of struggle for a national revival were being tied in ever closer with calls for socialism, progress, and democratic renewal.

China, which had long been known as a hidebound, stagnant country, was coming alive. Many forward-looking Chinese realised that the country had to be got off dead centre, but what they did not quite see was where to go, what road to take. The October Revolution in Russia provided them with an answer. Sun Yat-sen and many other Chinese revolutionary democrats decided to "go the Russian way".

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 169.



## The Spread of Lenin's Ideas and the Revolutionary Movement in China After the October Revolution

When news of the revolution in Russia first reached China, Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary-democratic followers were going through a period of deep disillusion. Their repeated attempts to carry out their plans for China's national revival had all failed, and there was an ever greater threat of China's breaking up into military-feudal estates. Sun Yat-sen and his Kuomintang group were casting about for the surest way to unite the country, win national independence, and ensure conditions for economic development.

Inside the country, Sun Yat-sen looked to the "good" generals, who could help him to implement his political and social programme. Outside the country, he appealed to the common sense of capitalist magnates and statesmen, tempting them with the benefits that would be theirs if they supported him in his struggle for China's renewal. In the period between the Hsinhai revolution and the October victory, Sun Yat-sen tried various ways of implementing his plans, but every one of these had failed, and, according to his friends, he was beginning to give way to despair. He thought it was impossible to break the deadlock. But the October Revolution heartened him and fortified his resolution to go on fighting. He said: "The success of the Russian revolution has brought fresh hope to mankind."

Sun Yat-sen welcomed the October Revolution with all his heart. He tried to understand the reasons behind the Russian revolutionaries' success, and to draw as much useful knowledge as possible from their experience. As he studied that experience, the theory and practice of Leninism, he was coming to reappraise his own long-settled ideas—a complicated and contradictory process. By that time, he had already developed into a mature thinker and politician, with his own well-thought-out concept about his country's further development and his own social ideals.

In thinking over the factors behind the victory of the Russian revolution, he also looked for the causes of his own failures. He concentrated on the organisational aspects of the revolution's preparation and staging, on the methods

and special tactics employed by Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks. He saw these as the key to their success. He was less concerned with the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and the socio-economic programme of the October Revolution: he did not devote much attention to these, because, he believed, the Russian Communists' ideas were similar to his own principles and differed only marginally, if at all. He believed that he shared his ideas with the Russian revolutionaries. He said: "Both our Party and the Russian Party take the stand of the three people's principles." The only difference lay in the methods of struggle the Russian methods having proved to be more effective.<sup>1</sup>

Still, to the very last, Sun Yat-sen did not accept or understand the theory of surplus value, class struggle, and proletarian dictatorship. His ideas about socialist society were very different from those of the Marxists-Leninists. But this did not prevent him from studying and adopting any Marxist political propositions that he thought would help the Chinese people to fight for a better future.

Sun Yat-sen felt himself drawn to Lenin. He sought direct contacts with the leader of the Russian revolution. In the summer of 1918, he sent Lenin a telegram of greetings.<sup>2</sup> Ho Hsiang-ping, wife of Sun Yat-sen's closest friend and fellow-fighter, Liao Chung-kai, wrote: "The victory of the October Revolution, which roused the oppressed peoples of the world, helped Sun Yat-sen to realise that 'the Chinese revolution would never win out unless it followed Russia's example'." Soon after correspondence started between Sun Yat-sen and Lenin.<sup>3</sup> Sun Yat-sen's letters to Lenin were drafted by two of his most loyal associates, Liao Chung-kai and Chu Chih-hsin, and his wife Sun Ching-ling. Sun

<sup>1</sup> Sun Yat-sen, *Selected Works*, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> China's posts and telegraph service at the time was in the hands of the imperialists, so that the telegram was sent over via the USA with the help of Chinese émigrés (see Liu-Li-kai, "Sun Yat-sen's Welcome of the October Revolution and His Proposal for an Alliance with Russia", *Li Shih enchiu*, No. 5, 1954, p. 2). In a reply message on August 1, 1918, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, thanked Sun Yat-sen on Lenin's behalf and came out in favour of contacts between the Russian and the Chinese revolutionaries (see S. P. Tikhvinsky, *Sun Yat-sen. Foreign Policy Views and Practice*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 222-23, in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> See Ho Hsiang-ping, *Reminiscences about Sun Yat-sen*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 59-60 (in Russian).



Yat-sen wanted to send his friends to study in Russia and urged them to learn Russian.<sup>1</sup>

In 1921, in a letter to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, Sun Yat-sen wrote: "I would like to meet you personally, you and my other friends in Moscow. I take a great interest in your affairs, especially the organisation of your Soviets, your Army and education.... Just as Moscow has done, I would like to lay the groundwork for a Chinese Republic deep down in the minds of the young generation — working people of the days to come. With best regards to you and my friend Lenin, and to all those who have done so much in the cause of mankind's freedom."<sup>2</sup>

In February 1923, Sun Yat-sen came to stand at the head of the Revolutionary Government of South China, which was located at Kwangchow and was in opposition to the Peking government. His positions, however, were precarious. Since Sun Yat-sen wanted to unite the country but did not have any forces of his own, he had to resort to various militarist cliques, which, for their part, used his name to further their own ends but did not share his democratic aspirations in the least.

In an effort to consolidate his positions and establish an efficient revolutionary party and a reliable army, Sun Yat-sen asked the Soviet Government for assistance. Lenin considered his request very attentively. In the summer of 1923, the Soviet Government sent over some prominent political and military leaders to act as advisers at Kwangchow. In September 1923, M. M. Borodin, one of the oldest Bolsheviks, became political adviser to Sun Yat-sen. In 1924, the outstanding Soviet military leader, V. K. Blücher, went to China to head the team of Soviet military advisers. Lenin's envoys, who did their best to help the Chinese revolutionaries to organise their struggle, enjoyed the Chinese people's sincere respect. They helped to establish the National-Revolutionary Army and the Whampoa Military Academy to train personnel for the army.

The ideological assistance rendered to Sun Yat-sen by the Communist International was also of great importance.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Sun Yat-sen. 1866-1966, Moscow, 1966, p. 324 (in Russian).

While promoting the establishment of a Communist Party, the Comintern also thought it its duty to support Sun Yat-sen's non-proletarian revolutionary-democratic organisation. It did not seek to impose a proletarian programme or proletarian methods of struggle on Sun Yat-sen's Kuomintang Party, but helped it with its advice and recommendations to work out and formulate a political platform that would enable it to strengthen its positions, put it on a more solid social basis, thus bringing about a fresh revolutionary upsurge. The Comintern helped Sun Yat-sen and his associates to work out a programme that was in line with the urgent tasks of the revolutionary, national-democratic movement in China. In doing so, the Comintern handled Sun Yat-sen's doctrine of the three people's principles with great care, preserving their form but filling them with more consistent revolutionary content. In November 1923, when a delegation from Sun Yat-sen was in Moscow, the Presidium of the Comintern Executive adopted a resolution on the national liberation movement in China and the Kuomintang Party, expressing confidence that "the Kuomintang's three principles, which have been basic to that party since its establishment—*nationalism, democracy and state socialism*—will be interpreted by it in the modern spirit". Then the resolution went on to spell out the new content of the three people's principles.

Nationalism was to help the Kuomintang step up its struggle against world imperialism and its stooges, the struggle for China's independence, in which it was to rely on broad sections of the peasants, the workers, the intelligentsia and the trade-industrial circles. For each of these sections, nationalism was to mean elimination of oppression both by foreign imperialism and local militarism.

The second principle—democracy—had to be "regarded not from the standpoint of 'innate human rights' in general, but as a revolutionary principle being used at the present time in China. One should bear in mind here that in a bourgeois society democracy degenerates into a system and machinery for oppressing the working masses, so that in spreading the principles of democracy among the masses, the Kuomintang should interpret it to make it serve the interests of China's working masses, that is, all individuals and organisations which stand for genuine struggle against



imperialism should enjoy extensive rights and freedoms, but these freedoms should by no means be extended to the elements and organisations which back foreign imperialists or their stooges, the Chinese militarists."

The Comintern pointed out that the third principle—state socialism—"will have a revolutionising effect on the masses and meet with a broad response among them if it is interpreted to mean *nationalisation of foreign firms, enterprises, banks, railways and waterways*. The nationalisation principle could also be extended to national Chinese industry, for this would promote the further development of the productive forces. State socialism cannot be interpreted as state nationalisation of land. The huge peasant masses that are in need of land should be told that the land will be handed over to those who work it, and that the institution of large and numerous medium and small landowners, who do not work their land but go in for trade or serve as government officials, robbing the farmers both in cash rent and in kind, will be abolished. The state has to ease the peasants' tax burden, and should give them a great deal of assistance in irrigation, resettlement from densely populated to thinly populated areas, the development of new land, and so on."<sup>1</sup>

The Comintern worked in line with Lenin's ideas about the need to unite all the revolutionary forces for a struggle against imperialism and internal reaction, helping the young Chinese Communists to overcome their hostility for Sun Yat-sen and his Kuomintang Party and to establish co-operation with it, something which had a beneficial effect on the CPC's development, helped it to become a major political force in Chinese society all the quicker and to gain more influence among the masses.

Besides serving to transform Sun Yat-sen's ideological and political activity, the October Revolution had a powerful effect on the development of China's revolutionary-democratic movement as a whole. While Sun Yat-sen was chiefly concerned about Russia's practical revolutionary experience, another part of the progressive Chinese intelligentsia concentrated on Russia's theoretical experience,

<sup>1</sup> *Kommunist*, No. 4, 1969, pp. 12-14 (in Russian).

seeking to get at the substance of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

In contrast to Sun Yat-sen, these intellectuals regarded Marxism-Leninism as a coherent theoretical system, which had to be assimilated in the aggregate.

In 1921, these intellectuals founded the Communist Party of China. They translated Lenin's speeches and articles into Chinese, explained the main propositions of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine in the Chinese press, and engaged in vigorous polemics with the opponents of scientific socialism.

Lenin's works were first translated into Chinese in 1919. The first article to be printed (in part) was his "Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat,"<sup>1</sup> which was soon followed by full or partial translations of "A Great Beginning", the report on the Party Programme to the 8th Congress of the RCP(B), "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", and so on. The magazine *Hsin Chinghien* edited by Professor Ch'en Tu-hsiu played a particularly important role in popularising Lenin's ideas. It became the organ of the Shanghai group which brought together the various Marxist circles and initiated the establishment of the Communist Party of China. It used to carry translations of works by Marx, Engels and Lenin, and popular articles about the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The third anniversary of the October Revolution in November 1920 saw the publication of the first issue of an underground magazine, *Kungchantang* (Communist). It carried, issue by issue, various information on Lenin's life and work, and also translations of his CC Report to the 9th Congress of the RCP(B), speeches at the Second Congress of the Communist International, part of *The State and Revolution*, and other works.<sup>2</sup> The publication of Lenin's works and information about Lenin and Leninism was an integral part of the campaign launched by China's Marxist intelligentsia in preparation for the establishment of the CPC.

The Communist Party was established in China as the revolutionary situation there was gathering momentum.

<sup>1</sup> The translation appeared in the Peking magazine *New China*, No. 8, December 15, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Chiang Ch'ung-fang, "Publication and Spread of Lenin's Works in China", in a collection entitled *Publication and Spread of Lenin's Works*, Moscow, 1960, p. 280.



Thus, in 1919, there was the patriotic May 4 Movement, which flared in protest against the Japanese expansion in China (stepped up during the First World War), the mercenary policy of the pro-Japanese Peking government, and the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference, which were a gross violation of China's national sovereignty. The movement was a vivid expression of the socio-economic changes in China itself and the powerful influence exerted by the liberation ideas of the October Revolution. The May 4 Movement was organised by progressive intellectuals, with students, workers, tradesmen, and members of the industrial bourgeoisie taking an active part.

Like any social phenomenon taking place at the turn of a social epoch, the May 4 Movement comprised some old, traditional features of the national liberation struggle and some new features connected with the impact of the October Revolution.

The May 4 Movement helped the Chinese Marxists to realise the importance of the popular masses in the fight for the country's liberation.

It was very hard to spread Marxism-Leninism and establish a Communist Party in China because of the country's socio-economic backwardness and the sway of feudal dogmas and traditions. The Chinese revolutionary democrats, who came to believe in Marxism-Leninism following the victory of the October Revolution, found themselves to be quite ignorant of the socio-economic conditions in their country. They were hazy about the class composition of Chinese society, and had but a vague idea of the concept of "proletariat", associating it with the working population as a whole. It was also hard to overcome the traditional, age-old disdain for physical work and the working people. The record of the communist movement showed that many Chinese Marxists could not live down their petty-bourgeois or even feudal views on the working masses to the very end. This gave rise to various opportunist attitudes, like lack of faith in the masses' creative initiative, neglect of everyday work among the broad masses, and a tendency to use injunction or even enforcement methods.

Many Chinese came to believe in the power of Marxism, but it was only a few who penetrated to the substance of this revolutionary doctrine. Some saw it only as a stepping-stone

to power, and others—as a means of saving the nation, but failed to grasp its class message.

The more consistent Chinese Marxists realised that if they were to master and use Russia's experience, they had to analyse China's socio-economic problems: the complexion of Chinese society, and the balance and configuration of its class forces.

Li Ta-chao, in particular, did a great deal to spread the ideas of the October Revolution and socialism. He went beyond mere faith in the power of Marxism to the study and assimilation of the Marxist doctrine in a purposeful way. Li Ta-chao maintained that it was most important for China's progressive, revolutionary democrats to make a profound study of the October Revolution's multifaceted experience. He said: "We must study Bolshevism, put it before the people, and tell society the truth about it."<sup>1</sup> But there would be no point in studying Marxism and the Russian Bolsheviks' experience without combining this with an effort to analyse China's realities: its society, its motive forces, and the balance of classes in the political arena. He emphasised: "A socialist who wants his principles to produce any effect must analyse the concrete conditions to which his ideals can best be applied."<sup>2</sup> Li Ta-chao called for a "movement to solve the country's social problems".<sup>3</sup> He urged the young, the students, and the forward-looking intelligentsia to go among the workers and peasants and analyse the concrete conditions of their life and work, and their attitudes. He spoke of the need to carry on broad educational work among the workers and peasants. "What our unschooled, illiterate nation particularly needs is schools that would provide general education for workers."<sup>4</sup>

The mastering of Marxism and the experience of the October Revolution was tied in with the question about the possible use of that experience in China. Li Ta-chao saw this as a "matter of paramount importance",<sup>5</sup> and did a great deal in that direction. He was the first to attempt a Marxist

<sup>1</sup> Li Ta-chao, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Moscow, 1965, p. 131 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.



analysis of Chinese society and of the causes behind its backwardness. Naturally, he could not solve all the problems of China's development and the Chinese revolution, and made various mistakes. But the good thing about him was that he was very much in earnest about these problems, and sought to understand and explain them from Marxist positions. He was the first to undertake a study of the concrete conditions of the workers and peasants, and wrote many articles on that question.

Ch'en Tu-hsiu and other Chinese revolutionary democrats also played an active part in spreading Marxism-Leninism and the experience of the October Revolution.

They were sincere in their desire to digest Russia's experience and use it to save their own country. A point to note, however, is that since they did not make any in-depth analysis of the concrete socio-economic relations in China itself, they were sometimes unable to make a deep and all-round assessment of the struggle being waged by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. The various external similarities between prerevolutionary Russia and China (like a more or less embryonic industry, a largely peasant population, and dependence on foreign capital) led them to believe that socialism in China would be easy to attain.

Thus, Ch'en Tu-hsiu and some other Marxists believed that China's road to socialism would be an easy one precisely in virtue of its economic backwardness, its poorly developed capitalist relations, and its extreme poverty.

Lenin specifically emphasised that the absence of the necessary material prerequisites, a low level of the productive forces, far from facilitating, in effect, complicated and slowed down the process of social change, which began with the take-over of power.

Here is how Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, an outstanding publicist and one of the first Chinese Marxists, described the early days of the spread of Marxism-Leninism in China: "We have an overpowering interest in the debate on socialism. We had a very vague and confused idea about socialist trends and the substance of socialism, seeing these as through the mist of early morning. We saw a lot of things as through a lace curtain."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, *Essays and Articles*, Moscow, 1959, p. 59 (in Russian).

In 1920, in their effort to draw closer to the working masses, the first Marxist circles began to put out special magazines for the workers: *Laotung chieh* (The Working People) in Shanghai, *Laotung ying* (The Voice of Labour) in Peking, *Laotung che* (The Working People) and *Laotung yü funü* (Work and Woman) in Canton.

When the Communist Party was being established in China, the Soviet Communists and the Comintern rendered important assistance to the Chinese Marxists. In the spring of 1920, a team of representatives from the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern Executive headed by G. N. Voitinsky went to China to help the Chinese comrades to master the essentials of Marxism-Leninism, assimilate the organisational experience of Party construction, and establish links with the working masses.

In late 1920, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai came to Moscow as correspondent for the newspaper *Cheng pao*, and in the spring of 1921, a big group of young Marxists came over to make an extensive study of Party leadership and life in Soviet Russia.<sup>1</sup>

In early 1921, an organiser and leader of China's Socialist Youth League, Chang T'ai-lei, came to the Soviet Union to contact the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern Executive in Irkutsk. The Secretariat looked into Chang T'ai-lei's detailed report,<sup>2</sup> and rendered all-round assistance to the young CPC.

The campaign to unite the Marxist circles into China's Communist Party in July 1921 was an event of historic importance, which settled the future of the Chinese people's liberation struggle. The establishment of the CPC was undoubtedly due to the powerful impact of Leninist ideas and the October Revolution.

In his concern for the education of Communists in Asian countries, Lenin pointed out the difficulties in the way of the establishment and work of Communist Parties in the backward countries, where precapitalist relations were still predominant and the proletariat weak. He said: "Much

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, December 8, 1960.

<sup>2</sup> The report on the state of Marxist propaganda and the work of Communist groups in China presented to the Third Congress of the Comintern was published in the magazine *Narody Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 3, 1921, pp. 322-35.



work will have to be done; errors will be inevitable; many difficulties will be encountered along this road.”<sup>1</sup>

These errors and difficulties were due both to the objective socio-economic conditions in these countries and subjective factors springing from these conditions: “Marxism is most easily, rapidly, completely and lastingly assimilated by the working class and its ideologists where large-scale industry is most developed. Economic relations which are backward, or which lag in their development, constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who assimilate only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world outlook, or individual slogans and demands, being unable to make a determined break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.”<sup>2</sup> The situation in China was complicated by the overwhelming power of specific feudal traditions, dogmas, canons and prejudices, and by the dogmatic principles of traditional Chinese education.

One of the main difficulties in the development of the communist movement in China were nationalist feelings not only among the masses, but even among the communist vanguard. Lenin said: “...the more backward the country, the stronger is the hold of small-scale agricultural production, patriarchalism and isolation, which inevitably lend particular strength and tenacity to the deepest of petty-bourgeois prejudices, i.e., to national egoism and national narrow-mindedness.”<sup>3</sup>

If China was to overcome these difficulties, the Comintern had to implement Lenin's policy of international assistance to the Communist parties of backward and oppressed countries.

In January 1922, the Comintern Executive convened a Congress of the Peoples of the Far East, which was held in Moscow. The young CPC sent over a big delegation consisting of prominent Communists like Ch'ü C'iu-pai, Chang T'ai-lei, Teng An-ming and Wang Ching-mei, and also Komsomol members and non-Party men.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 150.

The Congress helped the CPC to work out its Programme, and the Chinese delegates were given detailed information on Party and state work in the Soviet Union. In a talk with the delegates, Lenin explained that at that stage the revolution in China had a bourgeois-democratic prong, and was chiefly aimed to liberate the country from imperialism and feudalism.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese Communists wanted to establish their own Party on the lines of Lenin's organisational principles of Party construction, and to channel its activity along the Leninist way. The First Congress of the CPC formulated the Party's main task as that of guiding the organisation, training, and struggle of the working class. Soon after the First Congress, the CPC established in Shanghai an All-China Secretariat of the Trade Unions, which provided centralised leadership for the working-class movement and launched a campaign to organise workers' trade unions on class lines.

The CPC's central task now was to integrate Marxism-Leninism with the working-class movement, and this showed once again that Lenin's doctrine on the need to spread socialist consciousness among the working class applied here as it did elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> But in its efforts to establish lasting links with the working class, the young Communist Party ran into great difficulties. The Party itself was small and consisted of university lecturers, teachers, students, petty-bourgeois intellectuals, members of the bourgeoisie and even landowners, so that it was hard for them to operate among the working masses.

China's working class was still weak. The industrial proletariat, though grown considerably from 1914 to 1919, still made up less than one per cent of the country's population and was but a tiny section of China's multimillion labour army.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly to other backward countries, China's semi-proletarian sections, and also the numbers of workers

<sup>1</sup> See Ting Shou-ho, Ying Hsu-yi, Chang Po-chao, *The Influence of the October Revolution on China*, Moscow, 1959, p. 183 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 375-76.

<sup>3</sup> In the early 1920s, China had roughly 3 million industrial workers and no less than 12 million engaged in handicrafts and the artisan trades. See Wang Ya-nan, *Analysis of the Economic Forms. Semi-Feudal. Semi-Colonial China*, Moscow, 1959, p. 283 (in Russian).



connected with the lower forms of capitalist production and even with feudal economic forms, were much larger.

The country's working class included many women and children, while the number of regular workers was rather small; most workers maintained fairly close links with the countryside, and the labour turn-over was very great. The strong influences of traditional feudal ideology and the craft guild and provincial preconceptions made it hard to organise the workers and give them class training. But the Chinese working class had its strong points as well: the industrial proletariat was concentrated in a few big cities, at large modern enterprises. This created the conditions for powerful action by the working class, and also helped it to unite with the other patriotic forces (the national bourgeoisie, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and the students), which were also concentrated in the towns.

Despite the various difficulties, the Chinese Communists managed to score some successes in organising the working class. The first class trade unions were being set up to offset the old guild associations, which included both workers and employers. The first bout of strikes, which started in January 1922 with a victorious strike by Chinese seamen in Hong Kong, was coupled with a marked increase in the Communists' leading role, and had a sharp anti-imperialist edge. At that time, workers' strikes—a purely proletarian political method of struggle, in the course of which the workers acted as “the advanced class of the whole people”<sup>1</sup>—were already becoming a major method of the anti-imperialist struggle.

In May 1922, the Communists sponsored the First All-China Congress of Trade Unions, which laid the groundwork for an association of workers' organisations under Communist leadership. The Communist-led political strike on the Peking-Hankow Railway Line on February 7, 1923 was another major event of that period. Its savage suppression ended the first upsurge of the working-class movement.

The Second Congress of the CPC in July 1922 adopted a Party Programme, which said that the working class was to

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 85.

take part in a bourgeois-democratic, anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution. A Manifesto issued by the Congress urged the establishment of a united anti-imperialist front throughout the country, and this was an important achievement and a direct reflection of the Leninist decisions adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern. The Manifesto said that “the workers together with the poorest peasants and the petty bourgeoisie” had to establish “a united democratic front”, and that the national bourgeoisie could also “join China's other forces in their struggle against foreign imperialism and the mercenary Peking government”.<sup>1</sup> The Manifesto pointed out that if the workers involved in a united democratic front were not to be reduced to an appendage of the petty bourgeoisie and were to have a chance to fight for their own class interests, they had to unite within the Communist Party and trade unions.<sup>2</sup>

The Congress also decided that the CPC was to join the Comintern, and issued a special resolution on the need to protect Soviet Russia in every possible way.

On January 12, 1923, the Comintern Executive adopted a resolution On the CPC's Attitude to the Kuomintang Party, which formulated in concrete terms Lenin's principle of a united front. The Executive pointed out the need for joint action by the Kuomintang and the CPC in the national-revolutionary struggle, and emphasised the cardinal importance of Lenin's principle proclaiming the imperative need for the development and strengthening of an independent working-class movement as an important factor in the national-revolutionary struggle. “The Party should maintain its own organisation with a strictly centralised apparatus. The CPC should concentrate on the important specific tasks of organising and educating the working masses and setting up trade unions in order to lay the groundwork for a strong and massive Communist Party.”<sup>3</sup>

The Third Congress of the CPC in June 1923 adopted the historic decision to establish a united national anti-

<sup>1</sup> *Documents on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. 1, Peking, 1957, pp. 32-34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Comintern's Strategy and Tactics in the National-Colonial Revolution: the Example of China*, Moscow, 1934, p. 112 (here and elsewhere in Russian).



imperialist front. The Comintern took an active part in helping it to do so. The Kuomintang and the young Communist Party found it very hard to draw closer together, for many Communists, as well as Kuomintang members, failed to see the need for a united front. Secretary-General of the CPC Ch'en Tu-hsiu himself was at first opposed to the Communists' joining the Kuomintang, and it was only an explanatory campaign by Comintern spokesmen that made it possible to overcome these Left-sectarian misconceptions.

The First Congress of the Kumontang held at Kwangchow in 1924 formalised the establishment of a united front: the CPC was admitted into the Kuomintang, while retaining its political and organisational independence. To get the united front going, the Chinese Communists had to be steeled ideologically, be very flexible, and display political tact, and this was all the more difficult because their political maturity and Marxist training were inadequate.

The implementation of Lenin's strategy and tactics for a united front gave sweeping scope to the revolution of 1925-1927 and made it a major event of the international revolutionary struggle. That struggle owed its successes to the assistance of the international proletariat, the Soviet Union above all. At that time, the CPC sought to make a creative study and assimilate the vast experience in struggle gained by the working class of Russia and its Leninist Party.

But in the first round of its revolutionary struggle, the Chinese people were unable to score any victory: a joint counter-offensive by international imperialism and internal feudal-compradore reaction inflicted a heavy defeat on the Chinese people's revolutionary forces.

World socialism, the Soviet Union above all, still lacked the political and material resources that could have rendered timely assistance to the revolution in China and paralysed the counter-revolutionary policy of the imperialist powers and the domestic reactionary forces.

The defeat of the revolution was to a large extent due to the CPC leadership's mistakes, dealing a heavy blow at the revolutionary working class and the CPC itself. Political power now fell into the hands of the Kuomintang elite, which joined up with the imperialists and landowners in a

bloody terrorist campaign against the Communists, the revolutionary vanguard of the working class and the peasantry, murdering hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries, many outstanding leaders of the communist and working-class movement like Li Ta-chao, Chang T'ai-lei, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, Teng Chung-hsia, Chao Shih-yen, P'eng P'ai and Chen Yen-nien. In 1929, came the untimely death of Su Chao-cheng, a popular leader of the Chinese proletariat. The death toll among the CPC members in 1927-1935 has been estimated at about 400,000.<sup>1</sup> These were the nation's best men, ardent fighters for their people's freedom and for the working-class cause.

Against that background, the CPC's specific features stood out in stronger relief. The Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 said: "Experience has shown that, in the majority of colonial and semi-colonial countries, an important if not a predominant part of the Party ranks in the first stage of the movement is recruited from the petty bourgeoisie and, in particular, from the revolutionary-inclined intelligentsia, very frequently students. It not uncommonly happens that these elements enter the Party because they see in it the most decisive enemy of imperialism, at the same time not always sufficiently understanding that the Communist Party is not only the Party of struggle against imperialist exploitation and oppression, but is the Party which, as the Party of the proletariat, leads a decisive struggle against all kinds of exploitation and expropriation. Many of these adherents of the Party in the course of the revolutionary struggle will reach a proletarian class point of view, another part will find it more difficult to free themselves to the end from the moods, waverings, and half-hearted ideology of the petty bourgeoisie."<sup>2</sup>

Soon after the defeat of the revolution of 1925-1927, the CPC developed a left-adventurist deviation. Lenin emphasised that at any major turning points in history, when revolutions lost out, the petty-bourgeois inability to assess the objective configuration of forces, to map out and effect a switch from one form of struggle to another, and organise

<sup>1</sup> *Kommunist*, No. 9, 1968, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Communist International, 6th Congress. The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies*, London, 1929, pp. 42-43.



a retreat of the revolutionary forces that would involve the least loss became particularly pronounced.

The "Left"-wingers underrated the depth of the revolution's defeat and looked to a steady upturn in the struggle. Instead of carrying on painstaking day-to-day work with the masses, who were going through a deep depression, they kept issuing orders and appeals in an attempt to rally the workers to general strikes, sweeping political campaigns, and even armed uprisings. Under the white terrorism, this adventurist action resulted in grave losses among the revolutionary cadres. The Sixth Congress of the CPC held in the USSR in the summer of 1928, denounced the Right-wing capitulationist trend and particularly the mounting "Left"-wing adventurism within the CPC and headed the Party towards a fight for the masses. But shortly after that, in 1930, the CPC once again gave way to the "Left"-wing deviation, which took a manifestly nationalist, anti-Comintern form.

That deviation, which is known as "Li Li-sanism", after Li Li-san, the de facto head of the CPC in that period, was a consummate expression of anti-Leninist, Left-opportunist revolutionarism. Having subjectively assessed the situation in China as a revolutionary one,<sup>1</sup> Li Li-san and some other CPC leaders urged an immediate take-over of the big cities by the Red Army and the insurgent workers and peasants. They believed that the next revolutionary upheaval in China would be a socialist one and would spark off a world war, which would subsequently result in a world revolution. This ultra-revolutionary talk boiled down to instigation of a war that could have jeopardised the existence of the world's first country engaged in socialist construction. Lenin sharply criticised the "Left"-wing Communists' theory that revolutions should be "given a push" by means of war. "Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world

<sup>1</sup> That assessment was based on a livening up in the revolutionary mass movement after the Sixth Congress of the CPC, which had corrected the Party's Leftist mistakes. But the Red Army was still very small, the working-class movement had yet to recover from the repressions, and the peasant struggle was weak and disunited. And, most important of all, "the Party had yet to become the frontrunner, leader and organiser of the broad masses' actual revolutionary struggle" (*The Comintern's Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 255).

revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being 'legitimised'? Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions...."<sup>1</sup>

The loud-ringing Leftist talk, vainglory and disregard for the facts, the actual state of affairs and balance of forces went hand in hand with persecution of the Party cadres who were opposed to the CPC Central Committee's adventurist line. That was when the CPC leadership first started its harassment of any Party functionaries connected with the international communist movement and the Comintern. Li Li-san later admitted that he had "labelled" all dissenters as opportunists.<sup>2</sup>

The CPC leadership sought to misinform the Comintern and at the same time to incite the Party cadres against the Comintern, rousing nationalist feelings among them.

Li Li-san's manifestly faulty and ruinous "Left"-wing adventurism caused grave concern within the international communist movement. A special statement issued by the Comintern Executive in August 1930 denounced Li Li-san's line as being anti-Comintern and anti-Leninist, and exposed his statements that "the Chinese are exceptional and that the Comintern fails to see the tendency in the development of the Chinese revolution".<sup>3</sup> The Executive said: "The anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist line was bound to result in tricks and dodges of this kind, tricks and dodges hostile to Bolshevism and the Comintern."<sup>4</sup> In September 1930, the Third Plenary Meeting of the CPC Central Committee denounced Li Li-san's Leftist mistakes and removed him from Party leadership. Thus, just when "Left"-wing adventurism in China was at a critical pitch, the Comintern helped the CPC to put an end to this dangerous attitude.

In the autumn of 1931, imperialist Japan occupied Northeast China (Manchuria), and this effected a radical change in the whole background to the development of the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 71-72.

<sup>2</sup> See *Documents of the Eighth National Congress of the CPC*, Moscow, 1956, p. 370 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *The Comintern's Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 290.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



revolutionary struggle in the country. The worst danger now lay in the Left-sectarian attitudes that had developed within the CPC upon the bourgeoisie's betrayal and the failure of the 1925-1927 revolution. The CPC's urgent task now was to revive Lenin's strategy for a united national front, but the roots that Left opportunism had struck had already gone far too deep and were very hard to pull out. In the period between the Kuomintang's First Congress (January 1924) and the defeat of the revolution in July 1927, the period of activity of the united anti-imperialist front, the CPC was unable to take a clear-cut differentiated approach to the various sections of the bourgeoisie, or consistently to carry out Lenin's instructions on the need to reckon with the dual nature of the national bourgeoisie. The terrorist campaign unleashed by the Right-wing bourgeoisie upon the defeat of the revolution tended to intensify the CPC's Left-sectarian attitude to all other sections of the national bourgeoisie and so prevented it from making a correct assessment of the broad objective prerequisites for the re-establishment of a united national front in China.

The record of the establishment of a united anti-Japanese front in China in 1937 confirmed that Lenin's doctrine on national-colonial revolution was deeply scientific. A characteristic point here was that the united front of workers, students, the petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie and the patriotically-minded military took shape spontaneously, from below, in the course of the people's resistance to the Japanese aggressors and the movement against the Chiang Kai-shek government's capitulationist policy.

The CPC leadership was at first opposed to the tactics of establishing a united front that would include the workers and the patriotically-minded bourgeoisie, which was dissatisfied with the Japanese aggression (as during the heroic defence of Shanghai in early 1932), but the urgent need to have the nation's patriotic forces consolidated in the face of the Japanese imperialist threat, and the extensive explanatory work carried on by the Comintern and the Trade Union International—(TUI or Profintern), gradually geared the CPC to a radical change in its policy.

The Comintern and the Profintern explained with patience and persistence to the Chinese Communists the

need to "use every possible legal method, every possible pretext for drawing closer to the urban proletarian masses, fighting the Kuomintang's national reformism and winning away the workers from the class enemy."<sup>1</sup>

The Comintern and the TUI kept explaining to the CPC the need to concentrate on uniting the action of the peasant units in the Soviet areas with that of the working class in the country's proletarian centres. The Comintern Executive emphasised in 1928: "The Communist Party is bound to be defeated and disorganised unless it realises the need to win over and organise the masses."<sup>2</sup> The CPC's guidance of the Soviet movement also showed a petty-bourgeois revolutionist spirit connected with a subjectivist assessment of that stage of the revolution, and an urge to skip the revolution's democratic stage. The CPC leadership's general Leftist line tended to isolate the Soviet areas still further, to remove them from the proletarian centres and the working class. The Chinese Soviets, nominally the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, were in fact organs of peasant dictatorship, for they included but a few genuine spokesmen for the proletariat. The CPC leadership, however, regarded the Soviets as the future organs of proletarian dictatorship, and set them an unrealistic task, that of "introducing actual socialism straightaway."<sup>3</sup>

The decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern (July-August 1935) on the establishment of a united anti-imperialist front were of historic importance for the future of the Chinese people and the Chinese revolution. The Congress put a resolute end to the Left-sectarian mistakes in the international communist and working-class movement, elaborated Lenin's idea that the struggle for peace, the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism constituted a single whole, adapting it to the new historical conditions, and laying down a clear-cut line for the establishment of a united people's anti-fascist front in the developed countries, a united anti-imperialist front in the

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the 9th Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive (February 1928), *The Comintern's Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Comintern's Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 286.



colonial and dependent countries, and for the unity of the working-class movement.

The Congress devoted particular attention to the situation in China, specifically noting that "in China, the extension of the Soviet movement and the strengthening of the fighting power of the Red Army must be combined with the development of the people's anti-imperialist movement all over the country".<sup>1</sup> Setting out the main tasks of the new policy before the Chinese delegates, the CPC spokesman at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern emphasised that now that the nation's future was at stake, the thing was to single out the chief enemy and concentrate the people's forces against it. Japanese imperialism was the main enemy, and the CPC had to gear all its efforts to a struggle against it. The spokesman showed the harm that could be done by the "Left"-wing, anti-Leninist views of some CPC members who proposed the establishment of an anti-imperialist, rather than an anti-Japanese, front, for that would tend to isolate the Chinese people from some of its possible direct or indirect allies in the fight against Japan.<sup>2</sup>

The Congress adopted a special resolution reflecting Lenin's policy of international proletarian solidarity and making it "the duty of the Communists actively to support the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, especially the Red Army of the Chinese Soviets".<sup>3</sup>

The decisions of the Seventh Congress were well in line with the tasks the Chinese people now had to face. By August 1935, the CPC had already started a vigorous campaign to establish a united national anti-Japanese front. The turn in its policy was a sharp one.

In its struggle for a united anti-Japanese front, the CPC was gradually overcoming its Leftist mistakes. It withdrew some of its slogans, like those calling for the overthrow of the Kuomintang government, the establishment of Soviets, and a take-over of large landed estates.

The united national anti-Japanese front was established

<sup>1</sup> *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1935, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Communist International*, No. 14, 1936, pp. 87-88.

<sup>3</sup> *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, p. 43.

in September 1937, after Japan had started, on July 7, 1937, a large-scale war to occupy the whole of China.

Three years after the establishment of the united front, CPC membership was up from 40,000 to 800,000, and that of the army it led—from 30,000 to 500,000. A point to note, however, is that most of the new party members were recruited from the peasantry. Now that the Japanese had occupied all the major industrial centres, links between the CPC and the working class were complicated still further. In 1948, on the eve of the victory of the revolution, CPC membership was up to 3 million, with peasants making up 90 per cent of the total, intellectuals—7 per cent, and workers—only 3 per cent.

The Soviet Union's great victory in the Second World War and the routing of imperialist Japan's major forces by the Soviet Army were the decisive prerequisites for the accelerated development and victory of the Chinese revolution of 1945-1949. The establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949 was an event of world-wide importance, opening up the socialist road before the Chinese people.



**LENINISM AND THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION  
IN KOREA****Lenin, the First Russian Revolution  
and Stirrings in Korea**

Lenin's internationalist programme on the national question, his definition of the role and place of the national-colonial question in the world revolutionary process, and the support rendered by the Bolsheviks to the liberation struggle of the peoples enslaved by imperialism were of immediate importance for the rise of the liberation movement in Korea, as well as in other countries of the East.

In 1905, Korea was turned into a Japanese protectorate and was in danger of losing its national independence altogether. Broad sections of the Korean people were beginning to ferment in protest against the Japanese invasion. The forms of that protest differed from one class contingent to another, with the two main trends being a cultural and educational movement and action by the Justice Army. The Russian revolution of 1905-1907 had a marked effect on both these trends.

News of the Russian revolution reached Korea all the quicker in view of the two countries' territorial proximity. The core of a fairly large group of Korean political émigrés living in Russia was made up of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals, some of whom sought to use the Russian-Japanese contradictions in their struggle to maintain Korea's independence, and worked in that direction, while others—the more progressively-minded political



émigrés—showed a real interest in the Russian revolution, tried to understand its goals and purposes, and to profit by its experience. The Russian Social-Democrats helped them to master the revolutionary doctrine.

Tens of thousands of Koreans, who had left their own country in search of land and work, were living in the Russian Far East.<sup>1</sup> Most of them worked in farming, while the rest had jobs at gold mines, industrial enterprises, in the fisheries and other trades. Another large group of Koreans came to Russia to do seasonal work, and they were the first to bring back home the news of the revolutionary events in Russia.

Lenin remarked that “non-agricultural migration is a progressive phenomenon. It tears the population out of the neglected, backward, history-forgotten remote spots and draws them into the whirlpool of modern social life”.<sup>2</sup>

The Korean labourers who came to Russia in that turbulent period were in one way or another drawn into the general revolutionary whirlpool. Some of them joined the Russian working people’s general strike in Vladivostok and other cities of the Far East in October 1905. In late 1905 and early 1906, they took an active part in the workers’ uprising at the Jipdong gold mines in the Zeya Mountain District. Thus, the company’s workers went on strike in February 1906, demanding, among other things, an end to any discrimination by the tsarist authorities against the “yellows”. During the revolution, Korean peasants in the Russian Far East often took part in the peasant movement, setting fire to kulak farms, taking over land, and refusing to pay taxes. As they fought together with the Russian workers and peasants, though not on any large scale, the more advanced Korean labourers gained a great deal of revolutionary experience. A point to note here is that life itself taught them a very important lesson: they realised that there were two Russias—a tsarist Russia, which was hostile to the working people, followed a policy of plunder and violence in respect of the Korean and many other peoples, and had been branded as ignominious by Lenin and the Bolsheviks;

<sup>1</sup> In 1910, the South Ussuri Territory alone had 104 settlements with more than 50,000 Koreans.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 575.

and Lenin’s Russia—a labouring, fraternal Russia, which was deeply concerned over the future of the Korean and all the other peoples, and stood for their freedom and independence. As Korean and Russian labourers worked together, ever broader sections of Korean patriots came to realise that truth.

The Koreans were very interested in the Russian revolution. Korean newspapers carried reports on workers’ strikes, the peasant movement, and armed action by Russian proletarians, soldiers and sailors. At the same time, some reports on Lenin’s theory of revolution, the two tactics of social democracy in a democratic revolution, and the struggle going forward on the question reached the country. Of course, these were scattered, fragmentary and sometimes even distorted reports, but they riveted the attention of progressive Korean leaders to the theory and practice of the Russian revolution, stimulated revolutionary thinking and helped them to seek ways to win national freedom.

One Korean magazine says: “The first Russian revolution was not only something of an eye-opener for the peoples of Asia, notably, the people of Korea, which borders on Russia, showing them ways of struggle for their country’s freedom and independence and for democratic rights; it also had a powerful revolutionising effect on Korean people.”<sup>1</sup>

Now that Asia was awakening—a process sparked off by the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907—the Korean cultural and educational movement, which had its origins way back in the past, was opening itself out to more and more democratic ideas. Enlighteners’ organisations set up in 1905-1907 called for national independence, and urged a development of national industry and culture; they started a movement for the development of Korea’s national language, for purging it of Chinese characters and introducing the Korean script. Their policy-making propositions emphasised the need to draw Korea into the stream of world culture.

Under the influence of the theory and practice of the Russian revolution, the enlighteners’ movement, which was still on the whole liberal and limited, gradually acquired

<sup>1</sup> *Yoksa Kwahak*, No. 2, Pyongyang, 1963, p. 3.



some new and important features and developed stronger democratic trend. There was also greater stratification; many enlighteners (mostly ex-émigrés to Russia) were being involved in active struggle for their country's independence and for democratic freedoms, taking part in the establishment of armed guerrilla units. A characteristic thing here is that while carrying the nationalist message, the enlighteners' movement objectively helped to broaden the Korean people's international ties, giving them (the Korean intellectuals above all) access to progressive Russian culture.

The revolution of 1905-1907 also had a marked effect on the Justice Army, and soon after the establishment of the Japanese protectorate, the Army was fighting across the whole country. It recruited most of its fighters from among the peasantry, and also from among miners, the urban poor, and impoverished officials. The Justice Army movement, aimed against the country's enslavement by Japan, had some social, anti-feudal features, even though these were not particularly pronounced.

As Japan stripped Korea of the last shreds of sovereignty and independence, the Justice Army movement acquired fresh scope. The Korean emperor was forced to give up his throne for lodging a complaint with the Hague Conference.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin, who was very much concerned with the Korean events, wrote in this context: "The Hague Conference and Korea!!!! When the Korean prince (Yi Yong) appeared before the *Second* Hague Conference ... with a complaint against the Japanese and a declaration of the independence of Korea, the Japanese deposed the Korean emperor, put his son on the throne, and on July 24, 1907, concluded a 'treaty' with him, providing that all diplomatic relations shall be through the Japanese ambassador in Seoul."<sup>2</sup>

Under that treaty, Korea's whole administration was to be controlled by the Japanese Resident, while the Korean Government was not to issue any laws or decrees without Japan's consent. The Korean patriots said that the treaty

<sup>1</sup> The Hague Conference—a diplomatic conference at the Hague (the Netherlands) in 1907, which dealt largely with problems of international law.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 684.

had passed the death sentence on Korea's independence. The country erupted in uprisings, with ex-servicemen of the Korean national army (disbanded in August 1907 by the Japanese colonialists) taking an active part.

The liberation struggle in Korea in the early 20th century meant that the Korean people were gradually rousing themselves to conscious democratic action. In contrast to the various major campaigns of the late 19th century, the popular movement now was almost free of any religious slogans, shedding the mystical and religious mantle, and taking up the slogans of national independence and struggle against the Japanese colonialists and the feudal landowner clique that supported them. Although the various Justice Army units did not fight as a single whole, they put forward the same, nation-wide demands, so that the Korean patriots made several attempts to set up an organisational centre for the Army.

In that period, the ideas of democracy and independence were gradually beginning to blend into a massive popular movement. The process was very complicated and contradictory, because the cultural and educational organisations could not head the movement, for most of their leaders were against any revolutionary forms of struggle. At the same time, they helped to boost that struggle and gave it more awareness by spreading democratic ideas. Another section of the enlighteners, influenced by the revolutionary events in Russia, joined the ranks of active independence fighters. *Notes on the Suppression of Uprisings in Korea*, a secret publication by the Japanese Governor-General's office in Korea, pointed that out and emphasised that some enlighteners from among the one-time émigrés to Russia were not only carrying on educational work in Korea, but were also taking part in the establishment of guerrilla units and purchasing arms and ammunition on their behalf. The *Notes* voiced Japan's anxiety over the rise of a popular resistance movement in Korea, and said that the detachments headed by one-time émigrés back from revolutionary Russia presented the worst danger.<sup>1</sup>

The direct links between the Justice Army units in Korea

<sup>1</sup> *Notes on the Suppression of Uprisings in Korea*, Seoul, 1912, pp. 179-80 (in Japanese).



and the Korean patriots out in revolutionary Russia were of exceptional importance for the qualitative changes in the Korean liberation movement. Thus, when the Japanese punitive forces intensified their repressions, the leadership of the Army's northern group had to move many of its fighters to Russia, to the Posyet area, which had a big Korean community. The northern group's Posyet base carried on for nearly six years (1905-1911), and operated in close contact with the liberation movement in Korea (Justice Army units were also established in Manchuria).

The Korean liberation movement naturally gained a great deal of revolutionary experience from these connections, and a more intense striving for unity of action with the Russian working people. It was also natural that the units led by one-time émigrés to Russia were most effective and well organised for that period, and that northern Korea, which bordered on Russia, was the scene of the toughest fighting, the masses' democratic aspirations here being particularly pronounced.

The Korean people's liberation movement at the time when Asia was awakening was effective because it had acquired some new qualitative features: the old-style revolts had developed into massive and conscious struggle for independence and democratic rights, a struggle which did a great deal to prevent Japan from annexing Korea at once, so that it was annexed only in 1910, following a long period as a protectorate.

Lenin's summary of Franke's book, *The Great Powers in Eastern Asia*, says: "July 1910... treaty between Russia and Japan: Japan is given a free hand in Korea. [Some weeks after she annexes Korea.]"<sup>1</sup>

Having failed in its diplomatic attempts to induce Japan to maintain Korea's status quo, tsarist Russia eventually recognised the annexation.

But Lenin's Russia, revolutionary Russia, continued to oppose all annexation and oppression, coming out in defence of the Korean, as well as the other enslaved peoples. Lenin denounced tsarist Russia's policy in Korea as one of plunder and adventurism.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, pp. 528-29.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 141.

Despite the Japanese imperialists' brutal terrorism in the annexed country, the Korean people continued their courageous struggle for independence.

At that time, when Asia was just awakening, the broad masses in Korea had yet to hear about Lenin, and it was only some progressive Korean leaders who managed to read his works. But the struggle that Lenin and the Bolsheviks were waging against coercion and colonial conquests, Lenin's passionate drive in defence of the oppressed nations and his censure and denunciation of international imperialism did much to help Korea and the other Eastern countries in their liberation struggle. The Russian revolution led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks had a profound and progressive effect on the hearts and minds of the Korean patriots, on the mould and scope of the mass movement in the country, helping it to rise to a new and higher stage.

#### **The October Revolution in Russia and the Spread of Marxist-Leninist Ideas in Korea**

Kim Il Sung wrote: "The Great October Socialist Revolution had a crucial effect on the Korean people's liberation struggle. Its victory helped the great revolutionary ideas of Marxism-Leninism to penetrate this country and rapidly to spread across it.

"The best among the Korean patriots made a deep study of Lenin's works, and looked to his precepts for guidance and inspiration in their just struggle for the liberation of their people."<sup>1</sup>

The October victory made a radical change in the background to that struggle, tying in the latter with that of the international proletariat and with the socialist country born as a result of that victory. The Soviet state provided a powerful ideological and material base for the Korean liberation movement. There was deep interest among the various sections of Korean society in the Soviet Government's early foreign policy moves: the Decree on Peace, which laid down new principles of international relations,

<sup>1</sup> Kim Il Sung, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Moscow, 1962, p. 125 (in Russian).



denounced annexation in a most resolute way, and stated in legislative form that the oppressed peoples' liberation struggle was justified; the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia; the address by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR To All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East; and the Soviet Government's domestic policy, particularly in the sphere of national relations.

During the revolution and the Civil War, when the Russian-Korean border was virtually open, in view of the closer links between the population in Korea and in the Russian Far East, news of the October Revolution, and the Soviet Republic's policies and affairs reached Korea without much delay. Most of the working Koreans in Russia came out in support of the Soviet power, which had given them freedom and land. Many Korean internationalists took up arms to defend the Soviets against the interventionists and the whiteguards.

At first, news of the October Revolution and the Soviet state's affairs—which sometimes swelled out to legends—simply drifted across the country from one settlement to another, without being spread in any systematic way. The Far Eastern Bolshevik organisation carried on large-scale political and educational work among the Koreans, as well as among other foreign working people, explaining the latest developments in international affairs and the Soviet state's domestic and foreign policy, and so helped the Koreans living in Russia to get their bearings and see through the vigorous anti-Soviet nationalist propaganda carried on by bourgeois émigrés among them, and also enabled people inside Korea itself to find out more about the Soviet Republic and revolutionary ideas.

These ideas fell on fertile soil. In March 1919, the Korean people's pent-up indignation, engendered by the long years of Japanese colonial rule, the brutal terrorism, plunder and exploitation, burst forth in a powerful anti-imperialist uprising, which lasted nearly 3 months and involved something like 2 million people.

Having been caused by domestic contradictions, the uprising of 1919 was at the same time a direct response to the October Revolution, and a part of the international revolutionary tide that swept the world in the wake of the October Revolution. Patriotically-minded sections of the

Korean bourgeoisie and especially bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals took part in the uprising together with the working people. A Declaration of Independence drafted by Korean students in Tokyo in February 1919 said: "Since the establishment of the new state [Soviet Russia.—*Author.*], the first progressive democratic state, a state based on the principles of freedom and justice, the Korean people have come to hope that the Korean nation will also be able to contribute to mankind's cultural heritage, to the cause of peace and justice."

But Korea's bourgeois sections did not want to go beyond national liberation, refusing to accept the October Revolution's social message. Hence their dual and contradictory attitude. The Korean working class in that period was still very weak and, while playing a more resolute role in the uprising of 1919 than any other class forces, was yet unable to head it. Leadership fell into the hands of the bourgeoisie, which eventually made a deal with the imperialists. The Japanese military smothered the uprising in blood, murdering almost 8,000 patriots, wounding 16,000 and arresting more than 50,000. But the heroic people did not give in and went on fighting. The Soviet Republic gave them sustained and whole-hearted support. Thus, on July 26, 1919, it issued an Address to the Korean People, which gave a high assessment of its courage, pointed out that Korean revolutionaries in Russia were taking an active part in the fight against the interventionists and joining the Red Army, and said that their struggle and the liberation movement in Korea were part and parcel of one and the same internationalist task. The Address urged the Korean people to act together with the workers' and peasants' government in Russia, for "it is only provided we join our efforts that we can drive the Japanese out of Vladivostok and the Land of Morning Calm".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin saw the oppressed peoples' internationalist unity with the international working class and the Soviet socialist state, and joint anti-imperialist action by the working people in various countries as an earnest of the eventual collapse of the colonial system.

Lenin kept a close watch on the events in Korea, which

<sup>1</sup> *Izvestia*, August 15, 1919.



was being trampled by the Japanese punitive forces. In a passionately indignant speech at a meeting of the activists of the Moscow branch of the RCP(B) in December 1920, he said: "We recently received a Korean newspaper which gives an account of what the Japanese are doing. Here we find all the methods of tsarism and all the latest technical perfections combined with a purely Asiatic system of torture and unparalleled brutality."<sup>1</sup>

The general developments, the 1919 events in particular, attached special importance to the question of an international ally for the Korean people in its struggle for independence and social progress.

The broad working masses had a steady, though spontaneous, longing for an alliance with the workers' and peasants' state, a longing chiefly due to their spontaneous class solidarity, while the Korean bourgeois nationalists looked to the USA and its support. They did not realise that the US imperialists wanted to win Korea over from Japan to further their own predatory purposes, and that their promise of support for the Korean people in its fight against the Japanese rule in effect meant an attempt to establish US domination. Lenin said in 1920: "Take the two imperialist countries, Japan and America. They want to fight and will fight for world supremacy, for the right to loot. Japan will fight so as to continue to plunder Korea.... But the Americans would like to grab this Korean titbit."<sup>2</sup>

Here is Lenin's answer to the Korean people, as well as the other enslaved peoples, to the question of who was their true ally in their liberation struggle: the international working class and its vanguard, the Soviet socialist republic.

Life itself furnished proof of Lenin's propositions on that score, gradually stripping the masks off the would-be champions of Korean independence.<sup>3</sup>

The revolutionary events in Korea and other countries in the early post-October years showed that the only true way to freedom and independence lay in an alliance with the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 443.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 443.

<sup>3</sup> In February 1919, the Korean bourgeois nationalists, who pinned their hopes for independence on US support, sent their spokesmen to the Paris Peace Conference, but they were barred from attending.

Soviet state and the international working class. The truth of this, however, could not flash on the masses all of a sudden, and a sustained effort had to be put in to help them master the Marxist-Leninist theory and so find their way in the maze of complicated and often contradictory phenomena of that revolutionary epoch, and determine the goals, purposes and forms of their liberation struggle.

In these early post-October years, Lenin was already well known throughout Korea as the leader of the revolution and the founder and head of the Soviet state, but his ideas were just beginning to penetrate the ranks of the more advanced workers and progressive intellectuals. In the 1920s the process gathered momentum, something that was largely due to the establishment and activity of the Communist International.

Korean revolutionaries attended its First (Constituent) Congress in March 1919 and took part in its subsequent congresses.

Lenin had many conversations with Korean Communists. A. A. Kim, who took part in one of these meetings in November 1921 as Secretary of the Korean delegation to the Comintern Executive in Moscow, recalls: "We were bent on meeting our beloved leader before we left Moscow, and we succeeded in it.... In answer to our phone-call, we were soon told that Lenin would be very happy to meet the Korean revolutionary Li Don Khy, who was Chairman of our delegation. The meeting was to take place at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.... We entered a big hall and were then taken into the reception room, Lenin's famous study.... The door opened and we saw the familiar and well-known figure so dear to us. As in a dream, we rushed up to him to shake hands. (He greeted every one of us very warmly, shaking our hands with both of his according to Oriental custom.) He said cordially: "Very happy to meet you, Korean Communists". He sank into wicker chair and invited us to sit down opposite him.... We did not want to lose a single precious moment (they gave us half an hour), and got down to business at once. Li Don Khy spoke Korean. He started out by saying that we had come to see him as his pupils, and would therefore be quite frank with him."

Lenin, Kim goes on, replied with a smile that their proposal suited him very well, and asked them to give a



detailed account of the situation in Korea and the neighbouring countries. "As we reported, he would sometime put in sudden questions. Wery soon we were on easy and most friendly terms." Kim writes that Lenin listened very attentively to what they told him about Japan's colonialist policy in Korea, and wanted to know about the underground Communist circles and groups in Korea, and about the reasons behind the defeat of the March uprising.

Lenin asked many questions about the Korean revolutionaries' struggle. He said: "We live in cultural centres whereas you have to range the hills and forests with the imperialists at your heels. You must have international support."

"As we rose to go," Kim went on to recollect, "he held old Li Don Khy's hand in a long clasp, and our hearts surged with fresh energy and firm resolve to fight for the victory of communism."<sup>1</sup>

Kim's reminiscences show that Lenin paid much attention to the Korean revolutionary movement, and that the Korean revolutionaries loved and trusted him.

As the Soviet people scored fresh victories in their struggle against domestic and international counter-revolution and in the socialist transformations, there was more and more interest in their affairs, and also in the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which guided them.

Meanwhile, the situation in Korea insisently demanded that progressive leaders should raise an ideological banner and decide upon the methods of fighting for the country's liberation from the colonial yoke, and for the working people's social rights and freedoms. The defeat of the 1919 uprising, the capitulationist line followed by the bourgeois leaders, who looked to the imperialist USA and most of whom eventually agreed to a deal with Japan, showed, among other things, that the bourgeois nationalists' programme and efforts were inadequate.

In 1919, the Japanese authorities passed some reforms in order somewhat to mollify the Korean people, who had been subjected to savage repressions but had not given in, and to broaden Japan's social basis in the colony by winning

<sup>1</sup> *Tikhookeanskaya gazeta*, Khabarovsk, January 23, 1929, quoted in *Reminiscences about Lenin*, 1963, pp. 615-17.

over the bourgeoisie. These reforms may have been superficial, curtailed, and largely declarative, but for the time being served to ease up the police regime in Korea.

In the 1920s, Marxist-Leninist circles and Communist groups were being established in the country's industrial areas (some circles for the study of revolutionary theory had been established earlier on). Their members recall that they met secretly, in small groups, to read the Marxist writings they had managed to get, discussed these and argued over what they had read, even though they sometimes could not grasp the meaning. Some gave the tasks of the liberation movement a purely nationalist reading and probed Marxist-Leninist theory solely in search of ways leading to national liberation. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals made up the core of these circles, but there were also some advanced workers. Groups and circles established in the country's industrial centres, like Seoul, Pyongyang, Inchon, Wonsan, Pusan, Taegu, and in areas bordering on Russia, proved to be the most viable.

Communist organisations in the Soviet Far East did much towards spreading Marxism-Leninism among the Korean masses. The establishment in 1920 of Korean sections under the RCP(B) Central Committee and the Far Eastern Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee added fresh purpose and organisation to their efforts. In early 1920, the *Communist Manifesto* and the RCP(B) Rules and Programme were translated into Korea; many other Marxist-Leninist works, documents, and propaganda writings were being sent over to Korea. Pamphlets like *Marx and the Materialist Outlook*, *On Socialism*, *Lenin*, *The Marxist Doctrine*, *On Workers' Trade Unions*, and *On the Land Question* helped to explain the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Periodicals also played an important role in spreading Marxist-Leninist ideas and telling the Korean masses more about the Soviet Republic. In the late 1920s, 38 Soviet newspapers and magazines were more or less regularly supplied to Korea notably, *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Tikhookeanskaya Pravda* (Khabarovsk) and *Krasnoye Znamya* (Vladivostok); and magazines like *Bolshevik*, *Kommunistichesky Internatsional*, and *Pod Znamenem Marksizma*. One has to bear in mind that many Koreans, intellectuals in particular, knew Russian and could read these periodicals. Besides, the USSR was also putting out



quite a few periodicals in Korean: *Culture*, *Red Seamen's Asian Herald*, *Book for Political Readings*, *Workers' and Peasants' Herald*, *Eastern Communist Paper*, *Worker*, *Red Star*, and others.

Korean revolutionaries living in China and Japan were also sending Marx, Engels and Lenin's works back to the country. In 1923, Marx and Engels' *Wage Labour and Capital*, and *Surplus-Value and Profit* were published in an underground printing works.

Some of the newly established circles were temporary, with a fluid make-up. Their members, however, not only wanted to get to the essence of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, but also to find ways of using it in the Korean people's revolutionary struggle. They made a study of Lenin's biography published in Tokyo, and many of Lenin's works, like *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* and *What Is To Be Done?*

Lenin's idea that the struggle could only be headed by a party with an advanced theory, and that Marxism was just such an advanced theory, meeting the interests of all the working people, his teaching about the revolutionary Marxist Party, the Party of a new type, enabled the Korean revolutionaries to determine their main line of struggle.

Lenin's book *What Is To Be Done?*, which had played a very important role in the ideological routing of the Economists<sup>1</sup> and the establishment of a Marxist Party in Russia, and which had dealt a heavy blow at revisionism and opportunism in the West European Social-Democratic parties, also helped the Korean revolutionaries to find answers to the pressing problems of their liberation movement.

Lenin's works on the national question were of particular interest for the Korean revolutionaries—his national programme for the Party, which hinged on the complete equality of nations and the right of nations to self-determination, and his struggle against the bourgeois-nationalist platform and the activities of the parties of the

<sup>1</sup> Economism—an opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Economists narrowed down the tasks of the working class to a struggle for higher wages, better working conditions, and so on, and maintained that it was up to the liberal bourgeoisie to engage in political struggle, denied the leading role of the

Second International, which backed the imperialists' colonialist policy and looked down on the oppressed peoples.<sup>1</sup>

The more far-sighted leaders of the emerging working-class movement in Korea realised that its main task was to set up a Marxist-Leninist Party. But in a peasant country with a small and weak working class, where classes had yet to be differentiated on more distinct lines, this was a very hard thing to do. The masses got a distorted view of the revolutionary doctrine, Lenin's theory, which had gone through the prism of petty-bourgeois views and ideas. The bourgeois periodical press did a good deal in that direction.

During the "civilised rule" period proclaimed by the Japanese authorities following the 1919 uprising, Korea was allowed to have several daily newspapers in Korean, like *Dong-A Ilbo* (The Oriental Daily News) and *Chosun Ilbo* (Korean Daily Herald). Despite some distinctions in goals and policies, these newspapers spoke on behalf of the Korean bourgeois nationalists, reflecting their inconsistencies, duality and sharp waverings. *Dong-A Ilbo* was particularly active in Korean political affairs. There were also various magazines published in Korean in the 1920s, like *Creation of the World*, *Morning Star* and *White Tide*.

All the periodicals were subject to strict censorship by the Japanese authorities, who clamped down on any paper or magazine that did not toe the Japanese line, banning publications for 4-5 months or even longer, confiscating whole issues, making arrests and imposing fines. Still, these periodicals carried many reports about Lenin, the October Revolution, and developments in Soviet Russia, which were not just tribute to public opinion. There was no doubt at all that the patriotically-minded sections of the bourgeoisie had a keen interest in Lenin's work and doctrine, were looking for ways to achieve independence, and had a genuine feeling of admiration for the great feat of the Soviet people headed by Lenin's Party.

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working class, and preached the harmful idea that the working-class movement should be left to develop spontaneously.

<sup>1</sup> Kim In Kol, *The Spread of Marxism-Leninism and the Development of the Working-Class Movement in Korea in the 1920s*, Pyongyang, 1964, p. 18 (in Korean); Li Don Khy, "The Spread of Marxism-Leninism in Korea in the Early 1920s". *Yoksa Kwahak*, No. 2, 1963, p. 6.



From the early 1920s onwards, *Dong-A Ilbo* ran a special column "On the Russian State", carrying information about events in Russia, particularly about Lenin himself: his speeches, work, and health. The newspaper had its own correspondent in Moscow, Lee Kwang Yun.

From June to August 1921, *Dong-A Ilbo* carried what was perhaps the most interesting article in the Korean bourgeois-nationalist press of the 1920s, a 52-installment article about Lenin, which showed that Lenin was vastly popular as the ideologist and founder of the new world, and that there was deep interest in his doctrine among the various sections of the population. The article said: "Why are millions of men and women prepared to die for him? Because Lenin is their comrade and a fighter for social and economic freedom."<sup>1</sup>

The article, as long as a book, devoted much attention to Lenin's biography, his life in exile and as a political émigré, his efforts to establish and strengthen the Party, his struggle against the Party's enemies, and his role as leader of the revolution, termed the "great rejuvenation", and as founder and head of the Soviet state. The paper gave a high assessment of Lenin's struggle for peace, and said that he had not only carried out but also saved the revolution. The Decree on Land was given special mention as one of the most important steps taken by Lenin's government, whose domestic policy was described as a fight against capitalism, and foreign policy—as a struggle for a just and lasting peace.

"Lenin is now a symbol of the new spirit, he is a genuine father to his people. He lives, thinks and works for the sake of the people, he champions their interests."<sup>2</sup>

The paper said that he was modest, unassuming, far-sighted and a man of principle, that he detested phrase-mongers, political windbags, and men intoxicated with revolutionary phraseology, who did nothing but talk about the revolution.<sup>3</sup> The chief message of the article was that Lenin's ideas about doing away with social inequalities, oppression exploitation and tyranny opened up a new historical era.

<sup>1</sup> *Dong-A Ilbo*, August 22, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

An interesting point to note was that the nationalist newspaper carried its article about Lenin just over a year after the Japanese authorities allowed its publication. Every ten days or so, they would put a ban on one of its issues, and up to February 1921 it had been closed down altogether. Still, that very summer, it carried its enthusiastic, 52-installment article about Lenin. In 1922, the article was put out in book form as *Lenin and the History of the Russian Revolution* and carried a picture of Lenin.

Lenin's death caused profound sorrow among the Korean people, something that was reflected in the Korean press. *Dong-A Ilbo* wrote on January 21, 1926: "Lenin is dead, but his immortal ideas stand out in fresh and ever more brilliant relief for mankind to see. Lenin was not only a great thinker, but a great man, a father, brother, friend, teacher and adviser to millions of proletarians, and also a source of hope for small (oppressed) nations the world over." The article described Lenin as the great destroyer of the old world and creator of a new world, a world which the workers and peasants continued to build even after his death.

Other Korean periodicals also published articles about Lenin, reflecting the great interest among broad sections of the population for the leader of the revolution and his doctrine.

At the same time, the Korean bourgeois press in that period aired many slanderous inventions about the Soviet state, its policy and affairs, and also gave a twisted reading to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, and this naturally did much damage to the spread and assimilation of scientific communism ideas in Korea.

These ideas made their way to the masses across numerous difficulties and obstacles, blending into their liberation struggle. In the early 1920s, workers, peasants and intellectuals began to establish their own organisations. In 1920, Cha Koum Won, a worker, and Chu Dong Chok, an intellectual, founded Korea's first nation-wide proletarian organisation, Workers' Mutual Assistance Society, with 15 branches in the country's major cities. Its programme did not put forward any radical tasks for the workers' movement, because that movement was immature and its leaders took a reformist stand, but it did a great deal



towards uniting the workers. It also initiated the establishment of tenants' unions.

Workers in the country's industrial areas (printers, metal-workers, longshoremen and so on) began to establish trade unions, which operated within one city or even one enterprise.

Young people, women, peasants and intellectuals were also setting up their own organisations.

In the first half of the 1920s, the Korean liberation movement developed against a very complicated background. The Communists and the revolutionary forces had to face stronger and politically more experienced opponents—the national bourgeoisie and the national-reformists who voiced its interests and did their utmost to head the working people's and intellectuals' organisations and channel their activities along lines that suited the bourgeoisie. What made it worse was that the core of the nascent Korean communist movement was made up of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, while the working class here had a fairly weak foothold. Underground workers' organisations like the Proletarian Union and Society for the Study of New Ideas established under the influence of Marxist circles and Communist groups were also subject to national-reformist influence.<sup>1</sup>

The underground revolutionary circles and Communist groups tried to establish contacts with legal organisations, and to introduce socialist ideas into the mass movement. Thus, on May 1, 1923, they helped the workers of several Seoul enterprises to stage a mass strike; that day, workers' meetings and demonstrations were also held in other Korean cities. In 1923, the Koreans began marking the International Youth Day (first Sunday in September). But the Communist groups, which were disunited, insufficiently mature in political terms, and a prey to infighting, were unable to head the masses' action. One also had to bear in mind that the Japanese authorities tended to clamp down on the true revolutionary forces much more savagely than on the national-reformists, even when the latter put forward anti-Japanese slogans.

<sup>1</sup> The national-reformists wanted Korea to have autonomy within the Japanese Empire.

The Communist Party of Korea was established on April 17, 1925, in this very difficult situation, and the Communist Youth Union—on April 18. The Party's Manifesto correctly formulated the anti-imperialist tasks facing the Korean revolution, but said virtually nothing about any agrarian tasks. Lenin emphasised, however, that it would be utopian to think that proletarian parties—where these could emerge at all in a largely agrarian country—“can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support”.<sup>1</sup> But the Korean Communists' Manifesto did not formulate any anti-feudal tasks for the coming revolution.

The Communist Party's attitude to the bourgeoisie's claims to hegemony, to leadership of the liberation movement, was of particular importance for ensuring the Party's fighting efficiency. But here, too, the CPK did not have any clear-cut or coherent line. Some thought these claims to be justified and recognised the bourgeoisie's leading role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, while others took a sectarian stand and denied the national bourgeoisie not only the right to leadership but also to participation in the anti-imperialist movement.

Another grave difficulty facing the Communist Party was that the Communist groups constituting it had not managed to live down their infighting. Nor had they managed to organise the Party on strict principles of democratic centralism, or to work out its rules and programme.

But these grave errors notwithstanding, the establishment of a Communist Party was a major event in the history of the Korean revolutionary movement. As a section of the Communist International, the Communist Party of Korea began working to gain leadership of the liberation movement. Despite the constant danger and the savage Japanese persecutions, the Communists carried on large-scale propaganda and organisational work among the masses. They had some success in uniting the dissociated trade unions and peasant unions, and established links with youth and other mass organisations and with the creative intelligentsia. Thus, the Communists had a hand in setting up in 1925 the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 241-42.



Korean Association of Proletarian Writers, which adopted a revolutionary platform.

Upon the establishment of the Communist Party, there was a more intensive spread of Marxist-Leninist writings throughout the country. In 1927, the Communists began putting out in Korean their own newspaper, *Paper for the Masses*, and theoretical magazine, *Theoretical Struggle*, which in 1928 was renamed *The Present Moment*. These periodicals sought to spread Marxism. In various areas throughout Korea the Communists held meetings in memory of Lenin, with reports about his life and work. Meetings in memory of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were also held on their initiative. The Communist Party was at the head of a big anti-imperialist demonstration in June 1926, which proved to be a major stride along the way towards establishing a national front and uniting all the anti-imperialist forces. On the CPK's initiative, the All-Korea Workers' and Peasants' Union (established in 1924) was divided in 1927 into an All-Korea Workers' Union and All-Korea Peasants' Union, something that enabled the Communist Party to follow a more distinct class line in these organisations.

The Communists had to work in very difficult conditions. Mass arrests deprived the Party of its more vigorous, mature, and theoretically grounded cadres. Trials of Communists often provided opportunities for passing moral judgement on the judges themselves, the Japanese colonialists, and to spread Marxist-Leninist ideas, but still, the Party was being sapped of its strength, and this led to a more intensive activity inside the CPK on the part of some unscrupulous factional groups.

The Comintern helped the Party to overcome its factionalism and work out a correct programme of action. The Theses of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928) emphasised that "new forces must be drawn into the Communist Party, above all from among the industrial workers; this will be the best guarantee for the Bolshevik development of the Party, and especially it will facilitate the absolutely necessary liquidation of the harmful spirit of factionalism in its ranks".<sup>1</sup> The Theses said that the nation-

<sup>1</sup> *Communist International. 6th Congress. The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies*, p. 54.

al liberation slogans had to be tied in with those of an agrarian revolution. Since the working-class section in the Party was very weak, and the petty-bourgeois core was unable to ensure unity within the Party or follow a consistent Marxist-Leninist line, there was a danger that the Party would lose its revolutionary perspective and that the healthy forces within it would also be infected. Bearing that in mind, the Comintern decided to work to have the existing factions disbanded rather than united, in order to pave the way for the establishment of a new party, a new leading core for the liberation movement.

Accordingly, in 1928, the Communist Party of Korea was disbanded, and in December 1928, a plenary session of the Comintern Executive adopted theses on the tasks facing the Korean Communists. The main thing now was to establish a monolithic, well-cemented party with a proletarian core and iron discipline, a party which could combine the national liberation and the class tasks of the revolution correctly. This was the right way for setting up a Leninist Party in a largely peasant country.

The Comintern's recommendations did much to help the Korean Communists, who were working to establish a Marxist-Leninist vanguard for the Korean revolutionary movement. The Comintern and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union did their best to help them achieve their goal, and gave them theoretical training.

The underground Communist groups, set up in the country's industrial areas upon the disbandment of the Communist Party, sought to establish contacts with mass organisations, formed circles for the study of revolutionary doctrine, put out and circulated newspapers, leaflets and proclamations among the masses, and held meetings and demonstrations to mark revolutionary red-letter days.

The young Korean proletariat was coming to the fore in ever more confident strides. Thus, in the autumn of 1928, the workers of Wonsan staged a three-month general strike with vigorous Communist participation; in 1930, there was action by the miners of Shinhoon, and in early 1931, a workers' strike in Chongjin.

In the late 1920s, the peasant movement also had more thrust and was better organised. The qualitative changes in the movement were to be seen from the Tanchon uprising,



the massive peasant action in other areas, the new anti-imperialist and anti-feudal slogans, and the peasants' participation in meetings and demonstrations to mark revolutionary red-letter days (1929-1931).

In that period, the Korean young were also taking massive anti-imperialist action, which involved tens of thousands of students from more than 200 educational establishments. Workers, peasants and teachers came out in their support. The students circulated leaflets saying, "Long live the liberation of the Korean people and all the oppressed peoples!" In Seoul, they carried red banners.

It was not only the Japanese authorities, but also the Korean national-reformists, particularly their Right-wing groups with colonialist leanings, who were concerned about the liberation struggle in Korea, which became particularly sweeping during the world economic crisis, and about the rise of the working-class movement.

The national-reformists had to reckon with the vast popularity of socialist ideas among the masses, and took to saying that socialism was not bad in itself but could not be applied in Korea. Korea, they said, in view of its economic, social and cultural backwardness and the Korean people's "specifics", had to follow a special way. In March 1929, *Dong-A Ilbo* wrote: "Liberalism and socialism are the two motive forces of present-day society: socialism—in the civilised countries of Europe and America, and liberalism—in the backward countries of Asia and Africa."<sup>1</sup> To switch the masses' attention away from class problems, the national-reformists put forward the thesis that national struggle led to unity, and class struggle to disunity.

The Comintern and the CPSU helped the Korean revolutionary movement, which at that time had no united, well-organised party of its own, to weather the difficulties.

In the 1920s, the Korean patriots also extended their other international links, particularly with the Chinese people's liberation movement. Some of them took part in that movement itself: the Northern March in 1926-1927, the Canton uprising in December 1927, and so on. Many Korean revolutionaries took training at the Huangpu school which had Soviet advisers on its teaching staff.

<sup>1</sup> *Dong-A Ilbo*, March 23, 1929.

Throughout the 15 years before Korea's liberation by the Soviet Army from Japanese imperialist rule, the Marxist-Leninist doctrine was gradually blending into the mass liberation struggle, moulding the organisational and ideological basis for a new Communist Party.

Now that the world economic crisis was in full swing, Japan had taken to the war path, and the Korean regime was going fascist, the revolutionary forces had to work out a fresh programme of action, to determine the ways, methods and forms of their further struggle. The Korean Communists began working in that direction. In the early 1930s, they spearheaded a well-organised armed struggle against the Japanese, which developed into the main frontline of the Korean liberation movement. In putting forward their line of armed struggle, the Communists took into account the state of affairs in the country, the substantial political experience gained by the Korean working class in the preceding years, and also their past mistakes.

The military-police reign of terror<sup>1</sup> ruled out the possibility of legal action, so that the Korean patriots had to take up arms. The new line formulated by the Korean Communists was to launch a well-organised guerrilla movement in accordance with the situation at the time, establish a regular army, and link up the armed struggle with the other forms of the mass liberation movement. Various documents of the Korean revolutionary movement always emphasised that the communist line of the 1930s was a creative application of Marxism-Leninism to Korea's concrete realities.

The organisers of the guerrilla movement devoted much attention to the training, seasoning and ideological and theoretical development of its core, which was being recruited from among the advanced workers and peasants. In April 1932, Kim Il Sung came to stand at the head of the first guerrilla unit comprising workers, peasants and patriotic young men, who fought under the ideological banner of Marxism-Leninism.

Because of the situation at the time, the Korean guerrilla movement centred in Northeast China, which had a Korean

<sup>1</sup> From 1929 to 1931, more than 16,000 Korean patriots were arrested for so-called "ideological crimes".



population of more than 1 million. Guerrilla units were also operating throughout Korea.

The Korean guerrillas had to suffer many hardships, fighting a long and exhaustive struggle against the larger and well-armed Japanese army and police force. But the guerrilla movement not only acquired fresh scope, drawing in more and more fighters, but developed in depth, causing qualitative changes, and had a decisive effect on all the other streams of the Korean liberation movement.

Let us look back on the major landmarks of the guerrilla struggle without going into closer detail, for much has already been written on the subject. The guerrillas had their bases in Korea's border areas and in eastern Manchuria (which was also occupied by the Japanese militarists): in the liberated enclaves in these areas they established people's revolutionary power and carried out democratic transformations. Communist-led mass organisations operated in these areas, and fresh cadres were being trained. From these home bases, the guerrillas waged their anti-Japanese struggle. In 1934, the various guerrilla units were united into a people's revolutionary army.

The Communist guerrilla leaders devoted much attention to spreading Marxist-Leninist ideas and to political and educational work among the masses. In the early years of the guerrilla movement, they published the newspaper *Thwojeng* and also carried on Marxist-Leninist propaganda through the magazines *Samil*, *Hwacheunmin* and others. Communist agitators were sent over to Korea to assist the underground Communist groups. They also helped them to publish revolutionary newspapers and magazines, spelling out the tasks of the Korean revolution on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The first issue of the newspaper *Thwojeng* said: "Comrades, do not forget Lenin's words about the need for a stronger alliance with the workers and peasants in all countries." The underground periodicals also sought to explain the idea of proletarian leadership.

As the armed guerrilla struggle was stepped up, the Communist groups became stronger, operating in rural, as well as industrial areas, and setting up anti-imperialist mass organisations.

The Communist-led guerrilla struggle had an immediate effect on the working-class and peasant movement in Korea

and its scale and nature. In 1930-1935, the Korean workers staged more than 1,000 strikes, and the peasants took massive action which often ended in armed clashes with the army or the police force. A classified Japanese police pamphlet said: "The rapid rise of the communist movement has greatly invigorated the working-class and peasant movement, and has created tensions and anxiety in the country."<sup>1</sup>

As the working people's class action gathered momentum and communist influence increased, there was greater stratification among the national-reformists, with their Right wing coming out for downright support for Japan's policy (Kim Seun Soo, Lee Kwang Soo, Cho Man Sik and others). This was largely due to the fact that Japan was involving considerable sections of the Korean bourgeoisie in industries which catered for Japan's military needs.

Lenin wrote that the imperialist bourgeoisie was doing its utmost "to implant a reformist movement among the oppressed nations".<sup>2</sup> In the 1930s, the Right-wingers among the Korean national-reformists did not betray the hopes of Japan's imperialist bourgeoisie, but the more progressive national-reformist leaders were gradually siding with the revolutionary forces. Young intellectuals' unions and women's societies, as well as workers' and peasants' organisations headed by the national-reformists, were showing signs of a swing to the Left.

The situation in the country urged the need for unity among all the anti-imperialist forces, for a common national-democratic front. In their struggle for a united front, the Korean Communists gained much benefit from the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern (1935), which elaborated Lenin's ideas on the national liberation movement, on its alliance with the working-class movement in the advanced countries, and put forward the slogan of a united anti-imperialist front involving the broad masses, the peasantry above all.

The Comintern's Leninist line helped the Korean Communists to work out the major policy-making principles for a united front. In May 1936, they established a National

<sup>1</sup> *Public Mood in Korea over the Recent Period*, Seoul, 1940, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 242.



Revival Society as the leading body for a united front. Its ten-point programme formulated the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and general democratic tasks of the Korean revolution. Point one said that the Korean people had to be rallied for the effort to establish a broad and united anti-Japanese front, overthrow Japanese rule and set up a Korean people's government. The programme provided for sweeping socio-economic reforms, and reflected the Korean Communists' idea—which was well in line with Lenin's propositions—that a united front had to be based on an alliance between the workers and the peasants.

The Society established cells (variously named) across Korea and in the Korean communities in Northeast China.

The establishment of a leading body for the united front was an important landmark in the Korean liberation movement. The Communists equipped the movement with a programme of action, gave it perspective, and determined its priority tasks.

The colonial administration naturally responded to these developments by ordering its police authorities in Korea to "apply the most severe punishment to any Koreans found in possession of leaflets listing Kim Il Sung's ten principles [that was how the Society's programme was then called.—*Author.*], for this dangerous document agitates men's minds".

Japan's war against China in 1937 set off another wave of repressions in Korea (in 1937, the Japanese arrested more than 175,000). The Communist forces now had to operate in yet more difficult conditions, against the background of police terrorism and sharply intensified ideological indoctrination. Even so, the peasants' and women's unions and also youth organisations (many of whose members came from the non-working sections), to say nothing of workers' associations, looked up to the Society and its principles.

The guerrilla struggle was increasingly merging with the working-class and peasant movement. The workers staged strikes, refused to work on Japanese military orders, carried on subversive activity in transport and at arms factories, and organised armed units. Many of them went off to join the guerrillas in their armed struggle.

Upon the establishment of the National Revival Society, the armed struggle on Korean territory proper was

intensified. In June 1937, a Korean guerrilla unit crossed the Yalu River and made a heroic raid into Bochonbo. Their address to the city's population urged a resolute fight against Japanese rule and for a people's government.

Before and during the Second World War, there were some marked changes in Korea's socio-economic life. Industrial construction, in the military sector above all, swelled the ranks of the working class (by the end of the Second World War, Korea had more than 2 million workers, with about 600,000 of these employed at plants and factories); the proletariat was being increasingly concentrated at relatively large enterprises, and there were more skilled and literate workers. This vested the Korean proletariat with greater self-awareness as a class, helping it to develop the qualities of a hegemonic class, even though the constant recruitment of new workers from among the semi-proletarian and non-proletarian sections had a slowing effect on that process.

The Korean bourgeoisie was also changing, particularly towards greater stratification: Japan had involved not only the big but also large sections of the middle bourgeoisie in the arms industry, while another section of the bourgeoisie, especially the petty urban bourgeoisie, was going to the wall and being taken over by big capital, Japanese capital above all.

During the war, the national-reformist Right-wingers, who were at the top of Korea's national-reformist organisations, continued their slide towards the imperialist camp, ending up in downright coalescence. Their organisations fell apart, many of their members joining the active independence fighters. During the war, Japan tried to keep a tight hold on Korea, but the revolutionary forces continued their liberation struggle deep underground. In 1942, Korea had more than 180 underground anti-Japanese organisations. The Communists were at the head of the main line of that struggle, and this was of great importance for the future of the Korean liberation movement as a whole, and for strengthening the subjective factor of the Korean revolution.

The guerrilla struggle had a seasoning effect on the vanguard forces of the revolution, helped them to mature in ideological terms, and moulded the core of Korea's future



Marxist-Leninist Party. More and more workers, peasants and revolutionary-minded intellectuals were joining the Party cells of the fighting units.

In their efforts, the Korean Communists were guided by Marxism-Leninism, and made creative use of Lenin's strategy and tactics for the national liberation movement in Korea's concrete conditions. This enabled them to work out programmes of action for every stage of the movement on a truly scientific basis, to decide what forms of struggle, both legal and illegal, best suited their current needs, and to carry on differentiated work among the various sections of the population, following a flexible policy to win over new allies to the side of the revolution.

The communist guerrilla leaders made a point of fighting any deviations from the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, any manifestations of "Left"-wing adventurism, like, say, insistence on the part of some leaders upon instant socialist revolution, or some reckless uprisings which resulted in heavy and unwarranted losses. The Communists also fought against dogmatism—against any attempts to copy the experience of liberation movements in other countries in a blind and thoughtless way.

The Communists' efforts to do away with the survivals of sectarianism, factionalism and clannishness were another important line of struggle in the 1930s and 1940s, helping to lay the ideological and organisational groundwork for a new Communist Party.

One-time Korean guerrillas often recall that their communist leadership attached much attention to questions of unity and solidarity with the world revolutionary movement and its vanguard, the USSR. Thus, in laying down the tasks of their propaganda work among the population, Kim Il Sung and other leading Communists emphasised the need to help the masses know more about the Soviet Union's gains and about its strength, and give them a clear account of the ideas of scientific communism the Soviet Union was implementing.

During the war, the Korean Communists continued to put out underground publications, and to translate and spread Lenin's works. Here is an interesting example: in 1940, a book on Eastern medicine was circulated among progressive Koreans. At least, that was what the title said.

But after the first few pages, one suddenly came across a passage from Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* and other such passages had been worked into the medical text. Other works of Lenin's and Marxist-Leninist books and pamphlets were also published that way.

The masses also continued their protest, which was now chiefly aimed against Japan's militarist moves. The development at the fronts of the Soviet people's Great Patriotic War had a very tangible effect on popular action in Korea. From 1943 onwards, the Korean working class waged an ever more vigorous struggle, set up underground revolutionary committees (at the Chongjin Metallurgical Works, in Songjin, Pyongyang and Seoul), disrupted production at factories working for the arms industry (at the Heungnam Chemical Combine), staged more explosions, started fires, and carried on subversive activity at many enterprises, on railway lines and at airports. "Rice riots" broke out in the cities, while in the countryside the peasants refused to deliver rice for the army.

On the whole, the Korean liberation movement at the time of the war, though going forward on a somewhat smaller scale than in the 1930s (owing to the intensified police terrorism, was passing through a period of important qualitative change, which was due, in the first place, to the strengthening political positions of the working class and the Korean Communists' line to implement Lenin's strategy and tactics of revolutionary struggle.

Kim Il Sung wrote: "In its revolutionary work, the leading core of the guerrilla movement looked to the all-triumphant Leninist doctrine. The movement draw its strength and faith in victory from the great Soviet Union which embodies Lenin's ideas."<sup>1</sup>

### **The Victory of the People's Democratic Revolution in North Korea**

In August 1945, Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial rule, with the Soviet Union playing the crucial role, and fell away from the colonial system. The liberated people

<sup>1</sup> Kim Il Sung, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, p. 128.



were faced with the urgent question of further development ways. Their basic interests and the objective needs of social development called for the socialist road. The international prerequisites were also there, having stemmed from the October Revolution, the establishment of the Soviet socialist state, the Soviet Union's victory in the Second World War, and the sharp swing in the political balance of forces in the world in favour of socialism. But what about the internal prerequisites? Was there a revolutionary situation in the country? Lenin repeatedly emphasised that a revolution could not be imposed on a country from outside. Those, he said, who maintain that a revolution can be ordered from abroad are either madmen or provocateurs.<sup>1</sup> Lenin's apt remark also applies to the bourgeois falsifiers of Korean history, who seek to present the social revolution in Korea as an "imported article".

An analysis of the state of affairs in Korea on the eve of its liberation points to the existence of a revolutionary situation, which had the principal traits that were formulated by Lenin.

The Second World War aggravated the situation in the country to an extreme, exacerbating all the contradictions within Korean society. The colonialists and their stooges—the Korean feudal-compradore elite—could no longer run the colony in the old way and had to agree to some political concessions (like the 1944 law on suffrage for Koreans, and the campaigns for better treatment of Koreans). Their advances to the Korean population, their attempts to condition it in ideological terms, and the intensive propaganda of the thesis about the unity of Korea and Japan also showed that the rulers were in the grip of a crisis. Korea's Governor-General Koiso put it quite bluntly: "Why do we have to talk now about the common origins and affinity of Japan and Korea? It is because the ideas of freedom and independence are again afloat.... Unfortunately, we have to acknowledge that in view of the existing economic difficulties, some people have given way to Marxist fantasies."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 480.

<sup>2</sup> *Keijo Nippo*, August 3, 1944.

During the war, the working people's material conditions became even worse. Since all the material and manpower resources were made to work for the war, there was an acute shortage of foodstuffs and other goods, and prices rocketed. Something like 50-60 per cent of workers' and employees' wages went into military loans, numerous taxes and levies, and about 75 per cent of all peasants were deep in debt. Naturally, there was growing dissatisfaction and protest among the population.

But for a revolution to occur, objective factors must also be combined with the necessary subjective factors: a well-organised revolutionary force and an influential working class led by a Marxist-Leninist Party and capable of heading a revolution and changing society.

By the time Japan's colonial rule in Korea was about to fall, the proletariat there had already developed into a major political force, and although it did not have any united Marxist-Leninist Party of its own, the earlier struggle had laid the groundwork for its establishment. The country's liberation by the army of a socialist state and the ever stronger positions of the world proletariat gave a powerful boost to the prestige and influence of the Korean working class.

Lenin often emphasised that the question of power was pivotal to any revolution. He said that "the passing of state power from one *class* to another is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of that term".<sup>1</sup>

The national bourgeoisie, which wanted to channel the country's development along the capitalist way, was one likely aspirant to power, but it could not realise its aspirations because it had no positive programme that could win over the broad masses to its side; moreover, during the war its leaders had coalesced with the Japanese militarists, compromising the ideology and practice of bourgeois nationalism.

The revolutionary situation and favourable conditions for the transfer of power to the working class had taken shape throughout the whole country. In the South, as well as in the North, there was a broad movement for a sovereign

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 44.



democratic Korean state. People's committees were being set up as organs of power, and mass democratic organisations were being established.

A characteristic thing to note is that during the mass demonstrations staged in Seoul upon the country's liberation, the people carried Lenin's portraits alongside Korean national flags.

But whereas in the North the Soviet Army gave the Korean working people every opportunity to follow the democratic road and the revolutionary situation was successfully resolved, the state of affairs in the South was very different: US troops together with the Korean reactionaries suppressed the masses' democratic movement and installed a reactionary regime, with the USA pulling all the strings. So, North and South Korea took completely opposite roads.

In the North, the working class and the Communist Party, re-established right after liberation, took the lead in the social revolution. The Soviet Army acted in line with its internationalist liberation mission and gave them various support. It took charge of the plants, factories, mines, electric-power stations and railroads that once belonged to the colonialists and handed these over to the Korean working people. From the very start, the Soviet headquarters in North Korea and the civilian administration under it helped the people's committees to set the economy going, to revive and develop Korea's national culture, and to train national cadres. The Soviet Union also gave them financial support, and sent over various foodstuffs and means of transport.

The stationing of the Soviet troops in North Korea paralysed the moves of the Korean reactionaries, making it impossible for them to unleash a civil war.

At the same time, the Soviet Union, acting on its Leninist principle of protecting the peoples' sovereign rights, came out in the international arena with a forceful protest against the USA's imperialist encroachments on Korea. It first started that struggle at the Moscow meeting of Foreign Ministers in December 1945, and has been waging it, together with other socialist countries, ever since.

This all-round support—military, political, economic and diplomatic—made it much easier for the Korean working people to tackle the tasks of social transformation. In

formulating these tasks, the Communist Party of North Korea started from the premise that they could not be solved simultaneously, but only through definite stages, and that to skip any of these would be very dangerous. A 20-point programme drawn up by the Communist Party in February 1946 as a platform for the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea reflected the general democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal priority tasks of the Korean revolution (land reform, nationalisation of the industry, transport, means of communication and banks that had belonged to Japanese colonialists and traitors, legislation on equal rights for women and on workers' and employees' labour, a reform in education). By 1947, these tasks had in the main been fulfilled and, owing to the fact that they had been tackled under working-class and Communist Party guidance, the result was a distinct blend of their general democratic and socialist content. At the very first stage of the revolution, the new authorities nationalised the principal economic resources in the country, establishing a socialist sector and shaping new, socialist relations of production. The transition from the first to the second stage, that is, to a fulfilment of socialist tasks proper, did not involve any radical regrouping of class forces. The North Korean bourgeoisie (mostly owners of small enterprises and some medium-bracket businessmen and merchants, because the bigger, reactionary-minded bourgeois had fled to South Korea) had to join in the socialist transformations. In his *Publicist's Notes*, Lenin emphasised that favourable conditions for a transition of this kind implied "an absolutely secure victory of the proletariat, the absolute hopelessness of the position of the capitalists, the absolute necessity for them to display the most scrupulous obedience and their readiness to do so".<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Party of North Korea, faced with the tasks of restructuring society in the northern part of an economically backward and artificially divided country, looked to Lenin's doctrine for the best solutions to these tasks and for the answers to any questions that arose. Because of the conditions in Korea, the general principles of Marxism-Leninism manifested themselves in definite

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 361.



specific forms. Thus, the people's democratic state here was established only after the working class had come to power and carried out its revolutionary transformations. The first three years after liberation in effect went to lay the groundwork for a sovereign democratic Korean state.

The organs of power here, for instance, took shape in a specific way. In August and September 1945, the masses established people's committees representing a bloc of the working class, the peasantry, and all the patriotic forces led by the working class, but up to February 1946 these existed only locally. February 1946 saw the establishment of a Provisional People's Committee of North Korea. A year later, the First Congress of People's Committees elected a People's Assembly as the supreme organ of state power in North Korea, and a People's Committee was set up.

Another important general regularity of transition to socialism, the Party's leading and organising role, also manifested itself in specific forms.

In view of the favourable conditions at home and abroad, the Communist Party of North Korea became a ruling party as soon as it was established. It steered the work of the people's committees and mass organisations—the trade unions, the peasants' and women's unions, the democratic youth union, and intellectuals' associations. But the fact that the Party had to take the helm right after its establishment made its tasks much more difficult.

In August 1946, the Communist Party merged with the New People's Party (established in 1945), which was close to it in goal and purpose, to form the Labour Party of Korea.

From the very start, the Communist (Labour) Party of Korea exercised its leading role not only through the organs of power and mass organisations, but also through the united national front—a new organisational form for the alliance between the working class, the peasantry and other patriotic sections.

The deep-going socio-economic changes, which turned the northern part of the country into a solid base of Korean statehood, and favourable international conditions enabled the Korean people to realise their age-old aspirations for an independent democratic state of their own. The establishment of a reactionary pro-US regime in South Korea in May 1948 made this all the more imperative.

In August 1948, elections were held in North and South Korea to an all-Korea supreme organ of power—the Supreme People's Assembly, whose first session proclaimed the establishment of a Korean People's Democratic Republic and adopted a constitution. A government of the KPDR (headed by Kim Il Sung) was then established.

From that moment, economic and cultural construction in the northern part of the country gained fresh scope. An important factor here was the mutually advantageous Agreement on Economic and Cultural Co-operation with the USSR, signed in March 1949, and based on the Leninist principles of socialist internationalism.

In view of the situation in South Korea, the Labour Party took further steps to consolidate the patriotic forces who wanted the country united by peaceful means. In June 1949, they established a United Democratic Patriotic Front of Korea, and the Labour Parties of North and South Korea merged into a Labour Party of Korea.

The KPDR Government put forward some constructive proposals for a peaceful and democratic solution of the Korean problem, but the South Korean reactionaries and US imperialists rejected these proposals and in June 1950 started a war against the KPDR.

The Korean people's heroic work and fighting under the guidance of its Marxist-Leninist Party, the material, political and moral support rendered to them by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and the movement of all the peace-loving forces against the intervention in Korea brought about the aggressor's defeat. The Republic survived, but it lay in ruins, and its war-ravaged factories, railroads, dwellings and cultural establishments had to be built up anew. Here again the socialist countries acted on their Leninist principles of internationalism and helped the fraternal country. From 1954 to 1956, the USSR alone gave it 1,300 million rubles' worth of free aid to rehabilitate its vital economic sectors. The USSR also helped it to restore, reconstruct and put into operation more than 40 large industrial projects.

In their postwar economic construction, the KPDR Party and Government kept to the line of priority growth of heavy industry with a simultaneous development of the light industry and agriculture.



The three-year economic rehabilitation plan was successfully fulfilled, and under the decisions of the Third Congress of the Labour Party (April 1956), the Republic entered upon its first five-year period. This was aimed to complete the socialist transformations in town and countryside, and to establish a foundation for socialist industry.

The co-operation of agriculture served to speed up the socialist transformations in the handicrafts and in private industry and trade, which were based on small commodity peasant production and during the war had suffered heavy losses. By the autumn of 1958, both farming and these other sectors had been reorganised on co-operative lines, so that the socialist structure now had full sway in every sphere of the economy. Once the co-operation of agriculture was complete, there was a broad campaign to reconstruct it in technical terms in order to enable the productive forces in the countryside to catch up with the advanced, socialist relations of production.

The Fourth Congress of the Korean Labour Party (1961) formulated new tasks for socialist construction, which were written into the seven-year plan of economic development: "With reliance on the triumphant socialist system, to carry out an all-round technical reconstruction and a cultural revolution, and to achieve a steep rise in the people's living standards."

The Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance between the USSR and the KPDR, signed in July 1961, was one of the major factors that enabled the country to realise the seven-year plan. The Treaty entrenched the traditional relations of brotherhood between the Soviet and Korean peoples, promoted the further development of all-round links between them, and became a reliable factor for peace in the Far East.

The Fifth Congress of the Korean Labour Party in November 1970 summed up the results of the people's dedicated struggle, led by the Labour Party, to lay the foundations of socialism, and framed the Directives for the sixth plan of the Republic's economic development from 1971 to 1976. The Congress identified the strengthening and development of the socialist system and advance towards the complete triumph of socialism as the main task. It said that people's Korea had become a socialist industrial-

ised state. In 1970, gross industrial output was more than 21 times higher than that of 1949. Korean engineering has been developing rapidly. Other heavy industries—electric-power, fuel, mining, metallurgy and chemicals—have also been considerably developed. The light and the consumer goods industries have also been developing at a high rate.

In 1974, gross industrial output was 90 per cent higher than in 1970. Many industrial enterprises equipped with new technology have been started. The Soviet people, true to their internationalist duty, have been doing everything to help people's Korea build key industrial enterprises to advance its economic development. At present, more than 30 such enterprises and projects are being built with Soviet technical assistance. Hundreds of Soviet specialists working at the various construction sites have been sharing their experience and knowledge with their Korean brothers by class.

The development of industry has also helped to strengthen the material and technical basis of co-operated agriculture. In 1974, the Republic took in over 7 million tons of grain, or 3.5 times more than in 1946.

Important advances have also been made in cultural development: all the people can now read and write. Universal compulsory primary education was introduced in 1956, universal compulsory 7-year education in 1958, and universal compulsory 9-year technical education in 1967. In 1972, a start was made on the transition to universal compulsory 10-year education.

The Republic has over 9,000 general education schools, over 600 technical schools and 150 higher schools. A powerful contingent of the national intelligentsia has grown up. Nearly 800,000 specialists with a higher and secondary education now work in the national economy. Science, literature and art are being developed. The people's welfare is being enhanced.

People's Korea has been extending and strengthening its international contacts. It has established diplomatic relations with more than 70 countries, while over 80 countries have trade and economic ties with it.

The development of people's Korea, the successes scored by its talented and courageous people, led by the Labour Party, and the growth of its international prestige are



inseparable from its fraternal co-operation with the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community.

The CC's report to the Fifth Party Congress stressed that the Party and the people, carrying aloft the banner of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, intend to rally with the peoples of the socialist countries, with the Communist and Workers' parties, with the international working class, with the fighting peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and with all peace-loving peoples to bring about the triumph of the cause of peace, democracy, national independence, socialism and communism.

Lenin's theoretical legacy is a key source of political education of the Party and the people. In people's Korea Lenin's writings have been published in printings running to millions of copies.

For the time being, Lenin's ideas have triumphed only in the northern part of the country, while South Korea toils under the yoke of reaction.

L. I. Brezhnev said in the CPSU Central Committee's Report to the 25th Congress: "No matter what problems arise, we believe that they must be resolved in the spirit of strengthening friendship, unity and co-operation. That is how we shape our relations with the fraternal socialist states—Bulgaria, Hungary, Vietnam, the German Democratic Republic, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, Cuba, Mongolia, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia."<sup>1</sup>

The Korean Labour Party, the Government of people's Korea and its people have worked tirelessly for the peaceful unification of their country and the re-establishment of national unity on democratic principles. In their struggle, they have been invariably and consistently supported by the Soviet Union, all the countries of the socialist community and other peace-loving forces. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people have always supported the proposals put forward by the Government of people's Korea on the peaceful, democratic unification of the country, and the Korean people's demands for a withdrawal of US troops from the south of Korea.

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...*, XXVth Congress of the CPSU, p. 10.

The patriotic progressive forces of South Korea want peace, national unity and social progress. The advantages of the socialist way of development, along which people's Korea has been advancing, are a key factor in the achievement of Korea's national unity on a peaceful democratic basis.

The KPDR's successes have had a powerful influence on the South Korean working masses, revolutionising them by force of example. Lenin said: "...we have said, and still say, that socialism has the power of example.... We must show the significance of communism in practice, by example."<sup>1</sup>

In August 1975, it was 30 years since Korea's liberation by the Soviet Army from Japan's colonial yoke. Thirty years ago, the working people of North Korea, led by the Communists, carried out a people's democratic revolution, and visual evidence of this is the radical distinction between the results of the development in the North and the South over the period that has elapsed. The radical differences in the development of the North and the South show very well that the peoples can attain true national independence and social progress, peace and happiness only if they follow the road mapped out by Lenin.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 457.



## LENINISM AND THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION

## Vietnam in the Period of Asia's Awakening

Le Duan, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party, has said: "Lenin made a vast contribution to the liberation revolution of the peoples of the East, notably, Vietnam. He attached great importance to the Eastern peoples' role in overthrowing world imperialism, and gave them clear-cut and concrete instructions, showing them the way of revolutionary struggle."<sup>1</sup>

Even before any communist movement emerged in Vietnam, Lenin had kept in touch with developments in that far corner of the colonial system of imperialism. He exposed the purposes of colonial conquest in the following words: "Let us consider Indian, Indo-China and China. It is known that these three colonial and semi-colonial countries, with a population of six to seven hundred million, are subjected to the exploitation of the finance capital of several imperialist powers: Great Britain, France, Japan, the USA, etc."<sup>2</sup>

Colonial Vietnam was a vivid manifestation of the specific features of the expansion of French monopoly capital, which Lenin termed "usurious". He invalidated the bourgeois scientists' claim that the developed capitalist countries had a "civilising mission" in the colonial and

<sup>1</sup> Le Duan, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*, Hanoi, 1963, p. 199 (in Vietnamese).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 294.

dependent countries, and said that "the bourgeoisie was actually introducing slavery in the colonies and subjecting the native populations to unprecedented outrages and acts of violence, 'civilising' them by the spread of liquor and syphilis."<sup>1</sup>

Millions of Vietnamese farmers had no land, the workers and handicraftsmen lived from hand to mouth, and the emerging local industry was being suppressed, while the shares of the Indo-China Bank had a high rating in Paris and French investors were raking in ever larger dividends. French finance capital used various "legal" acts and relied on the colonial authorities' armed force to distort the country's agriculture and gear it to its own purposes.

The colonial administration was an important part of the system of colonial oppression. Indo-China was the first "proving ground" where a governor-generalship and protectorates were established as a form of colonial rule. "...The governments of various other colonies were created in the image of Indo-China."<sup>2</sup>

The Indo-Chinese protectorates of Annam,<sup>3</sup> Laos and Cambodia were an example of how the imperialists tried to cover up their colonial rule, an example of the wide variety of forms of suppression, which Lenin had pointed out in his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

Leninism reached Vietnam in a tortuous way.

The Russian revolution of 1905-1907 helped to rouse the Vietnamese people to political awareness, even though news of it reached Vietnam in roundabout ways, notably, through the French press. Try as it would, the French bourgeoisie could not keep the truth about the people's revolution in Russia from the progressive Vietnamese national intelligentsia and the more advanced elements among the Vietnamese people, who were searching for new ways of struggle for freedom and independence. As Lenin watched the flames of revolution spreading to most Asian countries, he said in the summer of 1908 that in China and

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> G. Baudrais, *La politique coloniale française en Indo-China*, Paris, 1920, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> At that time, Vietnam was divided into three historical parts: Cochin China (the southern part of the country), Annam (the central part), and Tonkin (the northern part).



Indo-China, the movement against medieval ways was particularly pronounced, that the "new spirit" and "European currents" there were on the increase, and that the old-style Chinese revolts would "inevitably develop into a conscious democratic movement".<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the 1905-1907 revolution in Russia, two major trends developed in the Vietnamese liberation movement, headed by the revolutionary democrats Phan Chau Trinh and Phan Boi Chau. Both these leaders, subsequently ideologists of the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie, experienced a difficult ideological and political evolution, painful and contradictory, vacillating between "traditional" monarchist ideas, the concepts of the French Enlighteners and the French bourgeois revolution, and those of Chinese reformers and revolutionaries. The Russian revolution, the first people's revolution of the imperialist epoch, helped them gradually to arrive, albeit through various relapses and inconsistencies, at the need to overthrow France's colonial rule and establish a democratic republican system. A number of bourgeois nationalist organisations sprang up in Vietnam, and whenever any of their members went abroad, they were influenced by revolutionary ideas. Phan Chau Trinh made a trip to Europe, where the reverberations of the Russian revolution were particularly strong. At the time of the Russian revolution, something like 200 Vietnamese revolutionaries, Phan Boi Chau among them, were living in Japan, which gave refuge to émigrés from many countries, particularly to some Bolsheviks, like Lenin's associate V. Kurnatovsky, who had been hounded out of Russia by the tsarist security police. There were also some Russian revolutionaries in Shanghai, while Vietnamese revolutionaries, emigrant workers, and soldiers on their way to French concessions also came to stay in that city.

Lenin said that once the Russian peasantry had shaken off its naive monarchism, the democratic republic would become its ideal.<sup>2</sup> The Vietnamese peasantry, too, had yet to shed its naive monarchism, for the thousand-year-old Confucian idea that "divine power" was not to be tampered

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 99.

with had struck deep root among the Vietnamese people. Soon, the new ideas began to make way into the midst of the ignorant and downtrodden Vietnamese peasantry. In 1907 and 1908, the peasants of Central Vietnam rose up in a movement which turned over a new page in Vietnam's history: the peasants were poorly organised, their goals were contradictory, and they had no weapons, but they already had Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chau Trinh's ideas inscribed on their banner. They cut off their traditional plaits and addressed each other as "dong pao" (fellow-countrymen). Developments at the time of the Russian revolution also gave a fresh lease of life to the insurrectionary peasant movement headed by the popular leader De Tham, which had started back in 1887, but had waned by 1894. In 1905, De Tham's armed bands renewed their fighting against the colonialists and carried on until 1913. In 1908, fearing a possible alliance between the revolutionary movements in various countries, the French colonialists launched punitive operations along the China-Vietnam border both against Vietnamese and Chinese insurgents. Here is what Lenin wrote at the time: "That some of the participants in colonial plunder are this time greatly concerned is borne out by the way the French are acting in Indo-China: they *helped* the 'historic authorities' in China to put down the revolutionaries! They feared equally for the safety of their 'own' Asian possessions bordering on China."<sup>1</sup>

In 1912, Phan Boi Chau's revolutionary democrats set up their Vietnam Revival Society (Vietnam Quang Phuc Hoi). One of the best things it did was to establish stronger links with De Tham's insurgents. During the First World War, a new contingent of the Vietnamese liberation struggle—Vietnamese soldiers from the French colonial army—came to the fore. In the summer of 1917, they staged an uprising in the Thai Nguyen province, refusing to fight, and the colonialists could not put them down for something like six months. The disturbances in the army were an important indicator of the mounting national liberation movement in Vietnam. Here is how Lenin assessed the spontaneous rioting among the soldiers, whom the exploit-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 185.



ing classes had always used as a prop: "...the important thing is that [their consciousness] has already awakened, that the soldiers have started a movement of *their own*, that the spirit of liberty has penetrated into the barracks everywhere."<sup>1</sup>

Analysing the crisis of imperialism during the First World War, Lenin showed that the uprisings in the colonies, notably Vietnam, were manifestations of that crisis. By way of example, he showed the colonialists' brutal reprisals against the oppressed colonial masses in French Annam, German Cameroon and British Singapore.<sup>2</sup>

The revolutionary-democratic movement in Vietnam, which gathered momentum under the influence of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907, paved the way for the emergence and development of new motive forces capable of implementing the ideas and practical experience of the October Revolution in Russia, and creatively applying Lenin's doctrine to Vietnamese reality.

Ho Chi Minh, who played an outstanding role in Vietnam's recent history, was one of the generation of revolutionary heroes. He was the son of a petty official, who was connected with Phan Boi Chau's organisation. As a boy, he witnessed the disputes on the ways and means of struggle going on among the older generation, and carried messages for the patriots' underground organisations.

The Hsinghai revolution in China had a strong effect on the Vietnamese revolutionaries, but did not give any answers to Ho Chi Minh's questions. He believed that for the most advanced revolutionary ideas on anti-colonial struggle one had to look to Europe, rather than the Far East. In early 1912, he got a job on the French vessel *La Touche-Treville*, sailing for Europe. He lived in France, Britain, and some other European countries, crossed over to America and then back to France, where he did hard work and fought shoulder to shoulder with the French proletarians and men from the French colonies. Upon the start of the First World War, hundreds of thousands of soldiers and workmen were brought into France from Vietnam and other French colonies. In assessing the objective consequences of that process, Lenin wrote that "the imperialist

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 354.

war has helped the revolution: from the colonies, the backward countries, and the isolation they lived in, the bourgeoisie levied soldiers for this imperialist war ... the French bourgeoisie impressed on soldiers from the French colonies that it was their duty to defend France. They taught them the use of arms, a very useful thing..."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, with France in need of more foodstuffs and raw materials, there was a marked increase in the number of industrial enterprises in Vietnam, some of these belonging to Vietnamese national capitalists. During the war, the total number of workers (seasonal workers included) went up from 50,000 to 100,000.<sup>2</sup> Despite the various obstacles, the ranks of the patriotically-minded Vietnamese intelligentsia continued to grow. "Down with French rule!" was becoming an ever more popular slogan, and the massive anti-imperialist action throughout 1915-1917 (in Vinh Yen, Bien Hoa, Cha Vinh, Quang Nam, Ha Dong provinces, the cities of Saigon, Hue, and others) showed the deepening crisis of the colonial regime in Vietnam.

### The Emergence of the Communist Party of Indo-China

The 1917 October Revolution in Russia heralded the revolution in Vietnam. The oppressed slaves of the vast French colonial empire, "from the Vietnamese peasants to the hunters in the Dahomey forests, have secretly learned that in a faraway corner of the earth there is a nation that has succeeded in overthrowing its exploiters and is managing its country with no need for masters and Governors-General. They have also heard that that country is Russia, that there are courageous people there, and that the most courageous of them all was Lenin....

"They also learned that that great leader, after having liberated his own people, wanted to liberate other peoples too. He called upon the white peoples to help the yellow and black peoples to free themselves from the foreign aggres-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> See Tran Van Giau, *Vietnam's Working Class*, Hanoi, 1957, pp. 50-56 (in Vietnamese).



sors' yoke, from all foreign aggressors, Governors-General, Residents, etc. And to reach that goal, he mapped out a definite programme.<sup>1</sup> That is how young Ho Chi Minh wrote about Lenin.

Following the October Revolution, the French colonialists in Vietnam did their best to smear the Russian Communist Party, the proletarian doctrine and Lenin himself, and to quench any true tidings about these. Anyone caught reading Lenin's works was brought before a military tribunal.<sup>2</sup>

A point to note is that following the October Revolution the Vietnamese living in France and other countries were the first to adopt Leninism as a powerful weapon in their struggle for freedom and independence. The 100,000 Vietnamese brought over to France by the French authorities during the First World War (half of these worked in industry, while the rest were drafted into the French army) found themselves in the midst of revolutionary French workers and soldiers, and the best among them welcomed the October Revolution heart and soul, and assimilated Lenin's ideas. The Versailles Peace Conference was attended by delegations from many oppressed countries, who still harboured illusions about Wilson's "Fourteen Points". In January 1919, Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) speaking on behalf of the Annam patriots, listed their main demands: autonomy for Indo-China; freedom of assembly, religious worship, the press and movements; a general amnesty for political prisoners; equal rights for French and Vietnamese; abolition of compulsory alcohol consumption and opium smoking; and abolition of corvée and the tax on salt. Ho Chi Minh and his comrades were soon undeceived: as Lenin put it, "the eyes of the working people have been opened because the Treaty of Versailles was a rapacious peace and showed that France and Britain had actually fought Germany in order to strengthen their rule over the colonies and to enhance their imperialist might".<sup>3</sup>

Addressing a ceremonial meeting in Hanoi in May 1975

<sup>1</sup> Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Hanoi, 1960, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> See *Publication and Spread of Lenin's Works*, Moscow, 1960, p. 267 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 156.

to mark the 85th anniversary of the birth of Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, spoke of the crucial impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and Lenin's writings on the shaping of Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary views and his creative application of Marxist-Leninist theory and the experience of the October Revolution in the concrete conditions of Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

In 1920, Ho Chi Minh took part in the Tours Congress of the French Socialists, which established the French Communist Party; he was one of the first to join it and voted for its entry into the Third International. Soon after, he began working in the FCP Central Committee's colonial department. One of his major duties was to send Marxist literature to Vietnam—the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*, "Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder, and newspapers like *L'Humanité*, and *Le Paria*.<sup>2</sup> These were carried to Indo-China with great difficulty, by some Vietnamese working for the Far Eastern line of the Office of Amalgamated Freight and Marine Shipments. The Vietnamese also had some direct contacts with Russia: Vietnamese sailors sent over to the Black Sea coast in 1919, took part in the Black Sea uprising and the "Hands off Soviet Russia" campaign. Ton Duc Thang, the incumbent president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, took part in that uprising. Truong Chinh wrote: "The Vietnamese people, the working class above all, take pride in the fact that one of their best men, Comrade Ton Duc Thang, together with French workers and sailors, started the 1919 uprising on the cruiser *Paris* in protest against the armed intervention in Russia by the imperialists of France and many other countries. The uprising was a manifestation of the Vietnamese workers' lofty feelings of proletarian internationalism, with the Vietnamese people making a small but highly significant contribution to the general struggle in support of the October Revolution."<sup>3</sup> Then

<sup>1</sup> See *Pravda*, May 20, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> See *Vietnam's Modern History*, Vol. IV, Hanoi, 1963, p. 89 (in Vietnamese).

<sup>3</sup> *Problems of History*, No. 10, 1957, p. 127 (in Russian).



there was also an all-Vietnamese military unit in the French interventionist force which was sent to the Soviet Far East but soon had to be pulled out as "unreliable".

In 1923 and 1924, Ho Chi Minh and some other Vietnamese revolutionaries came to Moscow from France to take courses at the Communist University of the Peoples of the East, where they were provided with all the facilities for study. Ho Chi Minh wrote at the time that the Russian revolution "is not satisfied with making fine platonic speeches and drafting 'humanitarian' resolutions in favour of oppressed peoples, but it teaches them to struggle, and helps them materially and morally, as proclaimed by Lenin in his theses on the colonial question".<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Vietnamese revolutionaries who came to the Soviet Union as their second motherland became prominent Leninists and leaders of the international and Vietnamese communist movement, like Tran Phu, the first General Secretary of the Communist Party of Indo-China; Kha Huy Tap, who succeeded Tran Phu as General Secretary; Le Hong Phong, official spokesman for the CPIC in the Comintern; and Nguyen Thi Minh Hay, a courageous revolutionary and founder of the Revolutionary Women's Movement in Vietnam.

In the first half of the 1920s, the Soviet functionaries staying in China on Sun Yat-sen's invitation, established contacts with progressive Vietnamese leaders, particularly Phan Boi Chau, and the Soviet Government invited some young Vietnamese to take courses in Moscow.

In 1924 and 1925, while training Vietnamese cadets at the Whampoa school in Kwangchow, Ho Chi Minh maintained personal contacts with Soviet advisers and lecturing specialists. Lenin's works on the national and colonial question played an exceptional role in moulding the Vietnamese revolutionaries' ideological and political outlook, and helping them to realise the urgent tasks of the national liberation revolution and choose ways for their solution. Ho Chi Minh told of this when he described his way to Leninism.

In 1925, the Vietnamese graduates of the Whampoa school made up the core of a Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth Association, Vietnam's first organisation to adopt the

<sup>1</sup> Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 80.

Marxist-Leninist doctrine. They faced the difficult task of rallying Vietnam's revolutionary masses, spreading the Leninist doctrine among them, and training them for the coming battles for freedom and independence.

Lenin's death struck sorrow into the hearts of the Vietnamese patriots. Ho Chi Minh wrote: "Accustomed to being treated as backward and inferior people, they [the peoples of the East] consider Lenin as the embodiment of universal brotherhood. Not only are they grateful to him, but they love him tenderly. To him they show a veneration which is almost filial devotion."<sup>1</sup> But even after Lenin's death, his ideas continued their triumphant advance, and millions of men the world over, the Vietnamese patriots, and the young Vietnamese proletariat among them, worked to implement his behests. By the late 1920s, Vietnam had about 220,000 industrial workers, who were mostly concentrated at large French enterprises, and this helped them to organise and gain political awareness. The workers took action in protest against their hard working and living conditions, devoting ever greater attention to political issues. Masses of peasants continued to be deprived of their land, and were being exploited ever harder through diverse semi-feudal and capitalist methods. The contradictions between the broad sections of the Vietnamese people and the foreign imperialists continued to grow. The economic crisis of 1929 inflicted fresh sufferings on the Vietnamese masses, adding urgency to the tasks of their national liberation and anti-feudal revolution.

The Vietnamese Communists worked to strengthen the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth Association and were active among the industrial and plantation workers, peasants and intellectuals. From the mid-1920s, a new, Revolutionary Party, headed, among others, by the young patriot Tran Phu, played an important role. A branch of the Association was set up in Siam (Thailand) to maintain contacts between the Comintern and the revolutionary movement in Vietnam. From 1928 to 1931, Ho Chi Minh worked on that branch as the Comintern's representative in Southeast Asia. On the basis of the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, the Association began prepar-

<sup>1</sup> Ho Chi Minh, *op. cit.*, p. 94.



ing the first, constituent congress of a Communist Party in order to adopt its rules and programme. At that time, the Association had about 2,000 members and many cells at plants, factories, mines and plantations.

On June 17, 1929, a conference of North Vietnamese Communists decided to set up a Communist Party of Indo-China (Dong duong cong san dang). It elected a provisional Central Committee of the CPIC and decided to put out a manifesto based on the general theoretical principles of the Comintern Programme. In October 1929, the communist-minded members of the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth Association of South Vietnam met for a conference in Hsiangkang and established the Annam Communist Party (Annam cong san dang), adopting rules and a programme virtually identical with those of the CPIC. In late 1929, an Indo-China Communist Union (Dong duong cong san lien doan) was set up in Central Vietnam. While carrying on large-scale ideological, political and organisational work among the masses, the three Communist organisations were nevertheless involved in mutual disputes and conflicts. The Comintern gave them its recommendations which proved to be very valuable. The Comintern wanted Indo-China to have one strong and united Communist Party, and in its letter, "On the Establishment of a Communist Party in Indo-China" (October 27, 1929), it said: "Divisions and controversy among these groups can have a very bad effect on revolutionary agitation in Indo-China. The key problem facing all Indo-Chinese Communists, a problem which brooks no delay, is to establish a revolutionary proletarian party, that is, a massive Communist Party—a single Communist organisation for the whole of Indo-China."<sup>1</sup> Under a subsequent decision to call a conference of Vietnam's Communist organisations, such a conference met in Hsiangkang on February 3, 1930.

Bearing in mind the urgent tasks of the working-class and national liberation movement, the conference adopted a resolution under which all the Communist groups were to merge into a single Communist Party of Vietnam.

<sup>1</sup> *A Great Stage in the History of the Vietnamese Revolution*, Hanoi, 1961, p. 77 (in Vietnamese).

Upon his return from the Soviet Union, where he had taken courses at the Communist University, Tran Phu became General Secretary of the Provisional Central Committee, and headed the struggle for closer unity among the Vietnamese Communists. Tran Phu worked out the Political Theses of the Communist Party of Indo-China, and these, despite some tactical shortcomings (like underestimation of an alliance with the national bourgeoisie), became the Party's militant programme.

In October 1930, the first plenary session of the Communist Party's Central Committee in Saigon approved these theses, taking account of the Comintern's recommendations. The Theses contained an analysis of the international situation, showed the successes of the USSR and the world revolutionary movements, and formulated the nature, motive forces, tasks and stages of the Vietnamese revolution, and the Party's basic strategy and tactics.

The theses said that the revolution in Indo-China would continue its triumphant advance with the help of the USSR, the state of proletarian dictatorship, and that the country would bypass capitalism and take the socialist road.<sup>1</sup> But at that particular stage of the revolution, the tasks facing the Vietnamese were anti-imperialist and anti-feudal: they had to overthrow French colonial rule and the feudal-landlord system; to confiscate all the land belonging to landlords, foreign imperialists and the church, and hand this over to the poor and middle peasantry; and to socialise all foreign-owned enterprises.

The Political Theses said very clearly that the proletariat and the peasantry were the chief motive forces of the revolution, and that proletarian leadership and a worker-peasant alliance were essential to victory.

The Theses emphasised the international unity of the revolutionary movement in Indo-China with the world proletarian and national liberation movements, and pointed out that a major task facing Party members was to "support the Soviet Union, and maintain close unity with the international working class and the revolutionary movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *A Great Stage...*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *A Great Stage...*, p. 84.



The first plenary meeting approved the draft rules for the various Communist-led mass organisations, like the Communist Youth League, the Red Trade Unions, the Peasant Union, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society. It suggested re-organising the various women's organisations and setting up a Women's Federation. It also decided to bring all the revolutionary parties and mass organisations together in a single anti-imperialist league. The session devoted much attention to questions of struggle against Leftist mistakes and the attempts that have occurred in some areas to carry out socialist slogans.

The meeting resolved that all Party members should be guided by the Theses, the Party's political programme, and the Comintern's decisions, and also work to establish Party committees in each of the three parts of the country.

The programme of revolutionary struggle set out in the Political Theses in effect served as a basis for all subsequent Party documents up to the start of the Second World War.

The Comintern gave constant attention to the revolutionary movement in Vietnam. In May 1930, in its reply to a message of greetings from the conference, at which all the Communist organisations in Indo-China merged, the Comintern suggested some alterations to be made in the line and tasks of the Vietnamese revolution.<sup>1</sup>

What with the complicated political situation in the country, the Communist-led proletariat was the only political force that had a genuine scientific revolutionary theory and, to quote Le Duan, had the benefit of the valuable experience gained in the course of the world proletariat's struggle, the October Revolution in particular.<sup>2</sup>

Acting on Lenin's doctrine, the CPIC guided the working-class movement towards a lasting alliance with the peasantry. It elaborated a programme on the agrarian question, which played an important role in strengthening the worker-peasant alliance and involving the peasantry in the proletarian movement.

The movement to set up workers' and peasants' councils in Vietnam in 1930 and 1931 did a great deal to strengthen

<sup>1</sup> See *Vietnam Workers' Party: 30 Years of Struggle*, Hanoi, 1960, p. 28 (in Vietnamese).

<sup>2</sup> See Le Duan, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*, p. 10

the worker-peasant alliance and help the proletariat to win hegemony in the national liberation revolution. The CPIC sought to merge the two major revolutionary streams, and rally the working class and other urban sections in support of the peasant insurgency in the Nghe An and Ha Tinh provinces (Central Vietnam). Truong Chinh subsequently wrote: "Our Party's greatest victory at the time of the revolutionary upsurge in 1930 and 1931 was the establishment of the worker-peasant alliance. As a result, the working class came to stand at the head of the revolution."<sup>1</sup>

The revolutionary struggle of 1930 and 1931 showed the profound truth of Lenin's idea that "it is the absolute duty of Communist parties and of elements prepared to form Communist parties, everywhere to conduct propaganda in favour of peasants' Soviets [Councils] or of working people's Soviets, this to include backward and colonial countries".<sup>2</sup> It was the peasants, up in arms against semi-feudal bondage, who set up the revolutionary organs of power in Vietnam in 1930.

Indo-China's colonial administration was alarmed at the unprecedented scale of the revolutionary movement and launched an all-out offensive against the Nghe An and Ha Tinh Councils and the insurgents in the cities. In March 1931, most of the CPIC Central Committee's members were arrested in Saigon; the Party Committee of North Vietnam and most of the local cells were broken up altogether. On June 5, Ho Chi Minh was arrested in Hong Kong under a deal between the French colonialists and the local British authorities. On September 5, General Secretary of the CPIC Central Committee and prominent internationalist, Tran Phu, was tortured to death by the colonialists in The Khan prison in Saigon.

In that period, the whole international communist and progressive movement rendered its moral, political and practical support to the Vietnamese revolutionary movement. While the colonial authorities claimed that they had "wiped out" the Communist Party of Indo-China, the CPIC was admitted to the Comintern by the 11th Plenary Session of its Executive. Working together with the Executive's

<sup>1</sup> Truong Chinh, *Forward, under the Party Banner*, Hanoi, 1963, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 243.



Eastern Secretariat, the French Communist Party rallied the working masses to a fight against the colonialists' crimes and was active among the soldiers and sailors being dispatched to Vietnam. In fact, French troops refused to shoot down demonstrators in Nghe An in September 1930.

The international movement of solidarity with Vietnam produced some effective results: thus, Ho Chi Minh had to be released by the British police just as they were about to hand him over to the French colonialists, who had sentenced him to death in his absence back in 1929.

The Comintern and its representatives did what they could to help Vietnam's working class establish a broad anti-imperialist front. The struggle for unity of action in Vietnam was a hard one. On the one hand, the Communists had to fight the various reformist organisations and the more vigorous anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda carried on by the Catholic Church. On the other hand, in the early 1930s, there emerged a grave danger that the Vietnamese revolutionary movement might give way to Trotskyism which was seeking to penetrate not only the petty-bourgeois nationalist sections but also the Communist Party itself.

In its two-pronged offensive—both against Right-wing reformism and ultra-Leftist opportunism—the CPIC made a large-scale and vigorous effort to obtain more massive support among the people. The 1st Congress of the CPIC in March 1935 took into account the new international and internal situation and the Comintern's recommendations, and introduced some amendments into the Party's Programme of Action adopted in 1932, which underestimated, not to say ignored, the prospects of co-operation with the patriotic elements in the national bourgeoisie and other sections of the population.

The decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern meant a qualitatively new step forward in the evolution of a common-front tactics in accordance with the deepening general crisis of capitalism and the growing influence of socialist forces in the world.

Lenin's ideas have been a guiding and inspiring light for the Vietnamese Communists in the intricate situation on the eve of the Second World War. Le Duan, First Secretary of the VWP Central Committee, wrote: "Acting upon Lenin's

recommendation: 'Concrete political aims must be set in concrete circumstances', the Party set as the immediate task for the 1936-1939 period the struggle against the reactionary colonialists (not yet the overthrow of the colonialist rule as a whole), against fascism and war, for democratic liberties, a decent standard of living, and peace. The Party was fully aware that those demands were by no means the final goal, that one could never radically change the old social order through reform, and that only by eventually standing up to smash the imperialist and feudal rule through violence and win power for the people would the revolutionary objective be achieved. However, Lenin himself said that without the democratic liberties brought about by the February 1917 Revolution it would have been difficult indeed to start the mass struggle of great scope and depth which led to the October Revolution. We may refer in similar terms to the effect of the 1936-1939 democratic movement upon the subsequent triumph of the August Revolution."<sup>1</sup>

The Popular Front movement in France led to a change of atmosphere in Vietnam: the CPIC could now engage in legal (South Vietnam) and semi-legal activities among the masses.

Following its July 1936 conference, the CPIC addressed an open letter to the country's political parties, calling for the creation of a people's anti-imperialist front to be based on a 12-point programme put forward by the CPIC.

At that time, the Party led a movement to convene an Indo-China congress, which would table the masses' demands before a French parliamentary commission. Action committees were being set up to work among the masses as local organs of the preparatory committee of the coming Indo-China congress. The movement spread across town and country, with something like 600 committees being established in South Vietnam alone. These committees organised thousands of mass rallies, and put out many propaganda publications and questionnaires. Besides carrying on political work among the masses, they also did a great

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<sup>1</sup> Le Duan, *The Vietnamese Revolution. Fundamental Problems, Essential Tasks*, Hanoi, 1970, pp. 48-49 (in Russian).



deal to train cadres, rally the young people and the women, and draw them into their studies.

At the same time, the CPIC went on fighting against the Trotskyite organisations which had in the meantime become more active. The Communists' temporary co-operation with the Trotskyites showed them that it was bad for the Party, engendering erroneous views and concepts among its members and followers. In July 1937, bearing in mind the recommendations presented by the French Communist Party, the CPIC Central Committee decided to break with the Trotskyites. That was a decision of principle, and it gave the Communists broader scope in their work to set up a Democratic Front of Indo-China (a decision on its establishment had been adopted by the CPIC Central Committee in March 1937). There was also a successful effort to strengthen Party organisations and Communist-led mass bodies. (By March 1938, Party membership had doubled as compared with the preceding period.)

On the eve of the Second World War, Vietnam's liberation forces were faced with some new and complicated tasks. The Communist Party set out to expose the loyalistic, chauvinist propaganda which called for support for the so-called French Motherland, and did its best to spread political knowledge among the masses and so unite them in the face of a world-wide armed conflict. On September 29, 1939, the CPIC Central Committee put out a pamphlet *On Present-Day Politics*, and then one entitled *The Soviet Union, a True Champion of Peace*, which gave a detailed account of the international situation, set out the tasks of the world progressive movement in the fight against fascism and war, gave an all-round description of the Soviet Union's consistent Leninist foreign policy aimed at maintaining peace, and formulated the CPIC's priority tasks.

In 1940, when Japan occupied Vietnam by "peaceful" means through a deal with France's Vichy rulers, the situation in Vietnam took a very grave turn. The French authorities in Indo-China and Japan's occupation troops joined forces and came down savagely on the virtually unarmed insurgents. Thus, they crushed the uprising in North, South and Central Vietnam in late 1940 and early 1941. It became obvious that the future of the Vietnamese revolution was interlinked with world developments. In

May 1941, the enlarged 8th Plenary Meeting of the CPIC Central Committee worked out a programme of action with a view to the situation in the country and abroad.

Starting from Lenin's doctrine on the worker-peasant alliance and his recommendations about union with the fellow-travellers of the revolution, the Vietnamese Communists found that the classes and parties that had earlier been a reserve of the counter-revolution had become a reserve of the revolution, and that the various sections of the population could now be brought together for anti-imperialist struggle. Hence the 8th Plenary Meeting's decision to set up a nation-wide front, a League of Struggle for Vietnam's Independence (Viet Minh), which would incorporate the Motherland Salvation Unions made up of workers, peasants, the petty and national bourgeoisie, and patriotically-minded landlords.

To implement the decision, the Vietnamese Communists had to use very skilful and flexible tactics. The agrarian programme adopted by the 6th Plenary Meeting of the CPIC Central Committee in 1939 was amended to ensure a temporary alliance between the peasants and the landlords in the fight against imperialism, with the new programme providing for a share-out of the colonialists' and collaborationists' land among the poor peasants, lower rents and interest rates, and a redistribution of communal land. The plenary session particularly emphasised that the Party was not giving up its class struggle, but that the various problems connected with it would have to be solved later. Its decision said: "At present, the Indo-Chinese revolution does not seek to solve two questions—the anti-imperialist and the anti-feudal—but only one most pressing question, that of national liberation." The 8th Plenary Meeting also adopted an important resolution on the revolution's prospects. It said: "It is not right to assume that the movement will end in a liberation revolution. We have to go on to tackling the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution and establishing proletarian rule."<sup>1</sup> The resolution went on to say that favourable foreign-policy factors like the Soviet Union's

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<sup>1</sup> *Vietnam Workers' Party Collected Documents*, Hanoi, 1963, p. 194 (in Vietnamese).



internationalist support and international proletarian solidarity would have a strong effect on that process.

On May 19, 1941, a Vietnam Congress of People's Representatives, attended by spokesmen from various sections of the population, was convened on the CPIC Central Committee's initiative. It adopted a decision to set up the Viet Minh front and elected its General Committee, which took over the functions of the National Liberation Committee and was in effect to operate as an underground revolutionary government of the new Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh was elected Chairman of the Committee, and Nguyen Luong Bang (who was later to become the DRV's first ambassador to the USSR)<sup>1</sup>—its General Secretary.

From 1941 onwards, political, economic and military activities in the areas liberated from the imperialists were directed by revolutionary people's committees and liberation committees. In some areas, they confiscated the lands belonging to landlords who had collaborated with the imperialists and distributed these among poor peasants. The resistance movement assumed various forms: civil disobedience campaigns against the invaders, rallies, demonstrations, terrorist and subversive activity. On December 22, 1944, the first regular unit of Vietnam's Liberation Army was set up under Vo Nguyen Giap's command. In 1945, a large Liberated Area was established in the North of the country. Alongside the movement in the rural areas, work was also being done on the CPIC Central Committee's instructions to strengthen the mass organisations in the towns, at enterprises, mines and plantations. The CPIC Central Committee's plenary meeting on March 9-12, 1945, which worked out directives for a nation-wide uprising, was an important stage on the way towards a revolution.

### The August Revolution

The defeat of Hitler Germany and imperialist Japan gave a powerful impetus to the national liberation movement throughout the colonial world. In August 1945, the

<sup>1</sup> In September 1969, Nguyen Luong Bang was elected Vice-President of the DRV.

situation in Vietnam was extremely favourable for a victory of the revolutionary forces: the 50,000-strong Japanese army in Vietnam had capitulated, and the Japanese administrative set-up had been utterly paralysed. So, the CPIC took resolute action to decide the country's future. Its All-Vietnam Conference on August 13, 1945 took a decision to mount a nation-wide uprising. Under that decision, the Viet Minh armed units started their drive from the Liberated Area towards Hanoi. Popular uprisings led by Viet Minh representatives resulted in the establishment of revolutionary rule in thousands of towns and hamlets. Newly established units of the Liberation Army were being equipped with weapons taken over from the Japanese troops which had surrendered. An All-Vietnam Congress of People's Representatives, convened on August 16, 1945, approved the decision to start an uprising, elected a National Liberation Committee, and formulated domestic and foreign policy lines to be followed by the people's power.

On August 19, the revolution won out in Hanoi, and on August 25, the Japanese henchman, Emperor Bao Dai, abdicated the throne in the city of Hue, in Central Vietnam. That very day, the revolutionary tide reached Saigon. On August 28, the National Liberation Committee was reorganised into a Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and on September 2, 1945, Ho Chi Minh promulgated Vietnam's Declaration of Independence. Since then, the Vietnamese people have been marking September 2 as a national holiday. The victory of the Vietnamese revolution was due to a creative use of Leninism in the specific conditions of the national liberation movement in that backward colonial country.

The August Revolution provided brilliant confirmation of these words of Lenin's: "History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes."<sup>1</sup> The August Revolution, a blend of political and armed struggle and revolutionary use of force by the insurgent

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 95.



population of town and country, was relatively peaceful and relatively bloodless, because of the surrender of the chief enemy—the Japanese militarists—thereby providing vivid historical proof of what Lenin had predicted back in 1899<sup>1</sup> and then in September 1917.<sup>2</sup> A collective study put out by the Party History Committee under the VWP Central Committee was quite right in saying that “were it not for the victory of the Soviet Army, which crushed Japan’s Kwantung Army and forced it into an unconditional surrender, the August Revolution, despite all our skill, could not have been relatively peaceful or relatively bloodless. The revolutionary people of Vietnam spilled so little blood because the Soviet Army had spilled so much.”<sup>3</sup> When the colonial and feudal administration fell under the impact of the revolution, new state organs were established at every level. People’s councils and executive committees were elected in towns, hamlets and provinces, and regional executive committees were set up in the country’s three major regions.

On January 6, 1946, the Vietnamese went to the polls in their first-ever free, general elections, and voted in a National Assembly, a nation-wide supreme organ of state power. In November 1946, it adopted the DRV’s Constitution, which reflected the actual balance of forces in the class struggle.

From the very start, the imperialists launched aggression against the DRV, hampering revolutionary change in the socio-economic sphere. On September 9, 1945, British and French occupation forces landed in South Vietnam, while a 200,000-strong contingent of Chinese nationalist troops led by US advisers threatened Vietnam from the North. The people’s power mustered the republic’s resources to face the grave threat, at the same time following a very flexible domestic and foreign policy line. The Ho Chi Minh government made the most of the contradictions between the imperialist powers and wrested a provisional agreement from the French authorities (March 6, 1946), under which the latter recognised the DRV as an independent state and Chinese troops were to be withdrawn from Vietnam. In the

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> *On the Nature and Specific Features of the August Revolution*, Hanoi, 1963, p. 25 (in Vietnamese).

spring of 1946, Britain also withdrew its troops from South Vietnam.

The signing of the March 6 Agreement, which opened the way for the French armed forces to North Vietnam and the DRV capital without a fight was a subtle practical move on the part of the DRV Government, a move that reminds one of Lenin’s diplomatic line at the time of the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. Many Vietnamese patriots did not realise the significance of that foreign policy move, and found it hard to accept that kind of treaty with a country which the Vietnamese masses had fought for 80 years. To explain the situation, the Ho Chi Minh government called a mass rally. The rally was held in Hanoi on March 7, 1946, and was attended by something like 100,000 people. Speaking on behalf of the DRV Government, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Vo Nguyen Giap, said that “Russia, for instance, signed the 1918 Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty in order to stop the German invasion and to have a chance, by virtue of the respite, to strengthen its army and political power. Didn’t Russia become stronger through the signing of that Treaty?”<sup>1</sup>

On September 14, 1946, following some very hard diplomatic bargaining, the DRV and France signed another agreement, *Les Principales Clauses du Modus Vivendi*, which reaffirmed the March 6 Agreement and provided for a ceasefire and a resumption of talks. But on December 19, 1946, the French imperialists started a large-scale aggressive war against the DRV, seizing Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities. However, they came up against firm resistance from the people.

In that trying period, the CPIC had to mobilise the nation’s resources to a fight against the imperialists. Analysing the causes behind the Vietnamese’ victories in 1939-1945 and in the War of Resistance (1945-1954), First Secretary of the VWP Central Committee Le Duan said that “working in accordance with Lenin’s doctrine, our Party guided the working class and the peasantry to the establishment of a common national front with the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class and, under certain conditions, with a

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Philippe Devillers, *L’Histoire du Viet-nam de 1940 à 1952*, Paris, 1952, p. 230.



small section of the landlords, all the while remaining true to its class stand, making correct use of the national factor and boosting the patriotic spirit that is typical of various sections of the population in colonial countries fighting imperialism".<sup>1</sup>

In a bid to help the French colonialists, the United States joined in the "dirty war" in Indo-China. It supplied the French with more arms and gave them more financial assistance. A puppet "state of Vietnam" headed by ex-emperor Bao Dai was established. In 1950, the USA and Britain gave it their official recognition, at the same time making a show of ignoring the existence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. But the Vietnamese people did not stand alone.

In January and February 1950, the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies extended their diplomatic recognition to the DRV. The European working class waged a consistent struggle under the slogan "Hands off Vietnam!" Progressive international organisations launched a world-wide movement of solidarity with the fighting Vietnam.

On February 11, 1951, the Second Congress of the CPIC (renamed Vietnam Workers' Party—VWP) worked out a programme to extend the revolutionary struggle still further. In March 1951, the Vietnamese people were brought together on the VWP's initiative in a common front, the Lien Viet. Steps were also taken to speed up socio-economic change. In December 1953, the third session of the National Assembly adopted a decree on a radical agrarian reform under the slogan of "the land to those who till it". The new political line for the countryside stimulated great enthusiasm among millions of peasants, and their broader participation in the heroic War of Resistance.

The Vietnam Workers' Party elaborated and made creative use of Lenin's doctrine on just revolutionary wars and the fraternal countries' fighting experience, leading the heroic Vietnamese people from one victorious battle to another. The capture of Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954 marked the Vietnamese people's victory in their nine-year War of Resistance. Then came a hard diplomatic struggle in Geneva, where the diplomats of the DRV and the whole

<sup>1</sup> Le Duan, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*, pp. 144-45.

socialist world, acting on Lenin's foreign policy concepts, scored a most important victory.

On July 27, 1954, a week after the signing of the Geneva Agreements, all military operations throughout North Vietnam were brought to a halt. Subsequently, the ceasefire was extended to Central and South Vietnam. Troops stationed north and south of the 17th parallel were regrouped in accordance with the time-scale stipulated by the Geneva Agreements, and prisoners of war were exchanged.

The DRV Government repeatedly expressed its readiness to hold consultations with the South Vietnamese authorities and, in compliance with the Geneva Agreements, took steps to develop economic, cultural and other ties with South Vietnam. All its attempts, however, met with stubborn resistance on the part of the puppet authorities and their US patrons.

The US imperialists sought to establish a puppet government in Saigon (with the USA pulling the strings), perpetuate the country's division and turn South Vietnam into its own stronghold at that vital crossroads in Southeast Asia. The international reactionaries struck a blow at a major provision of the Geneva Agreements: in September 1954, the documents of a hastily established aggressive bloc (SEATO) said that South Vietnam lay within its sphere of influence.

In violation of the Geneva Agreements, the USA began supplying South Vietnam with large consignments of arms and ammunition, and US officers and "experts" supervised the establishment of an army, a police force, and an administrative and a propaganda machine.

On October 26, 1955, following a referendum held on October 23 in an atmosphere of bloody terror, the US henchman Ngo Dinh Diem deposed Bao Dai and set himself up as the head of the "state of Vietnam", which he later renamed the "Republic of Vietnam". Soon afterwards, a National Assembly packed with Diem's hangers-on adopted a constitution drawn up by the dictator.

In 1961, the US imperialists started their so-called military escalation, or rather, their criminal intervention in Vietnam and throughout the whole of Indo-China.



## On the Way to Socialism

Ho Chi Minh told the Third Congress of the VWP (1960) that "once peace was restored, the fully liberated North Vietnam entered upon the stage of socialist revolution".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's doctrine on the main regularities of socialist revolution and socialist construction was further elaborated, in theory and practice, by the international communist movement, and was further confirmed by the events in Vietnam. First Secretary of the VWP Central Committee Le Duan said: "For us, there can be no way to socialism other than that mapped out by Marxism-Leninism and successfully travelled by the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist countries."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Vietnamese leaders pointed out, the people's revolution in Vietnam has many specific features, which are chiefly due to the concrete historical situation in that country.

"In our country, the dictatorship of the proletariat came into being at a time when the forces of production were extremely backward and the material premises for the building of socialism still very weak. The social system of production stood at a crossroads: either to advance to socialism, or to capitalism, or to linger for a time in small production."<sup>3</sup>

The Vietnamese people made creative use of Lenin's co-operative plan for starting socialist construction in order to build up a socialist basis founded on social property in the instruments and means of production, and a socialist superstructure.

The VWP, which enjoys nation-wide support, has been directing the country's balanced economic and cultural construction, scoring one major success after another. By 1957, the DRV's national economy had rehabilitated and reached the prewar (1939) level, and in the course of a radical agrarian reform all land had been handed over to

<sup>1</sup> *Third Congress of the VWP. Documents*, Vol. I, Hanoi, 1960, p. 179 (in Vietnamese).

<sup>2</sup> Le Duan, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Le Duan, *The Vietnamese Revolution...*, pp. 98-99.

those who tilled it. By 1960, 85 per cent of all peasant households in North Vietnam had joined producer co-operatives.

Applying Lenin's doctrine to the concrete conditions of their country, the VWP indicated the ways towards further socio-economic transformations meant to ensure a total victory of the socialist relations of production in the DRV. That task was to be solved under a three-year plan for the development and transformation of the country's economy and culture (1958-1960). The plan, worked out on the basis of the directives issued by the 14th and 16th plenary sessions of the VWP Central Committee (in November 1958 and April 1959), provided for broad socialist changes in industry, farming and trade, for the establishment of a socialist economy, and for scientific and cultural development.

The 3rd Congress of the VWP in September 1960 was a major event in the country's life. It summed up the advance made in the political, economic and cultural life, determined the Party's general line for the period of transition to socialism: to unite the whole people, further to enhance its fiery patriotism, its heroic traditions of struggle and work, simultaneously strengthening the ties of solidarity with the fraternal socialist countries led by the Soviet Union, powerfully and confidently to advance North Vietnam towards socialism, to ensure the people's welfare and happiness, to strengthen the North in order to provide a sound base for the struggle for the country's peaceful unification, promote the strengthening of the socialist camp and the preservation of peace in Southeast Asia and the whole world. The 3rd Congress of the VWP approved the Directives for the first five-year plan for developing the national economy and culture.

Mindful of what Lenin said about the tenacity of individual small production and the need for its radical transformation, the Vietnam Workers' Party said: "The struggle between the two ways—the capitalist and the socialist—in the North of our country consists essentially in a struggle to raise small production to large-scale socialist production. To hold firm to the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to carry out simultaneously those three revolutions, the keystone being the technical revolution, is the basic content of



*class struggle in the period of transition to socialism in the North of our country.*"<sup>1</sup>

Taking account of the experience of socialist construction in the USSR, the VWP devoted special attention to Lenin's ideas about the electrification of the national economy. Le Duan wrote: "As we start from small production, what we badly need is that which Lenin called 'electrification'. Only on the basis of electrification can we consolidate the worker-peasant alliance and the dictatorship of the proletariat, eradicate small-producer mentality and habits, strengthen and develop socialist ideology, bring the toiling people material welfare and a civilised life, and make them masters not only of society but also of nature."<sup>2</sup>

Ho Chi Minh was re-elected Chairman of the VWP, and Le Duan was elected its First Secretary. The first and successive plenary meetings of the new VWP Central Committee devoted much attention to carrying out the decisions of the 3rd Congress.

The 8th Plenary Session of the VWP Central Committee in April 1963 gave greater precision to the target figures of the first five-year plan (1961-1965), under which the country was to complete the first stage of its socialist industrialisation and the transformation of the national economy on socialist lines, and to lay the groundwork for the industrial and technical basis of socialism. In the first four years of the five-year period, industrial growth rates averaged 21.8 per cent a year in the centrally run state sector, and 19.4 per cent in the locally run state sector.

In farming, by the start of 1965, about 86 per cent of all peasant households had become members of 30,000 producer co-operatives, 54 per cent of these being co-operatives of a higher, consistently socialist type. In 1964, 87.9 per cent of all artisans and handicraftsmen had been co-operated, and nearly all state-capitalist enterprises had been reorganised on socialist lines.

In the course of socialist construction, the once backward agrarian country was building up an advanced economy. Thus, in 1955, farming and industry accounted for 83.6 and 16.4 per cent, respectively, of their combined gross

<sup>1</sup> Le Duan, *The Vietnamese Revolution...*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Le Duan, *The Vietnamese Revolution...*, p. 106.

production, whereas in late 1963, the balance was 50.5 to 49.5 per cent. The country now had its own engineering, metallurgical, chemical and other enterprises, something it had never had before.

From 1954 to 1964, the number of industrial enterprises went up from 41 to 1,015. In that decade, the number of electric-power stations went up from 9 to 35, and electric-power output increased nearly 9-fold as compared with 1955. There was also a big increase in the output of coal, cement and other materials.

The deep-going cultural transformations in Vietnam were based on Lenin's principles of socialist construction. At the time of the August Revolution, more than 90 per cent of the population could not read or write at all, but by 1960, illiteracy had been wiped out among the bulk of the population. There was a massive movement for a higher general-education level, with evening courses for adults being established virtually at every enterprise and in every co-operative. The five-year plan targets for scientific and cultural development were being met.

The record of socialist construction in the DRV showed that the relations between the socialist countries, evolving in accordance with Lenin's principles of proletarian internationalism, are a powerful means of accelerating economic growth and strengthening the political and military positions of each fraternal country in the face of imperialism.

US imperialism first mounted a crusade against the revolutionary forces in South Vietnam, which in December 1966 banded together in the ranks of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front. In August 1964, the US reactionaries extended their aggression to the DRV.

The people responded to the military escalation by rallying even closer round the Vietnam Workers' Party, enhancing their moral and political unity and giving greater support to their compatriots in the South. The Party formulated the people's tasks in wartime. It determined the line of popular resistance, combining struggle on three fronts: political, military and diplomatic. The DRV became a "great rear" of the popular struggle against the enemy along the "great front" in South Vietnam. In the ordeal of war, President Ho Chi Minh gave the best expression to the Vietnamese people's thoughts and aspirations, will and



determination. His death on September 3, 1969 was a heavy blow for the Vietnamese people. Ho Chi Minh's testament became a document of vast mobilising power. In his memory, the best sons and daughters of the Vietnamese people joined the Vietnam Workers' Party.

Having suffered vast material and moral-political losses, the USA had to announce an unconditional halt to its bombings of the DRV and agree to hold official talks with the DRV and the South Vietnam National Liberation Front (and subsequently with the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam).

All the Communists and all progressive and honest men throughout the world saw it as their internationalist duty to fight against the USA's imperialist aggression. The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in June 1969 issued a unanimous appeal: "Independence, Freedom and Peace for Vietnam!", voicing its all-out support for the fraternal Vietnamese people and its ardent solidarity with their fight against the US aggression. On June 12, 1969, the Meeting addressed a telegram to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, hailing its establishment as a new and important stage in the Vietnamese people's heroic liberation struggle, and assuring the PRG and the whole Vietnamese people of its unfailing support for their struggle to a victorious end.

The DRV's social and state system stood all the tests and trials of war. The Vietnam Workers' Party gave the fighting people a clear understanding of the goals of the struggle and inspired them to massive feats of arms.

Once again, history provided confirmation of Lenin's idea that a nation in which the majority of the workers and peasants realise, feel and see that they are fighting for their own power, the power of the working people, cannot be defeated.<sup>1</sup> The invasion by a powerful imperialist country having at its disposal all the latest military hardware was met by the Vietnamese people with firm determination to resist. The USSR and other fraternal countries supplied the Vietnamese people with all the military hardware and equipment they needed and helped to train high-skilled

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 319.

military personnel. This was a realisation of Lenin's view of the tremendous importance of military knowledge, military hardware and military organisation "as an instrument which the masses of the people, and classes of the people, use in resolving great historical conflicts"<sup>1</sup>.

During the war period, the DRV's socialist sector of the national economy was further strengthened. In 1971, it accounted for 92 per cent of the GNP, including 94 per cent of industrial and 96.1 per cent of agricultural output.

From the end of 1968, the DRV started the rehabilitation of its economy. By the end of 1971, industrial output was higher than in 1965. In 1972, following the resumption of US bombings, nearly all the industrial enterprises rebuilt from 1968 to 1971 were destroyed and had to be rebuilt once again when the military operations stopped in 1973.

In the DRV's agriculture, there are about 20,000 co-operatives uniting 95 per cent of all the farms, and over 100 state farms cultivating 5 per cent of the total area under crop. In the war period, the farmers had to overcome tremendous difficulties arising from the enemy bombings, the damage to irrigation systems, and the drafting of many farmers into the armed forces. However, its co-operative system stood every test.

The war did not frustrate the fulfilment of the DRV's cultural development programmes. By mid-1969, the number of schoolchildren and students came to more than 5 million. Tens of thousands of young men and women have been educated in the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries. Over 2.5 million people were enrolled at adult schools. In the 1975/1976 academic year, there were more than 50 higher schools and higher courses with an enrolment of over 100,000 and 200 technical schools with 250,000 students. Political, school, scientific and literary publications were issued in much larger printings. Special mention should be made of the growing publication of Lenin's writings and books describing his life and work. The 4th edition of V. I. Lenin's *Collected Works* was translated and published in Vietnamese, and the Hanoi Suthat (Truth)

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 565.



Publishers and Progress Publishers in Moscow have now issued the first few volumes of Lenin's *Complete Works* translated into Vietnamese.

The top-priority political task facing the Vietnamese people after their great victory—the liberation of South Vietnam—was to complete the country's reunification in accordance with the innermost wishes of the whole Vietnamese nation. On November 15-21, 1975, a Political Consultative Conference on the Reunification of Vietnam met in Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh. It was attended by a 25-member delegation from North Vietnam headed by Truong Chinh, member of the Political Bureau of the VWP Central Committee and Chairman of the DRV National Assembly's Standing Committee, and a 25-member delegation from South Vietnam headed by Pham Hung, member of the Political Bureau of the VWP Central Committee and Secretary of the South-Vietnamese Bureau of the VWP Central Committee. The Conference examined every aspect of the new situation and came to the unanimous conclusion that the Vietnamese revolution had entered a new stage, that of socialist revolution and socialist construction throughout the country. It decided shortly to hold a general election across the whole territory of Vietnam to elect one National Assembly as the country's supreme organ of state power, which would determine the state structure of a unified socialist Vietnam, elect its higher state organs, and adopt the country's new Constitution. On April 25, 1976, the citizens of Vietnam went to the polls to elect the supreme organ of state power and, in an atmosphere of animation and enthusiasm, voted in the best representatives of the Vietnamese people who had waged a 30-year-long heroic struggle for freedom, independence, unity and socialism.

In the Central Committee's Report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU, L. I. Brezhnev said: "The Soviet people take pride in having rendered considerable aid to Vietnam in its struggle against imperialist invaders. Having won independence and national unity at a high price, the people of Vietnam are now working arduously to restore their country and are building the socialist future. Vietnam's victory has opened new horizons for all of Southeast Asia. It was a glorious victory, and will be inscribed forever in the

history of the peoples' struggle for freedom and socialism."<sup>1</sup>

The 4th Congress of the Vietnam Workers' Party in December 1976 emphasised that Vietnam would follow an undeviating line of socialist construction. The Congress decided to rename the VWP, the militant revolutionary vanguard of the Vietnamese people, into the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Soviet-Vietnamese friendship was further strengthened and seasoned in the period of the war. The 23rd Congress of the CPSU resolutely declared: "In 'escalating' the disgraceful war against the people of Vietnam, the aggressors will meet with increasing support of Vietnam by the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist countries. The people of Vietnam shall be masters of their entire land. Nobody will ever succeed in extinguishing the torch of socialism held high by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam."<sup>2</sup> The address of the 24th Congress of the CPSU, "Freedom and Peace to the Peoples of Indochina!", was of tremendous importance.

An agreement ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam was signed in Paris on January 27, 1973. L. I. Brezhnev told the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow in 1973 that the signing of the agreement and the end of the war in Vietnam was "an event of world-wide significance",<sup>3</sup> a victory for the heroic Vietnamese people, the socialist states, and all the peace forces working to stop the imperialist aggression in Indo-China.

The working people of the DRV switched to peacetime construction and successfully fulfilled a two-year plan of rehabilitation and development of the national economy.

In 1974, important successes were achieved in agriculture.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the rice crop that year was 21.4 per cent above the 1973 crop. Gross industrial and handicraft output was 15 per cent higher in value than that of 1973. The annual coal output target was overfulfilled by 12 per cent.

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...*, XXVth Congress of the CPSU, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 23rd Congress of the CPSU, p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Our Course: Peace and Socialism*, Moscow, 1974, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> *Nhan Dan*, December 25, 1974.



In 1974, the generation of electric power was 66 per cent above the 1965 record level. In some leading industries, labour productivity in 1974 went up by 16-18 per cent. By the end of 1974, all the electric-power plants operating before the war had been rebuilt and new ones started. The Thai Nguyen metallurgical plant, which had been ruined, was rebuilt, and six new engineering works were commissioned. All the enterprises of the building and light industries were back in operation. By the end of 1974, state and co-operative trade was double the 1965 level.

1975, the year of the 30th anniversary of the Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War, the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the DRV, the 45th anniversary of the founding of the fine Vietnam Workers' Party, and the 85th anniversary since the birth of Ho Chi Minh, an outstanding leader of the international communist, working-class and national liberation movement, the founder of the VWP and the first President of the DRV, was marked by yet another remarkable success. On April 30, the hated South Vietnamese puppet regime collapsed under the blows of the patriotic armed forces and the insurgent population. This fulfilled Ho Chi Minh's behest about Vietnam's complete national liberation.

The award of the Soviet Order of Friendship Among the Peoples to the Vietnamese-Soviet Friendship Society was a stirring event in the record of relations between the Soviet and Vietnamese peoples, which are based on the Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism. A message of greetings to the Vietnamese-Soviet Friendship Society from L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said: "The Vietnamese people's victories are fresh and convincing evidence of the great viability of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the socialist countries' strength and combat solidarity, and the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces in the struggle for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism."<sup>1</sup>

Having defended socialist North Vietnam and completely liberated South Vietnam, the Vietnamese people, relying on its true friends, has started the construction of a peaceful, independent and socialist Vietnam.

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, May 22, 1975.

In the address calling for peace and freedom to the peoples of Indochina, the 24th Congress of the CPSU emphasised: "The Soviet Union has rendered, and continues to render, every possible aid and support to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in building socialism, reinforcing her defence capability and repulsing imperialist encroachments, and has sided consistently and firmly with the liberation movement in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, which is making an outstanding contribution to peace and to the national independence of the peoples."<sup>1</sup>

The Paris Agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam, signed in January 1973, marked a most important victory for all the Vietnamese patriots.

"The great historical importance of the Vietnamese people's victory lies in the fact that it has set an inspiring example of heroism in the fight for freedom, strengthened the positions of socialism in Southeast Asia, underscored the strength of the forces of peace and socialism, and opened up prospects for a further relaxation of international tension. The Vietnamese people's resolute and selfless struggle, the socialist community's all-round assistance, and the unprecedented international solidarity movement led by the Communist and Workers' parties have proved to be insurmountable barriers in the way of aggression."<sup>2</sup>

The DRV's record shows very vividly that Lenin's ideas are as potent and invincible as ever. Holding high the Leninist banner, the Vietnamese people has overthrown French colonial rule, carried out its victorious August Revolution, scored great successes in socialist construction, repulsed the US aggression, and fought to unify the country.

<sup>1</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, January 28, 1973.



## **PART THREE**

**Leninist Foreign Policy  
and the Peoples of Afghanistan,  
Iran and Turkey  
in Their Fight Against Colonialism**



LENIN AND THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF FRIENDLY SOVIET-AFGHAN RELATIONS**In Support of Afghanistan's Sovereignty**

Lenin was interested in Afghanistan's historical destiny long before the October Revolution. In studying international politics and economics under imperialism, Lenin made a thorough analysis of the imperialist powers' colonial policy in Asia. His *Notebooks on Imperialism* give some valuable assessments of Afghanistan's condition at the time when world capitalism was entering its imperialist stage. These assessments are of paramount importance for an insight into Afghan history. Lenin's statements show his unfailing respect and sympathy for the Afghan people, as well as all the other peoples suffering under imperialist rule.

In dealing with the international positions of Afghanistan, which had been deprived of the right to maintain independent diplomatic relations with other states as a result of the British aggression of 1878-1880, Lenin spoke of the country's tragic lot in the atmosphere of fierce fighting between the imperialist powers for division and redivision of the world. In a world divided up between the imperialists, Lenin wrote, Afghanistan was one of the areas that lacked "sovereignty. They usually pass into the hands of the Great Powers: separate parts of these areas *split off*."<sup>1</sup>

The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, which divided the Middle East into spheres of influence, putting Afghanistan

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 106.



within the sphere of Britain's "exclusive influence", did a great deal to bring about the country's enslavement by the British colonialists. Lenin described the agreement as an act of colonial policy stemming from an interplay of the imperialist aspirations of Britain, Russia and Germany, and the contradictions between them.<sup>1</sup> At its Prague Conference in 1912, the Bolshevik Party exposed the imperialist substance of that alliance—an alliance aimed against the Asian peoples.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin made a close study of the Eastern peoples' liberation struggle against their foreign oppressors, believing that it heralded great national liberation movements which would eventually lead to a collapse of the colonial system of imperialism. In drawing up his "Table of Colonial Seizures and Wars", he kept a scrupulous record of the Afghan people's struggle against the British colonialists.<sup>3</sup> His notes show a deep feeling of sympathy for the Afghans' heroic effort to maintain their statehood. Thus, in his abstracts of various writings on Afghanistan's history, economy and population, Lenin used to mark off passages pointing to the Afghans' fighting qualities, and also those which showed that after a succession of defeats, Britain had begun to treat the Afghans "with the greatest caution".<sup>4</sup>

Lenin's assessments of various concrete events in Afghanistan's recent history are an integral part of his analysis of the imperialist contradictions and the whole situation in Asia on the eve of the first stage of a general crisis of capitalism. His valuable analysis helped the Russian Communists to draw up their programme on the national and colonial question. The slogans of support by the revolutionary proletariat for the anti-imperialist struggle in Asia and other continents, as put forward and implemented by Lenin's Party, played the decisive role in making it possible for Afghanistan to regain its sovereign statehood (1919).

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 687.

<sup>2</sup> See CPSU in *Decisions and Resolutions of Its Congresses, Conferences and CC Plenary Meetings*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 344 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 511.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 727.

## The October Revolution and Afghanistan

The October Revolution in Russia gave a decisive impulse to the powerful upswing in the national liberation movement throughout the East, Afghanistan in particular. Afghanistan's recent historical evolution is part and parcel of one of the processes that were sparked off by the October Revolution and have since become major components of world development: the crisis and break-up of the colonial system of imperialism and the revival, independence and independent development of the once colonial and semi-colonial nations.

The establishment of a socialist state in Russia worked a radical change in Afghanistan's international position and added stature to its national patriotic circles, who wanted the country to regain its sovereignty. Afghan opinion was deeply interested in the documents issued by the Soviet Republic in support of the anti-imperialist struggle in the East. In the spring of 1918, a Persian translation of the Soviet Government's address To All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East reached Afghanistan via Iran.

In 1917 and 1918, the Soviet Government was already taking steps to establish contacts with the governments of the neighbouring Asian countries. In 1918, Soviet Turkestan offered to establish friendly relations with Afghanistan, and although the reactionary regime of Amir Habibullah, acting on British orders, ignored the offer, news of it soon spread across the country and met with the population's sympathies.

The anti-colonialist ideas proclaimed by the Soviet Republic, the scrapping of the fettering treaties that tsarism had imposed on various Asian countries and also of its imperialist agreements with the colonial powers—all that had a strong effect on the Afghan liberation movement.

The Soviet state's principles of equality and national freedom were well in line with the Afghan patriots' vital aspirations. Mohammad Rahim Shiwan, an Afghan who lived through that period, recalls that news of the October Revolution in Russia, "spread across Afghanistan very quickly. Even school teachers told their pupils about it ... and the Afghan press carried reports to that effect. News of the revolution in Russia ... had a powerful effect on public



opinion in Afghanistan, particularly the independence advocates, the young intellectuals. People were saying that Lenin would help the country to win its independence from the British."<sup>1</sup> Russia's successful armed struggle against the British interventionists in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus helped to intensify the patriotic feelings in Afghanistan. The Afghan patriots were quite right to regard friendship and co-operation with Soviet Russia as a real prerequisite for securing the country's independence.

The Young Afghan movement which had emerged in the early 20th century voiced the more radical national patriotic aspirations of the day. The social changes in Afghanistan in the last three decades of the 19th century had created definite prerequisites for bourgeois evolution, and led to the emergence of appropriate ideological trends, which came out into the open at the time of Asia's awakening under the impact of the Russian revolution of 1905-1907. Although the Young Afghans were only a small group of nationalistic bourgeois and landlords, their programme called for independence and constitutional reform and was objectively in accord with the interests of broad sections of the population.

British imperialism, for its part, was using Afghanistan's reactionary regime to turn the country into a stronghold for suppressing anti-colonial movements in Asia, and, most important of all, for backing up the counter-revolutionaries and interventionists in Soviet Central Asia. Lenin said in July 1918 that the British colonialists' intrigues in Afghanistan were aimed towards "extending their colonial possessions, strangling nations, and attacking Soviet Russia".<sup>2</sup>

Britain's policy held grave danger for Afghanistan, for if the British interventionists had established themselves in Central Asia they would inevitably have deprived Afghanistan of its statehood. The Afghan patriots saw this very well, especially since it came to their knowledge that the encircled Soviet Republic was doing its best to strengthen Afghanistan's national statehood. Thus, one article in the 1918

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Rahim Shiwan, *Reminiscences* (handwritten manuscripts, Institute of Oriental Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences), Moscow, 1967, p. 43 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 23.

Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty made it binding on the contracting parties to respect Afghanistan's "political and economic independence and territorial integrity".<sup>1</sup> That was the first act in international law under which Afghan sovereignty was ever recognised.

The situation in Afghanistan changed in February 1919, when the Young Afghans came to power. The new government headed by Amir Amanullah Khan proclaimed Afghanistan's independence and put in train the reforms that were due. In March 1919, Afghanistan approached Britain with a proposal to review the two parties' relations on the basis of recognition of their equality. But the British imperialists rejected that just proposal and demanded that Afghanistan should comply with the old fettering agreements. Their activities in India made it abundantly clear that they were plotting a colonial war against Afghanistan.

In that crucial period, the qualitatively new background to the Afghan people's national liberation struggle that had taken shape after the October Revolution in Russia revealed its full practical importance.

Soviet Russia was the first to welcome Afghanistan's declaration of independence, and on March 27, 1919, the RSFSR Government announced its recognition of Afghanistan's full sovereignty.

It is only natural that the Soviet Union's foreign policy, which dealt a crushing blow at the imperialist colonial system in Asia, has always had a deep effect on public thinking in Afghanistan. This will be seen, for instance, from statements made by Afghan historians and publicists, giving a high assessment of the young Soviet Republic's measures to establish equitable relations with Eastern countries.

Analysing the course of events in Afghanistan in the context of the international repercussions of the October Revolution, the prominent Afghan historian, Mir Ghulam Mohammad Ghubar, writes: "As a result of the socialist revolution in Russia and the emergence of the Soviet Republic, the policy that had been typical of Russian tsarism was changed at root inside the country, in Asia, and in

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in J. L. Magnes, *Russia and Germany at Brest-Litovsk*, New York, 1919, p. 170.



international relations in general. The Soviet Republic sided with the Eastern people's liberation struggle against Western oppression and, in contrast to the European oppressors, regarded their progress and independence as political gains....

"The Soviet Republic reaffirmed the freedom and total independence of the peoples of the East, and recognised their right to sovereign development.... Its policy was undoubtedly beneficial for the free development of the Eastern nations and the protection of their territory from any encroachments.... Soviet Russia was the first power to recognise Afghanistan's independence."<sup>1</sup>

Speaking at an international symposium in Alma Ata in 1969 to mark Lenin's centenary, Mir Hossein Shah, Professor of History at Kabul University, said: "Lenin is well known and deeply respected in Afghanistan. He warmly welcomed the Afghan people's victory in their struggle against colonialism. He was personally involved in solving the major problems of Soviet-Afghan relations, and closely followed the drafting of various agreements that were vital for both countries and of instructions for Soviet diplomats in Kabul."<sup>2</sup>

The British colonialists' blunt refusal to recognise Afghanistan's newly proclaimed sovereignty showed that they were bent on following their old aggressive line in respect of that country.

On April 7, 1919, in the face of imperialist aggression, the head of the Afghan state, Amir Amanullah Khan, sent Lenin a message which said: "I believe there is urgent need for a declaration of unity and friendship for the sake of mankind's unification, peace and benefit.... Since you ... together with your comrades, who are friends of mankind, have assumed the noble and honourable task of protecting men's peace and happiness and have proclaimed the principles of the freedom and equality of nations the world over, I am happy to send you this first friendly message on behalf of free and independent Afghanistan and the Afghan people, who want progress."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the

<sup>1</sup> Mir Ghulam Mohammad Ghubar, *Afghanistan on the Roads of History*, Kabul, 1967, p. 502 (in Dari).

<sup>2</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, October 8, 1969.

<sup>3</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 175.

Afghan Government sent extraordinary ambassadors to the RSFSR and other countries to establish direct relations on an equitable basis.

Amanullah Khan's message was delivered to Tashkent and on May 20 was radioed to Moscow. On May 27, 1919, a reply message signed by Lenin and Mikhail Kalinin, Soviet Russia's first President, arrived in Tashkent and was then sent over to Afghanistan's Government in Kabul.

The reply message said: "Having received your first message on behalf of the free and independent Afghan nation with greetings to the Russian people and with the announcement of Your Majesty's accession to the throne; we hasten to convey on behalf of the Worker-and-Peasant Government and the whole Russian people our reply greetings to the independent Afghan people, which has heroically stood up for its freedom from the foreign oppressors.

"We welcome Your Majesty's intention to establish close relations with the Russian people, and request You to appoint Your official representative to Moscow, and, for our part, offer you to send over to Kabul a representative of the Worker-and-Peasant Government, requesting Your Majesty to instruct all your authorities to let him through without delay. The establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between the two great nations will open up broad opportunities for mutual assistance against any foreign predatory encroachments on the freedom and property of others.

"We are extremely happy to be sending our first greetings to the peoples of Afghanistan, and request Your Majesty to accept friendly salutations from us, who are friends of Your people."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet return message provided invaluable moral and political support for the cause of Afghan independence.

The establishment of friendly relations with neighbouring Afghanistan was also of undoubted importance for the Soviet peoples, who were fighting against the interventionists and internal counter-revolutionaries. The exchange of messages between the governments of the RSFSR

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 174.



and Afghanistan in May 1919 meant their mutual *de jure* recognition in international law.

Soviet Russia responded without any reservations to Afghanistan's call for declaring unity and friendship in the struggle against the imperialist aggressors. One must bear in mind that the "urgent need" for this kind of declaration mentioned in the Amir's message was due to the fact that in May 1919 the British colonialists had started their third war against Afghanistan. Britain's ruling circles did not want to give up their positions in that country, and resorted to the pressures which they had usually applied in the East in the epoch of total imperialist domination. The bourgeois press aired the aggressor's plans in respect of Afghanistan quite openly. The London *National Review* wrote in July 1919: "The only solution seems to be the one we have found necessary in the past—a temporary occupation of a considerable part of the country, including, almost certainly, Kabul and Kandahar, and an endeavour during the breathing-space so obtained to discover a ruler who realises the benefits of a British alliance."<sup>1</sup>

Actual events, however, confounded the plans of the colonialists, who were bent on ignoring the new factor in international affairs—the Leninist foreign policy of the first socialist state. In late May 1919, a diplomatic mission of the Turkestan Soviet Republic, representing the RSFSR, left from Tashkent for Kabul. On its arrival in Kabul, it informed the Afghan Government of Soviet Turkestan's readiness to render various, including military, assistance to the fighting Afghans. On May 28, 1919, Afghanistan's extraordinary ambassador and his staff arrived in Tashkent.

The establishment of Soviet-Afghan diplomatic relations put an end to the foreign policy isolation thrust upon the Afghan state by the British colonialists. The event was of international importance: it had a powerful effect on public opinion in Asia, Afghanistan's neighbours above all. Thus, Kabul's independent policy met with a deep response among the patriotic circles in India, where anti-imperialist action was on the upgrade under the impact of the liberation ideas heralded by the October Revolution in Russia. Afghanistan, which was waging an armed struggle

<sup>1</sup> *The National Review*, No. 487, July 1919, p. 654.

against the colonialists for its national sovereignty and which was the first Asian country to establish friendly contacts with Soviet Russia, had a prominent role to play in the overall anti-imperialist struggle in the East in the period following the October Revolution. Freedom fighters in all the colonial and dependent countries naturally saw Soviet-Afghan anti-colonialist co-operation as an inspiring example of an equitable alliance with Soviet Russia in order to achieve just national goals. An important point to stress, therefore, is that the letter of credence issued to the RSFSR's plenipotentiary representative in Central Asia, Y. Z. Surits, and signed by Lenin on June 23, 1919, put on him the duty to maintain both diplomatic relations with independent Afghanistan and direct contacts with Central Asian governments and all revolutionary organisations working to free the peoples from foreign rule.<sup>1</sup>

The events in Afghanistan, which showed an upsurge in liberation aspirations in the East and growing confidence among the peoples in Soviet Russia's foreign policy, caused obvious anxiety in the imperialist circles. In July 1919, United Press submitted to Lenin a list of questions, one of which went as follows: What are the tactics of the Russian Soviet Republic in respect of Afghanistan, India and other Moslem countries outside Russia? In answering the question, Lenin emphasised that the whole activity of the Soviet Republic in Afghanistan, India and other Moslem countries outside Russia stemmed from a desire to promote the free and independent development of every nationality in every way, from an utter rejection of everything that added to "the oppression of the working people of their own countries and of hundreds of millions of people in the colonies of Asia, Africa, etc., by a small number of 'civilised' capitalists".<sup>2</sup>

It is only natural that public opinion in Afghanistan and other Eastern countries should have been broadly sympathetic with Lenin's foreign policy, and the reactionary British press, which was extremely concerned about "Bolshevik influence" in Asia, was obliged to admit that. "We cannot explain how it happens that Bolshevism has gained a

<sup>1</sup> See *Druzhiba narodov*, No. 11, 1957, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 516.



footing not only in the khanates [Central Asia.—*Author.*], but in Afghanistan and even in India. It would seem incredible that its ... doctrines could make way among Mohammedan peoples if the fact were not there to prove it."<sup>1</sup>

An important thing to note is that even while trying to portray Afghanistan's liberation struggle as a result of "Bolshevik intrigues", Britain's colonial politicians and bourgeois press had had to recognise that from then on they would have to reckon with Kabul's altered international positions.

The new international situation that took shape after the Russian Revolution in October 1917 strengthened the positions of Afghanistan, whose armed forces and a voluntary corps of its various tribes stood their ground against the colonialists, and at the central sector of the front even defeated them. In June 1919, military operations were brought to a halt, and on August 8, Britain and Afghanistan signed an interim peace treaty in Rawalpindi, with Britain's recognition of Afghanistan's sovereignty written into its annex.

Afghanistan's success in its struggle for independence reverberated far and wide. The Afghan patriots' armed struggle against colonialism and Soviet Russia's support for that struggle excited much interest among the captive nations, particularly in Britain's possessions in India.

The Soviet peoples welcomed Afghanistan's newly won independence with great enthusiasm. In October 1919, when the enemy blockade against Soviet Turkestan was brought to an end, Afghanistan's extraordinary embassy in Tashkent headed by Muhammad Wali Khan arrived in Moscow, where they were received by Lenin. People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, recalled that Lenin's reception of the extraordinary mission was an instance of the attention "he devoted to every successive step in our Eastern policy".<sup>2</sup>

A newspaper report on Lenin's meeting with Afghan Ambassador Extraordinary said: "Comrade Lenin met the Ambassador in his private office with the words, 'I am very

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Boulger, "Our Relations with Afghanistan", *The Contemporary Review*, No. 643, London, July 1919, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> G. V. Chicherin, *Articles and Speeches on International Politics*, p. 283.

glad to see in the Red capital of the worker and peasant government the representative of the friendly Afghan people, who are suffering and fighting against imperialist oppression.' To which the Ambassador replied: 'I proffer you a friendly hand and hope that you will help the whole of the East to free itself from the yoke of European imperialism.' During the talk that followed, Lenin said that the Soviet power, the power of the working people and the oppressed, was striving towards the very goal the Afghan Ambassador Extraordinary had spoken about, but that it was necessary that the Moslem East should realise this and help Soviet Russia in her great war of liberation. To this the Ambassador replied that he could assert that the Moslem East realised this and the hour was not far off when the world would see that there was no room for European imperialism in the East."<sup>1</sup>

Muhammad Wali Khan handed Lenin a letter from Amir Amanullah Khan dated April 21, 1919, voicing a desire to establish "friendly links and sincere relations between the two great states".<sup>2</sup>

In his return message to Kabul dated November 27, 1919, Lenin emphasised the Soviet Republic's understanding and consistent support of Afghanistan's national forces which were fighting to free their country from colonialism.

Lenin thanked Amanullah Khan for his greetings and initiative in establishing friendship between the Russian and Afghan peoples, and wrote: "At the very start of the Afghan people's glorious struggle for independence, the worker-and-peasant government of Russia hastened to recognise the new state of affairs in Afghanistan, expressed solemn recognition of its full independence, and sent over its ambassador to maintain lasting and sustained links between Moscow and Kabul.

"The worker-and-peasant government of Russia has instructed its Embassy in Afghanistan to enter into negotiations with the Afghan people's government with a view to signing trade and other friendly agreements."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Documents on National and Colonial Problems*, No. 7 (22), Moscow, 1934, p. 72 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Documents on National and Colonial Problems*, p. 74.



## The Soviet-Afghan Treaty

In December 1919, the RSFSR embassy in Kabul started talks towards concluding a Soviet-Afghan friendship treaty. The original text of the treaty was initialled in September 1920. Speaking before the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1919, Lenin ranked the strengthening of friendly ties with Afghanistan among the Soviet Republic's major foreign policy successes in the East.<sup>1</sup>

Amanullah Khan's official message to Moscow dated December 1, 1920, shows that the Soviet Government's Leninist foreign policy had left a strong impression on Afghanistan. Amanullah Khan congratulated his "High friend Chairman Lenin" on the completion of the Kabul "talks on laying the basis for friendly good-neighbour relations" between the two countries. He wrote: "Since the Government of the Russian Soviet Republic has directed its good feelings and intentions towards an overthrow of imperialism throughout the world, and particularly towards liberating the Eastern peoples from despotism and the world imperialists, and to strengthening the situation, in which each nation can decide the future of its own state, these were the only reasons behind the greatest urge for a settlement of relations between my Royal Government and the Government of the Russian Soviet Republic."<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Mahmud Tarzi wrote to Chicherin at the time: "Please, believe me that my Government intends to sign the Friendship Treaty with the Government of the Russian Soviet Republic chiefly because of our common policy aimed to overthrow the imperialist despotism throughout the world and particularly to liberate all the Eastern peoples, regardless of nationality and religious creed, from the rule and tyranny of world predators—a policy to which Your Excellency's Government has devoted so much attention."<sup>3</sup>

Despite the British colonialists' intrigues to hinder the strengthening of Soviet-Afghan relations,<sup>4</sup> the RSFSR and

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 491.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, Moscow, 1960, pp. 94-95.

<sup>3</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1959, p. 560.

<sup>4</sup> S. P. Kiktev, "Afghanistan", *The History of Foreign Countries. 1917-1945*, Moscow, 1967, p. 245 (in Russian).

Afghanistan signed their Moscow Treaty of February 28, 1921 and it is still effective today.

The Treaty's preamble says that it is "aimed at strengthening the friendly relations between Russia and Afghanistan and safeguarding Afghanistan's true independence". It was the first equitable treaty Afghanistan had ever signed with any great power. The two parties recognised each other's independence, agreed to establish normal diplomatic relations, and undertook "not to enter into any military or political agreements with a third power which would be damaging to either of the Contracting Parties". The Soviet Government granted Afghanistan "unrestricted and dutyfree transit across its territory for any goods it purchases both through its state organs in Russia itself and elsewhere abroad". Soviet Russia also agreed to give its southern neighbour financial and other material assistance,<sup>1</sup> notably to supply it with aircraft, to set up a flying school, deliver 5,000 rifles with a stock of cartridges, build a smokeless powder plant, dispatch Soviet specialists for that purpose, and also to give Afghanistan 1 million rubles' worth of gold as an interest-free loan. A radio station to be installed in Kabul was handed over to the Afghan Government. By late 1923, the Soviet Government had fulfilled all its assistance commitments under the Treaty.<sup>2</sup>

In a message to Amanullah Khan in late April 1921, Lenin characterised the importance of the 1921 Friendship Treaty for the development of Soviet-Afghan relations, and the historical prerequisites behind the two countries' co-operation and the prospects for stronger good-neighbour relations.

Lenin informed the Amir that the All-Russia Central Executive Committee had ratified the Soviet-Afghan Treaty, and wrote: "The Treaty between the two states has formally entrenched the friendship and mutual sympathy between Afghanistan and Russia that have been developing and strengthening for the past two years....

"The Russian Soviet Government and the High Afghan State have common interests in the East; both states treasure

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 550-53.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy History*, Part I, Moscow, 1966, pp. 137, 138 (in Russian).



their independence and want to see each other and all the peoples of the East free and independent. The above circumstances and especially the fact that there are no issues between Afghanistan and Russia that could cause any controversy or even cast a shadow on Russian-Afghan friendship tend to bring the two States closer together. Old imperialist Russia is gone for good, and it is a new, Soviet Russia—the northern neighbour of the High Afghan State—that has offered a hand of friendship and brotherhood to all the peoples of the East, the Afghan people in the first place.

“The High Afghan State was one of the first states whose representatives we were happy to welcome in Moscow, and we are happy to note that the Afghan people’s first Friendship Treaty has been concluded with Russia.

“We are confident that our most sincere desire will come true and that Russia will always be first friend to the High Afghan State for the benefit of both peoples.”<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet-Afghan Treaty strengthened Afghanistan’s domestic and international positions, and played a most important role in the Afghan people’s further struggle to consolidate its independence and fend off Britain’s imperialist attempts to restore its rule in the country. Upon its ratification, Britain had to sign a final peace treaty with Afghanistan (October 1921) on the basis of recognition of its full independence and establishment of normal diplomatic relations. At the same time, the 1921 Soviet-Afghan Treaty undoubtedly helped to improve the Soviet Republic’s own international positions.

So, Afghanistan regained its independence as a consequence of the victory of the October Revolution, carried out in Russia under Lenin’s leadership. Lenin also directed the work done in the world’s first socialist state to render support to the fighting Afghanistan and to establish friendly relations with it. Soviet policy in respect of Afghanistan has always been based on Lenin’s clear-cut propositions, formulated on the principle that the Soviet and the Afghan peoples have common historical interests in the fight against imperialism. In its practical relations with Afghanistan, as well as other Eastern countries, the Soviet Union has always

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, pp. 93-94.

complied with Lenin’s idea on the need to reckon with the concrete historical social development of nations and to regard progressive phenomena in their specific context.

Most remarkable in that respect are the Instructions issued to the RSFSR’s ambassador in Afghanistan in June 1921, just as the principles of the Soviets’ Eastern policy which were being formulated under Lenin’s guidance. The Instructions said: “Our policy is a policy of peace and co-operation between all nations. With the economically backward Eastern nations suffering under the foreign economic yoke, socialist Soviet Russia is their natural friend.

“Our policy in the East is not aggressive, but is a policy of peace and friendship. In your activity, you should repeat that basic thesis over and over again; in Kabul, in particular, you must concentrate your efforts on developing our friendship with Afghanistan. Friendship implies mutual assistance and, on the strength of our desire to do our utmost to help the friendly Afghan state develop and flourish, we are prepared to assist its peaceful endeavour in every way we can. You should study Afghanistan’s needs and requirements and ascertain its governments’ wishes to enable us to do what we can to promote its development and welfare in compliance with and in elaboration of the Russian-Afghan Treaty.

“...We say to the Afghan Government: you have one system—we have another; you have one set of ideals—we have another; but our common urge for our peoples’ full independence and freedom of action brings us together. We are not interfering in your internal affairs....”<sup>1</sup>

### **Following Lenin’s Principles of Friendship and Co-operation**

The Soviet Union’s line in respect of its southern neighbour has been based on a consistent realisation of the principles formulated by Lenin. In the decades that have gone by since the establishment of the “lasting and sustained links between Moscow and Kabul” mentioned by Lenin in his message to the head of the Afghan state,

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, pp. 166-67.



Soviet-Afghan good-neighbour relations have continued to strengthen.

Afghanistan has been following a consistent policy of non-alignment, and its independent, peace-loving, anti-colonialist line is an important contribution to the cause of peace and security in the Middle East.

The Soviet Union's attitude to Afghanistan's national foreign policy concepts is one of deep understanding, as will be seen from the 1931 Soviet-Afghan Treaty on Neutrality and Mutual Non-Aggression. The Treaty has been extended several times (last time, in 1965, for another ten years), for lasting good-neighbour relations are fully in accord with the two countries' mutual interests.

As for Soviet-Afghan economic ties, these provide an example of broad mutually advantageous co-operation between an advanced and developing countries on the principles of equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Afghanistan's priority problem is that of accelerating the development of its productive forces, building up an independent economy and overcoming the country's backwardness. Since 1956, its economic policy has been aimed at mobilising and using the country's national resources on the basis of five-year plans elaborated by government agencies and carried out under their supervision. Soviet-Afghan economic co-operation has done much to promote their implementation.

The Soviet Union is Afghanistan's stable trading partner, for their relations are free of any short-term fluctuations and are planned for long periods ahead, so providing a steady market for traditional Afghan exports. It is only natural, therefore, that since 1954, the USSR has been Afghanistan's biggest trading partner.

The USSR has also been giving Afghanistan broad financial and technical assistance, the scale of which may be judged from the fact that under Afghanistan's first five-year plan, 54 per cent of all the financial resources drawn by the Afghan Government from abroad came from the Soviet Union, and under the second five-year plan—more than 60 per cent.

The Soviet Union has also given Afghanistan financial and technical assistance in building large hydroelectric-

power stations, irrigation works, road and transport projects, and various enterprises in the metal-working, construction, food and other industries. It has helped Afghanistan to look for mineral deposits, notably to prove and start the exploitation of some major natural gas deposits. Long-term plans for joint use of border rivers have been worked out, and many Afghan specialists are being trained at various projects going up with Soviet assistance in Afghanistan and also at Soviet educational establishments. All that helps the country to solve its complex economic problems, reconstruct its economy and lay the groundwork for a modern industry. Economic ties with Afghanistan are also well in line with the USSR's own economic interests. It is a traditional importer of many Afghan export goods, like animal and other farm produce and, recently, natural gas from Northern Afghanistan.

The USSR's Leninist foreign policy enjoys respect in Afghanistan, whose public opinion has a high appreciation of the traditional good-neighbour relations and co-operation with the Soviet Union.

The Leninist principles of Soviet foreign policy have unfailingly served to strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between the Soviet and the Afghan peoples.

Since Afghanistan attained its independence in 1919, it has made some big strides forward in its economy, culture and social relations. Its recent history has seen the Afghans shed many historically obsolescent features in economic and political life, and this is largely due to the ongoing changes in the country's class structure, and the fact that political forces advocating national-patriotic programmes with ever broader social orientations have emerged in the social arena.

The liquidation of monarchy in July 1973 and the proclamation of a republican system was an event of historic importance in Afghanistan's social development. Guided by its unflagging feelings of friendship for the people of that country, the USSR Government was the first in the world to extend official recognition to the Republic of Afghanistan. The friendly messages exchanged by the leaders of the Soviet Union and republican Afghanistan stressed the urge to strengthen Soviet-Afghan relations of good neighbour-hood and all-round co-operation. In this context,



L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said: "We express satisfaction over the fact that our long-standing tradition, more than a half-century old, of good relations with neighbouring Afghanistan is fully maintained now that that ancient country has become a young republic. We wish it success in developing along the path of national and social progress."<sup>1</sup>

The soundness of Soviet-Afghan friendship was demonstrated during the official visit to the USSR in June 1974 of Mohammed Daoud, Afghanistan's head of state and Prime Minister. The Joint Statement of the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan, adopted as a result of the talks in Moscow, said that the two parties "have noted with great satisfaction that the principles of friendship, good neighbourhood, equality, mutual respect of sovereignty, independence and non-interference in domestic affairs, which had been made the basis of Soviet-Afghan relations by V. I. Lenin and the leaders of the Afghan people's struggle for Afghanistan's national independence, and embodied in the Soviet-Afghan treaties of 1921 and 1931, have stood the test of time in the most complicated conditions of the international situation. They fully meet the vital interests of the peoples of both countries and continue to be a solid foundation for friendship and fruitful co-operation between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan."<sup>2</sup>

The parties stressed that the all-round ties between the two countries would be further steadily extended and deepened for the benefit of the Soviet and the Afghan peoples, in the interests of world peace.

The Leninist principles of Soviet foreign policy have unfailingly served to strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between the Soviet and the Afghan peoples.

In February 1975, the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan signed an agreement on economic and technical co-operation, providing for Soviet participation in Afghanistan's long-term programmes of economic and cultural construction. In December 1975, the two parties agreed to extend for another decade their bilateral treaty of neutrality and mutual non-aggression.

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, September 25, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, June 9, 1974.

The traditional nature of Soviet-Afghani friendship was pointed out at the 25th Congress of the CPSU. In giving an account of the USSR's relations with Asian states, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee L. I. Brezhnev described Afghanistan as a good neighbour of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

The historical record of Soviet-Afghani good-neighbourhood is a vivid practical example of the peaceful coexistence of states.

<sup>1</sup> See L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...., XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, p. 19.



**LENINIST FOREIGN POLICY  
AND THE PEOPLES OF IRAN IN THEIR FIGHT  
FOR INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIAL PROGRESS**

**In Defence of the Iranian Revolution  
of 1905-1911**

In dealing with the imperialist powers' colonial policy, Lenin wrote: "Finance capital ... is capable of subjecting, and actually does subject, to itself even states enjoying the fullest political independence.... Of course, finance capital finds most 'convenient', and derives the greatest profit from, a *form* of subjection which involves the loss of the political independence of the subjected countries and peoples. In this respect, the semi-colonial countries provide a typical example of the 'middle stage'. It is natural that the struggle for these semi-dependent countries should have become particularly bitter in the epoch of finance capital, when the rest of the world has already been divided up."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin ranked Iran<sup>2</sup>—a feudal agrarian state with fabulous oil deposits and a strategic position—among these semi-colonial countries, the struggle over which became particularly bitter in the early 20th century.

Lenin repeatedly referred to Iran as to a hotbed of contradictions between the imperialist states in the Middle East. That was where the interests of Britain, Germany, the USA and tsarist Russia clashed in their fight for raw material sources, capital-investment spheres and monopoly profits.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 259-60.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 257.

Britain and tsarist Russia had the strongest hold on the country, where they owned oil, telegraph, road-building and other major concessions, and were in control of the country's finances, fettering it by numerous loans. By the start of the First World War, Iran's debts to Britain and Russia had reached nearly £7 million, an enormous figure in that period.

Lenin watched the Iranian peoples' anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle with great attention. He came out warmly in defence of the Iranian revolution of 1905-1911, which had been sparked off by the 1905-1907 revolution in Russia.

Lenin saw the Iranian revolution of 1905-1911 as a sign that the Iranian peoples were awakening to political life and to struggle for democracy and national independence. He believed that Iran, as well as the whole of Asia, had entered the epoch of bourgeois-democratic national liberation movements. In his work *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* Lenin wrote: "In Eastern Europe and Asia the period of bourgeois-democratic revolutions did not begin until 1905. The revolutions in Russia, Persia, Turkey and China, the Balkan wars—such is the chain of world events of *our* period in our 'Orient'. And only a blind man could fail to see in this chain of events the awakening of a *whole series* of bourgeois-democratic national movements which strive to create nationally independent and nationally uniform states."<sup>1</sup>

In his *Notebooks on Imperialism*,<sup>2</sup> Lenin spoke of the major events of the 1905-1911 revolution in Iran—the establishment of the Majlis and the uprising in Tabriz. He believed that the climax of the Iranian revolution came in 1909,<sup>3</sup> with the march on Tehran staged by the *fedahin*<sup>4</sup> from Resht and *bakhtiari*<sup>5</sup> units, and the deposition of the double-dyed reactionary Mohammed Ali Shah.

Lenin followed the developments in Iran with close attention and received detailed reports from some Trans-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, pp. 701, 703.

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> The *fedahin*—members of voluntary revolutionary squads made up of farmers, workers and the petty urban bourgeoisie.

<sup>5</sup> The *bakhtiari*—semi-nomad tribes in Western Iran.



caucasian Bolsheviks who were in Iran at the time. A point to note is that the Transcaucasian Bolsheviks played an important part in spreading Marxist ideas in Iran, particularly during the revolution of 1905-1911. They gave the Iranian revolutionaries substantial political, organisational and material support.

In the autumn of 1909, Grigory Orjonikidze, an outstanding Communist Party leader, lived in Iran. He stayed there till the summer of 1910, working in close contact with the Iranian revolutionaries and taking part in the *fedahin* march on Resht and Ardabil. On his initiative, an international club was set up in Resht, whose activists organised lectures, held talks and spread social-democratic literature.

Even before the 1905-1911 revolution in Iran, the RSDLP's central newspaper, *Iskra*, and other Marxist publications were being brought into Russia via Iran, particularly Tabriz. Thus, in a letter to L. Y. Galperin in 1901, Lenin wrote: "A further shipment to Persia via Vienna was made only recently, so it is premature to talk of failure. It may be successful. Inform the addressee in Tabriz that he will be receiving books from Berlin and write us when they are received."<sup>1</sup>

Orjonikidze kept Lenin in touch with the revolutionary developments in Iran. So, on June 4, 1910, he wrote Lenin from Resht:

"Dear Comrade!

"I have received your letter and minutes [documents of the Paris Plenary Session of the RSDLP Central Committee on January 15-February 5, 1910.—*Ed.*]... Up to now, we have received everything you have sent us... The transport for Persia arrives from France in a sealed package, which is opened only in Enzeli. We have got the *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata* [Social-Democratic Herald], *Dnevnik Sotsial-Demokrata* [Social-Democratic Diary], and Central Organ No. 13. I have written to the Enzeli comrades to say that they should also take care of the money. As soon as I receive it, I will send it over by postal order.

"The Persians are thinking of setting up a social-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 72.

democratic organisation; I may send a report about this to the Central Organ.

"With comradely greetings,  
"Sergo."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin strongly denounced the Russian and British governments for their support of the Iranian reactionaries and their intervention in Iran in order to put down the revolutionaries. In his article, "Inflammable Material in World Politics" he pointed out that a counter-revolution had taken place in Persia: "The exploits of the Cossacks in mass shootings, punitive expeditions, manhandling and pillage in Russia are followed by their exploits in suppressing the revolution in Persia."<sup>2</sup> He denounced Britain's policy and said that Britain was "pharisaically washing her hands of the affair, and maintaining a demonstratively friendly neutrality towards the Persian reactionaries and supporters of absolutism". He wrote in connection with Britain's ruthless reprisals against the revolutionaries in the south of Iran: "The British Liberal bourgeoisie ... are more and more frequently, frankly and sharply demonstrating what *brutes* the highly 'civilised' European 'politicians', men who have passed through the high school of constitutionalism, can turn into when it comes to a rise in the mass struggle against capital and the capitalist colonial system, i.e., a system of enslavement, plunder and violence."<sup>3</sup>

On Lenin's initiative, the Sixth (Prague) All-Russia Conference of the RSDLP in January 1912 adopted a special resolution, "The Russian Government's Attack on Persia", which said: "The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party protests against the rapacious policy of the tsarist gang which is bent on suppressing the freedom of the Persian people and, in pursuing this policy, does not shrink from carrying out the most barbarous and infamous acts.

"The Conference places on record that the alliance between the Russian and British governments which the Russian liberals are widely advertising and supporting in every way, is directed primarily against the revolutionary

<sup>1</sup> G. K. Orjonikidze, *Articles and Speeches*, Vol. I, 1910-1926, Moscow, 1956, pp. 1-2 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



movement of the democratic forces in Asia, and that, by virtue of this alliance, the Liberal government of Britain is a party to the bloody atrocities perpetrated by the tsarist government.

"The Conference expresses its unqualified sympathy for the struggle waged by the Persian people and, particularly, by the Persian Social-Democratic Party, which has lost so many of its members in the fight against the tsarist butchers."<sup>1</sup>

In early 1915, Lenin wrote that the ongoing world war was, "in substance, a struggle between Britain, France and Germany for the partition of colonies and for the plunder of rival countries; on the part of tsarism and the ruling classes of Russia, it is an attempt to seize Persia, Mongolia ... etc."<sup>2</sup>

Iran did not take part in the First World War, but the belligerent states brought their troops into the country and turned it into another battleground. In his *Notebooks on Imperialism*, Lenin wrote: "Formally, Persia is neutral in this war. In actual fact, however, both the Russians and the British, on the one hand, and the Turks and the Germans, on the other, are *fighting* and plundering *on Persian territory*."<sup>3</sup>

In May 1917, Lenin expressed his indignation over the secret treaty between tsarist Russia and Britain on the partition of Iran, describing it as a dirty plunderous treaty. Iran, he said, is "being rent piecemeal by thugs that are waging a war of 'liberation'".<sup>4</sup> "The consuls (of the three Great Powers) resort to shameless intrigues, hire gangs, incite conflicts..."<sup>5</sup>

By 1917, foreign troops had occupied almost the whole of Iran, Britain's positions there being particularly strong. Iran was now 90 per cent a colony.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, pp. 484-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 39, p. 719.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 340.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 39, p. 720.

<sup>6</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 340.

## The October Revolution and Iran

The October 1917 Socialist Revolution in Russia dealt a crushing blow at the colonial system of imperialism.

Characterising its importance for the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries of the East, I. Iskenderi, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Party of Iran (Tudeh), wrote: "The Great October Socialist Revolution has served as a powerful source of inspiration for the colonial and dependent peoples in their fight for liberation from imperialist oppression and reactionary rule."<sup>1</sup>

The First World War had plunged Iran into economic dislocation, famine, epidemics and foreign occupation, so that Lenin's Decree on Peace, which called for an end to the war and withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of other countries, was fully in accord with the demands of broad sections of the Iranian people. The 1907 and 1915 Anglo-Russian agreements partitioning Iran into spheres of influence were among the tsarist agreements abrogated by the Soviet Government.

The address to the Moslems of Russia and the East issued by the Council of People's Commissars reaffirmed once again that the Soviet Government headed by Lenin was repudiating tsarist Russia's imperialist policy. The address said, among other things, that "the Treaty partitioning Persia has been torn up and destroyed. As soon as military operations are brought to an end, our troops will be withdrawn from Persia and the Persians will be free to decide their own future."<sup>2</sup>

The address called on the peoples of the East, the Iranian people among them, to fight their foreign imperialist oppressors. "It is not Russia or its revolutionary government that are seeking to enslave you, but the European imperialist predators....

"Overthrow these predatory oppressors of your countries!... Lose no time in shaking off their age-old yoke!"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, November 12, 1974.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



On January 3, 1918, a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars chaired by Lenin discussed the evacuation of Russian troops from Iran,<sup>1</sup> and by April 1918 all Russian troops had been withdrawn. A special provision was included in the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, on the Soviet delegation's insistence, providing for recognition of full independence and inviolability of Iran and Afghanistan.

The Iranian people, to quote Bravin, a Soviet diplomatic agent in Tehran, were very enthusiastic about the Soviet Government's friendly policy aimed at strengthening Iran's national independence and sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> A note sent by the Iranian Government to the RSFSR Council of People's Commissars voiced its gratitude "for the act of justice towards Persia".<sup>3</sup>

Even Right-wing Iranian leaders could not deny Lenin's role in the cause of Iran's national revival.

Saiyid Zia ud-Din Tabatabai was in Petrograd at the time of the October Revolution. He recalled: "I saw Lenin quite closely and heard him speak on many occasions; I knew Russian and understood him very well. You cannot imagine the powerful impression he made on me by his remarkable speech from the balcony....

"Do you know what Lenin said on that great day? He started his revolutionary speech by saying that the Soviet Government was abrogating the treaty that had partitioned Iran between Russia and Britain, renouncing all its privileges and the tsarist government's financial loans in Iran, and eliminating the capitulations regime. For me, Lenin's words symbolised the Iranian people's road to freedom and salvation."<sup>4</sup>

Seid Hassan Tagi Zade wrote: "The Great Russian Revolution was, in effect, something of a godsend for Iran.... That revolution and the overthrow of the imperial regime were, for Iran, the greatest historic event of the past 150 years, and there is no doubt at all that if that revolution

<sup>1</sup> See M. I. Trush, *Lenin's Foreign Policy Activity, 1917-1920. A Daily Account*, Moscow, 1963, p. 81 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 713.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Saiyid Zia ud-Din Tabatabai, "Reminiscences", *Tehran Mossavar*, No. 1122, 1964 (in Persian).

had not occurred at the end of the First World War, both Iran and Turkey would have long since disappeared."<sup>1</sup>

Iran was one of the first countries to recognise Soviet Russia (in December 1917), but normal diplomatic relations between the two countries were only established in early 1921. That was due to the reactionary, anti-national policy of Iran's Anglophile governments of the day and the intrigues of the imperialist states, which strained to prevent the development of friendly relations between Iran and Soviet Russia.

Once the Russian troops were withdrawn from Iran, Britain occupied almost the whole of its territory and turned it into a bridgehead in its fight against the Soviet Republic. Lenin told a joint sitting of the Executive Committee on July 29, 1918, that Britain had "swallowed up the whole of Persia" and had "long been moving up its forces for seizing the Southern Caucasus".<sup>2</sup>

The Versailles Treaty served to strengthen Britain's influence in Iran to an even greater extent. Lenin wrote: "What then is the Treaty of Versailles? It is an unparalleled and predatory peace, which has made slaves of tens of millions of people.... Turkey, Persia and China have been enslaved"<sup>3</sup> and were being dismembered alive.<sup>4</sup>

Lenin attached much importance to the establishment and strengthening of good-neighbour relations between the Soviet Republic and Iran. In the summer of 1918, I. O. Kolomiitsev was sent to Iran on Lenin's instructions as the first Soviet diplomatic representative, but the Iranian Government refused to recognise him and he had to leave the country. In 1919, Kolomiitsev made another trip to Iran in order to secure an adjustment of Soviet-Iranian relations and inform the Iranian people of the RSFSR Government's Address to the Government and People of Persia issued on June 26, 1919. In its Address, the Soviet Government reaffirmed its repudiation of tsarist Russia's colonial policy

<sup>1</sup> Tagi Zade, *A History of the First Period of the Revolution and the Constitutional Movement in Iran*, Tehran, 1958, pp. 66-67 (in Persian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 218.



in Iran and of all its privileges and concessions in that country, and declared that it was handing over to the Iranian people all the valuables on Iranian territory that had once belonged to Russian capitalists.<sup>1</sup>

But that important document did not reach the Iranian people: Kolomiitsev was shot on Iranian territory by Russian whiteguards led by the British.

The Soviet Government did not recognise the Anglo-Iranian agreement of August 9, 1919, which in effect reduced Iran to the status of a British colony. In its Address to the Workers and Peasants of Persia, the RSFSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs described that agreement as an "outrage perpetrated by the British together with the Persian Government".<sup>2</sup> The Address was of exceptional importance for the Iranian people, for it gave them hope that the British could be fought. The Address said: "The working masses of Russia regard the working masses of Persia as their friends and brothers, and as their future comrades in the revolutionary struggle for the total liberation of labour..."<sup>3</sup>

Even these brief extracts from some of the Soviet Government's early documents show very well that it followed a selfless, generous and friendly policy in respect of Iran. All its foreign policy moves show the Soviet people's sincere desire to help the Iranian peoples get rid of their semi-colonial dependence and establish a truly sovereign state.

Despite the reactionary regime imposed on Iran by the Vossuq-ed-Dowleh Government and the British military authorities, broad sections of the Iranian people learnt about the October Revolution's liberation ideas and the Soviet Government's peaceful Leninist foreign policy, and, moreover, had a warm feeling of sympathy for their northern neighbour, the young socialist state. Orjonikidze said in 1918: "We are proud to say that the whole Moslem world, the whole of the East, now looks to Soviet Russia and Moscow rather than Britain or France."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> G. K. Orjonikidze, *Articles and Speeches*, Vol. I, pp. 57-58.

From the start of 1918, various democratic organisations, parties and trade unions began emerging throughout the country. In Iranian Azerbaijan, Sheik Muhammad Hiabani and his followers set up an Azerbaijan Democratic Party, which sought, among other things, to expel the British imperialists from Iran and democratise the country.

Adalet, a social-democratic party organised in 1916 by Iranian workers who had worked abroad, stepped up its activities. Upon their return to Iran from the neighbouring Soviet republics after the October Revolution, these workers took a most active part in the revolutionary movement of the day.

As the Red Army drove out the British from Turkestan and the Transcaucasus, and the Soviet power was restored in Baku and Ashkhabad, the peoples of Iran saw that it was possible to defeat the British imperialists and rose up in vigorous struggle against them.

The national liberation movement in Iran in the early post-1917 years involved workers, peasants, handicraftsmen, progressively-minded merchants, the smaller landowners, intellectuals and the clergy. The movement, sparked off by the October Revolution, was aimed against the British imperialists' colonialist policy and the feudal regime.

The national liberation movement reached its peak in 1920 and 1921, with the armed uprisings against the British imperialists and the Shah's government in Iranian Azerbaijan, Gilan and Khurasan, as a result of which these provinces refused allegiance to the central authorities and set up their own democratic government.

On April 7, 1920, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party started an uprising in Tabriz. The insurgents established a national government headed by Muhammad Hiabani, which called for the immediate abrogation of the 1919 Anglo-Iranian agreement and prompt establishment of friendly relations with Soviet Russia.

The arrival of a Soviet flotilla in Enzeli in May 1920 gave a fresh impetus to the national liberation movement in Gilan, which had started during the First World War. The flotilla came to clear the port from the whiteguards and the British, who were using it to supply their units fighting against



Soviet Russia, and to restore free and safe navigation in the Caspian Sea.<sup>1</sup>

The British troops retreated, and this marked the beginning of their pull-out from Iran. An annual report at the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets by the RSFSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs said that "Britain's military prestige in the East has suffered an irreparable blow".<sup>2</sup>

The Enzeli population and the Iranian authorities gave the Soviet flotilla a ceremonial welcome. Mirza Kuchik Khan, leader of the guerrilla liberation movement in Gilan, was also present at the reception and, in a talk with the member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasian Front G. K. Orjonikidze and the commander of the Caspian Flotilla F. F. Raskolnikov, proposed joint action against the British.

The Gilan insurgents proclaimed a republic and formed a provisional revolutionary government headed by Kuchik Khan. Its main slogans were a fight against the British imperialists, an alliance with the RSFSR and various democratic reforms.

Meanwhile, the Soviet ships had completed their task and left Iranian waters. On June 6, 1920, Raskolnikov reported to Moscow that the Soviet expeditionary corps had been disbanded and the ships of the Caspian Flotilla had sailed for Baku.

In a report on the Soviet Government's foreign policy and relations with Eastern countries, Chicherin told a sitting of the Central Executive Committee on June 17, 1920 that the Soviet people were gradually coming into direct contact with the peoples of the East fighting against capitalist rule, first with the Persian masses when the remnants of the Denikin fleet took refuge in Enzeli, where Soviet troops were landed to finish off enemy; and that Enzeli had been cleared and the Soviet army and navy units had left Persian territory and Persian waters.<sup>3</sup>

On June 22-24, 1920, the Adalet Party held its first

<sup>1</sup> See *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, pp. 542-43.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 666.

<sup>3</sup> See G. V. Chicherin, *Articles and Speeches on International Politics*, p. 168.

congress in Enzeli (electing Lenin as honorary chairman), where the Party was renamed the Iranian Communist Party. At that time, it had between 8,000 and 10,000 members, and joined the Comintern.

The Party set itself the task of taking the lead in the country's national liberation movement and setting up a common national front of struggle against the foreign imperialists and the big feudals and compradores, their mainstay in the country.<sup>1</sup>

The ICP was the first Communist Party in the countries of the East. It was a true champion of the interests of the Iranian working people and all the oppressed nationalities, and did a great deal to promote the country's democratic movement.

The early documents of the Iranian Communist Party—its Rules, Programme, *Theses on the Socio-Economic Situation in Iran and the Tactics of the Iranian Communist Party (Adalet)*, and its leaflets, appeals and addresses to the Iranian people—were of major importance not only for the development of the national liberation movement in the country, but also for the spread of Marxist-Leninist ideas.

The First Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku from September 1 to 7, 1920 played an important role in advancing the national liberation movement in Asia.

It was attended by 201 delegates from Iran, prominent revolutionaries Gaidar-khan Amu-ogly and Sultan Zade among others.

The Congress decided to send a 25-member delegation to Moscow to meet Lenin, and two of these 25 were Iranians, Eivazov and Akhundov.

The national liberation movement in Iran following the October Revolution in Russia was of exceptional importance for the country's life. It did a great deal towards liberating Iran from British occupation, and towards a break-down of the Anglo-Iranian agreement of 1919, and subsequently led to the overthrow of the Kajar monarchy.

Although the Shah's government in alliance with the British imperialists managed to put down the 1918-1922 movement, it left a deep mark on Iran's history and

<sup>1</sup> *Programme of the Iranian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Section of the Third, Communist International (Iran)*, 1921, p. 4 (in Persian).



provided eloquent proof of the Iranian people's urge for national independence, democratisation and lasting good-neighbour ties with the Soviet Republic.

Many spokesmen of the ruling circles, to say nothing of the broad masses, who wanted a lasting alliance with the Soviet Republic, realised that the severing of Iran's ties with the Soviet Republic had a bad effect on Iran's political and economic situation. So, in the autumn of 1920, the Moshir ed-Dowleh government sent Moshaver ol-Mamalek as a plenipotentiary representative to Moscow, where he was to hold talks with the Soviet Government on the establishment of diplomatic relations. In November 1920, the two parties started talks on the signing of a Soviet-Iranian treaty, which was to be based on the Soviet Government's address to the peoples of Iran of June 26, 1919.

### **A Treaty of Friendship and Good-Neighbour Relations**

A plenary sitting of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee on December 7, 1920 considered and approved Chicherin's proposals on the principles of a treaty with Iran.<sup>1</sup>

On December 10, the Iranian delegation was received by Lenin at its request.

In his reminiscences, entitled *The Most Humane Man*, Hamid Sayah, a member of the Iranian mission, recalls: "I find it hard to convey the feelings I had as we pulled up at the entrance of the Kremlin building where the leader of the revolution lived and worked: I was about to see the man who had issued a daring challenge to the whole old world, the man who was building up new relations between men and nations, and was holding out a hand of brotherly friendship to Persia, my own country. I was greatly excited.

"Upon entering Lenin's office, I was astounded to see its modest furniture: a plain table, chair and armchair, a small bookstand, and no sign of ornaments or luxury of any kind. I'd never seen a more modest office.

<sup>1</sup> See A. N. Heifets, *Soviet Russia and Neighbouring Countries of the East (1918-1920)*, p. 261.

"Lenin rose to his feet with a vigorous gesture, greeted us and asked what language we preferred to use. Our ambassador chose French. When he saw that there were three of us, Lenin walked briskly into the secretary's room and brought back two chairs. Imagine Lenin himself bringing us chairs! We were naturally embarrassed. I sat down next to Lenin.... We had a business-like but informal discussion on various important questions of Iranian-Soviet relations....

"Lenin said: 'The whole of Russia's Eastern policy will be diametrically opposed to that of the imperialist powers. In contrast to the imperialists' predatory, expansionist policy, our stand is one of selfless friendship and non-interference in your country's internal affairs....'

"I left Lenin's office with the conviction that the Soviet power was bound to win out, if only because its leader was a man so brilliant and humane."<sup>1</sup>

The Moscow talks on the Soviet-Iranian Treaty were completed by the end of 1920. Listing the successes of Soviet foreign policy, a policy which started by recognising the sovereignty and independence of all states, Lenin told the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on December 22, 1920: "We can also welcome the forthcoming signing of a treaty with Persia, friendly relations with whom are assured by the fact that the fundamental interests of all peoples suffering from the yoke of imperialism coincide."<sup>2</sup>

On February 5, 1921, Lenin signed the credentials (in Russian and French) issued by the Council of People's Commissars to F. A. Rothstein concerning his appointment as the RSFSR's plenipotentiary representative in Iran.

On February 12, 1921, Lenin received Rothstein and had a talk with him just before he left for Iran.

On February 26, 1921, the Soviet-Iranian Treaty was signed in Moscow. It was the first equitable treaty Iran had ever had with any great power; it meant the Soviet Government's recognition of Iran's sovereignty and independence, once again spelling out the message of Lenin's foreign policy in respect of the Eastern countries.

<sup>1</sup> *The Living Lenin. Reminiscences by Contemporaries*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 267-69 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 491.



The Treaty's Preamble said: "In its desire to see the Persian people independent, prosperous and in full possession of all its resources, Russia's Soviet Government abrogates all the treaties and agreements signed by the old tsarist government with Persia and detracting from the Persian people's rights, and declares these to be null and void."<sup>1</sup>

The Treaty of 1921 cancelled all the concessions that had been granted to Russian capitalists in Iran before the October Revolution. The Soviet Government also renounced the regime of capitulations imposed on Iran by the imperialist powers, and handed over to the Iranian people without compensation the large store of valuables and property which had been held by the tsarist government and Russian capitalists in Iran.

In order to strengthen friendly relations, the Treaty provided for a renewal of trade links between the two states. The two sides also pledged non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

The Treaty established a new kind of relationship between the two countries, and helped to strengthen Iran's political and economic independence. It has always served and continues to serve as a solid foundation for friendly Soviet-Iranian relations and their further development. It has been a point of departure for various subsequent treaties, agreements and conventions between the USSR and Iran.

The Treaty did a great deal towards helping Iran to put an end to the British occupation and the fettering Anglo-Iranian agreement of August 9, 1919.

The Iranian people, their democratic organisations and the press welcomed the signing of the Treaty. The semi-official *Iran* gave a detailed account of this under the headline: "Alliance with Russia Spells Salvation for Persia."

After the Treaty was signed, Lenin continued to attend to Soviet-Iranian relations, particularly the question of resuming the traditional trade links between the two countries. In a note to L. A. Fotieva on June 21, 1921, Lenin wrote: "Comrade Belgov is going to Persia as a representative of

<sup>1</sup> For the full text of the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921 see, *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 536-44.

the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade. He used to work with the Ninth Army. Menzhinsky and Manuilsky know him. He also worked with the Far Eastern Republic. Please telephone Lezhava, Voikov, Menzhinsky, Sklyansky and Molotov for information about Belgov. Do this *today*."<sup>1</sup> Lenin also asked his secretary to invite Belgov for a personal talk.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin insisted on scrupulous non-interference in Iran's internal affairs; he denounced in the most decisive and uncompromising manner the fact that some Baku functionaries were violating this policy.

Lenin approved of Rothstein's correct line in the matter of the Gilan revolution, and wrote him on August 13, 1921: "I seem to be in full agreement with your circumspect policy in Persia. I have not heard the 'other side', but I do not think that your main considerations could be refuted."<sup>3</sup>

At a sitting of the Central Committee's Political Bureau on October 3, 1921, Lenin raised the question of violations by some Baku functionaries of the Soviet policy line with respect to Iran. The Political Bureau adopted a decision condemning these violations, and made S. M. Kirov, member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Central Committee, responsible for ensuring compliance with that decision. He was to ensure scrupulous non-interference in the armed struggle between the insurgents and the Shah's troops which was going on in Gilan and the neighbouring provinces in Northern Iran in 1920 and 1921. In October 1921, the RSFSR Revolutionary Military Council sent a special military commission to Baku and placed it at Kirov's disposal in order to enable him to exercise that control.

On October 15, 1921, Lenin drafted a Political Bureau resolution pointing out, among other things, the need for the most scrupulous compliance with the Political Bureau's decision of October 3, 1921, condemning the departures from the Soviet Government's policy line on Iran.

Towards the end of 1921, the Political Bureau held debates on Iran several times. At a sitting on November 11,

<sup>1</sup> See M. I. Trush, *Lenin's Foreign Policy Activity. 1921-1923. A Daily Account*, Moscow, 1967, p. 175 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 254.



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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 254.



1921, Lenin gave a report on Iran, and on November 17, 1921, he attended another sitting to hear Chicherin's report, "On Our Persian Policy".

In a letter to Stalin on November 19, 1921, Chicherin set out his ideas on the RSFSR's foreign policy in the East. The Soviet Republic, he wrote, should not confine itself to political support for the national liberation movement in the East, but should also help the young national states to develop their economy and train cadres. He said that in respect of Afghanistan, Mongolia and Iran that policy had yielded some positive results, and that a similar line had to be followed in respect of Turkey.

Lenin read Chicherin's letter and added a postscript: "Comrade Stalin:

"Will you let me have a copy of your reply to Chicherin? I think he is right.

"20/XI. *Lenin.*"<sup>1</sup>

Lenin took part in the Central Committee's Plenary Meeting on December 28, 1921, which had Iran on its agenda.

\* \* \*

The Iranian people, like other Eastern peoples, mourned over Lenin's death and continue to cherish his memory. The newspaper *Sedaye Mardom* wrote: "The wise and realistic policy followed by Lenin, the great leader of the socialist revolution, opened a new chapter in Iran's relations with the Soviet Union, and put an end to the tsarist policy of coercion."<sup>2</sup> The weekly *Khandaniha* wrote: "Lenin stands out even among the men who have played an exceptional role in world history: by carrying out the revolution in Russia, he changed the course of present-day history."<sup>3</sup>

The Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, told a group of Soviet correspondents that Lenin had played an important role in doing away with the tsarist government's inequitable and exploitative treaties with Iran.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 381, 691-92, Note 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Sedaye Mardom*, July 24, 1967.

<sup>3</sup> *Khandaniha*, October 7, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> See *Izvestia*, November 1, 1967.

One will come across Lenin's name—a name cherished by all progressive mankind—in many Iranian newspapers, magazines and works of fiction. For the Iranian people, this name spells friendship with the Soviet people, a friendship engendered by the October Revolution.

### Lenin's Ideas on Peaceful Coexistence and Iran

The Soviet Government's foreign policy, based on Lenin's principles of good-neighbour co-operation between nations, ever closer economic and cultural links, and stronger peace, is well in accord with the Iranian people's vital interests.

The Soviet Republic's friendly policy with respect to Iran, its vigorous efforts to protect Iran's national interests and support its legitimate demands in international affairs, and its selfless and systematic assistance led to a further development of Soviet-Iranian relations.

In a letter to the USSR's plenipotentiary representative in Iran, B. Shumyatsky, on March 1, 1923, Chicherin set out the main objectives of Soviet policy in Iran. He wrote: "Tsarist policy with respect to Iran was aimed at holding back its independent development, whereas the Soviet Union aims to do its best to help Iran advance, develop its productive forces and fight off the Western countries' encroachments on its independence."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Government moulded its foreign policy accordingly and gave Iran its all-out economic support. It was only owing to Soviet policy that the Reza Shah government was able to cancel the capitulations regime and strengthen the state's sovereignty. Iran's ruling circles recognised the Soviet Union's role in bringing about that important event. Minister Teimurtash of Reza Shah's court said: "Persia will always remember that the Soviet Government was the first to renounce all its privileges of its own accord, and that is the only reason why we have been able to get rid of the capitulations."

Mixed Soviet-Iranian societies set up in the 1920s, like Persian Cotton, Persian Silk, Persian Oil and Russo-Persian

<sup>1</sup> S. Zarnitsky and A. Sergeev, *Chicherin*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 195-96 (in Russian).



Sugar, greatly helped Iran to build up its national economy and improve its financial position.

Soviet specialists helped Iran to build various projects, including the country's first powerful radio station. The Soviet Union also gave it considerable assistance in the fight against pests and epidemics.

The Iranian Government was grateful for the Soviet Government's friendly assistance.<sup>1</sup>

From the very outset, Soviet foreign policy with respect to Iran has always been friendly and neighbourly, although the anti-national line followed by some Iranian governments and foreign imperialist intrigues have sometimes caused complications.

The Soviet Union's friendly attitude to the Iranian peoples will be seen from many facts which are highly important both in international terms and also for Iran's sovereignty. Thus, soon after the Second World War ended, the Soviet Union came out forcefully against the US-British proposal that the USA, Britain and the Soviet Union should set up a "tripartite commission on Iran" with sweeping powers of control over the country's domestic affairs.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Government's refusal to take part in a "tripartite commission" of that kind frustrated the colonialist designs of the USA and Britain, for which it earned the Iranian people's gratitude.<sup>3</sup>

In October 1951, the Soviet Union championed Iran's interests in the UN Security Council in connection with Britain's complaints over Iran's nationalisation of the oil industry and the winding up of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The Soviet delegate declared that the nationalisation of the oil industry was the Iranian people's internal affair, and came out against the inclusion of that issue on the Security Council's agenda,<sup>4</sup> for that would be violating not only the Iranian people's sovereign rights, but also the UN Charter, which provided for non-interference in a state's internal affairs.

The Iranian people paid high tribute to the Soviet

<sup>1</sup> See *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, Moscow, 1962, p. 626.

<sup>2</sup> See *Pravda*, May 6, 1946.

<sup>3</sup> See *Iran*, January 10, 1946.

<sup>4</sup> See *Pravda*, October 21, 1951.

Union's support. The newspaper *Siasete Ma* wrote that the Soviet Union had foiled the Anglo-US imperialist plans to enslave Iran through the Security Council, and had produced a marked effect on the Iranian people's fight for the nationalisation of the oil industry.<sup>1</sup>

Various important border and financial issues that arose during the Second World War have been settled to the two parties' mutual satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> During his visit to Iran in November 1963, Leonid Brezhnev said: "The settlement of the border disputes between the USSR and Iran has set all other states an example of settlement of disputes by peaceful means, through negotiation, with mutual regard for each other's interests. In the present conditions, this example is of considerable international importance."<sup>3</sup>

The development of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Iran in the mid-1950s, the resolution of various controversial issues and the signing of some important Soviet-Iranian agreements caused much anxiety among the US and British imperialists and the reactionary circles in Iran connected with them. In late 1959, US interference in Soviet-Iranian relations resulted in their marked worsening, and the tensions persisted until 1962.

In September 1962, Iran's new Prime Minister Assadollah Alam declared that his government would work to improve its relations with the Soviet Union.

As a result of bilateral talks on security matters, Soviet-Iranian relations took a turn for the better. The Soviet Government welcomed an official statement by the Iranian Government saying that it would not allow any foreign states to maintain any missile bases on its territory. That important move dispelled the tensions in Soviet-Iranian relations and struck a blow at the US plans to use its military ally's territory as a bridgehead for aggression against the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup>

Now that its relations with the USSR have improved, Iran can draw on Soviet financial and technical assistance in the construction of important industrial projects, particularly in the heavy industry.

<sup>1</sup> See *Siasete Ma*, October 21, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> See *Izvestia*, April 13, 1957.

<sup>3</sup> See *Pravda*, November 18, 1963.

<sup>4</sup> See *Izvestia*, September 15, 1962.



On July 27, 1963, a Soviet-Iranian agreement on economic and technical co-operation was signed in Tehran. It provided for the construction of a hydropower complex on the frontier section of the Araks River, the construction in Iran of a sturgeon plant, land improvement in the Pahlavi Bay of the Caspian Sea, construction of elevators, etc.

The Soviet Union gave Iran economic and technical assistance in building a metallurgical and engineering works and a trans-Iranian gas pipeline for delivery of gas to the USSR. Iran's largest engineering works was started in October 1972, while a steel mill, built at Isfahan with the Soviet Union's assistance, began to operate in March 1973. The trans-Iranian 1,100-kilometre gas pipeline, whose northern section, about 500 kilometres long, was built by Soviet organisations, was started in 1970. The peoples of Iran highly appreciate the Soviet Union's assistance in building these important projects.

An agreement on economic co-operation signed by the USSR and Iran on June 22, 1968 provided for extensive co-operation during Iran's fourth five-year plan (1968/69-1972/73) in the extraction and export of oil and natural gas, the development of Iran's industry and communications, and in building electric-power stations, dams and elevators. An agreement on scientific and technical co-operation signed on February 25, 1971 provides for an exchange of specialists, delegations, and scientific and technical information.

The USSR and Iran signed a long-term (15-year) treaty on developing economic and technical co-operation in October 1972. Foreign trade is important to Iran's economic life. The Soviet Union offers a large and stable market for traditional Iranian exports, while Soviet industry helps to meet Iran's requirements in technology.

A Soviet-Iranian long-term trade agreement (1971-1976), which came into force on March 24, 1971, provides for the largest volume of Iranian trade with a foreign state.

Alongside trade, economic, and technical co-operation between the Soviet Union and Iran, their co-operation in science and culture has also advanced in recent years.

Exchange visits by leaders of the two states have played a big part in developing Soviet-Iranian relations. In his speech at a dinner in honour of the Shahinshah of Iran,

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, on November 18, 1974, N. V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, said: "The fruits of Soviet-Iranian co-operation are now evident in the most diverse fields, including international affairs, economics, trade, science, culture and other fields."<sup>1</sup>

In implementing its Peace Programme, substantiated in all respects by the 24th and 25th Congresses of the CPSU, the Soviet state seeks to strengthen Soviet-Iranian friendship, whose foundations were laid by the great Lenin.

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<sup>1</sup>*Pravda*, November 19, 1974.



## LENIN AND SOVIET-TURKISH RELATIONS

**Lenin's Denunciation  
of the Inter-Imperialist Fight  
to Partition the Turkish Empire**

Lenin pointed out that in the imperialist epoch, Ottoman Turkey had become "an object rather than a subject of world politics".<sup>1</sup> By the turn of the century, the great powers had reduced it to a semi-colony, enmeshing it "in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence".<sup>2</sup> In defining the status of Persia, China and Turkey in the imperialist system, Lenin wrote: "...the first of these countries is already almost completely a colony, the second and third are becoming such."<sup>3</sup> As the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire gathered momentum, the major imperialist powers fought an ever fiercer battle to divide its territory and lay hands on its oil, cotton and other industrial and agricultural raw materials. Their struggle was part of the overall inter-imperialist struggle to recarve the world, and played a considerable role in the run-up to the First World War.

When the First World broke out on August 1, 1914, Lenin made a resolute effort to lay bare its imperialist essence.

In April 1915, Britain, France and tsarist Russia signed a secret treaty on Constantinople and the Straits. In February

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

1916, Britain and France signed a secret agreement to partition Asian Turkey.<sup>1</sup> Lenin surmised the existence of these secret treaties providing for the partitioning of Turkey and Iran and the seizure of Constantinople and Armenia,<sup>2</sup> and described them as dirty and plunderous.<sup>3</sup> In August 1915, he wrote: "Britain and France are lying when they assert that they are warring for Belgium's freedom. In reality, they have long been preparing the war, and are waging it with the purpose of robbing Germany and stripping her of her colonies; they have signed a treaty with Italy and Russia on the pillage and carving up of Turkey and Austria. The tsarist monarchy in Russia is waging a predatory war aimed at seizing Galicia, taking territory away from Turkey, enslaving Persia, Mongolia, etc."<sup>4</sup>

Lenin was convinced that Russia and Britain were in collusion over Constantinople. He wrote: "There is undoubtedly a secret treaty between Russia and England, and among other things it concerns Constantinople. That Russia hopes to get Constantinople, and that England does not want to give it to her is well known. If England does give Russia Constantinople, she will either attempt to take it from her later, or else will make this 'concession' on terms directed against Russia. The text of the secret treaty is unknown, but that the struggle between England and Russia centres around precisely this question, that this struggle is going on even now, is not only known, but beyond the slightest doubt."<sup>5</sup>

Lenin sought to expose the German imperialists' expansionist designs on Turkey. Germany made use of Turkey's troops in the fighting and drew on its economic resources, seeking to turn the whole Ottoman Empire into its own colony. Turkey's strategic situation made it possible to establish convenient bridgeheads in the fight against British and Russian possessions.

<sup>1</sup> Later that year, tsarist Russia acceded to that agreement, and Italy—the following year.

<sup>2</sup> That is, Western Armenia, overrun by Turkey in the early 16th century. Under the 1878 Berlin Treaty, a part of Western Armenia was incorporated in the Russian Empire.

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 381.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 367.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 128.



Although Germany posed as Turkey's "patron" and a champion of its "integrity", Lenin saw through its pretences and exposed its expansionist aspirations. He said that "Germany has *already* converted Turkey into her financial and military vassal!"<sup>1</sup>

All through the war, Lenin kept denouncing the predatory, annexationist policy of the imperialist states. When tsarist autocracy in Russia was overthrown as a result of the February 1917 Revolution, Lenin said that the newly installed bourgeois Provisional Government was "a war government, a government for the continuation of the imperialist slaughter, a government of *plunder*, out to plunder Armenia, Galicia and Turkey, annex Constantinople".<sup>2</sup>

In the matter of Turkey, the Provisional Government followed in the wake of tsarist policy, which had been aimed at "carving up and partitioning Turkey",<sup>3</sup> but the October Revolution put an end to all these predatory designs on Turkey, as well as on other Eastern countries.

### **Lenin and Soviet-Turkish Relations During Turkey's War of Independence**

The October Revolution and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' state had a powerful effect on the course of world history. Owing to its domestic and foreign policy, the Soviet Republic, headed by Lenin, soon came to enjoy the sympathies of the working masses in the West and the East.

In his foreign policy activity as head of the Soviet Government, Lenin attached particular importance to the establishment of friendly, good-neighbour relations with the countries of the East, primarily with those bordering on Soviet Russia: Mongolia, China, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey, whose peoples had been roused by the liberation ideas of the October Revolution to a fight against the imperialists.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. 23, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. 23, p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. 24, p. 116.

The address To All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East, issued by the Council of People's Commissars and signed by Lenin on December 3, 1917, said, among other things: "We declare that the secret treaties on the seizure of Constantinople concluded by the dethroned tsar and reaffirmed by the unseated Kerensky have been torn up and destroyed. The Russian Republic and its Government, the Council of People's Commissars, are against any seizure of foreign lands: the Moslems must keep Constantinople."<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with Lenin's proposal adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the Soviet Government began publishing the secret diplomatic documents and treaties partitioning Eastern countries between tsarist Russia and the other great powers, and so exposed for the whole world to see the imperialists' rapacious designs and haggings over the future of Eastern nations. The second issue of Collected Secret Documents from the Archives of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs contained secret treaties on Turkey's partitioning.

These disclosures made a great impression in Turkey and intensified the anti-war feelings in the country. The Young Turks' government, however, refused to reckon with its people's interests: a few months before their government collapsed, the Young Turks attacked Soviet Russia within the framework of the German imperialists' plans. Their treacherous move showed their downright hostility to revolutionary Russia and their fear that the October Revolution could intensify the Turkish people's urge to be free and their dissatisfaction with the crumbling policy of war.

On September 20, 1918, the Soviet Government had to abrogate the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty with Turkey in view of its systematic violation by the Turkish Government. That historic move released the Transcaucasian peoples from the heavy burden of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and, at the same time, led to a rupture of diplomatic relations between Soviet Russia and Turkey.

The Turkish generals' plunderous raids on Baku and Daghestan in June to October 1918 brought fresh suffering to the Turkish people and weakened the Turkish army's

<sup>1</sup> USSR Foreign Policy Documents, Vol. I, p. 35.



resistance to the Anglo-French forces in Iraq, Palestine and Macedonia. On October 30, 1918, Turkey capitulated unconditionally.

Lenin pointed out back in June 1918 that Britain was "trying to grab Baghdad and strangle Turkey" to death.<sup>1</sup> The Mudros Armistice, which British Admiral Calthorpe dictated to the Turkish delegates on behalf of the Allies on board his warship *Agamemnon*, was indeed to strangle Turkey to death.

Britain wanted to get a firm hold on Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, the Black Sea Straits and Istanbul, and also to extend its influence to the rest of the Ottoman Empire. The British imperialists attached particular importance to the Straits and Istanbul in view of their plans for an armed campaign against the Soviet Republic in the south of Russia in 1918 and 1919.

Under the Mudros Armistice, Turkey pledged to pull out its forces from Daghestan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Iranian Azerbaijan, and to provide backing for British troops which got the "right" to occupy Baku, Batum and other parts of the Transcaucasus.

Denouncing the plans of the British imperialists, who sought to establish their rule in the Caucasus and destroy the Soviet power, Lenin told the Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in November 1918: "And now Britain has a treaty with the Turks which gives her Baku so that she may strangle us by depriving us of raw materials."<sup>2</sup>

When the Anglo-French troops captured the forts in the Straits and turned Istanbul—the key to the Black Sea—into a naval base for the Entente powers, they posed a grave threat to Soviet Russia.

Lenin realised that the Entente countries meant to turn Turkey and the Balkans into an anti-Soviet bridgehead. Eight days before Turkey capitulated, Lenin pointed out the possibility of their attacking Soviet Russia from Turkey and the Balkans. He said: "...the British and French have not achieved any great success in Siberia or in Archangel—in fact they have suffered a number of setbacks—they are now directing their efforts for an attack on

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 484.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 160.

Russia from the South, either through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea, or else overland, through Bulgaria and Rumania."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, once the Allied troops occupied the Straits zone and Istanbul, they intensified their anti-Soviet intervention: French, British and Greek contingents landed in Novorossiisk, Sevastopol, Odessa and Batum, and Allied warships were at large in the Black Sea, blockading Soviet Russia and the Ukraine.

In his speech on the international situation at the Sixth All-Russia Extraordinary Congress of Soviets on November 8, 1918, Lenin re-emphasised the danger facing the country. But, he said, there was no reason at all to lose heart. "...This enemy is going to topple into the abyss into which Austro-German imperialism once toppled; we know that the enemy, which has now ensnared Turkey, seized Bulgaria and is bent on occupying the whole of Austria-Hungary with the object of establishing a tsarist, gendarme regime, is heading for its doom."<sup>2</sup>

Once the war was over, there was even fiercer fighting among the Allied powers over the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. The big capitalist monopolies were itching to lay their hands on its oil and other raw materials. The US imperialists, who had made thousands of millions of dollars out of the war, were also making a frenzied bid for a share of the spoils together with their British, French and Italian counterparts.

Lenin followed the postwar carve-up of the world among the imperialists with close attention, and said that the contradictions between the victors were bound to aggravate. He wrote: "That war fully exposed itself as an imperialist, reactionary, predatory war both on the part of Germany and on the part of the capitalists of Britain, France, Italy and America. The latter are now beginning to quarrel over the spoils, over the division of Turkey, Russia, the African and Polynesian colonies, the Balkans...."<sup>3</sup>

At their Paris Peace Conference, the victorious powers agreed to establish mandates on the territories that had

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 430.



been part of the Ottoman Empire, and also on the Caucasus, which was termed "a component of the problem of the Turkish Empire".<sup>1</sup> The US imperialists wanted a single mandate for the whole of Turkey and the Transcaucasus.

The mandate system was a new form of colonial plunder, and was meant to cover up the imperialists' annexationist policy. Lenin penetrated to the very root of the mandate system. He said: "And when they talk of handing out mandates for colonies, we know very well that it means handing out mandates for spoliation and plunder—handing out to an insignificant section of the world's population the right to exploit the majority of the population of the globe."<sup>2</sup>

Under a draft peace treaty with Turkey drawn up by a team of experts at the Paris Peace Conference, the British were to have a mandate for Palestine and Mesopotamia, and the French—for Syria and Cilicia; Southwestern Anatolia was to fall within the Italian sphere of influence; Britain was to establish a protectorate over a Kurdish area in Southeastern Anatolia; the six Eastern provinces in Anatolia were to be incorporated in Armenia, ruled by the Dashnak Party and held as US mandated territory; the Izmir province and Eastern Thrace were to go to Greece; the Straits were to be turned into an international zone, and a small Turkish state headed by a sultan was to be maintained in Central Anatolia under the Entente's virtual control.

Describing the postwar pattern of the world at the Second Congress of the Comintern, Lenin ranked Turkey, Iran and China among the colonial countries whom the victors, as he put it, were dismembering alive.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, he emphasised: "Furious wrangling over the partitioning of Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia and China is going on between Japan, Britain, America and France."<sup>4</sup>

Lenin repeatedly pointed out that under imperialism, national wars in the colonies and semi-colonies were sure to intensify. The Turks were one of the first Eastern peoples to start, under the impact of the October Revolution in Russia,

<sup>1</sup> *A History of Diplomacy*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1945, p. 21 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 159-60.

<sup>3</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 218.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 226.

a well-organised armed struggle against the foreign invaders and domestic reactionaries—the agents of imperialism. The Soviet and the Turkish people were fighting one and the same enemy: imperialist Britain, France, Italy and the USA. The Red Army's victory over the 130,000-strong Entente army in the south of Russia and over the expeditionary corps in the Caucasus, and also the defeat of Wrangel's whiteguard army in the Crimea, encouraged the Turkish army to wage a more resolute fight against the interventionists, strengthened its rear, and created favourable conditions for a flow of material assistance from the south of Russia and the Caucasus. At the same time, Turkey's heroic struggle against the Entente was also doing much to help Soviet Russia. Moreover, it was well in keeping with the Soviet republics' national interests to have the Entente forces ousted from the Black Sea Straits and Istanbul and Turkish sovereignty there restored, for the Entente's domination of the Straits endangered their sovereignty and security.

The Turkish population was always delighted to hear of the Red Army's victories over the Anglo-French forces and the counter-revolutionary tsarist generals. Progressive Turkish newspapers wrote that the downfall of imperialism and the triumph of Soviet ideals was the people's only road to salvation. Mustafa Kemal, leader of the Turkish liberation movement, said: "Bolshevism, which strives for the loftiest goals, has scored a victory over the common enemy, an enemy which has encroached on our existence as well, and this is something to be grateful for."<sup>1</sup>

In October 1919, a Representative Committee formed by the Turkish National Congress in Sivas, sent Halil Pasha (Kut) and Dr. Fuat Sabit Bei to Soviet Russia to establish unofficial contacts with the Soviet Government, but they managed to get to Moscow only in May 1920. Halil Pasha asked the Soviet Government to help Turkey in its struggle against the invaders.

On April 23, 1920, a Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNA) opened in Ankara and proclaimed itself to be the only legal power exercising the Turkish people's will. Since the Sultan government was a puppet in the hands of the

<sup>1</sup> *Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri*, Ankara, 1945, Part I (1919-1938), p. 92.



occupation forces, the GNA formed a national revolutionary government headed by the outstanding statesman Mustafa Kemal.

Three days after the opening of the GNA, Mustafa Kemal sent an official letter to Lenin requesting the establishment of diplomatic relations and some financial and military assistance to Turkey. He wrote: "We pledge to pool all our efforts and all our military operations with those of the Russian Bolsheviks, whose purpose is to fight the imperialist governments and liberate all the oppressed peoples from their rule. To drive the imperialist forces off the territories populated by our people, and build up our internal strength for a continued joint struggle against imperialism, we are asking Soviet Russia to give us by way of assistance 5 million Turkish lire in gold, some arms and ammunition (in quantities to be decided through negotiation) and also some military and technical means, medical materials and food-stuffs for our troops." Kemal's letter ended as follows: "Please accept our most respectful regards and our most sincere feelings."<sup>1</sup>

In early May, a liaison officer, Ibrahim Hulusi, set out from Trabzon in a motorboat, reached Novorossiisk, and on June 1, 1920, delivered Kemal's message to Lenin in Moscow.

On Lenin's instructions, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin drew up a reply message, which was delivered to Trabzon on June 14, 1920, and was then telegraphed to Ankara.

The reply message said that the Soviet Government had taken cognisance of the GNA's decision to accord its work and military operations against the imperialist governments "with the high ideal of the liberation of oppressed peoples.... The Soviet Government holds out a hand of friendship to all the nations of the world, and will always remain true to its principle of recognising every nation's right to self-determination. The Soviet Government takes a keen interest in the Turkish people's heroic struggle for its sovereignty and independence, and now that Turkey is going through a hard period, is happy to lay a lasting

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No. 11, 1963, pp. 147-48.

foundation for the friendship that is to unite the Turkish and the Russian peoples."

In order to establish friendly relations and lasting friendship between Turkey and Russia, the Soviet Government proposed an immediate exchange of diplomatic and consular representatives, and agreed to mediate in the demarcation of the borders between Turkey, Armenia and Iran.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Government's reply message, which amounted to recognition of the GNA government, met with great enthusiasm among the Turks, for at that time the West European imperialist states, both big and small, had joined together in an attempt to destroy Turkish statehood and divide Turkey among themselves, while Lenin's government was the world's only government to have recognised the Turkish people's just struggle for independence, and agreed to establish immediate diplomatic relations.

On July 4, 1920, the GNA officially announced that the Turkish Government had received Chicherin's message "with the keenest pleasure and satisfaction". The Turkish Government welcomed the Soviet offer of mediation. This message said: "The Turkish Grand National Assembly is confident that the Russian Soviet Republic, which has proclaimed itself to be a champion of the oppressed and an irreconcilable enemy of the capitalists and imperialists, will give us its all-round support in the unequal struggle we have undertaken, a struggle whose outcome will determine our own existence and will also affect the common cause of the whole of suffering mankind." The Turkish Government said that the Turkish nation had "a feeling of cordial friendship for the great and noble Russian nation, and sincerely wished it every success in its grandiose struggle against tyranny of every kind".<sup>2</sup>

In early May 1920, the GNA decided to send a delegation to Moscow to negotiate a basis for friendly contacts between the two countries and determine the shape of their future relationship. The delegation consisted of Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Bei (head of the delegation), Economics Minister

<sup>1</sup> See *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 555.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 556.



Youssef Kemal Bei, and Osman Bey, a deputy from Trabzon.

At a GNA sitting on July 8, 1920, Mustafa Kemal spoke of the contacts with the RSFSR Government. He emphasised: "Our latest contacts with the Soviet Republic have acquired a fairly distinct and tangible form. We have established official relations and have maintained them most successfully. You know their substance: Soviet Russia has promised us any material support we may need. It has promised us arms and money."<sup>1</sup>

On July 8, 1920, the Soviet Government officially notified Turkey that the Russian Republic was renouncing all the capitulations rights, financial control and interference in Turkey's internal affairs, and wished the Turkish people every success in their fight against the imperialist invaders, something that caused great satisfaction among the Turks.

On July 19, 1920, a Turkish government delegation, which had left Ankara in mid-May, arrived in Moscow.<sup>2</sup> The Turkish delegates met Chicherin, L. M. Karakhan, and other prominent Soviet statesman and military leaders, and were also acquainted with the Soviet peoples' life and struggle.

On August 13, a Political Bureau meeting attended by Lenin discussed Chicherin's proposals on Turkey and Armenia.

On August 14, Lenin had a talk with the Turkish delegates. He explained the Soviet Government's policy in respect of the peoples of the East, emphasising that a major principle of the Soviet Government's policy was to render assistance to the oppressed peoples of the East, and said he was sure that Turkey's national government would be pleased to hear of the establishment of the Bashkir, Kirghiz and Turkestan Autonomous Republics within the RSFSR.

Bekir Sami Bei handed Lenin a message of greetings from the Turkish people and the GNA, and expressed the hope that the Soviet Government would "never withdraw its friendship and support from the Turkish people, who have

<sup>1</sup> Kemal Atatürk, *Selected Speeches and Articles*, Moscow, 1966, p. 95 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> The delegation was held up at Erzurum for lack of a permit to cross Armenia. On June 12, they were taken from Trabzon to Tuapse, and then made their way to Moscow.

no hostile designs on any neighbouring country, or any goals other than the attainment of their own freedom and independence within their national borders".<sup>1</sup>

The friendly welcome accorded by Lenin to the GNA's representatives made a deep impression on the Turkish Government.

The policy of protecting Turkey's national interests and sovereignty followed by the Lenin government inspired the Turkish people in their fight against the invaders. Mustafa Kemal wrote to Chicherin in November 1920: "I am extremely pleased to tell you of the Turkish people's feelings of admiration for the Russian people, who did not rest after breaking their chains and for more than two years now have been waging an unparalleled struggle to liberate the whole world, braving untold suffering with enthusiasm in order to wipe out all oppression from the face of the earth."<sup>2</sup>

In the course of the Soviet-Turkish talks, which lasted from late July to August 24, 1920, the two parties drafted a treaty of friendship, which was initialled by the leaders of the two delegations but remained unsigned because neither the Turkish nor the Dashnak government of Armenia would agree to the Soviet Government's proposal to establish a border line between Turkey and Armenia on the basis of justice and the self-determination of nations.

Their refusal to mark out a border line in accordance with historical, economic and ethnographic principles, as suggested by the Soviet Government, complicated the Soviet-Turkish talks. Turkey's Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Bei did much in that direction: he favoured closer relations with Britain, and deliberately misled his government by misinforming it about Soviet Russia's policy in respect of Turkey. On his return to Ankara, he tried to set the Turkish leaders against the Soviet Republic.

The Entente imperialists used the territorial dispute between Turkey and Armenia to frustrate the signing of the Soviet-Turkish Friendship Treaty. Despite Soviet diplomatic efforts, they managed to provoke a war between the Dashnaks and the Kemalists, in the course of which they

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Cebesoy, *Moskova hatiralari*, Istanbul, 1955, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, p. 11.



hoped to pit the Turkish troops against the Red Army and establish an anti-Soviet bridgehead in the Caucasus by uniting the counter-revolutionary forces of Turkey and the Caucasus.

Military operations started on September 24, 1920. On October 30, Turkish troops occupied Kars, and on November 7—the Alexandropol railway junction.

In order to stop the war, the Soviet Government offered its help to the Dashnaks, proposing to send red Army units into Armenia. But the Dashnak government turned down that offer, as well as the offer of mediation.

As the Turkish troops pushed deeper into Armenia, there was some danger of a big war breaking out in the Caucasus. Speaking before a Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Communist Party on November 21, 1920, Lenin said: "...at the moment conditions in the Caucasus are becoming most complex and extremely difficult to analyse, with the likelihood that war may be forced on us any day. But with the peace with Poland almost assured and Wrangel wiped out, this war cannot be so alarming..."<sup>1</sup> Lenin proved to be quite right in his assessment.

In late November 1920, Armenia was the scene of a great historic event, which radically changed Armenia's future and the situation in the Caucasus: the workers and peasants started an uprising, overthrew the Dashnak rule, and on November 29, established Soviet power. Their Revolutionary Committee proclaimed itself to be the Provisional Government of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, and sent Lenin a message of greetings and a request for assistance. On Lenin's instructions, the 11th Red Army stationed in Azerbaijan moved into Armenia to help its people.

The Armenian revolutionary Committee was confident that Soviet Armenia and revolutionary Turkey would restore peace on the basis of a fraternal agreement. What with the Turkish people fighting a hard struggle against the imperialists, a firm peace along the Armenian border was also in accord with Turkey's own national interests.

Lenin attached much importance to fraternal solidarity between the peoples of Soviet Armenia and Turkey. In his

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 415.

reply telegram to the Revolutionary Committee's message of greetings, he wrote: "Through you I send greetings to the Soviet Armenia of the working people, liberated from the yoke of imperialism. I have no doubt that you will exert every effort to establish fraternal solidarity between the working people of Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan."<sup>1</sup>

But the Turkish ruling circles went against the will of the working people, who saw Soviet Armenia as a reliable ally in the fight against imperialism, and continued their old expansionist policy in respect of Armenia. The Turkish Government tried to present the new Armenian Government with a *fait accompli* and on December 2, 1920, that is, after Soviet power had been established in Armenia, pressed upon the Dashnaks the fettering Alexandropol Treaty, under which Armenia was to become a Turkish protectorate.

The governments of the RSFSR, Soviet Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan refused to recognise the Alexandropol Treaty and demanded its abrogation, and also an immediate withdrawal of Turkish troops from Armenian territory. But the Turkish Government, influenced by the reactionaries, refused to satisfy these demands.

Lenin was sure that the Turkish workers and peasants, who were waging a heroic struggle against the Anglo-French imperialists and their Greek accomplices, would prevent a collusion between their country's rulers, the Entente, and the sultan circles. In his final remarks on a concessions report before a sitting of the Communist Party group at the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, Lenin said: "The Turkish attack was planned against us. The Allies were making a pitfall for us, but fell into it themselves, because we have received Soviet Armenia.

"The men at the top in Turkey are Cadets, Octobrists, Nationalists, who are prepared to sell us to the Allies. But that is an extremely difficult thing to do, because feeling among the Turkish people against the savage oppression by the Allies is running very high, and sympathy towards Soviet Russia is growing in proportion as we help the independent Azerbaijan Republic to carry out proper liberation of the Moslem peasants, who have driven out the

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 437.



landowners, but are afraid to take the land, and will shortly stop being afraid; when they do take the land the Turkish landowner won't last long." He pointed out the importance of the Soviet Government's peace policy in the Caucasus for boosting the prestige of Soviet power in the East, and said: "We personally have been and will be peaceful in the extreme in the Caucasus, and for the information of our Caucasian comrades, we shall be very careful to avoid anything that may involve us in war. Our peaceful policy so far has been so felicitous, that the Allies are getting nervous, have started taking decisive steps against us, but are only getting them against themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's policy in the Caucasus helped to dispel the difficulties in Soviet-Turkish relations. As Soviet power in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia grew stronger, there was a more favourable setting for stronger friendship between Soviet Russia and Turkey.

On July 2, 1920, a Soviet diplomatic mission left Moscow for Ankara. It was led by counsellor Y. Y. Upmal-Angarsky, because the RSFSR Government's plenipotentiary representative in Turkey S. Eliava was unable to go to Turkey for health reasons. Georgia's Menshevik government refused to allow the Soviet mission passage across its territory, and they had to make their way to Turkey across the neutral zone between Georgia and Armenia. Since they were carrying 200.6 kilograms of gold bars, which the Soviet Government had promised Turkey during the Moscow talks, they were escorted up to the Turkish border by the 28th Cavalry Regiment of the 11th Red Army and a machine-gun platoon. On August 30, after a long and dangerous journey, the mission arrived at Hasankale, where Turkish troops and the population gave them a warm welcome. In Erzurum, Mamahatun, Sivas, Kayseri and Ankara they were also treated very well.

On their arrival in Ankara on October 4, 1920, they met Mustafa Kemal and handed him Chicherin's personal message. "We are convinced," said the message, "that the arrival in Turkey of Halil Pasha and a counsellor of our mission, who are soon to be followed by our plenipotentiary representative, will be of considerable help in developing

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 246.

the ties between the two countries and the two governments for the greater benefit and advantage of the peoples of Russia and Turkey."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin believed that a major task of Soviet diplomacy was to win the confidence of the oppressed peoples of the East. His ideas on that issue were used in formulating the instructions for the RSFSR's diplomatic representatives in Georgia, Armenia and Turkey, which were approved on July 7, 1920 by a Political Bureau meeting, where Lenin was also present.

Lenin once told S. I. Aralov: "Tsarist Russia had warred against Turkey for centuries ... and that has naturally left a deep mark on the minds of the people, who had always been told that Russia was Turkey's age-old enemy. All that served to build up mistrust and hostility for the Russians among the Turkish peasants, petty and middle-bracket owners, traders, intellectuals and ruling circles. Mistrust, you know, is hard to live down. This calls for a lot of cautious, painstaking and considerate effort; we must prove and explain, in deed rather than in word, the difference between old, tsarist Russia and Soviet Russia. This is our task, and you, as our ambassador, must be a vehicle of the Soviet policy of non-interference in their affairs and a champion of genuine friendship between our peoples."<sup>2</sup>

The arrival in Ankara of the Soviet Republic's diplomatic representatives helped to establish official relations between the two countries. The third anniversary of the October Revolution saw the ceremonial opening of a Soviet embassy in Ankara, the only foreign diplomatic mission in revolutionary Turkey at the time.

On December 28, 1920, the RSFSR's extraordinary representative in Turkey, P. G. Mdivani, arrived in Kars, where he stayed for a few months before proceeding to Ankara.

In late November 1920, the Turkish Government appointed Ali Fuat Pasha as its ambassador in Soviet Russia. That December, the two parties reached an understanding to hold a Soviet-Turkish conference, and exchanged notes

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> S. I. Aralov, *Reminiscences of a Soviet Diplomat*, Moscow, 1960, p. 36 (in Russian).



on the urgent questions of international relations. The Turkish Government officially refuted the rumours about its co-operation with the Entente states for the establishment of an anti-Soviet bloc in the Caucasus. It said: "we have not had any peace negotiations—either direct or indirect—with the Entente powers (Britain, France and Italy), and have never attempted to do so."<sup>1</sup>

A frank exchange of opinion on various problems between the Soviet and Turkish governments helped to promote closer co-operation between them.

In a report to the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on December 22, 1920, Lenin spoke of Soviet Russia's relations with its Eastern neighbours, and said that over the preceding year, Soviet policy in the East had scored major successes. He said: "We must also note that friendly relations with Afghanistan, and still more so with Turkey, are being steadily established and strengthened. As for the latter power, the Entente countries have done everything they could to render impossible any more or less normal relations between her and the West-European countries. This circumstance, coupled with consolidation of the Soviets, is steadily strengthening the alliance and the friendly relations between Russia and the oppressed nations of the East, despite the bourgeoisie's resistance and intrigues and the continuing encirclement of Russia by bourgeois countries. The chief factor in politics today is the violence being used by the imperialists against peoples which have not had the good fortune to be among the victors; this world policy of imperialism is leading to closer relations, alliance and friendship among all the oppressed nations."<sup>2</sup>

The strengthening of the Soviet power among the Moslem nations of Russia met with a feeling of satisfaction among the Turks. When the Soviet Government proclaimed the autonomy of Soviet Daghestan, Mustafa Kemal sent Lenin a telegram which said: "I am firmly convinced that the only road to the desired goals lies through our co-operation, and welcome any future consolidation of the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in S. I. Kuznetsova, *The Establishment of Soviet-Turkish Relations*, Moscow, 1961, p. 39 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 491.

friendly ties between us. I am infinitely grateful to you for the far-sighted policy that the Soviet Republic has been following on your high initiative both in the East and throughout the world."<sup>1</sup>

On Lenin's instructions, Chicherin drafted a reply telegram to Kemal on behalf of the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and Lenin signed it on January 7, 1921. It said: "We were happy to receive your message on the proclamation of the autonomy of the mountaineers. Your message has convinced the Soviet Government that Soviet Russia's policy in respect of the nations within the Russian Federation has met with your sympathy.... I am happy to state that you have correctly interpreted our measures in respect of the smaller nations and have given them a welcome which can only help to establish good mutual understanding and mutual trust.

"May I express once again our gratitude for your message, and also our most sincere wishes to the Turkish people and its Government, which have been fighting with indomitable energy for their country's independence and prosperity."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin was always interested in the development of Soviet-Turkish relations. On December 7, 1920, a plenary meeting of the Communist Party's Central Committee presided over by Lenin looked into Chicherin's proposal on a treaty with Turkey. The plenary meeting instructed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to work out a draft and put it up for approval by the Central Committee. On December 17, a Central Committee plenary meeting reaffirmed the Central Committee's decision on the RSFSR's peaceful policy line in the Caucasus and demanded that the Foreign Commissariat and the People's Commissariat for Naval Affairs should take steps to ensure the success of that policy.

On February 19, 1921, a Turkish government delegation arrived in Moscow, consisting of Economics Minister Youssouf Kemal Bei (head of the delegation), Education Minister Dr. Riza Nur Bei and Turkey's Ambassador to Soviet Russia Ali Fuat Pasha.

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 52, pp. 301-02 (5th Russ. ed.).



Opening the Soviet-Turkish conference on February 26, 1921, Chicherin spoke of the Soviet people's outstanding role in the fight against imperialism, and emphasised that Soviet Russia was a natural ally to every nation fighting for its freedom and independence, particularly the Turkish nation, to whom it was now pledging its inviolable friendship.

There were obstacles in the way of Soviet-Turkish negotiations. The Russian and Turkish peoples' internal and external enemies were straining to prevent their rapprochement and friendship. To frustrate their talks, the Entente powers called a conference in London, which was held almost parallel with the Moscow Conference (from February 21 to March 14). The British, French and Italian imperialists were going out of their way to involve Turkey in an anti-Soviet coalition and so to turn its liberation war into an aggressive war in the Caucasus. During the Moscow talks, numerous imperialist periodicals carried on a hysterical anti-Soviet campaign, treating the world to preposterous lies and slander.

The Entente powers could do nothing to hamper the Soviet-Turkish talks. The London Conference was a total failure.

Lenin saw the Soviet-Turkish talks as a major achievement of the Soviet Republic's foreign policy. The record of his activities in February 1921 shows how much time he devoted to Soviet-Turkish relations. Thus, on February 4, he read Klyshko's telegram on Turkey; on February 9, he had a talk with Indian Communist M. Roy, who told him of the situation in the Middle East; on February 19, he read a letter from N. N. Narimanov on Turkish and Armenian affairs and sent it on to all the Central Committee members for comment; on February 22, he read Chicherin's letter on Turkey and marked it important; and on February 26, he received the Turkish delegation in the Kremlin to discuss the signing of a treaty with Turkey.

At a plenary meeting of the Moscow Soviet on February 28, Lenin spoke about the situation in the Soviet Republic and abroad, describing the Soviet-Turkish conference as one of the most important events. He said: "This is an especially welcome fact, because there had been many obstacles to direct negotiations with the Turkish Govern-

ment delegation, and now that there is an opportunity of reaching an understanding here in Moscow, we feel sure that a firm foundation will be laid for closer relations and friendship. Of course, this will not be achieved through diplomatic machinations (in which, we are not afraid to admit, our adversaries have the edge on us), but through the fact that over the past few years both nations have had to endure untold suffering at the hands of the imperialist powers.... Turkish workers and peasants have demonstrated that the resistance on the part of modern nations to plunder is a thing that has to be reckoned with: Turkey herself resisted plunder by the imperialist governments with such vigour that even the strongest of them have had to keep their hands off her. That is what makes us regard the current negotiations with the Turkish Government as a very great achievement."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's speech, radioed to Ankara, produced a powerful impression on the Turks. In a telegram to Chicherin, Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmet Muhtar wrote: "We heard Citizen Lenin's speech at the opening of the Moscow Conference with the keenest satisfaction."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin was highly interested in the Soviet-Turkish conference. Every night, he telephoned Chicherin for a report on the day's progress.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Soviet-Turkish talks went forward in an atmosphere of friendship and complete equality, they ran into considerable difficulties, notably in the demarcation of Turkey's borders with Soviet Georgia and Armenia. What made it worse was that not all of the Turkish leaders wanted a rapprochement with Soviet Russia: some were against that, and were still hoping for a deal with the Entente. Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Bei, head of the Turkish delegation at the London Conference, urged the establishment of an anti-Bolshevik confederation of the Caucasian bourgeois republics and Turkey under Entente patronage. Many GNA deputies, particularly from the Eastern pro-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 147, 148.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, p. 515. Lenin did not speak at the opening of a Moscow Conference, but at a plenary session of the Moscow Soviet.

<sup>3</sup> See G. V. Chicherin, *Articles and Speeches on International Politics*, p. 283.



vinces, gave him vigorous backing. Moreover, in early March 1921, just before fleeing abroad, the Georgian Mensheviks in Batum signed an agreement with the Turkish Government, under which Batum District with the city of Batum, Akhaltsikh District and Akhalkalaki District were to be handed over to Turkey: hence, on March 11, Turkish troops occupied Batum. The Georgian Mensheviks made their treacherous move in order to provoke another anti-Soviet war in the Transcaucasus.

But Lenin's wise foreign policy removed that danger. When it turned out that the Turkish delegates were deliberately dragging their feet over the signing of an agreement on Batum, Lenin wrote Chicherin on March 9, 1921: "I am extremely anxious about the Turks' putting off the signing of the agreement on Batum, playing for time while their troops are moving to Batum. We must not allow them such delays. Discuss the following measure: you will adjourn your conference for half an hour to have a talk with me, while Stalin will have a straightforward talk with the Turkish delegation to clear things up and have everything settled not later than today."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's suggestion worked: the question of Batum and its district was settled, all the controversial points in the matter of Turkey's borders with Soviet Georgia and Armenia were agreed on before March 16.<sup>2</sup>

### The Soviet-Turkish Treaty

On March 16, 1921, Soviet Russia and Turkey signed a Friendship and Brotherhood Treaty. That was a diplomatic act of international importance.

Lenin's policy of friendship and support for nations fighting for their independence struck a blow at the Entente powers' anti-Soviet plans and enabled the Transcaucasian peoples to go over to peaceful labour. Lenin made special

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> In demarcating these borders, the Soviet Government agreed to let Turkey have the Kars, Ardagan and Artvin districts, which had been part of Russia up to 1918, and were now occupied by Turkish troops—a total of

mention of the "peace agreement with the Turks, which alone will rid us of interminable wars in the Caucasus".<sup>1</sup>

For Turkey, the Treaty was of great importance. The Soviet Government ensured the inviolability of Turkey's northeastern border, reinforcing its military positions. Soviet Russia was Turkey's true ally in the fight against imperialism. The Treaty added substance to Turkey's sovereign statehood and international prestige, and caused general enthusiasm among the Turkish troops and people, and encouraged them to fight the interventionists to the very last.

The Turkish national liberation movement could not develop successfully without Soviet Russia's assistance. As we have already pointed out, Lenin believed that the Soviet Republic should not confine itself to moral support for the national liberation movement in the East, but should also render material assistance to the countries fighting for their freedom and independence. But moral support, he always emphasised, was also very important. "Moral support, sympathy and friendship," he told Ambassador Aralov, "is great help three times over; the Turkish people will feel that they are not alone."<sup>2</sup>

At the signing of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty, the two countries concluded an agreement on Soviet financial assistance (10 million rubles in gold to be given gratis) and also on arms and ammunition deliveries to Turkey.

In late 1920, the command of the Black Sea Fleet gave refuge, on Lenin's instructions, to three Turkish warships which had refused to submit to the sultan government. The warships had been seized and disarmed by the British in Sinop, but managed to get away, and Mustafa Kemal asked the Soviet Government to help them out. "The Turkish ships were met to the south of Gelenjik and safely escorted to Novorossiisk, where they were under the protection of our coastal defences. We armed the ships. When Mustafa Kemal Pasha found out that the ships were in a Soviet port, he sent a telegram of thanks to the Soviet Government and

19,915 sq. km. with a population of 492,000. See *Bulletin of the Central Statistical Board*, No. 55, 1921, p. 10 (in Russian).

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> S. I. Aralov, *Reminiscences of a Soviet Diplomat*, pp. 35-36.



the local naval authorities. In early 1921, the ships were returned to the young Turkey."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout 1922, the Soviet Government continued to supply Turkey with arms and ammunition. On the eve of the Turkish army's general offensive against the Greek troops, the Soviet Government had given Turkey 22 military aircraft.<sup>2</sup>

A point to note here is that Soviet Russia was giving this aid to Turkey at a time when it was itself badly in need of money and means of defence against foreign imperialists and internal counter-revolutionaries.

A most interesting document first published in Volume 54 of Lenin's *Complete Works* in Russian shows his attitude to Soviet Russia's commitments to Turkey. In view of financial difficulties, G. Y. Sokolnikov suggested that the payment of the remaining 3.5 million rubles of the 10 million rubles in gold promised to Turkey at the signing of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty should be put off, but Chicherin wrote a letter to Lenin objecting to any delay. In a note for the Political Bureau, Lenin wrote: "I believe that Chicherin is *absolutely* right, and propose that the *Politbureau* should decide: confirm Chicherin's standpoint. Pay out in time what has been promised without fail."<sup>3</sup> In May 1922, the 3.5 million rubles were paid out to Turkey.

In April 1921, the Soviet Government gave the Turkish Red Crescent Society a grant of 30,000 rubles in gold to help the areas devastated by the occupation forces. The Turkish people were deeply grateful for what Mustafa Kemal described as "Soviet Russia's humane and magnanimous act".<sup>4</sup>

After the signing of the Soviet-Turkish Friendship and Brotherhood Treaty, Lenin continued working to strengthen good-neighbour relations with Turkey. On April 2, 1921, he proposed to the Political Bureau that Central Committee directives should be sent to Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia with respect to the treaties they were going to sign with Turkey. On October 13, 1921, in accordance with

<sup>1</sup> S. I. Aralov, *Reminiscences of a Soviet Diplomat*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Kiazim Kara Bekir, *Istiklâl harbimiz*, Istanbul, 1960, p. 1165.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 483.

<sup>4</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, p. 59.

those directives and in the presence of an RSFSR representative, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia signed their Kars Treaty of Friendship with Turkey, which served to strengthen Soviet-Turkish relations still further.

In May 1921, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Turkey started talks towards convening a bilateral conference. In early August, they agreed to hold a conference in Ankara. The Ukrainian Government appointed Mikhail Frunze, a prominent Party, state and military leader, and Commander-in-Chief of all the Ukrainian ground and naval forces, as its first delegate to the conference. Since the question was a major state affair, a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on August 9, 1921 discussed it and sanctioned Frunze's trip to Ankara as representative of the Ukrainian Republic. Frunze recalled: "I was appointed at a time when the Turkish troops had been defeated by the Greeks and when Angora seemed about to fall to the Greek troops; that was when the Soviet Ukraine, in agreement with Russia, deemed it necessary to emphasise its friendly attitude to Turkey for the whole world to see by sending over its ambassador."<sup>1</sup>

The news of his arrival in Turkey met with general enthusiasm among the Turkish troops and population.

The signing on January 2, 1922 of the Ukrainian-Turkish Friendship and Brotherhood Treaty and the very fact of Frunze's stay in Turkey played an important role in strengthening Soviet-Turkish relations.

On January 26, 1922, the RSFSR's new representative in Turkey, S. I. Aralov, arrived in Ankara. On the eve of his departure for Turkey, Aralov had been received by Lenin. "The Turks," Lenin had told him, "are fighting for their national liberation, and the Central Committee is sending you there because you know military matters."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin continued to keep a close watch on the progress of Soviet-Turkish relations, and on Soviet assistance to Turkey in arms and ammunition.<sup>3</sup> On February 1, 1922, the Central

<sup>1</sup> M. V. Frunze, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow-Leningrad, 1929, p. 357 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> S. I. Aralov, *Reminiscences of a Soviet Diplomat*, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> See A. N. Heifets, *Soviet Diplomacy and the Peoples of the East, 1921-1927*, Moscow, 1968, p. 187 (in Russian).



Committee approved Orjonikidze's proposal on the delivery to Turkey of aviation and automobile petrol.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's policy of moral and material support for the Turkish people in their fight against the invaders was a major factor in Turkey's victory over the joint forces of imperialism. In August and September 1922, the Turkish army won a decisive victory over the Anglo-Greek interventionists and liberated the whole of Anatolia. The fight to free Istanbul and Eastern Thrace was completed at the Lausanne Peace Conference with vigorous support from Soviet diplomats.

The Lausanne Peace Conference was the final phase of the Turkish people's national liberation movement. In the course of it, Turkey was to stand up for the gains it had secured in its hard fight against the foreign invaders. The Conference was to help improve international relations in the Middle East. Lenin pointed out that the end of the Greco-Turkish war would also "be the end of the conflicts and differences which placed that war in the forefront of international politics".<sup>2</sup> But the Anglo-French conflict remained acute all the time the Conference was in session. Lenin said: "...war may break out any day as a consequence of a dispute between Great Britain and France over some point of their treaty with Turkey..."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin believed that Soviet Russia's effort to resolve the Middle East question was not just a matter of prestige. He said: "Our Middle East policy is a matter of Russia's most real, immediate and vital interest and of the interest of a number of states federated with her. If all these states did not succeed in getting their demand to participate in the Middle East Conference satisfied, there would remain a huge mass of elements of hostility, conflict and discontent;

<sup>1</sup> In 1922, the Azerbaijan Oil Syndicate, which was in charge of export and import trade at the time, delivered to Turkey via Batum 9,294 tons of paraffin and 340 tons of petrol. The Soviet Government helped Turkey to ship the arms and other military equipment left behind by the Russian Army in Eastern Anatolia in 1918 via Batum to Samsun under the supervision of N. A. Ravich, a special Foreign Commissariat representative in Eastern Anatolia (N. A. Ravich, *Early Stages of the Century*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 298-99, in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 449.

their non-participation would involve such difficulties in purely commercial affairs between Eastern Europe on the one hand, and all other states on the other, that either there would remain no grounds whatever for peaceful coexistence or that such existence would be extraordinarily difficult."<sup>1</sup>

The Lausanne Conference repeatedly came up for discussion at Political Bureau meetings and plenary meetings of the Central Committee with Lenin at the head. As he drew up the directives for the Soviet delegation at the Lausanne Conference, Lenin emphasised the need to protect Turkey's national interests alongside those of the Soviet Republics.

The Entente powers refused to admit the Soviet delegation to the Lausanne Conference on an equal footing with its other participants for dealing with all the aspects of the Middle East question, and the Soviet Government had to agree to take part in the Commission on the Straits.

Even before the opening of the Lausanne Conference, Lenin formulated the Soviet programme for the Straits. He told Michael Farbman, a British correspondent: "Our Straits programme (still only approximate, of course) contains, among other things, the following:

"First the satisfaction of Turkey's national aspirations. We consider this essential, and not only in the interests of national independence. Our five years' experience in settling the national question in a country that contains a tremendous number of nationalities such as could hardly be found in any other country, gives us the full conviction that under such circumstances the only correct attitude to the interests of nations is to meet those interests in full and provide conditions that exclude any possibility of conflicts on that score. Our experience has left us with the firm conviction that only exclusive attention to the interests of various nations can remove grounds for conflicts, can remove mutual mistrust, can remove the fear of any intrigues and create that confidence, especially on the part of workers and peasants speaking different languages, without which there absolutely cannot be peaceful relations between peoples or anything like a successful devel-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 385.



opment of everything that is of value in present-day civilisation.

“Secondly, our programme includes the closing of the Straits to all warships in times of peace and of war. This is in the direct commercial interests of all powers, not only of those whose territory is in the immediate vicinity of the Straits, but of all others, too. It must be remembered that all over the world there has been an inordinate amount of pacifist talk, an unusual number of pacifist phrases and assurances, and even vows against war and against peace [the reference is to the Versailles Peace—*Ed.*], although there is usually little preparedness on the part of the majority of states, especially on the part of the modern civilised states, to take any realistic steps, even the most simple, to ensure peace. On this, and on similar questions, we should like to see a minimum of general assurances, solemn promises and grandiloquent formulas, and the greatest possible number of the simplest and most obvious decisions and measures that would certainly lead to peace, if not to the complete elimination of the war danger.

“Thirdly, our programme on the Straits includes complete freedom of commerce by sea. After what I have said above I do not think it at all necessary to explain this point or make it more concrete.”<sup>1</sup>

So, Lenin's Straits Programme agreed with Turkey's national interests and those of other Black Sea states: Soviet Russia, the Ukraine and Georgia, and also Rumania and Bulgaria. It ensured freedom of commercial navigation for all states both in peace- and wartime.

On the basis of Lenin's programme, the Soviet Government drafted a declaration on the Straits, and head of the Soviet delegation Chicherin read it out at the Conference on December 4, 1922. Both the Soviet declaration on the Straits and the Soviet memorandum on the Eastern question, put before the Conference on December 30, 1922, played a great role in establishing a lasting peace in the Middle East and Europe.

Here is how Chicherin described Lenin's role in the preparation of the Lausanne Conference: “When I returned from abroad in the autumn of 1922, I spent six

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 385-86.

weeks in Moscow. The chief question then was that of Turkey; preparations were being made for the Lausanne Conference. The Programme we were to take to Lausanne was debated and adopted with Lenin's vigorous participation. That was his last major contribution to our foreign policy. The Straits were the last question I ever discussed with Lenin. Nor did I ever see him again.”<sup>1</sup>

The above extracts from the immortal legacy left us by the great thinker, leader and teacher of the world proletariat and all the oppressed and newly liberated peoples show his intense concern for the drama being acted up in Turkey, and his deep feeling of sympathy for the heroic struggle of the Turkish workers and peasants for their freedom and independence. Under his guidance, the Soviet Republic established friendly, good-neighbour relations with the new Turkey, and he was personally involved in the matter of rendering financial support to the Turkish people and supplying its army with weapons and ammunition, which enabled it to crush the imperialist interventionists. To quote Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish people “sincerely admired the wisdom of Lenin, Soviet Russia's great leader”.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin's foreign policy principles met with deep sympathy in Turkey, as well as everywhere else in the East. Lenin was naturally widely popular in Turkey. The founder of the Turkish Communist Party, Mustafa Subhi, said: “Our highly respected great teacher, with his ideas, actions and aspirations, represents a whole revolutionary world.”<sup>3</sup> He was known to workers, peasants, soldiers and working intellectuals. Back in 1918, the students of Istanbul University demanded that Lenin should be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Turkish workers and peasants called him the father of the oppressed nations. Turkish newspapers wrote: “Lenin is the pride of mankind”, “Lenin is the sun and honour of all men”, “Lenin is invincible”, “Lenin means Russia, and Russia means Lenin. Indeed, that man was the greatest personality of our epoch”.

In the course of the anti-imperialist revolution, a Communist Party was formed in Turkey under the

<sup>1</sup> G. V. Chicherin, *Articles and Speeches on International Politics*, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No. 8, 1960, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *First Congress of the Communist International*, Minutes, p. 245.



favourable influence of Leninism. That was one of the most important political events in Turkey's history and meant that the Turkish proletariat was entering the social scene as a tangible force.

Once the Communist Party was established, it started working to spread the ideas of scientific socialism and communism in Turkey, with communist newspapers and magazines like *Yeni Dünya*, *Emek*, *Kurtuluş*, *Yeni Hayat* and *Aydinlik* playing an important role. In 1920, the *Communist Manifesto* and some other works by the classics of Marxism-Leninism were put out in Turkish. Over the following few years, dozens of works by Marx, Engels and Lenin were translated into Turkish. The Istanbul magazine *Aydinlik*, edited by Şefik Hüsnü, a prominent Communist Party leader, did a good deal to spread the ideas of scientific communism. It carried articles on the philosophical foundations of the Marxist outlook, Lenin's theory of imperialism, the working-class and communist movement, and the national liberation struggle of the peoples of the East.

The Communist Party's vigorous activity roused the Turkish authorities to hostile action against it. The Turkish national bourgeoisie feared further development of the liberation movement and a more intense class struggle, and, upon winning political independence, did not dare go on to deep socio-economic transformations. Nevertheless, the overthrow of the medieval sultan regime and the establishment of a Turkish national state opened the way to the Turkish people's national revival and spiritual advance.

### The Leninist Course

After the national liberation struggle in Turkey was over, the Soviet Union continued working to strengthen Turkey's independence. In 1925, when the British imperialists were threatening Turkey with another war, and the country was going through a critical period, the Soviet Union and the Turkish Republic signed a Non-Aggression and Neutrality Treaty, which played an important role in maintaining and strengthening peace in the Middle East.

The co-operation between Soviet and Turkish diplomats in the struggle for peace was a brilliant proof that Lenin's

policy of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems was correct. Mutual friendship, good-neighbour relations, and economic and cultural ties between the two countries were making headway, and there were also personal contacts between statesmen, scientists, engineers, writers, and workers in medicine, culture and the arts.

The Soviet Union's selfless assistance was very important for the development of the Turkish national economy. In 1932, it gave Turkey a long-term interest-free credit for \$8 million to purchase the latest types of Soviet machinery. Under that credit and with Soviet assistance, Turkey built two textile factories in Kayseri and Nazilli. The Soviet Union also helped Turkey to train skilled textile workers.

Mutually advantageous trade, which followed the signing of a Trade and Navigation Treaty in March 1927, also helped to strengthen Soviet-Turkish friendship.

But when the founder of the Turkish Republic Kemal Atatürk died shortly before the Second World War (in 1938), reactionary forces pushed Turkey away from Atatürk's foreign policy line. Soviet-Turkish relations gradually worsened, while British, French and US influence in Turkey increased. Its rulers gave up its foreign policy independence and from then on catered to the imperialist states.

The betrayal of the country's national interests gave rise to a feeling of deep indignation among the Turkish people, so that in May 1960, the anti-national regime of the Democratic Party's Bayar-Menderes government was overthrown.

Since then, Soviet-Turkish relations have changed considerably for the better. Soviet and Turkish statesmen have exchanged a number of official visits, and Soviet-Turkish communiques have repeatedly voiced the two governments' desire to continue their efforts towards the development of friendly, good-neighbour relations and stronger mutual trust in accordance with the traditions that date back to Lenin and Atatürk. Their one-time estrangement has gradually given way to a definite mutual understanding and an urge to follow the way of co-operation and genuine good-neighbour relations.



The half-century of Soviet-Turkish relations has shown that the traditions of friendship and good neighbourhood are deeply rooted. Of much importance for the further successful development of Soviet-Turkish relations was the visit to Turkey in April 1972 by N. V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The talks on that occasion showed that the USSR and Turkey were close in their positions on key international issues. The Declaration on the Principles of Good-Neighbour Relations between the USSR and the Turkish Republic, which was signed during the visit, is an important basis for further relations between the two countries.

Better Soviet-Turkish relations are not only well in line with the two countries' national interests, but also serve the cause of peace and the security of all nations.

## **PART FOUR**

### **Leninism and the Anti-Imperialist Struggle in India, Southeast Asia and the Arab Countries**



### **Spread of Marxist Ideology in India: Early Stages**

The early 20th century saw the emergence of a new trend within the world revolutionary process—the struggle to implement the theory of the founders of scientific communism. Lenin was at the back of that trend: he elaborated Marxism in a creative way and worked out an all-round theory of socialist revolution, with the national and colonial question as its ingredient.

Lenin showed that under imperialism, the anti-imperialist, national liberation movement could not be uniform or homogeneous, for it involved various social groups and classes, each with its own goals and objectives, and each using different forms and methods of struggle. But, Lenin realised, all their attacks were spearheaded against the common enemy: the nationalism of the oppressed nations had an anti-imperialist edge, bringing the various social forces together in their struggle against the foreign colonialists.

In the first decade of the 20th century, the Indian anti-imperialist movement developed two main trends: bourgeois-democratic and revolutionary-democratic, the former confining itself to a nationalist framework, that is, a struggle to win political independence, whereas the latter went beyond that and sought to combine the struggle for political independence with radical social reforms, and this



gave the whole anti-imperialist movement greater depth and intensity.

The aspects of the revolutionary theory which Lenin had creatively elaborated to fit the new historical conditions had some influence on both these trends. The strength of their influence naturally differed from one class or social section of Indian society to another. The bourgeois democrats, whose ideologist was Mahatma Gandhi, went the way of denying Marxism-Leninism, but at the same time they often drew on the theory of scientific socialism to reinforce their anti-colonialist positions. As for the revolutionary democrats, they saw Marxism-Leninism as the highroad to national liberation and social progress. One must emphasise here that as the Indian national liberation movement became more democratic, many bourgeois democrats gradually came to assimilate some aspects of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, and this gave a further impetus to the general swing to the Left.

Of course, Marxism-Leninism penetrated India with great difficulty, often reaching it in distorted form. In fact, its influence in India began to amount to something only after the October Revolution, when Lenin's ideas began to take on substance inside the Soviet Republic and reached the Indians in concrete forms, and when communist groups first emerged in India and started to spread Marxist-Leninist ideas within the national liberation movement.

\* \* \*

Lenin first mentioned India in his *Development of Capitalism in Russia*. In analysing the economic development of the Russian countryside, he wrote: "Agricultural capitalism is taking another, enormous step forward; it is boundlessly expanding the commercial production of agricultural produce and drawing a number of new countries into the world arena; it is driving patriarchal agriculture out of its last refuges, such as India or Russia..."<sup>1</sup> Many Indian and European researchers subsequently noted various economic similarities between prerevolutionary Russia and India.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 329.

This book of Lenin's is still of paramount methodological importance for the study of agrarian relations in India.

In analysing the colonial policy of the European bourgeoisie and the oppressed peoples' struggle against that policy in an article entitled "The War in China", Lenin called the reader's attention to the popular anti-British uprising in India in 1857-1859.<sup>1</sup> In 1901, when dealing with the development of the world capitalist economy, he ranked India among the few Eastern countries that had relatively close links with the world market.<sup>2</sup>

At the turn of the century, Lenin was mostly interested in the socio-economic aspect of Indian history, but after 1905, when Europe and Asia became the scene of revolutionary movements, he devoted more attention to the political movement in India. The shift was largely due to the upswing in the national liberation struggle under the impact of the 1905-1907 revolution in Russia, which had roused the oppressed peoples of India, as well as of many other Eastern countries.

The working-class and national liberation movement that swept the world in the wake of this revolution scared the European bourgeoisie and threw her into the arms of the diehard reactionaries. "But," Lenin emphasised, "the proletariat of the European countries and the young democracy of Asia, fully confident of its strength and with abiding faith in the masses, are advancing to take the place of this decadent and moribund bourgeoisie."<sup>3</sup> In this context, Lenin made special mention of the growing unrest in British India.<sup>4</sup>

During the Russian revolution of 1905-1907, there was a powerful upswing in the national liberation movement in India. It started mostly in protest against the partitioning of Bengal, brought off by the imperialists "in order to weaken the national movement"<sup>5</sup> in one of the more advanced Indian provinces. Later, mass action in different parts of the country took on a sharply anti-imperialist edge and went

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 497.



well beyond mere protest against the partitioning of Bengal. In a report on September 24, 1906, the Russian Consul in Bombay, Polovtsev, said that the movement was aimed "not only against individual government measures, but even against the British presence as such and all things British in India."<sup>1</sup>

The broad anti-colonialist movement was led by the Indian National Congress, which was going through a period of democratisation, with growing influence being exerted by petty-bourgeois revolutionaries, who wanted independence and looked for support among broader sections of the population. An "extremist" group was established within the Congress headed by the prominent politician and leader of the radical section of the Indian national bourgeoisie, Bal Gangadhar Tilak. There was no unity among the "extremists", however. The more radical of the group believed that the colonial regime had to be overthrown chiefly through an armed uprising. But an uprising for them was a coup by a small underground group of conspirators. These petty-bourgeois nationalists did not have any links with the popular masses, and most of them fell victim to the colonial authorities. Tilak recognised both violent and peaceful, legal forms of struggle, called the Indian peoples to revolutionary struggle, and wanted them to profit by the experience of the revolutionary movements in various countries, including Russia.<sup>2</sup>

When the Congress split up in 1908, Tilak tried to set up an independent party, but in June 1908, he was arrested, accused of anti-government activities and exiled. His trial led to massive unrest in some parts of India and a mammoth strike by workers in Bombay. Lenin took notice of these events, and dealt with them in his famous article "Inflammable Material in World Politics".

Before he started work on that article, Lenin took part in the broad debates on the colonial question at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International (August 1907), which he attended together with A. V. Lunacharsky, M. M. Lit-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *The National Liberation Movement in India and B. G. Tilak's Activity*, Moscow, 1958, p. 563 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See *The National Liberation Movement in India and B. G. Tilak's Activity*, p. 501.

vinov and other Bolsheviks. The Indian woman-revolutionary, B. R. Cama, who had emigrated from India, made an ardent speech at the Congress, calling on the international working-class movement to voice its protest over the Indian people's unbearable exploitation by the British imperialists. Cama came out very strongly in favour of the Russian revolution.<sup>1</sup>

In his "Inflammable Material in World Politics" Lenin emphasised: "In India lately, the native slaves of the 'civilised' British capitalists have been a source of worry to their 'masters'. There is no end to the acts of violence and plunder which goes under the name of the British system of government in India."<sup>2</sup>

Upon his return from Stuttgart, Lenin wrote in the *Proletary* (Proletarian) in October 1907 that "the British bourgeoisie, for example, derives more profit from the many millions of the population of India and other colonies than from the British workers."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin noted that the indignation against colonial rule in India was by no means erratic or confined to some small, exclusive groups of revolutionaries. He discerned some new phenomena in India's political development, which showed, above all, in the fact that Tilak's conviction by the British authorities entailed workers' strikes. "...In India the street is beginning to stand up for its writers and political leaders. In India, too, the proletariat has already developed to conscious political mass struggle..."<sup>4</sup>

### Lenin and Revolutionary Indian Émigrés

In view of the colonialists' savage reprisals against the national liberation fighters, many Indian patriots had to go abroad. In Switzerland, France, Germany, Sweden and the USA, the Indian revolutionaries inevitably ran into political émigrés from Russia, who maintained close links with Lenin.

<sup>1</sup> See *The International Socialist Congresses. Speeches and Resolutions on India*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 183-84.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 184.



There are no proved facts to show that Lenin had any direct contacts with Indian émigrés, but documents have already been found showing their fairly close links with some of Lenin's associates, forward-looking Russian intellectuals like Maxim Gorky and M. P. Pavlovich.<sup>1</sup> These personal contacts naturally helped to mould the Indian revolutionaries' thinking. Lenin and his associates benefited, too, receiving information on what was going on in the Indian national liberation movement.

Before and during the First World War, Indian émigrés in San Francisco and Berlin set up groups which tried to get into contact with anti-colonial organisations in India. One of the latter, the Ghadar Party, was preparing an armed uprising to overthrow British rule in India.

Under the influence of various circumstances (including the activities of the Ghadar Party), progressive sections of the national bourgeoisie were taking an ever more active part in the anti-imperialist struggle. The émigré groups and organisations used various means to intensify the anti-imperialist struggle in India. Some of them counted on assistance from countries hostile to Britain. Thus, in late 1914, a small group in Berlin established an Indian Revolutionary Committee. Its members had fairly loose links with India, and their hopes were largely illusory, but they genuinely thought to overthrow colonialist rule.

In early 1915, the Indian Revolutionary Committee sent a mission to Afghanistan in order to establish a centre for anti-British propaganda in India. But the mission failed to carry out its tasks.

It was only after Amanullah Khan came to power in Afghanistan that Indian revolutionary émigrés found it possible to step up their activities in that country. They initiated the formation of a "Provisional Government of India", headed by Raja Mahendra Pratap. It also included Professor Maulvi Barkatullah, who had long lived abroad, and Maulana Obaidullah, who had come to Kabul from India, where he had been in contact with the Deoband centre for co-ordinating the anti-imperialist activities of the

<sup>1</sup> See *A. M. Gorky's Archives*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 221-23; Y. Y. Lyusternik, *Russo-Indian Economic and Cultural Ties in the 19th Century*, Moscow, 1966, p. 178 (both in Russian).

Indian Moslems. In 1919, Pratap, Obaidullah and other Indians were asked to leave Afghanistan, and they made their way to Moscow.

At that time, many Indian émigrés who had previously lived in Western Europe and America, particularly some Ghadar Party members and Moslem pilgrims,<sup>1</sup> were staging in Moscow and Tashkent. They were ardent patriots and were looking for ways to free India from the British yoke. They hoped to get support from the Bolsheviki. S. G. Sardesai, member of the National Council of the Communist Party of India, subsequently wrote that "none of them was disappointed in the Soviet Union. Lenin gave them all the help they could make use of in the cause of Indian freedom."<sup>2</sup>

On May 7, 1919, several Indians, led by Pratap, were received by Lenin. As Pratap later recalled, at the start of their talks Lenin asked them in English what language they preferred: German, English, French or Russian. The talk was in English. Pratap presented Lenin with his book, *Religion of Love*. It turned out that Lenin had already read it, and believed that it advocated "Tolstoyism".<sup>3</sup>

Indian émigrés played an important role in the Indian revolutionary liberation movement, although their ties with India were not always very strong. They did all they could to spread the ideas of struggle for national liberation and socialism and tell the Indians about the revolutionary events in Russia and Western Europe.

### **New Stage in the Liberation Struggle in India After the October Revolution**

Progressive Indian journalists living abroad published their own patriotic newspapers and magazines and sent these over to India, and this was how the Indians came to know some more or less authentic facts about the October Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> These were pilgrims who had left India to join the Caliphate movement in Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, New Delhi, 1967, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> See *Soviet Land*, No. 8, 1968, p. 40.



In January 1918, an editorial entitled "About the Russian Leader Lenin" was printed in the Marathi-language newspaper *Kesari* edited by B. G. Tilak. When still a youth, the article said, Lenin had become an adherent of the Marxian doctrine and studied in depth the economic and political position of the peasants in Russia and in other countries. Lenin's writings on the agrarian question were masterpieces of scientific thought, the article went on, clarifying Lenin's attitude to the problems of war, peace and other key international issues.<sup>1</sup>

The British Intelligence Service began to keep a close watch on newspaper reports, to penalise editors, impose fines, confiscate some issues, ban their circulation, etc. Its reports noted the special activity of papers, like *The Bombay Chronicle*, *Kesari*, *The Tribune* and *The Independent*. The editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*, B. J. Horniman, was expelled from the country. The editor of the Urdu newspaper *Zamindar*, Zaffar Ali Khan, was repeatedly harassed.<sup>2</sup>

*The Tribune* of Lahore published everything it could about Bolshevism and events in Russia even before October 1917. Thus, in July 1917 it reported that Lenin was working in the underground, and judging from the tone of the article it could be assumed that Lenin's name was already known to readers of the paper.<sup>3</sup> There were some interesting reports in *The Independent*, a newspaper published in Allahabad by the Nehru family. In April 1919, when Gandhi was already a very popular leader, the newspaper carried an article entitled "Gandhi vs. Lenin". In those circumstances, this title was an indication of the importance of Lenin's ideas for India. Various theoretical articles about the people's participation in the revolution and the proletariat's role were published. In October 1920, the paper refuted reports from London about an increase in working hours in Soviet Russia. Referring to a ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) report from Stockholm, the paper said that workers in Russia stayed on after working hours of their own free will in order to rehabilitate the national economy and advance the victory on the front.<sup>4</sup> On

<sup>1</sup> See S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Independent*, October 29, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Tribune*, July 24, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Independent*, October 6, 1920.

October 19, 1920, the paper carried a big article on Soviet Russia, which said, in particular, that Lenin had issued a sufficient number of statements that Russia needed peace to implement a constructive plan. The Civil War was reported on fairly objectively and in detail. On October 2, 1920, the paper carried the full text of Lenin's speech at the Ninth Congress of the RCP(B), in an English translation. An article entitled "The Truth about the Events in Russia", which appeared in the newspaper *Maryada* in February 1920, said that Bolshevism had been accepted and approved by the vast majority of peace-loving people in Russia.<sup>1</sup>

Some newspapers which were being published in Punjab, Madras, Bengal and other provinces sought to give an objective account of the revolutionary events in Russia and to get at their root. A future analysis of these writings will, undoubtedly, shed fresh light on yet another important chapter in the history of the great process of the liberation of the oppressed peoples set going by the October Revolution.

News of the 1917 events in Russia reached the Indian people not only through the press and various writings, but also by word of mouth. The chief source of information here was the Indian soldiers who had been recruited by the British (mostly in Northern India—Punjab, the United Provinces and Kashmir) to fight in the First World War, and who were now returning home. The Indians fought with the British armed forces in the Middle East, in Africa, France, the Transcaspian area, and other areas, where they first heard of the revolutionary ideas of the October Revolution. The soldiers accepted these heart and soul, for they hated the British colonialists. Lenin said in this context: "Britain brought regiments from India to fight the Germans.... They were formed into shock units and hurled into the most dangerous sectors, where they were mown down like grass by machine-guns. But they learned something."<sup>2</sup>

Some Moslem organisations in Northern India, having heard of the October Revolution, sent messages of greetings to Soviet Russia. One of these which was sent right after the

<sup>1</sup> N. A. Y. Home Department, Pol. (Deposit), 1920, f. 89, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 390.



revolution, in late 1917, but reached Moscow in various roundabout ways only in November 1918, said: "Leaders of the Russian Revolution! India congratulates you on the great victory you have scored in the interests of world democracy. India marvels at the noble and humane principles you have proclaimed upon coming to power. But at the same time, India fears that your success may not be lasting, for we believe that so long as Britain holds 350 million Indians as its slaves, you cannot succeed in realising your ... aspirations.... You must know that Britain will not suffer a Democratic Russia, based on the principles you have proclaimed, to exist side by side with its major colonies. You must bear in mind that Britain will spare no pains to strangle your new, Socialist Republic."

The working-class movement led by the trade unions played an ever more important role in the anti-imperialist struggle.

The first Communist groups—small but vigorous—emerged in the early 1920s. They started publishing leaflets and pamphlets. In 1922, a Bombay group started publishing *The Socialist*, a magazine in English, which carried articles on Soviet Russia and the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. In 1923, a Calcutta group started publishing *Danawani* (Voice of the People), a magazine in Bengali, which was edited by a founder of India's Communist Party Muzaffar Ahmed.

The rising strike movement heralded a nation-wide upswing in the liberation struggle. It started a few months after the October Revolution in Russia and soon became a permanent and important factor of the country's socio-political life. At that time, workers and handicraftsmen made up a sizable part of the Indian population.

In 1919, there were incessant clashes between workers and employers, merging into the anti-imperialist movement, which also involved intellectuals, handicraftsmen, the urban poor, workers of small manufactures and small traders. These sections, together with railway workers, who were one of the more advanced and closely-knit working-class contingents of the day, were an important motive force behind the anti-imperialist action in Punjab, where the struggle was particularly bitter. In April 1919, strikes broke out all along Punjab's railway lines, and also in Bombay and

Gujarat. The strikers held up official trains under armed guard. The anti-imperialist action in Punjab was taken up in other areas, especially by railwaymen and textile workers in Gujarat.

The British imperialists came down upon the national liberation fighters with savage repressions. They introduced a wartime emergency law giving unlimited powers to the local authorities. The events in the town of Amritsar, known as the Amritsar Massacre, epitomised the colonialists' crime. On April 13, 1919, the British shot down a peaceful rally in Jallianwalla Bagh Square organised by the inhabitants of the town and neighbouring villages. There were more than 2,000 dead, women and children among them. The crime caused a storm of indignation in India and abroad.

After the Amritsar events, the anti-imperialist movement in the country markedly grew. Lenin said that the October Revolution had given a start to anti-imperialist movements in many colonial countries, that India was "at the head of these countries", and that revolution there was "maturing in proportion, on the one hand, to the growth of the industrial and railway proletariat, and, on the other, to the increase in the brutal terrorism of the British, who with ever greater frequency resort to massacres (Amritsar), public floggings, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The fight of millions upon millions against the colonial yoke was led by the Indian bourgeoisie and its political party, the Indian National Congress. What with the revolutionary upswing, many petty bourgeois, handicraftsmen, and broad sections of workers and peasants, who were prepared to free their country at any sacrifice, were also joining the National Congress. The Nagpur Session of the National Congress in December 1920 adopted a programme of non-collaboration with the colonialists, providing for a boycott of the elections to the legislative bodies, a boycott of the courts and educational establishments, English clothes and fabrics, an encouragement of hand-spinning and weaving, and, as a last resort, refusal to pay taxes.

The party decisions voiced its sympathy with the workers'

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 455.



fight "for securing their legitimate rights through the organisation of Trades Unions".<sup>1</sup> Since it aimed to become a mass party, the Congress had to support the proletariat's broad strike struggle, channelling it into the general non-collaboration movement and so objectively helping to deepen class awareness among the masses and strengthen the workers' urge for active political struggle and independent organisation.

The British colonial authorities issued demagogic statements about the danger of Marxist-Leninist ideas penetrating into India, and blamed the anti-imperialist struggle on the "intrigues of Bolshevik agents". They wanted to make the leaders of the national movement fear the workers' and peasants' social struggle. India's Viceroy Lord Chelmsford called on the leaders of the National Congress to suspend the mass action and co-operate with him in the fight against the "Bolshevik menace".

The colonialists portrayed revolutionary events in Russia as rampant "lawlessness"; their newspapers treated the reader to generous helpings of slander, saying that the Russian people had "run amok" and seized power, "trampling on the cultural legacy of the past" and "fostering cruelty and ignorance". They lied about the October Revolution, the early measures of the Soviet government and the work of the revolutionary leaders, Lenin above all, seeking to disorient and intimidate the Indian intellectuals, who had, perhaps, started their purposeful anti-imperialist fight precisely as a result of the October Revolution.

That propaganda doubtless had some effect on certain sections of Indian society, but the colonialists were unable to offset the revolutionising impact of the Leninist ideas on the Indian national liberation movement.

The magazine *Modern Review* systematically carried reports about Russia and Lenin. In February 1919, its editor, Ramanand Chatterji, wrote: "It is refreshing to turn from the chorus of abuses and misrepresentations directed against the Russian Soviets by the capitalist press to the illuminating sketch of the framework of the Soviet state....

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian National Congress, 1920-1923*, Allahabad, 1924, pp. 34-35.

In fact, the Bolshevik is striving to make Russia better and nobler than anything she has ever been."<sup>1</sup>

The leading members of the National Congress came out against the colonialists' attempts to raise the bogey of a "Bolshevik menace". Here is what Gandhi replied to the Viceroy's proposal to end mass action in order to stop the country's "infiltration" by Bolshevik ideas: "I have never believed in a Bolshevik menace." Later Gandhi wrote: "...there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women, who have given up their all for its sake; and ideal that is sanctified by sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain."<sup>2</sup>

The upswing in the Indian national liberation movement reached its apogee in 1920 and 1921. The number of strikes was at an all-time high, with well over a million strikers taking part in more than 250 strikes in the first six months of 1920. In 1921, the strikes became more persistent and often took a political turn. Clashes between workers and employers sometimes ended in real fighting. Gandhi said, for instance, that one of the most bitter of these, a strike by Bombay textile workers in late 1921, was a veritable uprising.

The rapid spread of the strike movement was coupled with better organisation of the working class. The strike committees that spontaneously emerged in the course of strikes sometimes retained the functions of a ruling body and developed into trade-union organisations. Some of these later united into industrial trade unions. Workers' organisations were often headed by intellectuals, who were being increasingly confirmed in their view that it was impossible to drive out the British colonialists without a mass workers' and peasants' movement.

In 1920, the trade unions held their First All-India Congress. Its decisions reflected the complexities of the formation of a country-wide trade-union centre, which showed that the working-class and social movement was still fairly young. The Second Congress in Jharia in 1921 was more representative. On the day of its opening, Jharia's

<sup>1</sup> S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup> See S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, p. 29.



striking miners staged a mass demonstration. The decision of the Congress reflected the struggle between the various trends. One of these, for instance, wanted to keep the Indian working-class movement within the framework of reformist Labour ideology, and another—to subject it to the tasks of the national liberation movement led by the National Congress. A special resolution expressed the delegates' sympathy with the working people of Soviet Russia, and called on the world proletariat to help them leave war and hunger behind.<sup>1</sup>

In 1921, several major peasant uprisings broke out across India. Although they were relatively local and started for different reasons, all of them eventually developed on anti-imperialist lines and attracted the attention of the national liberation leaders.

### Leninist Influences in the Indian Anti-Imperialist Movement

Over the following few years, the struggle within the National Congress continued to gather momentum, reflecting the basic social contradictions within the party. That struggle helped enhance the political awareness of the various classes and social forces taking part in the liberation movement and being subjected, in varying degree, to the revolutionising influence of the theory and practice of the multinational Soviet state.

The British authorities made a titanic effort to prevent the development of any ideological contacts between the Indian and the Soviet people. Under the pretext of countering "subversive Bolshevik propaganda", they established a special information bureau to instruct officials in India on how to fight the infiltration of Bolshevik ideas.<sup>2</sup> But the colonialists' stubborn efforts to give a perverted picture of life in the Soviet Republic and of its Leninist nationalities policy were largely ineffective: people in every section of Indian society wanted to know more and more about Lenin, his work, and the doctrine of scientific

<sup>1</sup> See *The Daily Herald*, December 7, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> See *Link*, August 15, 1967.

socialism, and to learn the "secrets" of the new social system.

In 1921, G. V. Krishna Rao, journalist and active national liberation fighter, put out in Madras a biography of Lenin. He saw Lenin as "a man of iron will and scrupulous analytical mind", a man who was simple, who knew "the soul of the people and had faith in the masses' inexhaustible strength". The author tried to see Lenin's biography through the prism of the Marxist doctrine and, at the same time, compared the latter with Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence, which was the predominant doctrine of the Indian national movement at the time. He said that Lenin hated violence just as Gandhi did, but since despotism resorted to violent methods, Lenin resorted to these as well in order to achieve success. Lenin believed that he championed the proletariat's well-being and was always ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the workers the world over.<sup>1</sup> The publication of Lenin's biography in that period played an important role in the spread of Leninist ideas in India, even though it had a limited influence, for it was written in English.

Indian periodicals in the local languages, whose range was much wider, also kept publishing articles on Lenin and Soviet Russia. People read these articles aloud and discussed them with others.

Ramashankar Awasthi's *Russian Revolution*, published in Hindi in 1920, and his biography of Lenin (his first biography in Hindi),<sup>2</sup> were an important indicator of the interest in the events in Russia among the progressive Indian intellectuals. In April 1922, Husan Aziz Bhopali put out a pamphlet in Urdu called *The Leader of Freedom, Lenin*.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1920s, some groups of intellectuals had already read Lenin's works calling for a struggle against social and national oppression, and this helped the Indian patriots to see that their aims were identical with those of the revolutionary struggle of Soviet Russia and the whole international proletariat.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by A. Melnikov and A. Barkhudarov in "Lenin's First Biography in India", *Aziya i Afrika segodnya*, No. 11, 1967, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> See *Link*, August 15, 1967.

<sup>3</sup> See *New Age*, April 21, 1963.



Jawaharlal Nehru, the outstanding leader of the national liberation movement, wrote: "A study of Marx and Lenin produced a powerful effect on my mind and helped me to see history and current affairs in a new light. The long chain of history and of social development appeared to have some meaning, some sequence, and the future lost some of its obscurity.... I had no doubt that the Soviet Revolution had advanced human society by a great leap and had lit a bright flame which could not be smothered, and that it had laid the foundations for that new civilisation towards which the world could advance."<sup>1</sup>

In 1920, Lenin met an Indian delegation and told them what he thought of the peasant question. At that time, Lenin also received a set of theses on the national liberation movement in India formulated by the progressive Indian political leader, Bhupendranath Datta. Lenin wrote in his reply:

"Dear Comrade Datta,

"I have read your thesis. We should not discuss about the social classes. I think we should abide by my thesis on colonial question. Gather statistical facts about Peasant leagues if they exist in India."<sup>2</sup> Datta later wrote that Lenin's letter was "a revelation" to him, and that he had never before realised that the peasant movement was of importance for the movement for national freedom. Lenin's recommendations caused him to change his views on the ways and means of struggle for India's freedom.<sup>3</sup> Datta's *Dialectics of Land Economics of India* said that Lenin had used every possible source to get information about the Indian peasants, and that his works on the peasant question had had a strong effect on Congress members working in peasant organisations.

Soviet Russia's successes and its very existence had an effect not only on the communist movement in India (as some bourgeois writers maintain), but also on the national liberation movement as a whole, on all its motive forces, on the workers, the peasants, and even the moderate sections of the intelligentsia and the national bourgeoisie.

<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Bombay 1964, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 666, Note 291.

Under the impact of the unfolding working-class movement and the spread of Marxism in India, the Left radical leaders of the national liberation movement helped to organise workers' trade unions in India. B. Tilak was a leading figure behind the convocation of the first Indian Trades Union Congress.

In 1917-1922, the communist movement in India was in its preparatory stage. As Lenin's ideas and news of the October Revolution penetrated the country, and the Comintern and groups of Indian revolutionary émigrés stepped up their activities against the background of the massive and growing working-class and peasant movement, the first few Marxist groups were established in India's biggest industrial centres: Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lahore. Throughout 1923-1925, these groups recruited new members, and new groups were established in a number of industrial centres.

The colonial authorities used brutal repressions to prevent the rise of a communist movement in India. Thus, in particular, they staged the so-called anti-Bolshevik trials, where without providing any evidence they accused some Indian Communists of being "Bolshevik agents". But the repressions could do nothing to thwart the rising communist movement. In December 1925, the first conference of Indian Communists at Kanpur decided to establish a Communist Party of India.<sup>1</sup> Some Left-wing Congress Party members were also connected with the Communists.

Soviet Russia's example did a great deal to help the Indian national liberation movement elaborate mature revolutionary slogans.

Nehru was greatly impressed with what he saw on a visit to the USSR in 1927. Upon his return to India, he wrote a booklet called *Soviet Russia*.

In 1931, the National Congress met in Karachi and on the proposal of "The Young" (an influential group within the party) adopted its resolution on the basic rights, and also an economic and social programme putting forward radical democratic demands.

In his autobiography, which he wrote in prison in 1934

<sup>1</sup> See *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. 1, New Delhi, 1971, p. 3.



and 1935, Nehru drew the conclusion that "the institution of private property (except in a very restricted sense) gives dangerous power to individuals over society as a whole, and is therefore very harmful to society. I consider it immoral, far more so than drink, which harms the individual more than society."<sup>1</sup>

Many prominent men of Indian culture, like Rabindranath Tagore, Mohamad Iqbal and Prem Chand, showed a keen interest in the October Revolution and Soviet Russia's nationalities policy, often pinning their optimistic expectations on the Russian Revolution. Many of them wanted to visit the Soviet Union to see the great gains of socialism for themselves.

In 1930, despite his age and poor health, the great Indian humanist, Rabindranath Tagore, made a trip to the Soviet Union. In his *Letters from Russia*, he was greatly enthusiastic about Soviet Russia's achievements, particularly in culture. Speaking at the club of the Soviet Writers' Federation, he said: "I am extremely happy to have met workers in Russian culture. I have come to this country to learn from you.... I am delighted to see that for the first time in history you have brought education within the reach of the whole people, opening up before it the doors of schools, theatres and museums.... I am sure that your idea is very like my dream. You have done a great deal to foster a creative personality, much more than I can ever hope to do alone, and this is your immortal service to mankind."<sup>2</sup>

When India won its independence, there was a greater spread of Marxism-Leninism throughout the country. Many works on various aspects of Lenin's doctrine were being published, and more and more of Lenin's own writings were being translated into local languages. Upon its accession to power, the Indian bourgeoisie began to make some use of the experience of socialist construction in the USSR, nationalised British-owned industries, started to build up a state sector, and worked out state five-year plans.

In 1955, the National Congress proclaimed a programme for building a socialist-type society in India. But a bitter

<sup>1</sup> J. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, Bombay, 1962, p. 543.

<sup>2</sup> R. Tagore, *Letters from Russia*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 4-5 (retranslated from the Russian).

struggle broke out within the ruling circles over the reading of the programme and further ways for development. The socialist slogans had been largely formulated under pressure from the masses, who regarded socialism as the only possible way for India. The more progressive members of the propertied classes and the ruling party also realised that capitalism had discredited itself and that it could do nothing to free the country from feudal and colonial vestiges in a short period. In the National Congress, however, these forces were in a minority; besides, on the more important questions of political struggle, they decided not to appeal to the masses.

The Socialist Programme was formulated in very vague terms and, in effect, was not being implemented. There was a faster polarisation of political forces, more rapid class differentiation. The internal contradictions of the national bourgeoisie stood out more clearly; the big bourgeoisie was rapidly growing strong and was opposing any progressive changes. Private enterprise was being encouraged, and this gave a boost to big capital and strengthened the monopolies.

In 1959, when the Nehru government announced that the countryside was to be co-operated, the reactionary forces came out bluntly against its socialist slogans. The internal reactionaries led by ex-princes (who were still fairly strong in economic terms), landowners and big capitalists struck out against Nehru's line and called for his resignation, but they were unable to effect any cardinal changes in the government's policy even though there was a marked shift to the Right.

In the late 1960s, the struggle within the ruling camp and also between the various social forces took a sharp turn. The demands of the progressive elements within the ruling party approximated those of the Left-wing parties and democratic organisations. In the summer of 1969, the progressive forces managed to secure the nationalisation of the country's 14 major banks. The government also took some other steps towards nationalisation.

The Soviet Union has been giving all-round support to young nations in full accord with Lenin's behests. Soviet-Indian co-operation in international, economic and cultural affairs has been most beneficial. The Soviet-Indian Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation, signed on



August 9, 1971, is most important for the further strengthening of the friendship and mutually advantageous ties between the two countries.

Lenin's ideas helped to sharpen the progressive edge of the political line and opened up a fresh prospect for the country's social development.

Speaking before a Soviet-Indian friendship rally, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, said: "From the time of the Great October Revolution, the world began to hear a new voice—that of Lenin—and began to stir to new ideas."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's theoretical legacy is also extremely relevant to India's present-day development. In their search for the most effective ways to solve India's grave social problems, the problems of agrarian reform and national relations, to decide upon the best party strategy and tactics in the country's complicated conditions, and to wipe out poverty and unemployment, progressive-minded Indian leaders have been inevitably arriving at the need for a creative study of Lenin's theory and the experience of the USSR and other socialist countries in socialist construction.

Besides helping to strengthen India's progressive, anti-imperialist forces, the Soviet peoples' successes were also drawn upon for experience in the building of a new civilisation, and helped India's forward-looking social circles to assimilate the idea of planned economic development and the need for boosting India's state sector.

The five-year plans for the development of the Indian economy are now being framed taking account of the Soviet Union's considerable assistance, which has done much to strengthen India's economic independence. The USSR's aid is being channelled into the key branches of the state sector, like metallurgy, engineering and the power industry, which have been working to lay the material groundwork for a restructuring of the country's economic life in accordance with the latest scientific and technological achievements.

Without the support of the USSR and the whole socialist community, the Indian Government would have found it

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi, January 1966-August 1969*, New Delhi, 1971, p. 471.

harder to follow an independent policy and resist Western imperialist pressures.

Since India's independence, the two countries have established and successfully maintained broad economic, cultural, scientific and political ties.

In their fight to strengthen peace and international detente, India and the Soviet Union take a common stand on many issues in various international organisations and at international forums, congresses and conferences.

Soviet-Indian friendship is deep-rooted and traditional. Jawaharlal Nehru declared back in 1940 that India took a friendly view of socialism in Russia and would resolutely denounce any attempt to undermine it.

Soviet-Indian summit meetings and mutual visits by political leaders helped to strengthen the good-neighbour relations. The 1973 visit to India by General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee L. I. Brezhnev is a case in point. The Indian people gave him a warm welcome at mammoth rallies and various meetings, which showed the deep-rooted friendly relations between the Indian and the Soviet people.

The Soviet people's successes provide India with an inspiring example in its effort to solve complicated problems arising along the way of independent development. The friendly and mutually advantageous relations between India and the Soviet Union have met with the approval and support of all the progressive forces in India. Indian opinion has always taken a close interest in Soviet affairs.

At the time of the 25th Congress of the CPSU, the Indians published the CPSU Central Committee's Report to the Congress delivered by General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee L. I. Brezhnev: the document was translated into 11 languages of India and put out in pamphlet form.

The *National Herald* wrote at the time of the Congress that from the early days of the Soviet state, the great Lenin had given a high assessment of the revolutionary potentialities and importance of the Indian people's fight against colonialism. Today, the paper went on, Indian-Soviet friendship and co-operation are a powerful factor of international relations, a factor of peace and progress, and the decisions of the 25th Congress of the CPSU are very important for India as well, because they bear not only on



the life of the Soviet Union, but on that of all other countries in the world as well.

Friendly relations between countries like India and the Soviet Union are of great importance for stronger peace and stability in Asia, and for detente in the world.

These problems were high on the agenda of the Soviet-Indian talks held in Moscow on June 8-13, 1976.

In a welcoming speech at a reception at the Kremlin, L. I. Brezhnev said that the talks would mark a new and important stage in the development of Soviet-Indian relations. He said: "We rate the constantly growing Soviet-Indian friendship very highly, and attach, one might say, fundamental importance to this friendship. We regard it as embodiment of the inviolable friendship and unity between the two great forces of the present day—the socialist world and the countries that have thrown off the colonial yoke and taken the road of independent progressive development."<sup>1</sup>

A declaration issued at the end of the talks said that summit meetings were an effective way to promote the development of Soviet-Indian interstate relations, and that the leaders of the two countries agreed to hold these regularly.

In the course of the Moscow talks, the two parties examined the implementation of their long-term agreement on trade and economic development, signed in New Delhi on November 29, 1973, during L. I. Brezhnev's visit to India, voiced their satisfaction with the steady growth of Soviet-Indian trade, and emphasised the need to look for new areas and methods of co-operation.

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, June 9, 1976.

**THE EARLY SPREAD OF LENINISM  
IN SOME COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA<sup>1</sup>**

**Lenin and the National Liberation Movement  
in Indonesia**

*Penetration of the ideas of scientific socialism into Indonesia in the pre-October period.* The transforming power of Leninism, which showed the revolutionary way of transition from colonial oppression to national independence and full social emancipation affected Indonesia in a most impressive way.

The revolutionising influence was due to Indonesia's specific socio-economic and, consequently, political development. As a result of Holland's special colonial policy there, capitalism in Indonesia began to develop when the monopoly exploitation by the state and the local serf-owners had given way to exploitation by several imperialist powers. This produced fairly rapid socio-economic changes in Indonesia.

The shaping of the modern classes in Indonesia was most uneven. The national bourgeoisie here was a late-comer on the historical scene and was mostly connected with the non-productive spheres of the economy; it largely operated on a small and medium scale, and was extremely weak. The national proletariat grew up almost exclusively as foreign enterprises, and developed more rapidly than the national bourgeoisie.

<sup>1</sup> The chapter deals mainly with the early phase of the revolutionising influence of Lenin's ideas on Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma. The authors sought to analyse in detail only the more important aspects of that influence on the various contingents of the national liberation movement.



At the end of the 19th century, Indonesia had tens of thousands of industrial and hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers. Most of these were concentrated in large enterprises, and some working-class contingents, in the railway business above all, made up a fairly full-fledged proletariat.

The stunted condition of the Indonesian bourgeoisie which incited it against imperialism, on the one hand, and the proletariat's coinciding national and class interests, on the other, created objective prerequisites for the establishment of a common militant anti-imperialist front.

The Indonesian people were gradually developing a feeling of national awareness, and the 1905-1907 revolution in Russia gave that process a powerful impetus.

Indonesian intellectuals voiced this new mood. At first these were mostly members of impoverished feudal and bureaucratic families. In 1908, they set up in Java the country's first national organisation (Boedi Oetomo—Loft Goal), whose emergence falls within the context of Indonesia's national awakening. Its members urged unity among their fellow-countrymen for the purpose of developing national culture and economy. In 1912, democratic Indo-European<sup>1</sup> intellectuals set up on Java the country's first political party, the Indian Party<sup>2</sup> (later renamed National Indian Party), which for the first time advanced the slogan of Indonesia's independence. Since both these bodies had a narrow social make-up and were limited in their practical activity, they were unable to voice the interests of the whole nation. But their ideas played an important role in the development of the national liberation movement in Indonesia.

From 1911 to 1913, the Indonesian Moslems established Sarekat Islam (Islam Union), an organisation reflecting the interests of Indonesia's liberation, essentially bourgeois-democratic, movement, whose ideology—Moslem nationalism—was a manifestation of bourgeois nationalism and was typical of the colonial countries. That organisation was led

<sup>1</sup> Indo-Europeans—Indonesians of mixed parentage: Indonesian mothers and European fathers.

<sup>2</sup> The Party's name reflected Indonesia's former official name—Dutch East Indies.

by the national petty bourgeoisie and was the first mass political body in Indonesia, ranging across broad sections of the peasantry, the workers and the petty urban classes.

It was chiefly in the wake of these events in Indonesia that Lenin wrote his article "The Awakening of Asia" (1913), which gave an exhaustive characteristic of Indonesia's emergent national liberation movement: "A significant development is the spread of the revolutionary democratic movement to the Dutch East Indies, to Java and the other Dutch colonies, with a population of some forty million.

"First, the democratic movement is developing among the masses of Java, where a nationalist movement has arisen under the banner of Islam. Secondly, capitalism has created a local intelligentsia consisting of acclimatised Europeans who demand independence for the Dutch East Indies. Thirdly, the fairly large Chinese population of Java and the other islands have brought the revolutionary movement from their native land."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin defined Sarekat Islam as a national union of natives which "already has a membership of 80,000 and is holding mass meetings". He went on: "There is no stopping the growth of the democratic movement."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, Sarekat Islam's ideas of national unity and revival were a powerful stimulus for the advance of the popular movement. The peasant movement, which had been going strong from the turn of the century, became even more intensive, and in some areas acquired a sharp anti-colonialist and anti-feudal edge. A working-class movement emerged and rose rapidly: from 1913 onwards, strikes at foreign enterprises became commonplace.

The working-class movement at the time was on the whole spontaneous, but Sarekat Islam at once tried to give it a lead, for the national bourgeoisie realised that the proletariat was a new social force which could be used to pressure the imperialists, but which, at the same time, had to be kept in rein. Sarekat Islam sections gave support to workers' strikes, and, drawing on the experience of the Dutch trade unions, Sarekat Islam leaders set to organise the first Indonesian trade unions (among employees).

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.



The national and political consciousness of the Indonesian proletariat was considerably enhanced by the fact that the Indonesian working-class movement emerged and developed as an integral part of the national liberation movement, and that the working masses were being involved in politics through Sarekat Islam. One important point here was that the trade unions were being established by an anti-colonial political party, so that from the very start they had very strong political leanings. Because of that, however, the proletariat's own class interests could well be neglected, blending into the general anti-colonial struggle.

But the favourable background to the Indonesian working-class movement made it possible to invest it with socialist spirit from the very outset. On the eve of the First World War, some Dutch Social-Democrats living in Indonesia set up their own group. In May 1914, an Indian Social-Democratic Union (ISDV), the first Marxist organisation in Southeast Asia, was established in Surabaya on Java, and this meant that the Indonesian liberation movement was beginning to merge with the working-class movement in the advanced countries.

The process was complicated, reflecting the difficulties inherent in the spread of true Marxist ideology, difficulties which were intrinsic to the international working-class movement of the day, and which Lenin worked to live down. When the socialist movement in Europe broke up into the two major trends, revolutionary and opportunist, the Dutch Social-Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) went opportunist and moved to the extreme Right. But soon afterwards, several years before the October Revolution, the SDAP became one of the few European parties that broke up into two major trends, with a Left-wing section branching off (in 1909) into an independent Social-Democratic Party (SDP). In contrast to the SDAP, the new party took an international stand on all the major problems: it denounced militarism and the preparation by the imperialists of imperialist war, and called for immediate independence for Indonesia.

Lenin devoted much attention to the struggle between these two social-democratic trends in Holland, denouncing the opportunists' policy of the SDAP and thinking very highly of the Left-wing Social-Democrats and their irrecon-

cilable fight against the opportunists. He believed that the Dutch Left were "among the best revolutionary and internationalist elements in international Social-Democracy",<sup>1</sup> one of the Marxist groups which were to make up the core of the future Third International. At the same time, Lenin sharply criticised the SDP's mistakes in the matter of the self-determination of nations,<sup>2</sup> pointing out, however, that these mistakes stemmed from objective factors. He wrote that the Dutch Marxists "do not say quite what they mean".<sup>3</sup> Thus, Gorter, an SDP leader, "while wrongly repudiating the principle of self-determination of nations, applies it correctly by demanding *political independence* for the Dutch Indies and by unmasking the betrayal of socialism by the Dutch opportunists who disagree with this demand".<sup>4</sup>

Lenin's effort to mould the Dutch Left outlook on the truly Marxist line was of great importance both for the SDP itself and for its representatives in Indonesia.

At its foundation, the ISDV brought together members and supporters of Holland's both Social-Democratic parties, and this motley political complexion was a natural source of contradictions. The Right wing wanted to turn the ISDV into a political debating society, while the Left wing aimed at broad revolutionary propaganda among the Indonesian people. By 1915, despite resistance from the opportunists, the ISDV's vigorous Left-wing minority had already managed to gear the union to work among the masses, the working class above all.

The Left-wing Social-Democrats took their first steps towards organising the Indonesian workers through the Union of Railway and Tramway Personnel (VSTP), one of the few Dutch trade unions which admitted Indonesian employees to membership. They also worked among soldiers and sailors, and established contacts with national organisations, particularly Sarekat Islam, in order to take joint political action.

The ISDV used the trade unions and Sarekat Islam to recruit members from among the Indonesians. So, the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 348-49.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 166.



ISDV, which started out with no more than a few dozen members, mostly Dutchmen, with a handful of Indo-Europeans and Chinese, was gradually involving more and more Indonesians, and growing into a ramified organisation, which had its branches in Java's major industrial centres.

It mustered the support of Sarekat Islam's sections with a proletarian majority, and helped to effect Sarekat Islam's swing to the Left. The process was accelerated by the political atmosphere in Indonesia at that time: the sharp worsening of the masses' position caused by the First World War had led to a marked increase in the popular movement, which was spreading wide across the country and taking on a more organised form under the influence of Sarekat Islam. Action by the peasants (who were often put down by military force) was in the hands of Sarekat Islam alone, while the working-class movement was a sphere of joint work by Sarekat Islam and the ISDV. On the Social-Democrats' initiative and with the approval of the Sarekat Islam leadership, the two organisations devoted more attention to the establishment of trade unions. To guide the workers' strike movement, Sarekat Islam also established special "trades departments".

The February 1917 Revolution in Russia gave a further impetus to the Leftward swing in the Indonesian political movement. The ISDV's Left wing stepped up its activities to a considerable degree and became the main vehicle of the ideas of the Russian revolution.

When the news of the events in Russia reached Indonesia, an ISDV leader published an article, entitled "Triumph", in an Indonesian nationalist paper, calling on the Indonesian people to follow the Russians' example.

Soon after, the ISDV newspaper *Het Vrije Woord*, on whose board Left and Centrist elements were in a majority, carried a series of articles on the February Revolution in Russia. To bring socialist ideas within the reach of more readers, from April 1917 the ISDV newspaper was published in the generally spoken Malay, as well as in Dutch.

The ISDV press took an ever greater interest in the internal problems facing the Russian Social-Democrats, particularly the contradictions between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. In analysing these contradictions, *Het*

*Vrije Woord* repeatedly came out in support of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

The interest in the tactics of the various trends in international Social-Democracy was only natural, for the Left wing of the ISDV were facing the most urgent problem: they had to work among the masses against the odds of constant Right-wing opposition. The contradictions within the ISDV reached their peak in the spring of 1917, when the Left-wing forces intensified their activities. In September 1917, the Union split up, the opportunists withdrew from it and set up their own organisation. So, even before the October Revolution, Social-Democrats in Indonesia, as well as in Holland, went two separate ways: revolutionary and reformist; the adherents of the latter held on to their opportunist policy, while the ISDV members (the bulk of its Indonesian members included) worked to turn the Union into a mass proletarian party.

The Second National Congress of Sarekat Islam summed up the results of the political struggle and the growth in the Indonesian people's political awareness. At that time, Sarekat Islam was already taking shape as a block of various classes and political parties; it was something of a common national front with an emerging ISDV-led Left wing.

The work of the Congress, its decisions above all, showed that the anti-colonial movement in the country was on the increase, and that the Left-wing Social Democrats were having ever more say within it. The Congress decisions not only levelled sharp criticism at the country's economic and political system, but for the first time proclaimed the struggle for independence to be a concrete goal: it adopted a programme for Sarekat Islam saying that its main target was to achieve self-government through struggle against foreign capitalism.

The Congress showed heightened interest in the working-class question, it adopted a resolution in support of the mounting movement for higher wages and lower prices, and also set up a special "labour group" (alongside a "peasant group" and some others). ISDV member Semaoen, an Indonesian, was elected to Sarekat Islam's central leadership.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Sarekat Islam kongres (2-e nationale kongres) 20-27 October 1917 te Batavia, Batavia, 1919.*



The spread of socialist ideas in Indonesia in the period preceding the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917 served to intensify the impact of the October Revolution on the Indonesian national liberation movement.

*The influence of Leninist ideas on the Indonesian national liberation movement after the October Revolution.* News of the revolution in Russia, which for the first time in mankind's history had put an end to oppression in any form, reached Indonesia fairly soon. The press across the political spectrum gave wide coverage to the events in Petrograd. Indonesia's revolutionary Social-Democrats, like their fellow-fighters in Holland, met the Russian revolution with enthusiasm, and started to spread its ideas persistently among the people. The ISDV newspapers (both in Dutch and Malay) wrote a great deal about the importance of the Russian revolution and its gains.

On November 25, 1917, *Het Vrije Woord* started a series of articles on the October Revolution, the first of which said: "Events have outstripped our wildest dreams.... For us revolutionary socialists these comrades [the Bolsheviks.—*Authors*], with their great spirit of self-sacrifice and matchless valour ... are a brilliant flame, a powerful radiant light, which gives us strength to weather the hard times."

The ISDV newspaper recognised the international importance of the October Revolution, saying that the Russian working class was the "vanguard of all the modern proletariat". Accordingly, this social-democratic propaganda began to devote renewed attention to the Bolsheviks' tactics on the eve of the October Revolution. Thus, *Het Vrije Woord* reprinted an article from the Dutch newspaper *De Tribune*, which described the Bolsheviks' tactics as "the only possible tactics for the revolutionary Social-Democrats" and emphasised that "Lenin and the Russian maximalists [that is, Bolsheviks.—*Authors*] were the first to have made practical use of the idea of international proletarian unity in the fight against imperialism.... During the current war and after it, their tactics is to become world-wide.... It is the tactics for the new International, and it is bound to lead to victory in the fight against capitalism and the establishment of socialism."

The ISDV newspaper told of the Bolshevik Party's

difficult road to the socialist revolution, of their victory, their struggle to protect their gains, and of the Civil War. The newspaper urged the European proletariat to show its international class solidarity and support the Russian revolution. It described the Soviet system as genuine popular power.

It also gave a summing-up of the Soviet Government's major documents, particularly the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People (even if its version was not very accurate), and also Lenin's *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*.

On March 20, 1918, *Het Vrije Woord* carried an article about Lenin and his political career. It said that "the build-up of the Bolshevik Party" started with the launching of the newspaper *Iskra*, and that "one must recognise, without playing down anyone's merits, that the present epoch bears Lenin's mark". The paper gave a high assessment of Lenin's personal qualities, saying that he was staunch, had strength of mind, never shrank before any difficulty, never lost heart, and was always striving towards his goals.

Besides writing about the Russian revolution in the press, the ISDV leaders went on a special propaganda tour of Java's major cities in late 1917, and their reports on the October Revolution usually gathered hundreds of listeners. The impact of Lenin's ideas was felt stronger every day.

As 1917, 1918 and the early postwar years were a time of particular hardships for the broad masses, there was a powerful upsurge in the anti-imperialist struggle, its chief feature being the emergence of a mass working-class movement.

In late 1917 and early 1918, the whole of Java hummed with anti-imperialist rallies, which involved no less than 3,000-4,000 people each. At the end of December 1917, one of the country's first political demonstrations in Semarang drew about 10,000 workers and peasants from neighbouring villages; it started in support of the peasants' anti-feudal demands, but also came up with political demands, calling for a lifting of the restrictions on the popular movement.

The ISDV-led Semarang section of Sarekat Islam, and the VSTP initiated the working people's organised struggle to lower the cost of living, put a ceiling on rice prices, and



secure higher wages, for in those days of scarcity these were the people's most pressing problems.

In 1918, strikes involved 7,000 workers and employees (in 1917, only 300) and in 1919 and 1920—66,000 and 83,000 respectively<sup>1</sup>. The strikes were mostly economic, but they were also often aimed against tyrannical employers and social-national oppression.

The ISDV's line to establish proletarian trade unions helped to rouse the working class to action. The need for a mass organisation, which stemmed from the workers' struggle itself, was being met in the course of the strike movement and as the strikes grew in number, the number of trade unions increased accordingly. From the very start, the ISDV saw the trade unions as their stronghold in the spread of political ideas among the proletariat, and used them to organise regular political classes for the workers. This effort often resulted in the establishment of new ISDV sections. The Union also started a socialist propaganda campaign among the women and the young.

It carried on more active work among soldiers and sailors, organising regular political classes for them as well. On April 30, 1918, for the first time in Indonesia, the Surabaya Sailors' Club celebrated May Day, the day of international proletarian solidarity.

In May 1918, the ISDV held its Fifth Congress, which had an important effect on the Union's subsequent activity. At that time, it had 740 members, which means a more than fivefold increase over the old, undivided union, with most of its new members having been recruited from among Indonesians, who were also taking up leading positions in many of its sections and were on the Union's Central Board.

The Congress opened with a speech by the ISDV's chairman, who spoke about the international significance of the October Revolution; he emphasised that the Marxist-Leninist proposition that socialism could be built even in a backward country was of particular importance for Indonesia. "These days," he said, "the Russian revolution is naturally uppermost in our minds. I do not think there is another group of socialists that has come under such strong

<sup>1</sup> See *First Congress of the Revolutionary Organisations of the Far East*, Moscow-Petrograd, 1922, pp. 285-86 (in Russian).

influence from the Russian movement as we have.... We, too, should choose the way the Bolsheviki have taken." He spoke highly of the Soviets' desire to establish peace throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

The Congress adopted the party rules and a programme, which headed the ISDV for the establishment of a mass worker-and-peasant party permeated with the spirit of proletarian internationalism; these documents formulated the nation's vital demands in politics, economy and the position of the working people, even though these reflected the ISDV leaders' Leftist mistakes.

The ISDV Congress took place against the background of a further revolutionary upswing in Indonesia. In September 1918, the Indonesian soldiers of the capital's garrison staged a political demonstration, protesting against the Dutch authorities' campaign for a "higher defence capability for Indies", and demanding better living conditions.

The establishment of Soldiers' and Sailors' Councils in Surabaya in November 1918 was one of the vivid expressions of the direct influence exerted by the October Revolution on the Indonesian people's liberation struggle. The Surabaya section of the ISDV urged the soldiers to join the people in a struggle for their rights, to join Sarekat Islam and the ISDV, overthrow the Dutch organs of power and set up Councils. Soon after the Surabaya events, soldiers together with workers staged a big demonstration in Semarang.

The colonial authorities fell upon the revolutionaries with repression, and most of the ISDV's European leaders were expelled from Indonesia (the rest being made to leave by about 1922).

In its effort to strengthen the Indonesian proletariat's class solidarity, the ISDV proposed the establishment of a national trade-union centre, which they set up in 1919 in close co-operation with Sarekat Islam. The federation incorporated 22 trade unions with 72,000 members; nearly 45 per cent of the unions (chiefly proletarian) were under the control of the ISDV, and the rest were headed by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians.<sup>2</sup> The federation

<sup>1</sup> See *Het Vrije Woord*, May 30, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> *First Congress of the Revolutionary Organisations of the Far East*, pp. 283-85.



had a mixed leadership: its chairman was petty-bourgeois leader from Sarekat Islam, and the head of the executive—a member of the ISDV (an Indonesian).

Later that year, the 4th National Congress of Sarekat Islam (which at that time had a membership of more than 5 million) adopted the rules and programme for the trade union centre.

The rules said: "If mankind is to attain general happiness and well-being, it must destroy capitalist society by establishing a socialist social order in its stead. Recognising this outlook, the revolutionary socialist trade-union centre is to work for a revolutionary overthrow of the old society. The working class should be prepared to tackle the task it will face in a socialist society."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that a nation-wide forum like the Sarekat Islam Congress adopted an anti-capitalist programme comprising democratic and socialist demands and recognised the important socio-political role of the working class showed that Leninist ideas had an attraction for broad sections of Indonesia, including part of the national bourgeoisie.

The sweep of the working-class movement in 1920 and its urge for class consolidation meant that under the influence of political events at home and abroad, the Indonesian proletariat's awareness was being enhanced, and this made it possible to get down to establishing a Communist Party. The success of the Marxist-Leninist trend in the international working-class movement was also very helpful: a Communist International had been set up, and the Dutch SDP, reorganised as the Communist Party of Holland, had joined it at once.

On May 23, 1920, a closed sitting of the ISDV in Semarang to mark the anniversary of the Union solemnly proclaimed the establishment of the Communist Party of Indonesia (CPI). Indonesians made up the bulk of the young Communist Party.

Soon afterwards, the CPI established its first links with the international communist and national liberation movement: its representative, H. Sneevliet (Marring), was a delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern,<sup>2</sup> held in Moscow in

<sup>1</sup> *De Volharding*, No. 20, Semarang, November 10, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Sneevliet was Secretary of the Commission on the National-Colonial Question (with Lenin as its Chairman). On Lenin's recommendation (see

July and August 1920, and also at the First Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku (in September 1920).

In late December 1920, the CPI held a special conference which decided that the Party would join the Leninist Comintern.

The young CPI set to work to gain influence among the masses, the proletariat above all. The going was hard: first, because of the repressions which the authorities intensified as the working-class movement grew stronger; and second, because of the new and mounting contradictions with the bourgeois leaders of Sarekat Islam. The national bourgeoisie was alarmed by the CPI's growing influence among the proletariat and petty-bourgeois masses; it was afraid to lose its positions in the national liberation movement. In June 1921, the pressure of Sarekat Islam's Right-wing nationalists led to a break-up of the trade-union centre into two federations, and the one that was under communist influence joined the Trade-Union International.

Sarekat Islam's bourgeois leaders also sought to oust the Communists from their own organisation. The Fifth Congress of Sarekat Islam in March 1921 showed very well that the Communists were gaining increasing influence. Thus, Sarekat Islam's bourgeois leadership was unable to prevent the Congress from adopting the CPI's proposals, which were written into the joint Declaration of Principles. Colonial oppression, it said, was a result of capitalism, which could be overthrown above all through the joint effort by the workers and peasants; since, the Declaration went on, Sarekat Islam's purposes coincided with those of most popular organisations and the international working-class movement, it aimed to work together with all the parties in other countries that had similar views. True, the Declaration had a clause saying that Sarekat Islam would always concert its policy with the Islam commandments.<sup>1</sup>

Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, Ithaca, New York, 1965, p. 76), Sneevliet was elected first head of the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau (in China).

<sup>1</sup> See J. Th. Petrus Blumberger, *De nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie*, Haarlem, 1931, pp. 72-77; Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 96-98; F. R. Von der Mehden, "Marxism and Early Indonesian Islamic Nationalism", *Political Science Quarterly*, No. 3, New York, 1958, p. 346.



At the Fifth Congress, Sarekat Islam's bourgeois leadership proposed the adoption of the principle of party discipline, which would bar the members of any other parties from taking part in the organisation. The proposal was debated at the Sixth Congress of Sarekat Islam in October 1921.

There was no formal split-up, but the Communists had to leave some of Sarekat Islam's sections and together with their followers set up their own Red Sarekat Islam.

At the same time, the CPI kept trying to prevent a final split-up of Sarekat Islam. The question was the main item on the agenda of the CPI's Congress in December 1921, which representatives of Sarekat Islam and other national organisations attended as guests. The organisers of the Congress sought to emphasise their loyalty to the ideas of the October Revolution: the Congress was termed Red, because the hall where it took place had been decked out in red, red banners saying "Congress of the Communist Party of Indonesia" and "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" and bearing the Soviet arms ran along the wall behind the presidium table, and red strips were twined around the columns saying "Resist the exploiters!", "Long live communism!", "Down with capitalism!", and so on. There were also portraits of leaders of the international communist movement, Lenin among them. (Lenin's portraits had also been displayed at other CPI congresses, during May Day celebrations, and so on.)

The shift to the Right in Sarekat Islam's bourgeois wing was partially due to the fact that in 1918-1920, under pressure from the popular movement, the colonial powers had to make some economic and political concessions advantageous to the national bourgeoisie, and this had a slackening effect on the movement, with a sharp drop in Sarekat Islam and trade-union membership.

Sarekat Islam's slide to the Right was also to a considerable extent due to the CPI's own mistakes, which it had inherited from the Dutch Left-wing Social-Democrats. These boiled down to an eclectic attitude to the tasks of the different stages of the national liberation revolution, a theoretical confusion in the matter of a correlation between general democratic and socialist slogans in the revolutionary movement. Hence, the mistakes in their tactics for a

common national front, and their tendency to underrate the national bourgeoisie and the peasantry as allies of the working class.

The Comintern's Leninist leadership took a deep interest in the events in Indonesia and did its best to maintain and strengthen the unity of action of the Indonesian anti-imperialist forces. In its appeals to the Communists of Indonesia, the Comintern Executive repeatedly emphasised the need for an anti-colonial alliance with the Left-wing nationalists. In January 1922, a sitting of the Executive's Presidium approved the text of a message to Sarekat Islam's leader Chokroaminoto, calling on the organisation to engage in anti-imperialist co-operation with the Comintern. The message was sent over through the CPI Central Committee; in its covering letter to the CPI's leadership, the Comintern Executive emphasised the need for an alliance between the CPI and the nationalist movement in Indonesia. The Fourth Congress of the Comintern (attended, like the Third Congress, by a CPI delegation) dealt with Sarekat Islam as a special issue, defining it as a form of united front and recommending creative use of its experience in other colonial and dependent countries.

In late 1921 and early 1922, following a trip to attend the First Congress of the Peoples of the Far East, CPI leader Semaoen managed to come to Moscow and meet Lenin. In the course of their talk, Semaoen realised that Indonesia should not simply imitate European methods of revolutionary struggle, but look for ways best suited to the national tasks of the revolution.<sup>1</sup> When back in his own country, he told of this at a mass rally in Semarang.

Soon afterwards, the CPI launched a vigorous campaign to restore unity among the mass organisations, the trade unions above all. In the summer of 1922, the national trade-union centre resumed its work under a coalition leadership consisting of Sarekat Islam's bourgeois leaders and CPI members.

The Communist Party was able to achieve this because of the change in the balance of political forces within the working-class movement; in many proletarian trade unions,

<sup>1</sup> See *De Tribune*, Amsterdam, June 6, 1925; Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, p. 133.



the Communists were gradually gaining more influence even leadership. The CPI's influence in the socio-political organisations was also on the increase, and the process was enhanced by the worsening of the masses' material condition as a result of the 1921 economic crisis (which hit Indonesia in 1922 and 1923), and also by the policy of the colonial authorities, who went back on their promise to review the administration system as soon as the popular movement began to abate.

The growing authority of the Communist Party among the masses led to an increase in its numerical strength: in late 1922, the CPI had 1,300 members in 16 sections, and in the middle of 1923, it already had 32 sections in all of Java's major cities and also in Western Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi, Ternate and Ambon.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the Communist Party's growing activity and stronger influence among the masses, Sarekat Islam's Right-wing leaders decided to formalise their rupture with the Communists, and at a Sarekat Islam Congress in February 1923 officially expelled them from the organisation. The Communists had to leave the Congress, but most of its other delegates left as well, and very soon afterwards 20 of the 30 Sarekat Islam sections were under the influence of the Communist Party. Shortly thereafter, Sarekat Islam had to disband some of its other sections and faded into the background. True, it had played the role of a common anti-colonialist front and its break-up weakened the national liberation movement considerably but the fact that most of its members followed the Communist Party showed the growing influence of Lenin's ideas.

In March 1923, the CPI and Red Sarekat Islam held an impressive joint congress, which was attended by delegates from 15 Communist Party sections, 13 sections of Red Sarekat Islam, spokesmen for 13 trade unions, numerous guests from various political and social organisations, and also Indonesian and European correspondents—a total of about 3,000. The Congress decided that the sections of Red

<sup>1</sup> See, *Fourth World Congress of the Communist International, November 5-December 3, 1922. Selected Reports, Speeches and Resolutions*, Moscow, 1923, pp. 19-20 (in Russian); J. Th. Petrus Blumberger, *De communistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie*, Haarlem, 1928.

Sarekat Islam renamed Sarekat Rayat (Popular Union) were to maintain direct links between the CPI and the masses and provide a basis for the party, from which it would draw fresh blood.<sup>1</sup>

In mid-1923, the temporary let-up in the popular movement gave way to another upsurge, the proletariat being its most dynamic element. The mass May Day demonstrations that year, held for the first time in Indonesia's history, showed the working people's growing class consciousness.

A railwaymen's strike in May 1923 was a major event in the history of Indonesia's working-class movement. It was organised by the Communist-led VSTP, which had 15,000 members and was the country's biggest working-class association. The strike involved 13,000 of the 20,000 railway personnel, including the European employees (who went on strike for the first time), and their demands were both economic and political. Solidarity strikes were held in other industries.

The authorities at once proclaimed the railwaymen's strike to be "communist", said that its "political purpose was to disorganise the social order", and came down on the strikers with reprisals, dealing a hard blow at the working-class, primarily communist, movement. Still, it took the Communist Party only a short time to restore its depleted ranks (and those of the VSTP), and to start a renewed campaign at the grass roots. The CPI stepped up its propaganda work, increasing the number of its periodicals from 10 to 17 and extending the network of lectures and classes in Leninism.<sup>2</sup>

As the CPI intensified its activity, there was also an increase in the number and membership of Sarekat Rayat sections and popular schools they had organised to wipe out illiteracy and spread the rudiments of political education; from late 1922 to the autumn of 1924, the number of schools went up from 5 to 35. It was also in co-operation with Sarekat Rayat that the Communist Party made its first

<sup>1</sup> See J. Th. Petrus Blumberger, *De nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie*.

<sup>2</sup> The lectures usually ended in a call to "draw inspiration from Russia's example".



serious effort to carry on revolutionary propaganda among the peasant masses.

In June 1924, a CPI congress adopted two policy-making documents: a Declaration of Principles and a Political Programme, which formulated the tasks of a struggle for liberation from foreign rule and other important political and economic demands. Delegates at the congress emphasised the need for more work among the proletariat, and also among the women and the young. The congress adopted a decision to strengthen the CPI's contacts with the international communist movement, the Comintern above all, and also expressed a desire to establish an anti-imperialist alliance with the other oppressed peoples.

The congress also decided to have Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto* translated into Malay.<sup>1</sup> The Party had some Marxist-Leninist works, notably Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, and "Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder, but these were in Dutch. In Malay, there were only the works of the CPI's Indonesian leaders, setting out the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. Some time later, collected speeches by M. I. Kalinin, a prominent Soviet statesman and Party leader, and speeches by some leaders of the international communist movement at the first conference of the Peasant International were also translated into Malay.

In the second half of 1924, and particularly in 1925, the CPI markedly extended its work among the masses, the proletariat in the first place, concentrating on its political education. In August 1924, it organised mass protest against the clamp-down on Sarekat Rayat; on a single day, 50,000 Indonesians throughout the country took part in 38 rallies, which adopted a single resolution denouncing the colonial authorities' arbitrary action.<sup>2</sup>

Following the 1925 events in China, when the Communist Party of Indonesia started a campaign to explain the tasks of the Chinese revolution in order to foster a spirit of international class solidarity in the Indonesian proletariat, the working-class movement took on a more pronounced political tenor. Rallies were held across the whole ar-

<sup>1</sup> See *40 Tahun PKI*, Djakarta, 1960, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See *De Tribune*, December 21, 1924.

chipelago, many of these ending in collections in aid of the Chinese revolutionaries.

In the summer of 1925, there was a fresh rise in the strike movement, led off once again by the Semarang proletariat.

The strikes of 1925 were marked by numerous manifestations of class solidarity between Indonesian and Chinese workers, with many local Chinese joining the Communist Party of Indonesia.

There was a close link between the rapid rise of the working-class movement and Communist Party activity. The Communists organised and headed many strikes, and the successes of the trade-union movement were also largely due to their efforts. For the first time in Indonesia's history, the trade unions now embraced broad masses of the industrial and, partially, agricultural proletariat, and also most of the services—a total of 300,000 members.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of these were under the influence of the Communist Party.

The CPI's revolutionary propaganda was reaching the most out-of-the-way places in the archipelago. In the mid-1920s, the Communist Party had 38 newspapers and magazines—more than all the nationalist parties taken together. Many trade unions also had their own periodicals. By that time, CPI membership had reached 10,000, and up to 100,000 Indonesians were members of the CPI-led Sarekat Rayat. The Communists had also established Barisan Muda (Youth Front), whose 40 sections numbered something like 2,000 members. Communist Party sections had also been established in all of the more important ethnic organisations,<sup>2</sup> and in some army units and even in the police. In fact, the CPI at the time was the most influential force of the national liberation movement.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Fourth Congress of the Trade-Union International, March 17-April 3, 1928*, Minutes. Resolutions and Decisions, Moscow, 1968, p. 230 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Ethnic organisations—social associations set up among the various nationalities in Indonesia.

<sup>3</sup> The CPI's selfless efforts met with the recognition of the international working-class movement; CPI leaders exiled out of Indonesia in the early 1920s were elected to responsible posts: Semaoen was a member of the Comintern Executive and the Trade-Union International's Executive, and Tan Malaka—a Comintern representative in the Far East and Chairman of the Pacific Bureau (from 1924 onwards).



The party's profound effect on the mood of the various sections of the population will also be seen from the fact that various socio-political, including religious and anti-colonial trends, were spreading wide across the country under the communist banner. In Java and Sumatra, for instance, there was a broad movement called Moslem Communism, whose followers drew inspiration from the liberatory ideas of Leninism, even though their interpretation of it was more naive.

So, the Communist Party's ideas, variously transformed, were a uniting factor in the anti-imperialist struggle.

The CPI's émigré leaders and the Dutch Communists all worked to spread Leninist ideas among the Indonesian people. In early 1924, they set up in Amsterdam, with the Comintern's assistance, an Indian (or Java) Bureau, of which there were two representatives from the CPI, and one from the Communist Party of Holland. On May 15, 1924, the Bureau started publication of a theoretical monthly *Pandoe Merah* (Red Guide), both in Dutch and Malay. Almost the whole of the first issue was devoted to Lenin, who had died shortly before. It carried a long extract from Lenin's article "Better Fewer, but Better", chiefly bearing on the East. An editor's note said that the journal had translated that part of Lenin's work because it was of interest for all the peoples of Asia, who were fighting to attain happiness by establishing socialism. Hence, the note said, the obviously great importance of Lenin's legacy which makes the popular movement more powerful. The note ended thus: "Lenin is our father, the father of all the nations of the world, the father of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

An editor's note for the first of the three issues containing Lenin's biography said: the communist doctrine has now become Lenin's doctrine; Leninism is now the guiding doctrine in the revolutionary movement.<sup>2</sup> The fourth issue carried a summary of an article by D. Ivon Jones, about the first Leninist newspaper, *Iskra*, and its importance, published in *The Communist Review*, the journal of the British Communist Party<sup>3</sup> (No. 2, June 1924, pp. 64-72).

<sup>1</sup> *Pandoe Merah*, No. 1, 1924, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See *Pandoe Merah*, No. 1, 1924, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> See *Pandoe Merah*, No. 4, 1924, pp. 1-2.

The Indian Bureau had a marked influence on the Indonesian petty-bourgeois nationalist association, Perhimpunan Indonesia, operating in Holland, which played an important role in the Indonesian national liberation movement. By mid-1925, that association had moved to the Left and become much more radical, something that was expressed not only in its more pronounced anti-colonialism, but also in its growing interest in the communist movement. In 1925, Perhimpunan Indonesia put out a Memorandum, devoting one chapter to the influence of the October Revolution in the Far East, and the other—to the revolutionary trade-union movement in the Pacific countries. In November 1925, the association's leadership came into contact with the Comintern, having sent it a telegram voicing approval of its colonial policy.

A Left wing was beginning to take shape within Perhimpunan Indonesia. In late 1925, those of the Left-wingers who had strong communist leanings began translating into Indonesian some works by the classics of Marxism-Leninism.

At that time, the atmosphere in Indonesia was such that the Communist Party's influence on the popular movement could have been much stronger: the revolutionary events in China and in some other Eastern countries had had a tangible effect on the country's public opinion, and the strikes of 1925 were part of a general political commotion. But the young Communist Party, which had emerged in the conditions of overwhelming pressure from the petty-bourgeois environment and under strong influence from petty-bourgeois ideology, was unable to make creatively practical use of Lenin's strategic and tactical principles for the national liberation revolution.

The CPI line showed a Left-opportunist bias. Thus, in its Programme, the task of national liberation was linked up with that of destroying capitalism in the country. Apart from that, the CPI leadership decided to disband Sarekat Rayat and have its forward-looking elements join the Communist Party, something that was to have done away with its major gain—the broad popular national liberation front.

Taking Lenin's principles as a point of departure, the Sixth Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Execu-



tive in March and April 1925 criticised the CPI's views on these points and gave it recommendations on the more important questions of strategy and tactics. That helped many party members to overcome their Left-opportunist mistakes, to step up to some extent their work among the peasants, and also to take a more active (though not overt) part in the establishment in August 1925 of a new nation-wide federation, the National Unity Committee which incorporated the country's 12 leading socio-political organisations. The Committee was formed on the initiative of one-time Perhimpunan Indonesia members; petty bourgeois intellectuals of the new generation, who several years later were to organise new national parties, came to stand at its head, and a CPI leader was elected to its leadership as the second chairman.

But the incipient consolidation of the patriotic forces did not make any headway, for at the very height of the strike movement, the authorities clamped down upon the working-class organisations, both the trade unions and the Communist Party. The newspaper *De Tribune* of the Dutch Communists wrote of these repressions in an article entitled "Where Are They Pushing Java? Government Provoking Uprising?"<sup>1</sup>

On the tide of spontaneous popular action, extremist CPI leaders managed to persuade some party sections to decide for an immediate uprising. The uprising started in November 1926 on Java and in January 1927 on Sumatra, but it was savagely crushed by the Dutch colonialists. The Communist Party and allied organisations were banned, and their functionaries were put in prison or exiled to unhealthy areas, where they were doomed to die.

So, the departure of some of the CPI leaders from Lenin's principles of national liberation revolution played into the hands of imperialist reaction, which struck a staggering blow at the Indonesian working-class movement, the Communist Party above all.

But the reprisals could not purge the minds of the independence fighters of the ideas of the October Revolution, Lenin's ideas. Communist Party's activity left a deep mark on the subsequent national liberation movement in

<sup>1</sup> *De Tribune*, June 5, 1926.

Indonesia. Thus, in the first few years after the uprising, a revolutionary-democratic wing originated and came to the fore within the movement, whose whole ideology had been strongly influenced by Marxism-Leninism, and there was also a further increase in the Indonesian people's national awareness.

In 1927, a new generation of national leaders came to the forefront of the country's political life. They were not only better educated than the old leaders, but most of them were under Marxist influence. They established new, viable and dynamic parties, which determined the future of the Indonesian national liberation movement.

The first of these was the Nationalist Party of Indonesia (Partai Nasional Indonesia—PNI) founded on July 4, 1927. It proclaimed Indonesia's political independence to be its goal and put forward a programme of radical socio-economic transformations on socialist lines.

The PNI gave socialism a Narodnik reading and denied the existence of classes and class struggle in Indonesian society. In Indonesian conditions, however, its goal of struggle for independence and prosperity based on elimination of social inequalities did a great deal to consolidate the patriotic forces and promote the anti-colonial struggle, all the more so since the PNI aimed at bringing together the broadest possible sections of the Indonesian people, the working people of town and country above all. It took the PNI a fairly short time to win great popularity in Indonesia, with new members joining it from among various sections of the population: the peasantry, the workers, the petty and national bourgeoisie, and the lower-bracket intelligentsia.

The leaders of the Left wing of the nationalist movement worked for the establishment of a united anti-Dutch national front, and in December 1927 the major national parties met at Bandung and established a new organisation, the Consultative Council of Indonesian National Political Organisations (PPPKI), which at once issued a Manifesto urging the people to unite. Unity, said the Manifesto, would enable the Indonesians to fight for their independence and, despite the repressions, win through to victory and become a great nation.

At that time, Indonesia was the scene of some other important events indicative of a rapid growth of national



self-awareness among the Indonesian people. Thus, the Second Congress of the Pemuda Indonesia youth organisation, held at Batavia in late October 1928, came out for the assertion of an integrated country—Indonesia, of a united nation—the Indonesian nation, and of a single language—Indonesian. In December 1928, the first Congress of all the Indonesian women's organisations met at Jogjakarta and established one federation.

In April 1931, in view of the repressions levelled against it by the colonial authorities, the PNI had to be dissolved, but a week later it re-emerged as a new Indonesia Party (Partindo) which proclaimed independence through revolutionary mass action to be its immediate goal, and the principle of non-collaboration with the colonial authorities, its chief tactic.

The Indonesian Communists who were still at liberty worked within the PNI and Partindo, and Amir Sjarifuddin, one of the future leaders of the CPI, was a founder and leader of Partindo's revolutionary wing. What with the economic crisis and the spreading mass movement for better conditions,<sup>1</sup> the Communists' vigorous activity within the new party helped to radicalise the Indonesian Left-nationalist movement at a rapid pace. Partindo's new programme adopted in 1933 said that it was to fight for an Indonesia free of any capitalism or imperialism and based on all the Indonesian peoples' right to self-determination. Among the major political demands written into the programme was that all land and water should go to the peasants; it also called for political freedoms, an amnesty for political prisoners, social insurance for the workers, and abolition of the anti-strike laws.

One essential feature of Partindo's new programme was that it emphasised the role of the proletariat and its organisations in the fight for Indonesia's independence. The Party, said the programme, would bring the Indonesians to freedom by promoting mass action and strengthening proletarian organisations.

In 1933 and 1934, the Dutch authorities dealt another

<sup>1</sup> One notable event here was the uprising in early 1933 by Dutch and Indonesian seamen on the battleship *Zeven Provinciën*, known as the Indonesian *Potyomkin*.

blow at the Left-wing parties, arresting their leadership and clamping rigid restrictions on their activity, which made it virtually impossible. Despite the repressions of the mid-1930s and against the new international background of mounting inter-imperialist contradictions and the growing fascist threat, Indonesia's national political forces began to consolidate. This tendency, when was at first confined to the Right wing of the liberation movement, reflected the urgent need of the movement as a whole and unfolded under the slogan of anti-colonialism. The emergence of a new Left nationalist party, Gerindo (Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia—the Indonesian People's Movement), which was set up in May 1937 by the leaders of the former Partindo and the Communists, served to intensify that tendency and gave it a new turn in accordance with the spirit of the time. Right after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the Indonesian Communists launched a campaign to consolidate their ranks. Since it was hard to revive the Communist Party as an independent centralised organisation, the Communists concentrated their efforts within Gerindo and started working out a programme of struggle for profound democratic transformations and an anti-fascist front. Gerindo was among the initiators of the broad coalition of national forces, the Federation of Indonesian Political Organisations (Gabungan Politik Indonesia—GAPI), which was set up in 1939 and declared its readiness to work together with the Dutch authorities against the fascists provided the Indonesian people were enabled freely to express their political will and had their condition improved.<sup>1</sup> So, the emergence of Gerindo, which applied in the most correct way the general line elaborated by the international communist movement to Indonesia's concrete condition, marked the beginning of the new stage in Indonesia's national liberation movement.

The successes in national unification achieved on the eve of the Second World War played an important role during the Indonesian people's struggle against the Japanese invaders, who occupied the country in March 1942. The Indonesian Communists were at the forefront of the

<sup>1</sup> See Satiadjaja Sudiman, *On the National Unity Front, Communists in the Fight for Democratic Unity*, Prague, 1975, pp. 356-57.



movement, and this won them considerable prestige among the people. But it was during the Indonesian people's postwar struggle for independence that the unification tendencies gathered particular momentum, with different class forces actually working together in an anti-imperialist front. The Indonesian Communists carried considerable weight within the front, in effect sharing power with the bourgeois parties in the Indonesian Republic proclaimed on August 17, 1945. CPI leaders stood at the head of mass workers' and peasants' organisations, and deputies from the proletarian parties and associations made up more than one-third of Indonesia's Provisional Parliament. One leading member of the CPI headed the National Concentration, a bloc of political parties and organisations established in the summer of 1946. Some Communists were also on the government, and one of the CPI leaders, Amir Sjarifuddin,<sup>1</sup> from 1945 on, filled the post of Defence Minister and from June 1947 to January 1948, headed the coalition government. In that atmosphere, the Indonesian proletariat scored its first successes in improving the working people's conditions, notably, securing the adoption of the country's first ever labour legislation.

But some great difficulties arose in the way to consolidating the achievements of the Indonesian working class and its Party. The Right wing of the anti-imperialist bloc was very uneasy about the strengthening political positions of the CPI, particularly its growing influence in the Republic's armed forces. The incipient differences within the bloc, which reflected the class contradictions within Indonesian society, were also aggravated by the CPI leaders' departure from some major Leninist principles of national liberation revolution. They believed, in particular, that the proletariat was the only force which could lead the Indonesian revolution to victory. As a result, in early 1948, the bourgeois parties refused to continue working with the CPI, and took power into their own hands. That autumn, there was an all-out split among the national unity forces as the result of an armed anti-government uprising by the CPI's paramilitary organisations and allied military units, which

<sup>1</sup> Officially, Sjarifuddin and a group of other prominent CPI members spoke on behalf of the Socialist Party of Indonesia (up to August 1948).

was provoked by the Right-wing forces. The failure of the uprising led to massive repressions against the Communists: most of the CPI leaders and thousands of active members were massacred, and most Party organisations were destroyed. This sapped the strength of the democratic forces and the national forces as a whole, and meant a temporary defeat for the country's liberation movement. In 1949, in an effort to prevent any further mass anti-imperialist struggle and check the growing guerrilla movement, Holland recognised Indonesia's independence.

In the mid-1950s, however, the country's national patriotic forces began to recover and gather strength, and the Communist Party played a major role in that process. It took the line for a united anti-imperialist front based on struggle for complete politico-economic independence and social progress, and soon developed into one of the country's biggest, best organised and influential political bodies. At the turn of the 1950s, it had more than 3 million members and probation members, and its mass organisations had a membership of more than 16 million. In 1955, the Indonesians held their first general elections, as a result of which the CPI emerged as one of the four leading parties, and in the subsequent elections to the local organs of power (from late 1957 to early 1959), it polled the greatest number of votes among all the political parties. In that period, Indonesia achieved some important foreign policy successes, launched a number of progressive reforms, and adopted an anti-imperialist line.

But the process was unfolding in the conditions of sharp struggle against the Right-wing forces, which reached a climax in the late 1950s. There was a new and rapidly growing section in Indonesian society, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, which was closely connected with the army, whose role markedly increased following the suppression of the separatist revolts in 1957-1958. The Right-wing forces consolidated their socio-political basis and took a fiercely anti-communist stance. With society polarised on class lines, President Sukarno introduced a regime of "guided democracy", abolishing the system of parliamentary democracy and drastically curbing the activities of the political parties. What made it all the more difficult for the CPI to elaborate a further line of action in these circumstances was that its



leadership had deviated from the line of the international communist movement, had drawn closer on various points to the anti-Leninist positions of the Chinese Communist Party leaders, and was on bad or downright hostile terms with most of the fraternal parties. The CPI leadership had departed from the basic provisions of the Party's programme and strategic line for a united national front with the proletariat's gradual emergence as its leading forces. These Leftist leanings were coupled with the CPI leadership's Right-opportunist tactics of all-out support for the existing regime, which was in fact degenerating into a screen for the rule of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie in league with the reactionary army circles.

The CPI leadership's departure from Leninism and switch to an adventurist Maoist stand made it possible to involve the Indonesian Communist Party in the events of September 30, 1965, which were sparked off by domestic and foreign reactionaries. The events exposed the Party to attack by the class enemy: the Communists were brutally massacred, and in March 1966 the CPI was banned. The other Left-wing forces in the country were also suppressed. The national tragedy dealt a staggering blow at the Indonesian working class and anti-imperialist movement.

There is no doubt, however, that the present state of affairs is only temporary and that the proletariat will again move into the forefront of the Indonesian people's fight for progress. The CPI's programme for action, as set out in a number of its documents, is an earnest of its future success. The programme formulates the tasks of reviving the Party on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, restoring its prestige among the masses and establishing a broad national unity front embracing all the patriotic and democratic forces and capable of forming a national government which would follow a progressive democratic policy and a vigorous and independent foreign policy line. "The establishment of a National Unity Front is to mark a new stage in the fight for democracy and social progress in Indonesia."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Satiadjaja Sudiman, op. cit., p. 363.

## Early Spread of Leninism in the Philippines

Lenin devoted close attention to the colonial countries of the East, the Philippines in the first place. He first took an interest in the problems of its history when he was working on his fundamental study on imperialism. He looked into the circumstances of the US seizure of the Philippines in the course of the 1898 Spanish-American war, and drew the extremely important conclusion that it had been the first imperialist war for the redivision of a divided colonial world. Lenin's notes and abstracts for his *Notebooks on Imperialism* contain some profound ideas treating the problem of the Philippines in the light of the laws of the imperialist epoch.

Lenin analysed the true causes behind the USA's seizure of the Philippines, which at the time was neither a rich source of raw materials nor a large market. Let us recall that US bourgeois science alleged that by turning the Philippines into its colony, the USA was shouldering a heavy "burden" in its efforts to live up to its "civilising mission" in Asia. Lenin said that in actual fact the seizure of the Philippines had been an important link in the strategic plans of US expansion in the Far East. As Lenin put it, the Philippines were "a step towards Asia and *China*".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin noted the rivalry between the imperialist powers over the Philippines and the colonialists' attempts to obscure their expansionist designs by loud protests against the predatory policy of their rivals (the US rulers crying down the Spaniards, and the Japanese and German rulers—the Americans). Lenin wrote: "Let us suppose that a Japanese condemns the annexation of the Philippines by the Americans. The question is: will many believe that he does so because he has a horror of annexations as such, and not because he himself has a desire to annex the Philippines?"<sup>2</sup> Let us note that Lenin's remark became particularly relevant a quarter-century later, when in the face of an impending Japanese aggression, progressive Filipino forces had to carry on persistent explanatory work among the sections of the population who had succumbed to Japanese

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 298.



propaganda and were prepared to believe that Japan would "rescue" them from US rule.

Lenin was deeply indignant about the USA's treacherous method of seizing the Philippines, a method which reflected the political ways of the colonialists in the imperialist epoch and the specific practices of US imperialism, a young and rapidly growing predator, which was by no means fastidious about its choice of means, but nevertheless sought to pose as "the most democratic" power. US troops invaded Cuba and the Philippines under the pretence of assistance to their peoples, which had risen up against the Spanish yoke. Before the intervention, US officials came into contact with Emilio Aguinaldo, émigré leader of the Filipino nationalists, and secured the support of the insurgents by promising to recognise the country's independence. Lenin wrote: "In annexing the Philippines, the United States cheated Filipino leader *Aguinaldo* by promising the country independence."<sup>1</sup> The US Government cynically went back on its word to Aguinaldo; it promised him "the independence of his country, but later landed troops and annexed it".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin had a purpose in recalling these dramatic events: he wanted them to be a historical lesson not only to the Filipino people but also to other oppressed peoples.

The turbulent period of national wars (first against Spain and then against the USA), which the Philippines went through at the turn of the century, left a mark on the whole of the country's subsequent history, giving an impetus, among other things, to the rise of the working-class movement and the spread of advanced political ideas among the proletarians.

In the first few years of the 20th century, the organised working class was putting forward both specifically proletarian economic slogans and democratic demands within the framework of the nation-wide movement for independence. On the one hand, this tended to enhance bourgeois nationalist influences among the workers and held back their ideological self-determination, and on the other, made easier the adoption of political slogans and political struggle by the working-class movement. The trade-union move-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. 39, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 287.

ment was led by the bourgeois-reformist Nationalist Party.

In the level of development of national capitalist enterprise, the Philippines was not very far ahead of Indonesia, Burma and other Southeast Asian countries. Still, the local bourgeoisie, working together with the patriotic sections of the landlords and officials, managed to secure some fairly tangible concessions from the colonialists: with active backing from the peasant masses, the radical petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and the young working class, the bourgeois and landlord nationalists compelled the USA to give the Filipinos (from among the well-to-do sections) broad access to the colony's administrative apparatus, and to make a direct promise (written into the 1916 Jones Act) to grant the country independence as soon as it had developed a "stable government". In view of this, bourgeois nationalism in the Philippines largely developed on reformist lines, with only a small Left-wing radical section advocating revolutionary methods of struggle for independence. Hence, nationalist circles in the Philippines showed a more guarded attitude to socialist ideas than those, say, in India or Indonesia. Still, all the bourgeois nationalist organisations in the country had a more or less pronounced urge to lead forward the broad worker-peasant masses.

The new situation taking shape in the world after the October Revolution, introduced some fresh and important features into the national movement in the Philippines, particularly the workers' and peasants' class struggle.

The October Revolution and the shock it gave the imperialists encouraged the Filipino nationalists to use the situation for wresting further concessions from the USA. Thus they wanted to send a delegation to the Paris Peace Conference to voice the Philippines' striving for independence in reply to Wilson's notorious "Fourteen Points". Just then, on October 24, 1918, the Soviet Government sent a note to the Wilson government (formulated in accordance with Lenin's draft)<sup>1</sup> criticising the "Fourteen Points". It said, among other things: "Most peculiarly, your demands say nothing ... about the liberation of the Philippines."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Lenin's letter to G. V. Chicherin and L. M. Karakhan of October 10, 1918—V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, pp. 152-53.

<sup>2</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 535.



Lenin's diplomacy helped to expose the US colonial hypocrisy in the eyes of advanced public opinion.

Fearing further complications, the US Government barred the Philippines' delegation from the Paris Conference. But independence demands in the Philippines were becoming ever more insistent, so that the US colonial authorities, alarmed at the revolutionary upsurge in Asia, had to manoeuvre and alternate constitutional concessions with reprisals.

News of workers' and peasants' power having been established in Russia was gradually getting through to the Filipino working people, even though at first only to a narrow circle of relatively well educated workers in Manila. But, to judge, for instance, from the reaction of those whose unerring class instinct told them that the Russian example was catching and dangerous, this news had a powerful effect on the working people.

The scant and sometimes contradictory reports coming in from Europe could not satisfy the keen interest in the Russian revolution or show what it was really like. Crisanto Evangelista, type-setter and chairman of the Printers' Union, was the first to bring the Filipinos a fairly full and objective account of the October Revolution. He had long shown an interest in socialist ideas, but at the same time was a staunch follower of the Nationalist Party. Accordingly, the Philippines Legislative Assembly appointed him to a commission sent to Washington in 1919 to ask the US Congress for independence for the Philippines.

Evangelista's stay in the United States caused a profound change in his political views. As the US Congress showed utter indifference to the mission's appeals, he began to doubt that the Nationalists' reformist tactics could do any good. But the leaders of the Left-wing workers' association, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), gave their Filipino comrade a warm welcome.

An IWW Congress in Chicago, which Evangelista attended, adopted a resolution demanding independence for the Philippines. That was also where Evangelista first heard detailed and enthusiastic accounts of the socialist revolution in Russia and of Lenin, for some IWW leaders had already been to Soviet Russia.

Evangelista went back to the Philippines a changed man,

and set to rally a group of forward-looking trade-union workers and radically minded intellectuals, who wanted to get a good idea of Lenin's revolutionary theory and policy.

The first, small Leninist group emerged in Manila in the early 1920s, centring round Evangelista. Antonio Hora, a young intellectual from a petty-bourgeois family, was his closest associate. There were also some trade-union activists and the popular peasant leader Juan Faleo, who was a village teacher. They were all ardent patriots and saw organised action by the working people as a sure way to independence and social progress. In 1920, Evangelista led an impressive political strike by printing workers in protest against newspaper articles that were insulting to the Filipinos. In 1919, Faleo organised a militant peasant union in Nueva Esija.

In the summer of 1922, they decided to set up a Marxist Party,<sup>1</sup> although at first they obviously lacked strength and knowledge. But they were prepared to learn and built up their strength step by step; they were very energetic and knew they had chosen the right way and so, in October 1924, they established a Workers' Party (WP) with Hora as its chairman, and Evangelista as its secretary. The WP had no more than a few dozen members, while the whole work was in fact being done by a 12-member executive,<sup>2</sup> so that it was not a party in the true sense of the word, but rather a political centre guiding the work of a group of fellow-fighters.

Subsequent events showed that the establishment of the WP was an important phase in the development of the Philippines' working-class and peasant movement, and laid the groundwork for the emergence for a Communist Party.

The WP programme said that its aim was to "represent the political demands of unionised labour for the protection of the working people's rights and interests". It said that mass action by the workers was the only way to establish a "popular government", in place of the domination by "a few privileged persons subservient to the capitalist class" and swayed by imperialism; even though the existing

<sup>1</sup> See *International Press Correspondence*, No. 74, October 15, 1925, p. 1105.

<sup>2</sup> See *Novy Vostok*, No. 12, 1926, pp. 103-04 (in Russian).



bourgeois parties were fighting for the Philippines' independence, they were doing so through "purely academic expatiations". The programme demanded "immediate unconditional and absolute independence", said that the state should buy out the big landed estates and hand them over to tenants and farming workers at reasonable prices and maintained that the Tagalog language should be taught at school.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, the WP founders had a broad and generally correct idea of what they had to do; as Lenin taught, they tied in their struggle for the class interests of the workers and all the working people with the struggle for nation-wide demands, independence in the first place; they saw the need for an alliance between the working class and the peasantry; they did not deny the bourgeoisie's patriotic role (although they had yet to formulate the task of setting up a common national front), and wanted the anti-imperialist fight to be based on mass action by the working people. The WP programme largely accorded with the Comintern line, which had been adopted under Lenin's leadership.

In mid-1925, the WP held its second congress, where it decided to put up its candidates for the municipal elections in Manila. It did so, and somewhat unexpectedly (considering the Party's modest possibilities) scored a marked success: it polled about 6,000 votes out of a total of 34,000 (even while not winning any seats).

The WP carried on its propaganda against the background of a steadily growing interest in Lenin's ideas and Soviet policy, and this helped it to spread and implement Lenin's doctrine.

WP leaders were most active in the trade-union movement. They challenged the bourgeoisie's monopoly in controlling unionised labour movement, and waged a skilful and persistent fight for the proletarian masses' vital interests, gradually easing the collaborators and bourgeois politicians out of their leading position in the trade unions.

Very soon Evangelista and his followers won some leading posts in the country's biggest trade-union association, the Labour Congress (with a membership of more than 80,000), and came to play an important role in determining its

<sup>1</sup> See *Fourth Congress of the Trade-Union International...*, p. 269.

political line. The Congress started a militant strike struggle for the proletariat's immediate interests, lending its support to the nation-wide movement for independence, and established the first internationalist links with the advanced international working-class movement—the Trade-Union International and the Pan-Pacific Trade-Union Secretariat.

In their work among the peasants, the WP put forward a well-thought-out programme of struggle, for their vital needs and established a National Farmers' Confederation, which they ran and which was the first peasant organisation to be free of any naive mystic expectations or headlong terrorism, which had always in the past doomed their struggle to failure.

Lenin is known to have attached great importance to international solidarity and mutual assistance between the proletariat of the advanced countries and the oppressed masses of the colonies. He emphasised that mere sympathy for the oppressed was not enough, and that they had to be given effective assistance in their struggle against imperialism. That was also how he saw the stand taken by the advanced social forces in the USA in respect of the Philippines' national movement. Considering past experience, Lenin said: "In the United States, the imperialist war waged against Spain in 1898 stirred up the opposition of 'anti-imperialists', the last of the Mohicans of bourgeois democracy, who declared this war to be 'criminal', regarded the annexation of foreign territories as a violation of the Constitution, declared that the treatment of Aguinaldo, leader of the Filipinos ... was 'Jingo treachery'.... But as long as all this criticism shrank from recognising the inseparable bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the foundations of capitalism, while it shrank from joining the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism and its development—it remained a 'pious wish'."<sup>1</sup>

It was above all these forces, that is, the US proletariat, that had the moral obligation to come out in support of the Filipinos' struggle against US imperialist rule. In a letter to the US workers in 1918, Lenin put this quite bluntly: "The American people, who set the world an example in waging a

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 287.



revolutionary war against feudal slavery, now find themselves in the latest, capitalist stage of wage-slavery to a handful of multimillionaires, and find themselves playing the role of hired thugs who, for the benefit of wealthy scoundrels, throttled the Philippines in 1898 on the pretext of 'liberating' them...."<sup>1</sup> The US Communists—the vanguard of the US proletariat—knew that Lenin was right and did their best to keep the working people from being involved in the colonialists' crimes, and to help the emerging working-class movement in the Philippines. As a spokesman for the progressive US labour organisations told the Pan-Pacific Trade-Union Conference in Hankow (1927) the revolutionary workers of the United States regarded the struggle of the Filipino people as their own struggle and tried to help them in every way open to them under the existing conditions.

The initiators of Leninist propaganda in the Philippines drew on the support and experience of the international working-class movement to find the right ways of struggle for national independence and the working people's vital interests.

It was, of course, very hard to introduce Lenin's strategy and tactics into the class struggle and the national liberation movement, for the revolutionaries in the Philippines came up against colonialist reprisals, resistance from the collaborationists, and waverings of the reformers, to say nothing of the hidebound traditions and prejudice among the workers and peasants themselves. The first propagandists of Leninism themselves had yet to gain more experience, and there were still very few organisers with a sound Marxist grounding. But they pioneered a great cause, and the seeds of Lenin's ideas, which the efforts of true internationalists had help to bring to the Philippines, eventually produced a rich yield. In 1930, the Workers' Party was reorganised into a Communist Party, which has since been a permanent and effective factor in the country's political life. It has travelled a hard way, and has known both failure and success, but its every step forward, every fresh victory in the fight for the people's cause, has always been the result of compliance with Lenin's benests.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 63.

## The Impact of Marxism-Leninism on the National Liberation Movement in Burma

The ideology of scientific socialism and Lenin's doctrine on the national and colonial question reached Burma after the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, when Lenin's Party assumed power.

At the time, Burma was merely a fringe province of "British" India.<sup>1</sup> It was something like a "village inside a village", Britain's "rice paddy" in Southeast Asia. With a total population of nearly 17 million, only about 100,000 persons were employed in industry, with over two-thirds of them being Indian workers. The Burmese proletariat was very small, scattered, unorganised and linked more with the countryside than with the towns. There was no unity among the workers of different nationalities and creeds. Indeed, clashes often occurred between them and this sharply lowered the overall political level of the working-class movement. Indian workers were under the organisational and ideological influence of the Indian National Congress, and Chinese workers—of the Chinese communities in Burma. Only in 1920 was a class organisation of Burmese workers, the Workers' Union of Burma, set up.

The Burmese national bourgeoisie was very weak economically, politically and organisationally. It constantly depended on the British monopolies and Indian capital in Burma. Agriculture and the semi-feudal Burmese countryside were also dominated by foreign capital. There was no organisational connection between the spontaneous movement among the peasantry and the urban lower classes. That was the state of affairs until the Great October Revolution. The situation in Burma began to change under the direct influence of the ideas generated by the Great October Socialist Revolution and the early decrees of the Soviet state.

The first authentic reports about events in Soviet Russia, the activity of the Soviet Power, the Bolsheviks and Lenin must have reached Burma through Indian revolutionary émigrés, notably members of the Indian Committee

<sup>1</sup> Burma was separated from India and made an "independent" British colony in April 1937.



which was set up in Berlin in the early 1920s, and a group of Indian revolutionaries which was also set up there in 1922 and was headed by M. N. Roy. Lenin's writings must have also reached Burma through the Indian revolutionaries who in the early 1920s established reliable links with the underground anti-colonial movement in Burma.

Lenin's writings appeared and were read in Burma in his lifetime. One of the first readers of his works was Professor of Mathematics Aung Hla, President of the Burmese Association of Cultural Ties and Friendship with the USSR. In 1922, he read *The State and Revolution* and from then on began to collect Lenin's writings and writings about him. Aung Hla noted the great interest among young Burmese in Lenin as a personality. They greatly admired him and were profoundly shocked by his death.<sup>2</sup> After Lenin's death in January 1924, the legal Burmese press began to carry articles about him. The *Rangoon Mail* described Lenin as the greatest man of the epoch, the most "Russian of Russians", who left the world "a new Russia, a Russia of the working people, a state of Soviets".<sup>3</sup>

Until the 1930s, few people in Burma understood the substance of the philosophy of scientific communism or had a profound knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory. This is partly due to the language barrier: very few people knew any European languages, and these came mainly from the ranks of the feudal aristocracy. Meanwhile, Burmese revolutionaries read Lenin's works in an effort to find answers to the burning problems which the practice of the national liberation movement in the country put forward. They displayed great interest in various propositions of the political theory of Marxism-Leninism, Bolshevik tactics at different stages of the revolution, the Soviet state's practical activity, and the Bolsheviks' political and organisational work among the masses.

It is indicative that in Burma interest in Marxism-Leninism depended directly on the state of the national liberation movement in the country. When it was on an upgrade, many non-Marxists, petty-bourgeois leaders and

<sup>1</sup> V. Kudinov, "The Light of the October Revolution on the Banks of the Provada", *Aziya i Afrika segodnya*, No. 1, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

revolutionary nationalists, leaders of non-Marxist patriotic organisations and revolutionary democrats began thoroughly to read Lenin's works and study the practical activity of the Soviet Union's Communist Party in building socialism. Although not many of them became solid Marxists-Leninists, they all looked to Lenin's works for answers to the stirring problems in the practical struggle for national independence, and found these.

In 1930-1932, Burma was the scene of a sweeping peasant war led by Saya San. The peasant movement advanced a utopian programme for a return to the "golden age", that is, the precolonial past. It fought without the working class or any other anti-imperialist forces, and was savagely suppressed by the British authorities, who executed Saya San in late 1931.

On the eve of his execution, the patriot managed to hand over to his friends the money he had received for his book, *Symptoms of Disease*, and asked them to use it to buy socialist literature. His friends fulfilled his last wish, and opened a library named after him, where they had Marx's *Capital* and books about the Soviet Union, notably Jawaharlal Nehru's *Soviet Russia*, which he had written after his first trip to the USSR in 1927.

The defeat of the 1930-1932 peasant uprising made the liberation forces take a more sober view of the prospects of their struggle. The centre of the anti-colonialist movement was gradually moving into the area of organised political action led by radical bourgeois nationalists. Burma's young working class was also taking a more vigorous part in the struggle. The patriotic forces who were ready to fight for the country's independence gradually centred around Dohbama Asiayone (Our Burma), a student political association which had emerged in 1930. By the mid-1930s, Dohbama had already become a massive anti-colonialist organisation. Industrial trade unions were also being established at that time, and there was a more active strike movement among the oil workers, dockers, workers at rice-hulling enterprises, and so on.

The ideology of the national liberation movement was going through a period of marked change. Its leaders (most of whom came from the revolutionary section of the young led by the Rangoon University students) were increasingly



influenced by socialist writings, works by the founders of Marxism-Leninism in particular.

The Nagani (Red Dragon) Bookclub, founded by revolutionary Thakins in Rangoon, played an important role in the spread of the ideas of the October Revolution and the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Socialist ideas obviously contributed to the rise in the mid-1930s of a powerful student movement with a sharp anti-colonialist edge.

Just before the Second World War, the national liberation movement in Burma took another upturn, which started in 1938 with a strike by oil workers in Chau. The proletarian strike struggle soon extended to other areas, giving a boost to the anti-imperialist movement among the peasants and the urban poor. In January 1939, there was the famous Hunger March, staged by the revolutionary Thakins, members of the Dohbama association and led by oil workers of Central Burma, with thousands of peasants also involved. Dohbama initiated the establishment of a political centre for the peasant movement, the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation (ABPO).

The popularity of Marxist-Leninist ideas was on the increase; the Marxists had an ever stronger influence in the Dohbama, and also in workers', peasants' and youth organisations. Dohbama's Left wing, which sought to rely on the working masses of town and countryside, was gradually adopting scientific socialism as an ideological instrument.

In August 1939, Dohbama Left-wingers and the members of the working-class, student and peasant organisations and Marxist circles decided to unite within a single revolutionary party, the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). Aung San (1915-1947), Dohbama's General Secretary, was elected its first secretary.

The CPB was set up as an underground party, for the conditions for the emergence of a mature Marxist-Leninist party were not yet there. Aung San himself and many of its other leaders and rank-and-file members were petty-bourgeois revolutionaries. Nevertheless, the Communist Party had a visible revolutionising effect on Dohbama, considerably strengthening the positions of its Left, radical wing. Its influence is evident in Dohbama's early programme documents: the decisions of its Moulmein Conference in October 1939, and its Manifesto published in the spring of 1940.

The CPB's growing influence in Dohbama and outside it caused some anxiety in Dohbama's bourgeois nationalist wing. In late 1939 and early 1940, they established a People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), later renamed the Socialist Party of Burma. In social make-up, the PRP differed very little from the CPB, and their immediate targets were the same: to overthrow British rule and win national independence. PRP leaders—U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein and other future Right-wing Socialists, who wanted a "special way for Burma"—did their utmost to weaken the CPB's influence and ease its members out of the Dohbama leadership.

Upon the outbreak of the Second World War, Britain arbitrarily declared Burma a belligerent country, a decision Dohbama, the CPB, the PRP and other anti-colonialist organisations refused to support. They denounced those who were to blame for the Second World War, and demanded immediate independence for their country. A Dohbama manifesto emphasised that of all the great powers at the time, the Soviet Union was the only steady and consistent advocate of mankind's freedom.

In early 1940, the national liberation movement in Burma intensified, with Communists and Socialists having more and more influence on its development. They established an All-Burma Trade-Union Congress (ABTUC), which brought together all the revolutionary trade unions of workers and employees. It saw national independence as its priority goal. The Communist-led ABPO also called for resolute struggle against British colonial rule. Dohbama established contact with the leaders of the Indian National Congress. In March 1940, a Dohbama delegation led by Aung San attended an INC session in Ramgarh, which decided that the party would come out against India's participation in the war. It was there that the Burmese met Gandhi, Nehru and other Congress leaders. The leaders of the Burmese national movement were also seeking closer ties with the liberation forces in China.

Meanwhile, the British authorities came down with reprisals on Burma's patriotic organisations, the Communists above all. Many Communists, Socialists and other Dohbama leaders were imprisoned without trial. The CPB lost touch with its own local branches, and the contradictions



between the various factions in Dohbama itself and in other mass organisations became more acute, with the PRP gaining the upper hand. The PRP leadership advocated the immediate overthrow of British rule by any means, including armed assistance from outside.

In November 1940, the PRP leaders decided to accept Japanese military assistance in their fight against Britain. The Communists adopted a different policy: they said they were prepared to take part in the war on the side of the anti-fascist forces, provided Britain guaranteed the country independence after the victory over fascism. But the British colonialists rejected the CPB's legitimate condition and intensified their reprisals. In the summer of 1940, Aung San had to go into hiding and then left the country, cutting his links with the Communist Party. Other men, who had closer ties with the armed guerrilla movement, came to stand at its head.

But the British imperialists' reprisals could not quench the growing influence of Marxist-Leninist ideas in Burma. That was only natural, for these ideas had struck deep root in Burma even before the Second World War. Petty-bourgeois revolutionaries were also turning to Lenin's works. This will be seen very well from the stand taken by Aung San and present-day Burmese revolutionary democrats in respect of Marxism-Leninism, Lenin's writings, the history of the CPSU and socialist construction in the Soviet Union.

Aung San was a founder of Burma's national army (1941), which then played an important part in liberating the country from the Japanese invaders. He also gave a lead in rallying all the patriotic forces under the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, a nation-wide front, set up by the Communists, the Socialists and the command of the Burmese national army in August 1944. To his dying day, Aung San was President of the League and the generally recognised national leader.

Aung San's interest in the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism stemmed both from his desire to find an approach to the burning questions of the Burmese peoples' fight for independence, and from his genuine sympathy for the Soviet people and his urge to learn about their experience in scrapping the old system and building up a

new one in the interests of all the working people. Aung San realised that the Soviet Union was an example for all the oppressed and exploited, a workers' and peasants' state.

He had a deep respect for Lenin's party. In his first policy-making statement, a report on organisational matters at Dohbama's Moulmein Conference in October 1939, he said: "An analysis of past mistakes reveals the truth, and the Communist Party of Soviet Russia, which has established the world's first new society, has always followed this path.... Let me tell you about the organisational structure of Russia's Communist Party, whose example we must follow if we are to strengthen and extend our organisation. Its higher and lower organs exercise mutual control over each other. Every party organ is elective. All important party decisions are taken only once they had been discussed in the lower organs. The lower party organisations are subordinated to the appropriate higher organisations. If Dohbama Asiayone is to have iron discipline and is to overcome all its enemies, it has to adopt that set-up." The Dohbama Manifesto issued in the spring of 1940 denounced the imperialists' domestic and foreign policy, and voiced warm approval of the Soviet policy line.

Aung San took pride in the fact that the Soviet Union had played the decisive role in defeating German nazism and Japanese militarism. In his search for answers to various complicated problems, particularly the nationalities question and the drafting of a constitution for independent Burma, Aung San often looked to the Soviet Union. When calling his people to unite in the fight for independence, he pointed out that the Soviet Union "has many languages, but its people is a single whole".

His speech at a rally in Rangoon on July 13, 1947 was his last policy-making speech before the people, and something of a political testament. He urged his fellow-countrymen to build a new state for the ordinary people, reminding them of Soviet Russia, where a tremendous revolution had occurred in 1917, and where the exploited people had thrown off the yoke of the exploiters and had built a new-type state on the ruins of tsarism. He emphasised that before the Soviet Union became a great socialist power, its people had had to live through many difficulties and work very hard. He also said that to rehabilitate the country's



economy, and build a new society, the Burmese had to work out national plans and put in a great deal of selfless effort.<sup>1</sup>

General Aung San met a tragic death on July 19, 1947, and did not live to see Burma's independence. His bequest to his people was that they should always keep to the path of social progress, maintain friendly relations with the Soviet people, and draw as much as they can on their rich historical experience.

Aung San's personal library in his home in Rangoon, which is now maintained as a museum, shows the influence of Marxism-Leninism on the shaping of his political views. The library has many works by Lenin, mostly Martin Lawrence editions (in English) of the latter half of the 1930s, when the Thakins founded their Red Dragon Bookclub in Rangoon and supplied it with socialist literature.

No doubt, Aung San collected Lenin's books in an attempt to answer the questions that were besetting him during the national liberation struggle of the Burmese people. It was not by chance that his library included the first volume of Lenin's selected works written in the period 1894-1899 (*What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats, The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book (The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature)*, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats", etc.).

Aung San was apparently interested in the history of the first Russian revolution. A volume of Lenin's works in his library contained articles like "The Beginning of the Revolution in Russia", "The Revolutionary-Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry", "Three Constitutions, or Three Systems of Government", "The First Victory of the Revolution", "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising", "The Stages, the Trend, and the Prospects of the Revolution".<sup>2</sup>

The library also contains some books written by Lenin before and during the October Revolution, notably, his

<sup>1</sup> See Aung San, *Burma's Challenge*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 268-69 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The Revolution of 1905*, New York-London, 1931.

famous *Letters from Afar*<sup>1</sup> and his speeches at the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) on May 7-12, 1917<sup>2</sup>.

There are also Lenin's brilliant *The State and Revolution*,<sup>3</sup> *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*,<sup>4</sup> a pamphlet, *V. I. Lenin. On the Eve of October*,<sup>5</sup> which contains "Marxism and Insurrection", "The Crisis Has Matured", "Letter to the Bolshevik Comrades Attending the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region", "Letter to Comrades", "Letter to Bolshevik Party Members", "Letter to Central Committee Members (October 24 [November 6], 1917)", and a pamphlet containing his well-known works "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power", "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?"

Another collection, *The Paris Commune*,<sup>6</sup> contains his articles "In Memory of the Commune", "Lessons of the Commune", and extracts from *The State and Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, and also from his report on the work of the Council of People's Commissars (January 24, 1918), and his "Letter to the Workers of Europe and America" (January 21, 1919).

Then there is also a pamphlet called *War and the Second International*, containing "The Collapse of the Second International" and "The War and Russian Social-Democracy", a separate pamphlet entitled *The Teaching of Karl Marx*,<sup>7</sup> and other works.

Aung San, of course, read many more works by Lenin than have remained in his library. In his speeches, for instance, he referred to various other works. Thus, in his report at a conference of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) in May 1947, which debated a draft constitution for a future independent Burmese Union, he said: "We should establish a union with a duly regulated

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Letters from Afar (Including the Letter to the Swiss Workers)*, London, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The April Conference*, New York, 1931.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, London, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, London, 1935.

<sup>5</sup> V. I. Lenin, *On the Eve of October*, London, 1935.

<sup>6</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The Paris Commune*, London, 1931.

<sup>7</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The Teaching of Karl Marx*, London, 1935.



economy so as to guarantee the rights of the national minorities. We cannot put up with a union of the kind Lenin had condemned for its partial repudiation of the whole. We should establish a union which would make it possible for the economy to develop as a single whole, for it is only then that our union will achieve all-round progress and be of benefit for the vast majority.”<sup>1</sup>

About two years before the declaration of Burma's independence, Aung San suggested that a plan should be drafted for the rehabilitation and development of the country's national economy. He believed that implementation of such a plan would be the first step along the way to economic independence. Speaking at a session of the AFPFL Supreme Council on May 16, 1946, he called for total independence, and said that political independence without economic independence was nothing but a mockery.

Aung San realised that Burmese economists would find it very hard to draw up an economic plan for an independent Burma. He attached much importance to statistical data, but said that economic experts should take a critical view of bourgeois statistics and reckon with the masses' interests. To give more substance to his mistrust of the bourgeois statistics, he referred to Lenin: Lenin had emphasised, he said, that one should never blindly follow a doctrine based on a non-critical choice of statistical data.

Aung San had in mind Lenin's work "The Capitalist System of Modern Agriculture" where Lenin had done justice to social statistics in general and economic statistics in particular, at the same time levelling sharp criticism at some German statisticians who were apt to turn socio-economic statistics, the most powerful instrument of social knowledge,

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<sup>1</sup> Aung San probably meant Lenin's "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" (1916). Lenin wrote: "The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a *small part* of the general-democratic (now: general-socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected." And further he said: "To be an internationalist Social-Democrat one must *not* think only of one's own nation, but place *above it* the interests of all nations, their common liberty and equality" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 341, 347).

"into a monstrosity, into statistics for the sake of statistics, into a game".<sup>1</sup>

It would, of course, be simplifying things to say that Aung San was a consistent Marxist-Leninist and had understood the essence of scientific socialism. Indeed, he had been unable to shake off the influence of petty-bourgeois ideology altogether. The contradictions in his views and action reflected the objective contradictions in Burma's society itself.

Still, Lenin's works left a strong impression on him, and his public speeches and practical activities show this very well. He rejected the capitalist way for independent Burma and championed its non-capitalist development.

He was a revolutionary democrat and a resolute opponent of imperialism. He wanted to have the enslaving imperialist system destroyed. After the Second World War, he took an even more resolute stand against imperialism and its colonial system. He hated imperialism, be it British, Japanese or Burmese, and believed that history had already put paid to imperialism and doomed it to death. But he realised that imperialism and colonialism would not give up their positions of their own accord, and said that the people should be prepared to fight the fiercest ever battle against the aggressive imperialist forces.

At an AFPFL conference in May 1947, Aung San put forward the idea of establishing control over private capital and curbing its development in order to leave capitalism behind as soon as possible and rise to real democracy. He wanted big private capital to be nationalised in the interests of the country as a whole, the working people in the first place. He firmly believed that nationalisation was the only way to raise the standards of living and ensure the masses' well-being and happiness.

Looking back on the Burmese revolutionary democrats' ideological development, one cannot fail to see that after the Second World War, when the defeat of fascism, the establishment of the world socialist system and the rise of the national liberation movement had intensified the disintegration of the colonial system of imperialism, the influence of Leninist ideas on the fighters for Burma's

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 437.



independence became much stronger. Thus, they took more resolute action in the fight for their country's independence and gained a better understanding of the Marxist proposition that the national liberation movement of every individual oppressed nation was tied in with the common struggle of socialist and democratic forces against imperialism, for a break-up of its colonial system, and for the self-determination of every nation. Aung San regarded himself as an internationalist. He said: "I am a nationalist where nationalism stands for love of our people and love for others, where nationalism gives us the strength to fight tyranny and injustice within our country and without."

It is interesting to analyse the influence of scientific socialism on Aung San's ideology and practice because he was the most striking personality among the Burmese revolutionary democrats and was the recognised leader of the national liberation movement.

After his death, leadership of the AFPFL was taken over by the reformist wing of the national liberation movement headed by U Nu, U Kyaw Nyein and other Right-wing Socialists. When Burma was proclaimed independent in January 1948, they filled the leading posts in the national government, and got down to reappraising the AFPFL's ideology and policy of the Aung San period.

In March 1962, the army removed the bourgeois reformists from power and set up a Revolutionary Council headed by General Ne Win, Aung San's fellow-fighter.

Many policy-making documents of the Revolutionary Council and its Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) show a marked influence of scientific socialism.

The Revolutionary Council came to power under the banner of anti-capitalism and "Burmese socialism". True, the Revolutionary Council and the BSPP have their own idea about socialism, but that is essentially different from that of the Burmese Right-wing Socialists. The Revolutionary Council does not reject Marxism-Leninism and even accepts some of its ideas; it is a resolute opponent of capitalism and has rejected it outright. Ne Win said in 1963: "We have to discard the old political system which will not take us to our goal."<sup>1</sup> In its policy declaration, *The Burmese*

<sup>1</sup> *Forward*, Vol. II, No. 4, September 22, 1963, p. 2.

*Way to Socialism*, issued on April 30, 1962, the Revolutionary Council formulated its goal very clearly: "The Revolutionary Council of the Union of Burma does not believe that man will be set free from social evils as long as pernicious economic systems exist in which man exploits man.... The vanguard and custodian of a socialist democratic state are primarily peasants and workers..."<sup>1</sup> It also said that people in such a state had to earn their living by their own labour and that its economy had to be aimed at a "planned, proportional development of all the national productive forces".<sup>2</sup> A statement by the Revolutionary Council on April 30, 1963 said that the Revolutionary Government had assumed power "with the purpose of giving top priority to the welfare of workers and farmers".<sup>3</sup>

Since the Revolutionary Council's accession to power, there have been some marked changes in Burma's political and social life. The country has freed itself from the yoke of foreign capital, and the positions of the feudals, landowners and money-lenders in the countryside have been undermined. The country has been living up to the principle proclaimed by the Revolutionary Council on February 15, 1963 that the existence of a private sector was against the country's goals, and that it was nationalisation that was the principle of a socialist economy.

The BSPP has rejected the Right Social-Democrats' policy and ideology, and blamed them for arbitrarily discarding Marxist-Leninist works and relying solely on the works of bourgeois reformists, for having a hazy idea about progress in human history and for being carried away by reformism via a bourgeois parliamentary system. No BSPP policy-making document has ever put it in plain words that the party recognises the Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

The scientific socialist ideology is yet to become the ideology of the BSPP. The party leadership's attitude to Marxist-Leninist theory is largely reminiscent of the attitude of Aung San and his closest associates. BSPP documents extensively quote the works of Marxist-Leninist classics, mainly in the arguments against the ideological adversaries,

<sup>1</sup> *The Burmese Way to Socialism*. The Policy Declaration of the Revolutionary Council, Rangoon, April 30, 1962, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>2</sup> *The Burmese Way to Socialism*, pp. 4, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Forward*, May 7, 1963, p. 24.



the Communists in the first place.<sup>1</sup> The BSPP holds that Burmese socialism is "practice of a middle course free from Left and Right deviations", and that it will be built under the leadership of all the working people led by Socialists,<sup>2</sup> that is, members of the Burma Socialist Programme Party, which became the ruling party of the Union of Burma under the 1974 Constitution.

The BSPP officially declared that it would "study and avail itself of the opportunities provided by progressive ideas, theories and experiences at home, or abroad without discrimination between one country of origin and another".<sup>3</sup> In accordance with this principle, the Revolutionary Council and the BSPP created equal conditions for the study and spread of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism in the country. A great stride forward in this direction was taken on the centenary of Lenin's birth.

A special people's publishing house, headed by Thakin Lwin, a veteran of the working-class and trade-union movement, was set up in Rangoon for the translation and publication of Lenin's works in Burmese. It announced that it intends to publish very soon 15 works by Lenin, "the great proletarian leader and founder of the world's first socialist state". A biography of V. I. Lenin appeared in Burmese in 1969-1970. A four-volume edition of his *Selected Works* was also started. The first three volumes contained *What Is To Be Done?*; *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*; *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*; *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, and other works. The publication of Lenin's biography and his works for readers at large was a great victory for Burmese progressive opinion.

In Burma today, Marxist-Leninist ideology has been officially recognised, and Lenin's works are available to broad masses of people.

<sup>1</sup> "Specific Characteristics of the BSPP", *Forward*, Vol. III. September 15, 1964, pp. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Philosophy of the BSPP*, Rangoon, 1964, pp. 28, 29.

<sup>3</sup> *The Burmese Way to Socialism*, p. 2.

LENIN AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS  
IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

Leninist Influences in the Arab Countries

In the early 20th century, none of today's sovereign Arab states were to be found on the political map of the area. The Arab lands, divided up between the Ottoman Empire and the British and French colonial empires, were the scene of fierce inter-imperialist struggle. Lenin wrote in this context in his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that Britain wanted Baghdad "as a base for operations against Germany" and that at the turn of the century Arabia was one of the few remaining areas that had yet to be partitioned by the imperialists.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin was a true champion of the rights of the oppressed Arab peoples and an ardent opponent of the system of colonial slavery. In his "End of the Italo-Turkish War", he denounced the Italian colonialists for their barbarous action in Libya, saying that Italy's seizure of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica was a "perfected civilised bloodbath, the massacre of Arabs with the help of the 'latest' weapons". He predicted (and the following decades proved him to have been quite right): "Despite the 'peace', the war will actually go on, for the Arab tribes in the heart of Africa, in areas far away from the coast, will refuse to submit."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 269, 273.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, pp. 337-38.



In his *Notebooks on Imperialism*, Lenin wrote that the imperialists were plundering Morocco, having divided up that country in 1911 under a deal between Britain, France and Germany.<sup>1</sup> Later, in June 1918, he said Britain was "trying to grab Baghdad and strangle Turkey" to death.<sup>2</sup> In his subsequent speeches and articles, he repeatedly mentioned Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine.

Lenin's work after the October Revolution, which had radically changed the balance of forces in the world, dealt a heavy blow at imperialism and opened up a qualitatively new stage in the Arab peoples' national liberation struggle, was of particular importance for the revolutionary process in the Arab countries. The prominent Egyptian public figure Khaled Mohaya ed-Din said: "The October Socialist Revolution successfully laid a new groundwork for relations between states with different social regimes. The Decree on Peace and the calls for peaceful coexistence were creative and constructive steps taken by the revolution and Lenin, its great leader."<sup>3</sup>

The powerful revolutionising influence on the Arabs was due both to the very emergence of the Soviet Republic, a new type of state established through the revolutionary overthrow of the exploiting classes, and to the heroic struggle of its peoples against the foreign intervention, which showed that the imperialists could well be beaten. The Soviet Government's Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia and address To All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East (translated into Arabic), in whose elaboration Lenin had taken a personal part, were of great historic importance, showing that the young Soviet Republic had resolutely renounced the imperialist practices of tsarism and the Provisional Government. Many Arabs saw the address To All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East as Lenin's letter to the Arab leaders.

Forward-looking Arabs naturally welcomed Lenin's newly proclaimed principles of the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia, their right (as well as the rights of all the

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, pp. 513-15.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 484.

<sup>3</sup> *The Great October Socialist Revolution and the National Liberation Movement*, Moscow, 1969, p. 86 (in Russian).

other nations of the world) to free self-determination and the free development of national minorities and ethnic groups, and the abolition of all national and religious privileges and restrictions. The Arabs heard the call issued by Lenin's government: "Moslems of the East! Persians and Turks, Arabs and Hindus—all those whose person and property, freedom and motherland have been bought and sold for centuries by the greedy European predators, all those whose countries the plunderers that have started the war now want to divide!..."

"Overthrow these predators and the oppressors of your countries!... You have the right to do so, for you hold your future in your own hands."<sup>1</sup>

News of the new relations established by Soviet Russia with various Eastern countries, notably, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran and China, even though reaching the Arabs somewhat later, also played a considerable role, while the publication by the Council of People's Commissars of some secret Entente documents (particularly the Sykes-Picot Agreement) had an explosive effect on the Arabs.

The influence of the October Revolution and subsequent events in Russia differed from one Arab country to another. In Iraq, that influence was particularly strong, for Iraq is closest to Russia in geographic terms. Reports of the revolutionary events in Russia filtered to Iraq both through Iran and across the Russo-Turkish frontline, where in 1916 the Russian troops had been fighting battles at Khanaqin (Northern Iraq). The Turkish soldiers, many of whom were Syrian and Iraqi Arabs, soon found out about the overthrow of the landlords and the bourgeoisie on the other side of the battle-line, and about the revolutionary ferment among the Russian troops in the Caucasus and Iran. To Southern Iraq, these reports filtered in through India, because Indian troops made up the bulk of the British expeditionary army.

In 1918-1920, the headquarters of the British interventionist troops, which had invaded Russia's southern areas and were also fighting to crush the Iranian patriots, was stationed in Iraq, so that the Iraqis heard about every new development in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia and about the Iranian patriots' successes. Revolutionary feelings

<sup>1</sup> *USSR Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 34-35.



were spreading ever wider among the population. In August 1919, the British Governor of Kirkuk in Northern Iraq grudgingly admitted: "The name and tenets of Bolshevism are unfortunately becoming known." When the Iraqi Arabs found out through the British opposition press and the Calcutta newspaper *Habl al-Matin* about the publication of the Entente's secret treaties to divide the Arab World, the resentment over the British occupation regime in Iraq became particularly pronounced.

The Egyptians heard about the Russian proletariat's revolutionary movement even before the October armed uprising in Petrograd, so that in September 1917 the British authorities in Egypt introduced censorship on any reports about Russia, fearing their influence on the country's opinion, and also did their best to stem the "anarchist and pacifist propaganda" on the part of the revolutionary-minded Russian sailors who were staying in Egypt after their cruiser *Peresvet* was blown up by a German mine outside Port Said. The British officials wanted these "agitators" expelled from Egypt, and subsequently, in 1920-1921, they sent back to Russia more than 100 Russians as "adherents of the Soviet Government".

The Egyptian people learned about the October Revolution almost immediately, and subsequent reports from revolutionary Russia also reached Egypt very quickly, in a matter of days: reports about the decrees issued by the Council of People's Commissars and the decisions of the All-Russia Congresses of Soviets were telegraphed to Egypt from Paris and London. Their influence on the Egyptians was very strong. The British public figure and publicist, George Young, wrote that "Bolshevist ideas" had made an impression "both on the foreign workers and on the more class-conscious of the native proletariat". He also said that after the October Revolution the Egyptian nationalists had put forward much more radical demands and, moreover, had improved their organisation "by a study of the methods ... of the Russian Communists".<sup>1</sup>

The countries of Northern Africa also heard about the October Revolution and its leader very quickly; even the colonialist press run by the European minority in Algeria

<sup>1</sup> George Young, *Egypt*, London, 1930, pp. 297, 231.

could not suppress the reports about Lenin's Decrees on Peace and Land. The influence of the October Revolution in Algeria and Tunisia rose gradually, with a general swing to the Left within the ranks of the French working-class movement, with which the North African proletariat was connected, with the return from France of Algerian and Tunisian workers, students and soldiers, who were imbued with the revolutionary spirit of the metropolitan country, and as reports came in from abroad about the turbulent political events in Turkey and the Arab countries that had started right after the October Revolution.

Direct contacts between the Algerian troops sent to Odessa in 1919 and also to suppress the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and the Russian and Hungarian revolutionaries were of considerable importance. The Algerians' participation in the uprising of the French sailors in Odessa in 1919 was one of the earlier results of the revolutionising influence of Leninism on the men recruited to the Entente armies from among the colonial peoples.

It was due to the strong and growing influence of Leninist ideas about social and national liberation that a revolutionary tide swept the Arab countries in 1918-1922.

In Egypt, a powerful anti-colonial movement started in November 1918, and in the spring of 1919 spontaneously developed into a national liberation uprising. A point to note is that the fellaheen in the villages used the Russian word "Soviet" for the organs of power they were setting up. Although the uprising failed, it helped to bring about the establishment of a major national party, Wafd, which came to stand at the head of the country's anti-colonial movement. Wafd secured the liberation of some bourgeois national leaders headed by Saad Zaghlul who had been held under arrest by the British, and wrested various other concessions from the British authorities; thus, Britain renounced its protectorate over Egypt and agreed to proclaim it an independent and sovereign kingdom (February 28, 1922).

On April 19, 1923, as a direct result of these developments, King Ahmed Fuad promulgated a fairly liberal Constitution, and in January 1924 held parliamentary elections, which put power into the hands of the Wafd Party and its leader Saad Zaghlul.



But the national bourgeoisie was unable (and, to a considerable extent, unwilling) to make use of the upswing in the Egyptian people's anti-imperialist struggle in 1919-1921, which took place in a favourable international setting. Here is what progressive Egyptian historian Shuhdi Atiyya al-Shafii says in this context: "For the first time in mankind's history there emerged a great power which did not want to colonise, occupy or exploit anyone at all, a state which came to side with all the liberation forces of the world."<sup>1</sup> And it was only the adverse balance of political forces inside the country that prevented the Egyptian people from relying in their struggle for independence on the support of the first working people's state headed by Lenin.

In Syria and the Lebanon, the anti-imperialist struggle took an upturn in 1919 and 1920, when the Syrian and the Lebanese patriots fought against the French army which had invaded their countries to replace the British troops there under a secret deal between Britain and France on the partition of the Levant. A characteristic thing here was that to the very last the British kept deceiving the Syrians, insisting that no "Sykes-Picot Agreement had ever existed and that it had been invented by the Bolsheviks to drive a wedge between them and the Arabs".<sup>2</sup>

In August 1919, armed units of Lebanese patriots in Central Lebanon staged an attack on France's supreme commissar, gravely wounding the admiral in command of the French fleet; in October 1919, fighting against the occupationists spread across the whole of Southern Lebanon. The uprising continued up to June 1920. In Syria, the patriots of the Latakia region were the first to take up arms against the French forces that had landed on the northern coast. Although on March 8, 1920, Syria had been proclaimed independent, in April 1920 France was given a mandate to rule the country and started a drive to occupy it, everywhere running into resistance from the population. Popular resistance reached its climax on June 24, 1920, with the battle at Maisalun, where several thousand Arab insurgents tried to stop the advance of the French army on Damascus.

<sup>1</sup> Shuhdi Atiyya al-Shafii, *The Development of the National Liberation Movement in Egypt (1882-1956)*, Moscow 1961, p. 56 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Amin Said, *Arab Uprisings in the 20th Century*, p. 84.

After the French colonialists had seized Syria and the Lebanon, many Arab patriots in these countries began to turn to Soviet Russia. A report issued in December 1920 by the Patriotic Committee of Arab Unity newly established in Syria said, among other things: "The Arabs regard the government of Lenin and his friends, and the Great Revolution they have launched to liberate the East from the European tyrants as a great force capable of ensuring their well-being and happiness.

"Peace and happiness throughout the world depend on an alliance between the Arabs and the Bolsheviks.

"To attain their great goal, the Bolsheviks have made many sacrifices.

"And they want the Arabs to take up arms against the exploiters.

"To do so, the Arabs are asking the Bolsheviks to supply them with arms and military equipment...

"Long live Lenin, his comrades and Soviet power!

"Long live the alliance between the whole of Islam and the Bolsheviks!"<sup>1</sup>

While the Syrians and the Lebanese fought against France, the Palestinian Arabs began to take action against Britain, which at the San Remo Conference in April 1920 was given a mandate to run the country, and against Zionist immigration, which the British encouraged. The Arab-Palestinian Congress set up in 1920 called for an end to Jewish colonisation and for protection of the Arab farmers against the seizure of land by the Zionist trusts. The Socialist Party, formed in 1919, urged the establishment of an independent Palestine and of a single Arab-Jewish state.

The national liberation upsurge in Iraq was to a considerable extent due to the Red Army's successes in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia, particularly the defeat of the British at Enzeli (Iran) where, in the spring of 1920, the Red Caspian Flotilla carried out a successful landing operation. From 1919 onwards, the Kurdish tribes in Northern Iraq fought the British occupation forces. In May and June 1920, when the Iraqi Arabs heard of the establishment of British mandate rule over Iraq, they

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in A. N. Heifets, *Soviet Diplomacy and the Peoples of the East. 1921-1927*, pp. 308-09.



started a large-scale uprising which lasted into the spring of 1921. As a result, Britain had to make some concessions and agree to the establishment of a provisional national government in Iraq.

The government was mostly made up of feudals and pro-British Iraqis. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1921 it tried to establish contacts with the government of Soviet Russia through its representative Ismail Sidki.<sup>1</sup> Some time later, in November 1922, patriotic Iraqi émigrés living in Tehran, who had established a National Independence Committee, sent a message to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, requesting the Soviet Government to inform the Lausanne Conference that the treaty Britain had imposed on Iraq in October 1922 was illegal; the message said that the "Mesopotamian people would not shrink from any sacrifice to maintain its independence, put an end to British oppression and abolish the fettering treaty".<sup>2</sup>

The Libyan patriots, who had from 1912 been fighting the Italian colonialists, also tried to establish contacts with Soviet Russia. A Libyan delegation headed by Muhammad Khalid al-Qarqani, which went to Rome in late 1921 for talks with the Italian authorities, left for Moscow after having failed in its mission.<sup>3</sup> In 1922, Muhammad Idris al-Mahdi al-Sanusi, the Amir of Cyrenaica and head of the military-religious order of the Sanusi, who led the Libyans' struggle for independence, sent a friendly message to the Soviet Government and asked it for help.<sup>4</sup>

In 1918-1924, the Berber Riff tribes in Northern Morocco, fighting against the Spanish invaders (who had divided up Morocco with France in 1911), scored considerable successes. In 1921, the Riff insurgents defeated the Spanish army and established an independent Riff Republic, while one of their leaders said something that alarmed

<sup>1</sup> See A. N. Heifets, *Soviet Diplomacy and the Peoples of the East, 1921-1927*, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> See A. N. Heifets, *Soviet Diplomacy and the Peoples of the East, 1921-1927*, p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> See E. E. Evants-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, Oxford, 1949, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> See S. I. Aralov, *Reminiscences of a Soviet Diplomat*, p. 109.

the European imperialists: "Russia has got rid of its oppressors, and we are going its way."<sup>1</sup>

So, the Arab national liberation leaders of the day were under the influence of Marxism-Leninism, and they saw the world's first socialist state and Lenin's government as natural allies, friends and an inspiring example for their countries.

### The Spread of Marxism-Leninism in the Arab Countries

Besides having an effect on the overall rise of the national liberation movement in the Arab countries, the October Revolution and Lenin's policy also resulted in a rapid spread of Marxism-Leninism in the area (before the First World War, Algeria alone had some socialist organisations affiliated with the Second International).

Before the October Revolution, communist ideas had few followers in the Arab World because of the general sway of backward religious forms of social consciousness, which were due to the Arabs' economic backwardness and their oppression by the Ottoman exploiters or Western colonialists. But some forward-looking Arab intellectuals were quite ready to adopt the socialist outlook, and in the early 20th century socialist ideas began to make their way among the Arabs.

In Egypt, there even emerged in 1908 a Blessed Socialist Party, which immediately came under attack by the colonialists and had to leave the scene. Salam Musa, a prominent Egyptian philosopher and publicist, who in 1913 put out a pamphlet called *Socialism*, was one of the first men in Egypt to spread the socialist outlook. Another Egyptian writer, Mustafa al-Mansuri, published *A History of Socialist Trends* (Cairo, 1915), which dealt with the work of Karl Marx and the European socialist parties, the Marxist view of property under capitalism, and some problems of imperialism and war. He drew up a programme of socialist reform for Egypt and held that socialism was bound to win out throughout the world. Some Egyptian national leaders, like

<sup>1</sup> N. S. Lutskaya, *The Riff Republic*, Moscow, 1959, p. 58 (in Russian).



Mohammed Farid, were also influenced by socialist ideas.

Still, it was only after the October Revolution that the ideas of scientific socialism, Lenin's ideas, spread wide across the Arab World. In 1917 and 1918, the first Marxist-Leninist circles were set up in Egypt, and in 1919 these merged into a Socialist Party. In 1922, the party joined the Comintern, and was renamed Communist. In 1924, it already had more than 2,000 members, an impressive figure for a backward colonial country. In 1922, the first Marxist groups emerged in Syria and the Lebanon, and in 1924, a Communist-led People's Party was established in the Lebanon. Although Communist Parties in Syria and the Lebanon were officially established later, in 1930, the Communists took an active part in the two countries' political affairs throughout the second half of the 1920s. In 1920, following the French Socialists' Tours Congress, which set up the French Communist Party, Communist organisations were established in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, later instituted as independent parties (in 1924—in Tunisia, in 1936—in Algeria, and in 1943—in Morocco).

In 1921, the Palestinian Socialist Party was reorganised into a Communist Party, and in 1934, Marxist circles in Iraq merged into a Communist Party of Iraq. Later, in 1946, a Communist Party was established in the Sudan.

The young Arab Communist parties grew bigger and stronger under the direct leadership and influence of the Comintern, whose work in its early years was guided by Lenin and was subsequently carried on in accordance with Lenin's doctrine of the party, socialist revolution, and communist strategy and tactics, particularly in countries with a largely petty-bourgeois and peasant population.

Lenin's theoretical works on the national and colonial question, and also works like *The State and Revolution* and "*Left-Wing*" *Communism—an Infantile Disorder*, were of vast importance for the ideological training of Arab Communists: the various Marxist circles springing up all over the Arab World after the October Revolution and gradually developing into Marxist-Leninist parties usually started their ideological and educational work by studying these books. Thus, Yusef Suleiman Fahed, one of the founders of the Iraqi Communist Party, started his revolutionary activities in 1927 by organising a workers' circle to study

Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* and *The State and Revolution*, which had been illegally brought in from England.<sup>1</sup>

The terms of entry into the Comintern, worked out by Lenin and adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1920, emphasised: "Any party wishing to join the Third International must ruthlessly expose the colonial machinations of the imperialists of its 'own' country, must support—in deed, not merely in word—every colonial liberation movement."<sup>2</sup> That essential Leninist proposition helped the Communist parties of the capitalist countries to take a genuinely internationalist stand on the national and colonial question. In the Arab countries, this showed above all in the strong support given by the French Communist Party to the anti-imperialist movement and the Communist Parties of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Syria and the Lebanon, and by the Communist Party of Great Britain—to the Communists of Egypt, Iraq and Palestine.

As the Arab Communist parties developed and grew stronger on Leninist ideological and organisational principles, there was an upswing in the national revolutionary movement in the Arab World, with the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1922, in which Lenin took a vigorous part, declaring its support for that movement. The unification of the anti-imperialist national revolutionary forces on Lenin's principles had begun even earlier, in 1920, at the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, which was attended, among others, by delegates from Egypt and Syria.

A few years later, Western Europe, France above all, became the scene of a movement of protest against the suppression by joint Franco-Spanish imperialist forces of the Riffs' liberation struggle in Morocco in 1924-1926, and by the French colonial army—of the Druze uprising in Syria in 1925-1927, and Lenin's idea about a common anti-imperialist front was translated into reality: in February 1926, representatives of the European Communist parties, progressive European opinion and national revolutionary movements in the colonies, Egypt and other Arab countries

<sup>1</sup> See *A Life of Struggle*, Moscow, 1964, p. 253 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 209.



in particular, met in Berlin and established a World League against Colonial Oppression.

Delegates from Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia also took part in the 1927 Brussels World Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism, and then in the work of the Anti-Imperialist League, established at the Congress and bringing together many Communists, Left-wing Socialists and progressive Europeans who were not members of any party, and national liberation fighters from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Prominent leaders of the anti-colonial struggle—the Chairman of the Egyptian Nationalist Party Mohammed Hafez Ramadan and the leader of the Tunisian Destour Party Chadli Hairallah—were coopted to the League's General Council as representatives of the Arab countries. Ahmed Messali Hadj, Secretary-General of the North African Star (an association mostly made up of Algerian émigrés in France), laid before the Brussels Congress a broad programme of demands, calling, among other things, for Algeria's independence (the programme was subsequently used as a pretext for accusing the association of seeking to "infringe French sovereignty in Northern Africa" and for banning its activities in Algeria).<sup>1</sup>

The Arab members of the Anti-Imperialist League gave a high assessment of the Soviet Union's Leninist foreign policy in its vigorous effort to secure the liberation of the colonial and dependent peoples. The Riff delegate at the Brussels Congress ended his speech with these words: "Long live the Soviet Union, which helps the oppressed nations! Long live the national liberation and social emancipation of the oppressed peoples!"<sup>2</sup> And here is another indicative statement, made at a session of the League's General Council by Syrian representative Amir Shakib Arslan: "I am not a Communist and haven't read Marx, but I know that Lenin was the first man to inspire the proletariat with a feeling of fraternal friendship for the

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<sup>1</sup> See André Nouschi, *La naissance du nationalisme algérien 1914-1954*, Paris, 1962, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in G. Z. Sorkin, *The Anti-Imperialist League*, Moscow, 1965, p. 39 (in Russian).

colonial peoples, and that the Communists have been the first to spread this idea and translate it into reality."<sup>1</sup>

The League's work left a distinct mark on the national liberation movement in the Third World, for it showed the great importance of Lenin's idea about the need for solidarity among all the contingents of the world revolutionary movement and provided practical proof of the need for unity among the fighters against imperialism. The slogan approved by Lenin—"Workers of all countries and all oppressed peoples, unite!"—became an effective instrument of the national liberation movement. The work of the League and subsequent international associations of various anti-colonial forces differing in political and ideological terms was of great importance for the Arab countries.

The close contacts between the European Communists and the national revolutionaries of the colonies helped to strengthen from within the various anti-imperialist parties and organisations in Algeria, Tunisia, Syria and other Arab countries, for even while not accepting Marxism-Leninism, these parties and organisations learned a good deal from the Communists, drawing on their experience in organisation and work among the masses, and their revolutionary-democratic approach to the analysis of socio-political phenomena and many socio-economic problems.

### **Leninism and the Revival of Arab National Statehood**

The October Revolution and Lenin's work, in effect, ushered in a new stage in the Arab peoples' age-old struggle to restore their national statehood. From the very outset, Soviet diplomacy abided by Lenin's basic propositions: peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, equality of big and small nations, the right of every nation freely to decide its own future, and consistent support for the right of any nation oppressed and enslaved by imperialism to independent statehood.

Lenin's foreign policy principles lay at the root of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.



Soviet Union's friendly relations with the Arab countries. In October 1918, the RSFSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, sent a note to US President Woodrow Wilson, saying that Wilson's widely advertised "Fourteen Points" did not contain any demand for the liberation of Eastern countries like Egypt, India and the Philippines. Chicherin exposed Wilson's and the Wilsonians' hypocritical statements about "democracy" and "a community of nations", and said in connection with these Eastern countries: "It would be a great pity if these peoples were unable to join us in building a community of nations through their freely elected representatives."<sup>1</sup>

The more far-sighted and realistically-minded Arab leaders, who knew of the Soviet Government's principled stand on the national and colonial question, naturally wanted to establish contacts with the leaders of the world's first socialist country and to rely on its support in their liberation struggle. We have already mentioned the steps taken in that direction in 1921 and 1922 by some statesmen and politicians in Libya and Iraq. Later on, representatives of other Arab countries came up with a similar initiative. Thus, during the Lausanne Conference in January 1923, delegates from patriotic organisations in Egypt, Syria, Palestine and other Arab countries had several meetings with Chicherin, who was head of the Soviet delegation. Another member of the Soviet delegation, prominent revolutionary and diplomat V. V. Vorovsky, also did a great deal in Lausanne towards the establishment of friendly Soviet-Arab relations.

Chicherin, the first diplomat of the Leninist school, was deeply interested in the Arab peoples' struggle for their liberation and for the establishment and strengthening of their national statehood. It was his meeting in Lausanne with Azil, a delegate from Hejaz, which led to the establishment of the first official Soviet-Arab contacts and later, in April 1924, of normal diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Hashemite Kingdom (the official name of Hejaz at the time).

The political, economic and other relations between the

<sup>1</sup> *The USSR and the Arab Countries. 1917-1960*, Documents, Moscow, 1961, p. 60 (in Russian).

USSR and Hejaz emerged and strengthened against a complicated background. Hussain, sheriff of Mecca and ruler of Hejaz, laid claim to leadership of all the Arabs, something many forces within and outside the Arab world refused to accept, and this eventually resulted in the Hejaz-Nejd War of 1924-1925. What made things worse was that British imperialism was hatching entangled plots in the Arabian Peninsula. The USSR's foreign policy leaders, however, took a far-sighted and principled stand, giving a well-grounded assessment of the state of affairs in Arabia and laying bare the perfidious schemes of British diplomacy, which sought to get the Arabs at each other's throats and pit them all against the Soviet Union. During his talk with Azil in Lausanne, Chicherin said: "We greatly sympathise with the Arab people's desire for unification, but we cannot interfere in the matter of whether such unification should take the form of a confederation under Hussain's leadership or any other form, for that is the Arab people's own business."<sup>1</sup>

While appreciating in good time the objectively progressive tendency among the disunited Arab tribes and emirates to unite into one strong and independent state, Soviet diplomacy took a strictly neutral stand on the Hejaz-Nejd War. Upon the victory of the Nejd Amir, Ibn Saud, and the merging of Hejaz and Nejd, Ibn Saud conveyed thanks to the Soviet Government through K. A. Khakimov, Soviet diplomatic agent and Consul General at Jidda, in recognition of that stand.

A characteristic thing to note is that even before the outcome of the fighting in Arabia became clear, Chicherin told the Secretary-General of the French Foreign Ministry: "Ibn Saud is coming to the fore as one who unites, organises and modernises Arabia.... Britain is following five simultaneous policy lines in Arabia and supports both Ibn Saud and all his rivals."<sup>2</sup> By contrast, the Soviet Union adhered to a clear-cut and principled line, recognising without reservations Ibn Saud's new state—Hejaz and Nejd and their dependencies (in 1932, it became known as Saudi Arabia).

A message from K. A. Khakimov to Ibn Saud on February

<sup>1</sup> *The USSR and the Arab Countries. 1917-1960*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *The USSR and the Arab Countries. 1917-1960*, p. 70.



16, 1926 said: "Starting from the principle of the self-determination of nations and deeply respecting the will of the Hejaz people, who have chosen you as their king, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognises Your Majesty as King of Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies. On the strength of that, the Soviet Government regards itself as maintaining normal diplomatic relations with Your Majesty's Government."<sup>1</sup>

The USSR's recognition strengthened the kingdom's international positions and impelled various other countries, Britain in the first place, to recognise the new Arab state. The possibilities for extending and improving the relations between the USSR and Saudi Arabia could have subsequently been put to better use but for the stand taken by Saudi Arabia's feudal rulers, who were afraid of any new, progressive tendencies or any falling-out first with British and then also with US imperialism.

The Kingdom of Yemen was the second Arab country to establish official diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. On November 1, 1928, the two countries signed their Treaty of Friendship and Trade in Sanaa. Article 1 of the Treaty said that the two parties were establishing official relations and that the USSR Government recognised the "full and absolute independence of the Government of the Yemeni Land and its King, His Majesty Imam Yahia, son of Imam Mohammed Hamid al-Din, and its sovereignty".<sup>2</sup>

Before the Second World War, the Soviet Union was unable to establish any direct diplomatic relations with any other Arab countries, because these were either being held under imperialist colonial rule or, while having nominal independence, were in effect being controlled by the imperialist powers and could not pursue independent policy. But the USSR always stood up for the just cause of the Arab peoples, who continued and intensified their struggle for freedom and independence under the influence of the October Revolution and Lenin's ideas.

The Soviet Union was the world's only great power that refused to recognise the League of Nations' mandate system. In a note to the British and French governments in

<sup>1</sup> *The USSR and the Arab Countries. 1917-1960*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

May 1923 and at various international conferences throughout 1924-1927, the Soviet Government reasserted its non-recognition of the "so-called mandated state" of Palestine, Syria and other Arab territories. When joining the League of Nations in 1934, the USSR made a special reservation that it did not recognise on principle Article 22 of the League of Nations' Covenant dealing with the mandate system, and refused to take part in the appropriate commission, so denouncing and exposing the colonialists' hypocritical pseudo-legal screens, which enabled Britain and France to get League of Nations mandates for governing Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and the Lebanon.

After the Second World War (even before it was over), Lenin's prediction that most of the colonies and dependencies would win their freedom began to come true. The swelling tide of the Arab national liberation struggle, started by the October Revolution, crested with a revolution in Egypt in 1952, in Algeria in 1954-1962, Iraq in 1958, North Yemen in 1962, and South Yemen—1967-1968. The massive anti-colonial movements in Syria and the Lebanon in 1943-1945, and in Morocco, Tunisia and the Sudan in 1951-1955 were also successful. In their liberation struggle, these peoples always enjoyed the Soviet Union's friendly support. All the Arab countries have now attained political independence, though, in various ways and at various times, and the hour of the liberation of the Arab people of Palestine and realisation of its legitimate right to sovereignty and a national state is drawing near. Reliance on the powerful Soviet Union and world socialism has always been a decisive external prerequisite for the Arab peoples' successful struggle for freedom and independence.

In August 1943, the USSR established diplomatic relations with Egypt, in July 1944—with Syria, and in August 1944—with the Lebanon and Iraq. At that time, these countries were nominally independent, but were in fact held under control by Britain and France, and were occupied by British and French troops. In these conditions, particularly in view of the continuing war, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR, the leading power of the anti-Hitler coalition, provided important backing for the nascent sovereignty of Egypt, Iraq, Syria and the Lebanon,



and helped to strengthen their positions in their subsequent struggle for genuine independent statehood, in which they could also rely on Soviet support.

In May 1945, when Syrian and Lebanese patriots clashed with the French troops, the Soviet Government's resolute support for the patriots' just demands helped to bring about a peaceful settlement and then a withdrawal of the French troops from Syria and the Lebanon, so that the two young Arab republics retained their newly born independence.

In September 1946, the USSR representative at the United Nations called for a withdrawal of all British and other foreign troops from the Arab countries, Egypt and Iraq in particular.

In August 1947, the Soviet Union came out at the United Nations in support of Egypt's demand for a withdrawal of British troops from Egypt and the Sudan. In March 1948, the USSR signed a trade agreement with Egypt; in 1949, it supported at the United Nations a proposal to grant independence to Libya, and later on urged the United Nations to satisfy the just demands of the peoples of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria who rose to fight for national independence, came out strongly in support of the peoples of Oman and the Yemen, and took many other diplomatic steps to strengthen the sovereignty of the independent Arab countries and ensure self-determination for the Arab nations that had yet to break their colonial fetters. Georges Akl, a Lebanese politician, described the USSR's efforts in the United Nations as follows: "We could not have protected our interests better than the Soviet Union has done."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union's prompt recognition of Libya's independence in 1952 and also that of the Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia in 1956 was a continuation of its principled support for the Arabs' efforts to revive their national statehood. The Soviet Union did not stop there, but made a vigorous effort to protect the young Arab states from various imperialist intrigues. In 1955, the USSR and Czechoslovakia helped out Egypt, which was being pressured by the Western countries, by selling Soviet and Czechoslovak arms to the Nasser government. In July 1956, the USSR resolutely came out in

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in K. S. Petrov, "The Arab East and the October Revolution", *The Modern History of the Arab Countries*, Moscow, 1968, p. 32 (in Russian).

support of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, a legitimate step which restored the Egyptian people's rights to their property.

When the imperialists, infuriated by that crushing blow at their positions in the Arab East, launched their infamous tripartite aggression against Egypt (in October and November 1956), the Soviet Government's statement on the need to curb the aggressors played an important role in checking the plunderous attack and eliminating its aftermath. Indeed, the Egyptians recognised that it was the "Russian warning" that stopped the colonialist outrage. In the autumn of 1957, the USSR's firm stand helped to frustrate an imperialist plot against Syria, which had come under strong pressure from domestic and foreign reactionaries. In the summer of 1958, the imperialists were forced to retreat by the Soviet Union's resolute action against the US intervention in the Lebanon and the British intervention in Jordan, and also against the international reactionaries' attempts to put down the July Revolution in Iraq.

The USSR combines its diplomatic, moral and political support for the Arab peoples with concrete economic and other assistance. Soviet arms deliveries to the Algerian patriots, the Yemeni republicans, and the national armies of Egypt, Syria and Iraq played an important role in helping these freedom-loving nations to win effective independence. The USSR has signed agreements on economic and technical co-operation with Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Algeria, Kuwait, Tunisia and Morocco. Since the Second World War, it has helped and is helping the Arab countries to build hundreds of industrial enterprises and other important economic projects, like the Aswan Dam and the powerful Helwan Works in Egypt, the Euphrates hydrocomplex and the Latakia-Qamishli railway line in Syria, the nuclear reactor and the Basra-Baghdad railway line in Iraq, the Hodeida seaport in Yemen, and the Annaba metallurgical complex in Algeria. The Soviet Union has given the Arab countries crucial assistance in building up many new industries, which have started putting out farm machinery, electric motors and other electric engineering products, antibiotics and other medicines. Soviet geologists have helped the Syrians to find vast oil deposits, and Soviet



specialists have been working in many Arab countries in irrigation and the training of skilled personnel for the national economy and the civil service. The USSR has done a great deal towards eliminating the consequences of the imperialist aggression in the Middle East. Israel's aggression against the Arab countries in June 1967 was part of the imperialist scheme to stem the growing national liberation movement in that strategic area.

World imperialism has long been aiming its numerous intrigues at the oil-rich Middle East, for the turbulent revolutionary events in that area have led to the establishment of progressive regimes in some Arab countries, whose national sovereignty has been growing stronger from year to year, and this has placed a powerful barrier in the imperialists' way. Hence the imperialist attempts to topple the progressive regimes in Egypt, Syria and other Arab states. The aggressive war launched by Israel's extremist rulers with US imperialist assistance has inflicted serious damage on the Arab states, but has failed to achieve its goal of giving imperialism a stronger foothold in the Middle East. On the contrary, the Arab World has stood fast and has strengthened its armed forces. The Arabs realised that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries had sided with them without reservations, while most of the Western capitalist countries backed the aggressor. The whole of progressive mankind has come out in resolute protest against Israel's outrageous moves, its occupation of a big piece of Arab territory, and the terrorist regime it has imposed on the local Arab population.

On November 22, 1967, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution providing for the withdrawal of Israel's troops from the occupied territories and for a just solution of the Palestinian refugee question. That resolution, however, has yet to be carried out because of the stand taken by Israel's Zionist ruling circles supported by the US Government. The Israeli aggressors continue to ignore the demands of world opinion.

Israel stands exposed as the imperialist shock-force in the Middle East, so that US and NATO propaganda can do nothing to present the aggressor as a victim of injustice, and Zionism as a movement championing the interests of all the Jews.

The USSR and other socialist countries have resolutely supported the Arab peoples' just struggle and given them all-round assistance. This purpose is also served by the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation signed by the Soviet Union with Iraq in 1972 (and was served by a similar treaty between the USSR and Egypt signed in 1971).

In October 1973, the smouldering Middle East conflict broke out in renewed fighting on an unprecedented scale. L. I. Brezhnev told the World Congress of Peace Forces, held in Moscow from October 25 to 31, 1973, "What are the root causes of the recurrent armed conflicts in that area, the present war in particular? The answer, we think, is obvious: it is Israel's aggression and seizure of the Arab lands, Tel Aviv's stubborn refusal to respect the Arab peoples' legitimate rights, and the support rendered to its aggressive policy by the forces of the capitalist world that seek to hamper the free and independent development of the progressive Arab states."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have forcefully denounced Israel's expansionist policy and resolutely come out for its immediate and scrupulous compliance with the appropriate Security Council decisions, for wiping out the consequences of its aggression and establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Asian, African and Latin American countries and progressive forces the world over have also denounced Tel Aviv's aggressive, adventurist line.

The World Congress of Peace Forces came out resolutely and unanimously in support of the Arab peoples' just struggle against the Israeli invaders and their imperialist patrons.

Over the past five years, the Soviet Union has come to a good understanding with Syria, Iraq, Algeria, South Yemen, Libya and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. In the Central Committee's Report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU, L. I. Brezhnev said: "All these years, the Soviet Union has consistently supported the Arab peoples' struggle to eliminate the consequences of the Israeli aggression. Our country helped—and effectively, as the October 1973 has showed—to build up the military potential of the countries

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, October 27, 1973.



opposing the aggressor, that is, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. We supported the Arab political struggle both within the United Nations and outside it.

"There is no war in the Middle East at present. But neither is there peace, let alone tranquility. And who would venture to guarantee that hostilities do not erupt anew? This danger will persist as long as Israeli armies remain in the occupied territories. It will persist as long as the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their land are deprived of their legitimate rights and live in appalling conditions, and as long as the Arab people of Palestine are denied the possibility to create their national state. For Middle East peace to be lasting, the security of all the states of the region, their right to independent existence and development, must also be guaranteed."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union's principled stand on this question was also set out in two government statements on January 10 and April 29, 1976.

The Soviet Union has been urging a withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab territories and satisfaction of the legitimate national demands of the Arab people of Palestine, including their inalienable right to a national state of their own, and wants to see all the Middle East states provided with international guarantees of security. The USSR maintains that to achieve a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, the Geneva Peace Conference should resume its work with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

In their efforts to strengthen the Leninist principles of the Soviet Union's foreign policy and on the basis of a Leninist approach to the major social and political problems, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government have followed a consistent line for the support of all the forces of social progress and anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab countries, a line which is based on sound principles and has been repeatedly reaffirmed by CPSU Congresses and international meetings of Communist and Workers' parties. The visit to Iraq and Syria in late May and early June 1976 by A. N. Kosygin,

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...*, XXVth Congress of the CPSU, pp. 17-18.

member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, showed this very well. The communiques on the visit emphasised the Soviet Union's undeviating line of support for the progressive socio-economic transformations going on in the Arab countries, of strengthening the Arab anti-imperialist unity, eliminating the consequences of the Israeli aggression, ensuring the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab territories, and spiking the imperialist manoeuvres aimed to undermine the progressive regimes and split the Arab patriotic forces. In a speech on Baghdad television on June 1, 1976, A. N. Kosygin said: "The Arabs, like all the other peoples of the world, can and most certainly will be full masters of their own future.... We are convinced that the correct way towards this goal lies through a comprehensive political settlement of the Middle East conflict.... We are working for a settlement which would enable the Middle East peoples to live in peace and prosperity."

Every Arab country that has won independence as a result of a national liberation revolution has taken some steps to limit the activities of foreign capital or do away with these altogether. Syria, the first of all the advanced Arab countries to have won its independence, was also the first to complete that process. Egypt followed suit: in 1957, having nationalised the Suez Canal and rebuffed the tripartite aggression, it took steps to turn nearly all foreign property into state-owned (Egyptian) property.

The July 1964 decrees in Iraq sharply restricted the sphere of foreign capital investment in the Tigris and Euphrates valley, introducing state control over the banks and large-scale industry (except the oil industry). In 1972-1973, the state also nationalised the Iraq Petroleum Co.

Since 1963, a similar process has been going on in Algeria, where Western capital is being eased out, gradually and stage by stage, from farming and small-scale industry (1963-1964), foreign trade (1963-1965), mining and insurance (1966), banking (1967), transportation and marketing of fuel (1967-1968), various branches of large- and medium-scale industry (1968), and the extraction of oil and gas (1971). By now, foreign capital in Algeria has lost its



sway in industry and the credit and financial system.

In 1974, the last few positions held by big foreign companies (mainly in the automobile, chemical, textile and food industries) were eliminated in the country. Now, only foreign companies with a controlling interest held by the government are allowed to operate in Algeria.

Some other Arab countries, like the Yemen Arab Republic, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and Tunisia, have also taken measures to relax the grip of foreign capital and strengthen their economic independence. These measures differ in tenor and impact, but are all meant to attain as much economic independence as the concrete conditions in each country will allow. The Arab peoples know that otherwise their political independence would be fragile and their sovereignty largely nominal.

Having won their independence and carried out a policy of economic liberation, the Arab countries, particularly those where power rests with progressively-oriented regimes, have come up against the need not only to fight imperialism, but also to take a stand against the feudals, its agents inside the country. There is no doubt that the agrarian reforms in Iraq (1958) and Syria (1963) were aimed against the feudals, stemming from a desire on the part of the national governments to free the feudalism-fettered productive forces of the countryside and also to undermine the feudals' political basis, a source of reaction.

But in countries like Syria and Iraq it is impossible to strike out against the feudals without affecting the national bourgeoisie, which is closely connected with the latter. The bourgeoisie has a strong foothold in the countryside and obstructs agrarian reforms. Its selfish interests also prevent it from assisting in any large-scale national economic construction, which is expensive and where it takes a long time to recoup the original outlays. Meanwhile, the progressive, patriotic regimes regard such construction as one of their major tasks, which also involves the need to curb the private capitalist anarchy of production and a take-over by the state of the key positions in the economy. This gives particular urgency to Lenin's characteristic of the changing social relations of production under capitalism, when "it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production ... that private economic and private property

relations constitute a shell ... which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed ... but which will inevitably be removed".<sup>1</sup>

In view of all these factors, the governments of the more advanced Arab countries are obliged, sooner or later, to spearhead their social policy against the national bourgeoisie and capitalism in general. The July 1964 acts in Iraq, the January 1965 nationalisation in Syria, and the above-mentioned measures taken by the Algerian Government in 1963-1968, have undermined the foundations of private enterprise and raised serious barriers in the way of capitalist development. The state in these countries now controls 70-80 per cent of industrial production, and a big share of banking and foreign trade, and in Algeria it also has solid positions in agriculture.

Since the 1950s, the word "socialism" has been a part of the Arab leaders' political vocabulary, and of the slogans and even the names of the major Arab political organisations. In view of the Arabs' growing urge for socialism, parties like the Arab Socialist Revival Party (Baath) in Syria, Iraq and Jordan (and also in some other Arab countries where the party has groups of followers and advocates of Arab unity), the National Liberation Front in Algeria and the National Front in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen have written into their programmes the demand for a democratic agrarian reform, nationalisation of the large-scale means of production and an end to man's exploitation of man. The advanced Arab countries have already begun putting these slogans into effect: having rejected capitalism as an unjust social system incapable of solving the Arabs' urgent problems, they have opted for a socialist orientation. Gradually and stage by stage, they have worked to socialise the means of production, deprive the exploiting classes—the feudals and the bourgeoisie—of their economic and political power, introduce the rudiments of planning in the state sector, and involve the working people in economic administration and profit-sharing (like the workers' and peasants' self-management sector in Algeria, or the working people's representatives on the boards of enterprises and co-operatives in Syria).

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 303.



The support being given by the Communist parties of the socialist and advanced capitalist countries to the Arabs' urge for freedom has naturally helped to make socialist ideas more attractive for all Arab patriots. But objective factors are, of course, decisive: the actual alignment of the socio-political forces and (something Lenin had predicted) the inevitable development of the anti-imperialism of the national liberation movement into anti-capitalism. Moreover, the present-day realities of the Arab countries, particularly the frequent instances of unity of action between revolutionary patriots and Marxist-Leninists on an international or even national scale, bear out Lenin's well-known idea about the blending of proletarian and national liberation movements into one revolutionary stream.

Of course, many in the Arab countries still oppose socialism, and much remains to be done to get the broad masses of Arabs to accept socialist ideas. In some Arab countries, there is a hard and frequently fierce struggle to maintain or consolidate the socialist orientation. Still, the shoots of socialism have been fairly evident since the mid-1960s in the economy and politics of the leading Arab states and also in the Arabs' spiritual life.

One evidence of the authority commanded by scientific socialist ideas in the Arab World is the great interest among the socially active sections of the population in these countries, notably, the intelligentsia, in the works of Lenin, especially on the national and colonial question, the problems of political economy and the theoretical aspects of the transition from capitalism to socialism in a backward and multisectoral economy.

Lenin's famous works, but recently known only to Communists in the Arab countries, are now being widely translated into Arabic, and are freely circulated and studied. More and more Arabs are coming to know Lenin's name and his ideas, and this enhances the attractive power of socialism. This is a fact which the leading political parties in the Arab countries must reckon with. Some of them, like Algeria's National Liberation Front and Syria's Arab Socialist Revival Party, have openly recognised, since the early 1960s, the outstanding contribution made by Lenin and Marxism-Leninism as a whole to the cause of Arab

liberation. References to Lenin's propositions and statements can now be found not only in the communist but also in the revolutionary patriotic press in the Arab countries.

In some instance, the press of the leading Arab countries, like Egypt, Algeria and Syria, has published Lenin's writings, in full or slightly abridged, echoing present-day problems in these countries, or helping, in the view of their leaders, to tackle various complicated issues in national life. Lutfi el-Kholi, a prominent public and political leader in Egypt, says that "socialism is a force that has been growing in every corner of the world.... Moreover, socialist scientific theory has ceased to be the theory of the proletariat alone. This theory has become the lodestar for broad popular forces, especially in countries involved in the national liberation struggle."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's theoretical and practical work has had and continues to have a powerful influence not only on the working-class and communist movement in the Arab countries, but also on the whole national liberation revolution in the Arab World.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Great October Socialist Revolution and the National Liberation Movement*, p. 284.



## CONCLUSION

As the national liberation movement unfolds across the world, it provides vivid and convincing proof of the great truth and viability of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the national and colonial question, and Lenin's strategy and tactics for national liberation revolutions. A study of the eventful, complicated and often contradictory record of these revolutions helps to bring out the major internal and international prerequisites and patterns of the Eastern peoples' anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, national democratic revolution.

The oppressed peoples' victorious liberation struggle became possible only after the establishment of the socialist community. Before the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, they usually fought on their own, were isolated from the world anti-imperialist movement, and could do nothing against the much stronger imperialist forces. With the emergence of the world's first socialist power, there was a qualitative change in the international background to the development of the world revolutionary, notably, national liberation movement. The Soviet socialist country was the first to enter upon the construction of a new society, shouldering the main burden in the fight against imperialism and colonialism and rendering internationalist assistance to the other contingents of the world revolutionary



and national liberation movement. Ever since its establishment, it has always given noble and consistent support to that movement. L. I. Brezhnev has said: "We see the role and purpose of our policy in the international arena in always siding with those who fight against imperialism, against all forms of oppression and exploitation, for freedom and human dignity, for democracy and socialism."<sup>1</sup>

Of vast historic importance for the peoples of the East was the emergence of the world socialist community which is rendering them political, diplomatic, economic and military support and is taking up the various internationalist functions in the matter of ensuring the best conditions for broader and deeper national liberation revolutions. In their persistent struggle against the neo-colonialist policy of exporting counter-revolution, the newly-independent countries have relied on effective support from the socialist states. The developing states' growing economic, scientific and technical co-operation with the world socialist system has also done a great deal to promote their progress, opening up much wider prospects for socio-economic and cultural change in the interests of the masses.

The law discovered by Lenin—that of uneven economic and political development under capitalism—has largely determined the uneven development of the national liberation, revolutionary movement in the East. In some countries, the national liberation revolution has naturally and logically developed into a socialist-type revolution, while in other countries the revolutionary process has, for the time being, somewhat slowed down, with the top national bourgeoisie in alliance with other exploiting groups seeking to pressure their countries into building up a capitalist basis and a bourgeois political superstructure. Many young states have opted for a socialist orientation, but many others still have multisectoral economies with prevailing feudal-patriarchal or other forms of precapitalist social relations. The marked distinctions in the pace and methods of revolution in the Third World are chiefly due to the different degree of maturity of the objective and subjective prerequisites for social transformation of multisectoral

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, December 22, 1972.

societies, the different alignment of class and political forces, and varying levels of political maturity and national and political awareness among the masses.

In the Central Committee's Report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU, L. I. Brezhnev said: "...This is an epoch of radical social change. Socialism's positions are expanding and growing stronger. The victories of the national liberation movement are opening up new horizons for countries that have won independence. The class struggle of the working people against monopoly oppression, against the exploiting order, is gaining in intensity. The scale of the revolutionary-democratic, anti-imperialist movement is steadily growing. Taken as a whole, this signifies development of the world revolutionary process."<sup>1</sup> Another point to note is that the present-day revolutionary process, which has been drawing in ever more new generations, social sections, parties and organisations, has been unfolding against the background of international detente, when the latter has become the predominant tendency. Lenin's prediction that the liberation struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples was bound to play an ever more important role in the world revolutionary process is coming true.

As phenomena of the new historical epoch, the epoch of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism, present-day national liberation revolutions are essentially different in scale, motive forces, and political and social purposes from the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the past, being of a new and more progressive type of revolution.

The latest stage in the national liberation revolutions, involving a more intensive struggle for social emancipation, is marked by some important changes in the balance of social class forces. In the period of national struggle for state sovereignty within the framework of anti-imperialist unity fronts, the interests of different classes and social sections largely coincided, whereas today class contradictions have steadily aggravated, serving to stratify and further polarise the social forces. Although national motives (like struggle against neo-colonialism and aggression) are still extant,

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee... XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, p. 32.



blending in with socio-class aspirations, the latter have been gaining the upper hand, as mirrored in political and ideological struggle.

Tentatively speaking, the struggle around the social aspect of the national liberation revolution bearing on the problem of its transition to a qualitatively new stage has in the main unfolded between the national bourgeois, liberal petty-bourgeois, revolutionary-democratic and proletarian trends backed by definite classes and social groups.

The major qualitative changes in the liberated countries' socio-economic development resulting from their effort to lay the groundwork for economic independence are going hand in hand with radical, fundamental changes in their social class structure. This process is accelerated both by objective factors (more rapid industrial development, in the first place) and subjective factors connected with the masses' steadily growing social awareness.

The present-day transitional societies in the developing countries are going through a turbulent process of social stratification. But the social class processes going on in these countries are still steeped in regional and national specifics and will take a long while to be completed. This sometimes makes it impossible to draw a clear distinction between different classes, social groups and sections. Many internal and external factors, like the pervasive survivals of traditional pre-capitalist society, tend to give transitional social structures an even more mottled complexion.

In contrast to developed capitalist societies, where antagonistic classes (especially the proletariat and the bourgeoisie) have been taking on an ever more definite outline, the class structure in the multisectoral countries is still a patchwork of unfledged social classes and groups, with indistinct class barriers between them (as, say, between petty property holders and semi-proletarians), numerous transitional groups and sections (like mass lumpenhood) and non-class (notably, traditional) institutions superimposed on social class relations.

Since the social structure of transitional society is so checkered and parcelled, and there is very little socio-ideological and politico-organisational consolidation, virtually none of the individual classes of transitional society is capable, at the present stage at any rate, of independently

giving a lead to a nation-wide movement for social progress. Hence the need for a Marxist analysis of the specifics, of the distinctive features of social class stratification in Asia and Africa.

While making allowance for these specific features, one should also analyse the new elements arising in the course of the masses' growing struggle against exploitation in most of the liberated countries. Over the past few years, this struggle has generated some fundamentally new phenomena connected with the regrouping of social class forces in the national liberation movement areas and characterising the general regularities of historical development. Among these are:

First, the rapid growth of local bourgeois groupings; the steady merging of their basic core with the bureaucracy and the traditional pre-capitalist categories of exploiters; and the consequent emergence of a specific type of exploiter who extracts his surplus-value (and surplus-product) with the use of both modern (capitalist) and traditional (precapitalist), both primary and secondary forms of exploitation.

Second, the steady growth of the wage-labour force (notably, the proletariat and its industrial core) both in absolute and relative, qualitative and quantitative terms; the growing role of the urban working class, the agricultural proletariat, and the working peasantry as the chief producers of material wealth in social reproduction, the further growth in the working class' political and ideological maturity, consciousness, political consolidation and organisation as it gradually develops into the leading force of the national liberation movement.

Third, the growing division of the middle social sections of town and country (the small producer property-holders, the intelligentsia, the office employees, the officers, the students, and so on) into conservative pro-bourgeois and national progressive strands of the socio-political movements.

The balance of social class forces, particularly, the nature of the class coalition in power, determines the type of the socio-economic and political transformations in the course of national liberation revolutions, their depth and extent. From this point of view, the developing countries may be tentatively classed under several heads.



Group One could include countries with theocratic monarchist regimes and considerable survivals of patriarchal and feudal relations. Progressive political and ideological processes in these countries usually have to make their way against heavy social and political odds, and government policy-making documents, while proclaiming some progressive goals, are on the whole conservative. Consequently, the new, social stage of the national liberation revolutions in these countries is still a long way off.

Group Two could include countries of "white revolution" or "revolution from above", where the monarchist or bourgeois and landowner elite has deliberately set out to break up the archaic structures and pave the way for more or less rapid capitalist development (Iran, the Philippines, and eventually, possibly, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia).

The socio-political situation in these countries is of a dual nature. On the one hand, the tendencies that prevail here at present are obviously propelling these countries towards rapid modernisation of social and economic structures on capitalist lines. But, on the other hand, these countries may well be the scene of dramatic changes, which could markedly influence their general social orientation.

Group Three could include states with relatively developed capitalism and a well-shaped proletariat (like India, Sri Lanka and Singapore). The socio-economic and political changes in these countries do not go beyond the framework of capitalist relations, but nevertheless introduce some progressive changes into their economic and political life. As the class struggle in these countries aggravates, it may create the conditions for a balance of political forces which could allow transition to structural socio-economic transformations, and these are a sign of transition from national liberation revolution to social revolution.

Finally, Group Four could include socialism-oriented states, where the revolutionary-democratic forces have come to power in the course of class struggle. Despite some vacillations and inconsistencies, the revolutionary-democratic regimes have been carrying out structural socio-economic and political transformations, which open up the way to creating the necessary prerequisites for an eventual transition to socialist relations of production.

Under the present conditions in the national liberation

zone, *national liberation revolution could develop into socialist revolution* via national-democratic revolution. In practice, this takes the form of non-capitalist development and a policy of socialist orientation. At the same time, national-democratic revolution, whose mission, in the final count, is to pave the way for a subsequent transition to socialism, is still part and parcel of the national liberation revolution, its highest stage. Given a definite socio-economic and political setting, it could precede a revolutionary transition to socialism. In view of the general socio-economic backwardness and the weakness of the proletariat and political organisations in most Asian and African countries, national-democratic revolution may be expected to take a fairly long time.

The socio-economic and political processes going on in the developing countries of Asia and Africa involve a growth of national and class self-consciousness. In these conditions, paramount importance attaches to the problem of striking the right balance between the policy of strengthening the internationalist unity of all the anti-imperialist forces and that of strengthening national independence and state sovereignty, and also to the fight against any attempts by the imperialists and Right-wing reactionaries to use the growing national self-consciousness to spread ideas of religious and national exclusiveness for anti-communist and anti-national purposes.

The recent evolution of revolutionary-democratic ideology shows that the ideological climate in Asia and Africa is beginning to favour the development of progressive social thinking on the lines of scientific socialism, and a gradual movement away from nationalist narrow-mindedness and anti-communist relapses. The revolutionary democrats' co-operation with the international communist movement is to play a major role in the drive to overcome the various eclectic schemes and mould a scientific socialist outlook. Leninism, the most influential ideology of the 20th century and an international expression of the fight between the forces of progress and reaction, has a truly giant role to play in the revolutionary transformation of the world. The socialist countries' strengthening co-operation with the liberated countries, primarily those which have opted for fundamental socio-economic transformations, has done a great deal to promote this process.



The CPSU has followed a consistent and vigorous policy of support for the national liberation movement. L. I. Brezhnev told the 25th Congress of the CPSU: "Our Party supports and will continue to support peoples fighting for their freedom. In so doing, the Soviet Union does not look for advantages, does not hunt for concessions, does not seek political domination, and is not after military bases. We act as we are bid by our revolutionary conscience, our communist convictions."<sup>1</sup>

The peoples of the East are facing a historical choice: whether to follow the capitalist road and doom the masses to hunger and privation, or to take the road leading to social justice. Life itself has been providing daily proof of the need to choose the socialist orientation, which means complete national liberation and social emancipation for millions of men. Such are the invincible will of the people and the irreversible laws of world history, discovered by the founders of scientific socialism and confirmed by present-day revolutionary practice.

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee...*, XXVth Congress of the CPSU, p. 16.



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