

*Life Struggle and
Teachings of*
MAO TSE-TUNG

Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist)

Life Struggle and Teachings of Mao Tse-tung

First Print - December 1994

2nd Print - January, 2025

Published by : Amitava Chatterjee
Central Committee
Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist)
48 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata 700013
Phone : 2265-3234, 2249-1828

Printed at : Ganadabi Printers and Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
52B Indian Mirror Street, Kolkata 700013

Price : Rs. 30/-

Publisher's Note

In 1994 the birth centenary year of Great Mao Tse-Tung our central committee published a book as a tribute to the great leader of the world proletariat. Since then this book has been sold in numbers among the people and got exhausted.

Now considering the interest and demand for this book we are going to reprint it. Hope the book will receive positive response from the readers at large.

January, 2025
48 Lenin Sarani
Kolkata 700 013

Thanking you,
Amitava Chatterjee
Member, Central Committee
SUCI (Communist)

Life Struggle and Teachings of Mao Tse-tung

(1)

On the occasion of the birth centenary of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, before we start recalling the invaluable teachings of this great proletarian leader, we should take into cognizance one important point. Unwarranted and undesirable though, it is a stark reality, we must admit, that the best and the noblest sons of mankind, much as they enjoyed respect and reverence, they faced the saddest ordeals of denigration, persecution or even torture at the hands of the rulers of all countries at all times. Socrates was compelled to take hemlock, Bruno was burnt alive, Galileo had to face Inquisition. Such instances run galore. Even when the rulers could not but accord recognition to their genius at a subsequent period, they tried always and in all countries, without exception perhaps, to keep people in the dark about the real history of the great lives dedicated to the quest of truth.

That is why images of the greatest of the geniuses of the past, the great humanist thinkers, are now receding into oblivion in the whole of the modern capitalist world. The fate of the great souls of the past could not however be otherwise in societies built on class division and exploitation.

Engels once said:

“Marx was the most hated man of his time”.

Here again we should read the real meaning of the words. It was quite natural that this noble philosophy of Marxism, propounded by Marx and Engels, which has shown for the first time the correct path of all-round emancipation for the society, would incur worst wrath and attack from all those who stand

to defend the rule of capital. The current capitalist slander against Marxism stands as one shameless example of the moribund, morbid culture and sense of indecency of capitalism. Mao Tse-tung, too, in his birth centenary, has no respite from the slanders of these capitalist vermins.

A more cunning device is, of course, to attack Marxism and undermine it while chanting its vocabulary. In fact, this trend of revisionism has emerged in history side by side with the emergence of Marxism. The whole gamut of the modern revisionists, lined up from Khrushchev to Gorbachev, has followed the same trend. It is also in the same continuity that the modern revisionists of present China, the Teng Hsiao-ping leadership, are carrying on unrelenting assaults on Mao Tse-tung. The veiled revisionists and the social democratic parties, going by their 'Marxist' banners elsewhere and in our country, have joined the chorus enthusiastically in the name of criticizing Mao's so-called left deviation. Naturally, in the resulting smokescreen from these varied propaganda against as well as 'in favour of' Marxism, the broader masses of people are worse confounded as to the essence of Marxism. This confusion comes as an added blessing to capitalism; their orchestrated hate-campaign, slander and shameful falsehood keep on going.

It is the communists themselves who are to take on the task of unveiling the truth and refurbishing the image by conducting the necessary philosophical-ideological struggle with all power at their command, a struggle that has long been neglected. Then, and only then, the people will be able to judge the truth. Anybody with a rational bent of mind will then have little difficulty to realize that the proletarian revolutions that came off in a surge in one country after another, could not have materialized merely as 'chance coincidence of history', had not a living social current, a living social process been at work. In each such case, only the communists could lead the revolution to victory, because it was they who could visualize and contemplate the course that the

social process was to take. At the same time, in course of this social process itself, appeared Marx and all the later great Marxist thinkers from the womb of human history. Comrade Mao, too, emerged in the same process.

Man is Product of a Process

Mao often used to remind a meaningful proverb of China: ‘The Hunanese often say, “Straw sandals have no pattern - they shape themselves in the making”.’ (Speech at a Supreme State Conference, quoted in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, pp.91-95 - Stewart R. Schram.) With these simple words he wanted to indicate that in the ultimate analysis it was the social movement and social process which went into the making of an individual whether we know it or not, or realize it or not. That is why, truly firm and commendable characters are increasingly rarer to find in societies unable to sustain lofty ideologies. Healthy culture, ethics and morals are a far cry in them. Mao would quote the proverb to convey this truth in simple words. In this way, he could convey even high and complex revolutionary thoughts right to the illiterate peasants. They, in turn, could realize his messages and be imbued to join the struggle. This is a quality, an ability that everybody does not have. The so-called Marxists, equipped with the formal knowledge of Marxism, could never show this worth in any country at any time. Only the real Marxists could rise to this height through concrete application of the general truths and tenets of Marxism in the concrete situation of their respective countries and in the background of the prevailing world situation. Only the true communists could continuously develop and enrich the Marxian science and its methodology. The science of Marxism is universal, but its realization and application in each particular situation is concrete and specific. Only the genuine communists of different countries could trace out the concrete trends of development of traditions, values and culture of their respective soil. In course of that they could

grasp the highest and loftiest essence of this development, exhausting it and marking a brake with it, acquire and assimilate the higher communist ideology and values in their own life and character. Only thus could they build unwaveringly the communist movements in their countries. Lenin had pointed out:

“ We do not by any means regard Marx’s theory as something final and inviolable; we are convinced that it has only laid the cornerstones of science which socialists must advance in all directions if they do not want to be behind times. We hold that an independent elaboration of Marx’s theory provides only general guiding principles which are applied in particular differently to Britain than to France, differently to France than to Germany, differently to Germany than to Russia.” (*Collected Works, Vol. IV ; pp. 191-92*)

Mao himself did make the analysis :

“Being Marxists, Communists are internationalists, but we can put Marxism into practice only when it is integrated with the specific characteristics of our country and it acquires a definite national form. The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies precisely in its integration with the concrete revolutionary practice of all countries.... For the Chinese Communists who are part of the great Chinese nation, flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood, any talk about Marxism in isolation of China’s characteristics is merely Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in the vacuum. Hence to apply Marxism concretely in China so that its every manifestation has an indubitably Chinese character.” (*Selected Readings rom the Works of Mao Tse-tung, 1971 ed., p. 156*).

So Mao asked the leaders and cadres of his party to speak in :

“the fresh, lively Chinese style and spirit which the common people of China love.” (*Ibid*)

We hear echoes of the same teachings, though in a different context, in the words of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the

most beloved, the founder leader of our party, SUCI:

“We are failing to maintain the continuity with the high cultural standard attained during the days of freedom movement. Lofty phrases we are culling from the outside world, no doubt, but we have lost the link with the high cultural tune once developed on our own soil. ... How then could we be the vanguard of revolution today ?” (*An Evaluation of Saratchandra, Shibdas Ghosh, pp. 46-47*)

Early Life

Since his childhood Mao Tse-tung was attracted to the lessons which needed to be learnt from the age-old traditions of China. It was on account of this that he developed an easy command of classical literature, philosophy and history of China. He had another notable feature in his character which he developed in his teens. It was the courage to stand against injustice with unflinching determination and firmness. No amount of scolding or beating or, for that matter, any coercion could make him waver from what he would have realized as truth. On the other hand, if he had found his own understanding proved wrong or untrue, he did not hesitate in the least to discard that and to accept the new truthful understanding to resume his struggle on its basis. It meant, never did he allow his realization of truth to be marred and swamped by ego and self-complacence. Like all other great Marxist teachers, he, too, carried on this struggle consciously and ceaselessly all through life. It was thus that in 1941, when he was the most revered revolutionary leader in China, he could frankly submit:

“Today I still feel keenly the necessity for thorough research into Chinese and world affairs ; this is related to the scantiness of my own knowledge of Chinese and world affairs It is my wish to go on being a pupil, learning from the masses, together with all other Party comrades.” (*SR : Mao, p. 197*)

In almost every discussion and article he made and wrote,

Mao quoted from the philosophers of ancient China or from its classical literature and folklores, as well as using frequently Chinese proverbs and analogies. All these speak for how deeply he had studied and comprehended the social psyche and history of China. On the other hand, how vast was his knowledge of history, politics, philosophy and economics of the world, becomes apparent from the accounts of reputed journalists and historians. One such is the following excerpt from Edgar Snow, the well-known American journalist. In 1936, the year after Mao had become the Chairman of the CPC, Snow had an interview with him. The journalist wrote on his experience,

“I found him surprisingly well informed on current world politics. ... Mao was exceptionally well read in world history. ...Mao had read a number of books about India and had some definite opinions on that country ... Mao was an ardent student of philosophy ... He had not confined his reading to Marxist philosophers, but also knew something of the ancient Greeks, of Spinoza, Kant, Goethe, Hegel, Rousseau and others.” (*Red Star over China* : pp. 110-111)

Without however stopping at this, Mao carried on his life long pursuit of and struggle for knowledge. He did not wish to be a ‘pedant’, he desired to acquire an all-embracing knowledge and ability to guide revolutionary struggles in China. His quest for knowledge had only one purpose behind it: to bring about total liberation of the colonially subjugated, backward and crisis-ridden China. The unbearable pains and sorrows of the peasants’ lives amidst whom he lived in his teens and youth, about which he heard from his neighbours, workmates and others - all these struck deep in Mao’s heart to stir him into pondering over them. He was only thirteen, when a sort of transformation was occurring in his thoughts, a social consciousness was blooming. In Mao’s own words :

“It occurred to me one day that there was one thing peculiar about such stories, and that was the absence

of peasants who tilled the land. All the characters were warriors, officials or scholars; there was never a peasant hero. I wondered about this for two years, then I analyzed the content of the stories. I found that they all glorified men of arms, rulers of the people, who did not have to work the land, because they owned and controlled it and evidently made the peasants work it for them.” (*Ibid.* p. 157)

At the same time Mao was deeply influenced by the ideas of a popular Chinese reformist author that absence of scientific tools and instruments and industrial civilization was the cause of utter economic backwardness and dependence of China. This generated in Mao an urge to know about the modern western civilization, and to satisfy that urge he fled from his home to carry on his studies. Subsequently and onwards, the vortex of life with series of events, with many memorable experiences, gradually steeled Mao with maturity, armed him with the then prevailing nationalist thoughts and drew him into active social-political life. He joined the nationalist armed force in the 1911 nationalist revolutionary uprising led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the bold nationalist leader of China. After this revolution failed, Mao returned to his studies.

Stereotyped education system, however, did not suit him. He evolved his own system of learning that he himself termed self-education; he studied in the Hunan Provincial library where he used to get in right when the library opened, to come out last after it had been closed for the day - two handful of rice served for his lunch at noon. His interest ran from science to philosophy, from logic to law, from his own country to others - their history and geography. In course of this Mao grew up a young man of twenties, imbued with humanist and nationalist ideology; but as he himself subsequently realized and commented,

“... I was then an idealist...” (*Ibid.* p. 171)

The struggle went on; Mao grew more and more

conscious and active in nationalist politics; at the age of twentytwo, he started writing in a progressive journal *New Youth* ; he then set out in building students' organization and thus founded Hsin-Min Hsueh-Hui (New People's Study Society) that eventually became the most powerful of its kind in south China. Many communist leaders of future started their life in it; many of its cadres died martyr's death in the 1927 massacre of communists. Mao and his society organized anti-militarist movements against local warlords ; they fought for democratic rights such as equality of men and women, representative government and such others. They even organized a rally with red flags and banners on the occasion of the anniversary of November Revolution in the year 1920. From that time on, we may quote Mao here :

“I became more and more convinced that only mass political power, secured through mass action, could guarantee the realization of dynamic reforms.

“In the winter of 1920, I organized workers politically for the first time, and began to be guided in this by the influence of Marxist theory and the history of the Russian revolution. ...

“Three books especially deeply curved my mind, and built up in me a faith in Marxism, from which, once I had accepted it as the correct interpretation of history, I did not afterwards waver. These books were the *Communist Manifesto*, translated by *Ch'en Wang-tao* and the first Marxist book ever published in Chinese : *Class Struggle* by Kautsky and *A History of Socialism* by Kirkup.” (*Ibid*, pp. 179-81)

The Communist Party of China was not yet formed. As Mao himself submitted, his knowledge of Marxist literature had not yet grown much. But deep was his urge for the liberation of his society from the yoke of exploitation which led to the growth of his unflinching faith in the nobility and invincibility of Marxism, largely on the strength of the experiences of his struggles that spanned over the period of only twentyseven

years.

In turn, this rare instance of realization indicates the boldness and steadfastness in Mao's character. In itself, it speaks of the communist values. A genuine communist may be known by his relentless, uncompromising struggles to identify himself with the interest of the emancipation of the proletarian class through bringing about a revolutionary transformation of his own self, in all its entirety --- not only in thoughts but also in his personal emotions, feelings and sentiments. To be worth the name of a communist, anybody and everybody must keep this unceasing revolutionary struggle alive. Till death he has to pass through the test of keeping his struggling spirit living and unwavering against all odds and adversities in the same manner as did Comrade Mao Tse-tung. If vigour and initiative are sustained at every moment in the struggle, following correct path, revolutionary movement and revolutionary cadres do not fail to advance even under completely adverse circumstances. And the more this truth grows clearer to a revolutionary, the more he stands sure not to lose his mental peace, self-confidence and initiative, not even in the face of temporary defeats suffered by revolution at the hands of reaction. In this lies the significance of Mao's famous words :

“To swim against the current is a trait of the revolutionary character.”

Consciousness and Being

Undeniably, these mental qualities of Mao did not grow spontaneously and suddenly. In fact, no one is born with these traits as gifts of genius or talent. Many learned people, too, fail to understand that even a genius arises with a social cause behind him. In the words of Marx :

“It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being , but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.” *(Preface to Contribution to the Critique of Political*

Consciousness, 1859)

These words demand serious consideration. We should try to grasp the significance of this teaching to help ourselves in our struggle to free man not only from the influences of spiritualism, authoritarianism or prophet worshipping, but also from the clutches of narrow individualist thought-processes prevalent in the present decadent, morbid capitalist society. This gets imperative if we wish to make clear the way for the unhindered development of the individual.

In this context, we may recall the words of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh:

“In the social environment in which a man is born, he, the individual, comes into constant contradiction. ... With what ideology and principle, guided by which outlook and how far competently he can conduct his life-struggle - on all these depend, with what characteristics a man will develop ultimately in his life.” (*Free translation from In Memory of Comrade Subodh Banerjee*)

It means that if, in the conflict between progress and reaction, an individual fails to identify and consciously follow the progressive social ideology of his time, he is sure to meet his own downfall too. The development or downfall of an individual thus hinges on whether or not he conducts a conscious struggle, basing himself on the correct ideology.

Development of Comrade Mao Tse-tung is also the result of such a struggle and that, too, an exemplary one. To know and understand it we should have before us a brief outline of the then Chinese society.

Social Condition

Mao was born in a China, which was, on the one hand, tormented by feudal exploitation, and, on the other, subjugated to more than one imperialist force since 1840. It was a semi-feudal, semi-colonial state. Cursed by religious fanaticism of the

Middle Age, superstition, illiteracy, diseases, epidemics, floods, famines, starvation and terrible poverty, China was known to the world as the 'sick man of Asia'. Democratic rights, equality of man and woman, elected and representative governments - all these concepts were simply inconceivable there. The only things familiar were heartless exploitation and cruel torture by feudal lords and their henchmen, and the deep sighs and helpless tears of the peasants. Even as late as in 1929, in one single "man-made" famine in just three provinces in north-west China at least three million people perished, and that too being the official figure. As half-dead, starving peasants moved to the nearby towns for begging, the police of the Chiang Kai-shek government drove them back, imprisoned them in thousands and molested and raped their wives, daughters and sisters. Millions of acres of cultivable land which the peasants left behind, were usurped by the landlords and government officials.

Whether there be a famine or not, not only the poor peasants, the middle peasants, too, were bankrupted to pay the annual tax. The system was queer. Peasants were to satisfy the authorities at all levels. In the past the emperor grabbed the first and the major share ; later he was replaced by the Central Government of Nanking under Chiang Kai-shek. Then came the provincial warlords, who were peculiar to China. Even though they were not included in the traditional nobility who ruled by generations, those warlords governed different provinces by sheer strength of their own armies. Next, taxes had to be paid to village landlords. In addition, the peasants had their heavy debts with the rich peasants and usurers. These debts were so burdensome that poor peasants had to sell out their household belongings, cattle, tilling instruments and even their dwelling cottages. It did not end there ; to pay off the debts, sometimes they even had to sell out their female inmates, and if that, too, did not suffice, they had to work as slaves. It is not difficult to realize why addiction to opium for the span of

this 'earthly life' and hosts of religious superstitions and aberrant rituals for the life after death could thrive among the peasantry of China. Such were the conditions in the pre-revolution China.

At times, when oppression crossed all limits of human endurance, unorganized starving masses of the peasantry would burst forth desperately in rebellion. The inevitable result was inhuman torture. Warlords and landlords tightened their grip further and made their rule more cruel after each single uprising. Warlords had their own regular armies, patronized by imperialists. Landlords and rich peasants had their 'Min T'uan' - formed of mercenary killers and branded anti-socials.

Notably, these all-powerful warlords did not have contradictions with imperialist forces. They had contradictions among themselves on the question of capturing and maintaining maximum territory under their respective rule. Mutual war was a regular affair. Besides, in addition to extending his own power and sphere of influence, each warlord tried to set up alliance with this or that imperialist force. Thus Chiang Kai-shek had alliance first with the Anglo-French and then with the American imperialism. Playing upon this complex alignment of classes the imperialist forces, in their turn, kept economic and social order in rural China under their 'indirect' control for over hundred years from 1840 to 1945.

Whenever anti-imperialist struggles made any headway in urban areas, the warlords provided the imperialists with their own armed forces. This took place time and again, in the 4th May mass upheaval in 1919 or in the massacre of communists in 1927 at Shanghai, Nanking, Canton or Changsha. Under such circumstances, it was impossible to develop and extend even the minimum democratic movement in China, leave aside the class struggle, without forming an alternative armed force and without organizing armed resistance. It was precisely so because in the pre-revolution China there was no inkling of a capitalist democratic government and social order and the

country was bogged down as a semi-colonial, semi-feudal state.

Histoical Background

We cannot comprehend the concrete situation prevailing in the then China without going through the unwritten or much forgotten chapters of the cruel exploitation of a weak China by the 'democratic,' 'civilized', imperialist forces for over a whole century. The British imperialists got into this land with the notorious Opium War in 1840. At that time they captured all the big ports and cities of the country. Still today Hongkong carries with it that disgraceful scar of the past. Czar's Russia followed the British in 1860. In 1862 came the French. In 1894 entered the Japanese aggressors. Then in 1899 America declared its 'Open Door Policy' - its claim for equal rights for all western powers to help China in its 'trade and economic development'! It merely meant that the emergent American imperialism demanded its lawful share of the great responsibility to 'civilize the uncivilized Chinese people'. Till then, that is, till 1899, the lion's share of the responsibility was borne largely by the Anglo-French imperialists, in the same manner in which the British imperialism, this time single-handedly, bore similar responsibility in India for two centuries together! Through diplomatic manoeuvring centring round this 'Open Door Policy' American imperialism finally entered China in 1899 as the strongest rival of the Anglo-French imperialists. What a commendable instance of equal rights in bourgeois democracy! In this process, modern industries, telegraphic and postal communication system, roadways and railways gradually developed in China since 1840, more so in the post-first world war period; side by side, there also grew worst ever despotism and corruption, vulgar culture and crime under the impact of the 'civilized' west. Rural artisans, craftsmen, poor peasants and agricultural labourers were converted into

cheap labourers to enhance the profit of the imperialists ; at the same time this also led to the birth of industrial workers in China. But imperialist intervention halted development of the industrial capitalist class in the country, that had started to grow in the womb of the feudal society centring round the mercantile capital accrued from the trade and commerce of small scale or cottage industry products. In this background of backward Chinese economy Mao referred to the national bourgeoisie of China as middle bourgeois in all his writings and speeches. On the other hand, he used the term 'big bourgeoisie' for the comprador or the parasitic capitalist class that had developed under the tutelage of imperialists as the agent of imperialist capital, i.e., as its collaborator and being totally dependent on it; at times, he even termed them as big comprador houses. By this 'big bourgeoisie', he never meant big industrialists or industrial monopolists.

Incidentally, in our country, different groups of the CPI(ML), in their bid to blindly follow Mao in the name of accepting him as an authority, have designated even the monopolists like Tata, Birla, Ambani, Goenka and others as comprador capitalists. Though not in precisely this form, the same confusion has been apparent repeatedly in political analyses of the CPI or the CPI(M) too. In fact, these parties have failed to provide a correct evaluation of the concrete situation in this country and have instead sought always to impose the analyses of situations in pre-revolution Russia or China on the Indian context.

Mao showed in clear terms that the comprador capitalist class of China was the most shameless agent of imperialism. The collusion or unholy alliance of foreign imperialists and their cohorts, namely the comprador capitalists, warlords, big landlords on the soil, were the mainstay or the foundation of the coexistence of imperialism and feudalism in China. To explain this alliance Mao himself had quoted from Stalin's analysis :

“... imperialism, with all its financial and military might, is the force in China that supports, inspires, fosters and reserves the feudal survivals, together with their entire bureaucratic-militarist superstructure.” (*Stalin, CW: Vol.9, p. 292*)

It meant, as capitalist production relation started to operate, albeit being introduced through imperialist exploitation, China no longer remained a totally feudal society. On the other hand, since the whole of China was never brought under the military-administrative control of any one single imperialist force and since its different parts were under different imperialist forces - along with co-existence of some parts under the control of native bourgeoisie - it would not be correct to designate China as a full-fledged colonial state. That is why Mao termed China correctly as a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society or state.

Class Analysis in China

Thus in China, there was a society torn apart by multitudes of contradictions. The class relationship of different class forces was terribly complex. Under such circumstances, to make the Chinese revolution successful it was all the more imperative to have a correct scientific analysis of the specific position of different classes and their precise role in the revolution. Mao Tse-tung provided this analysis for the first time in his article *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society* written in 1926-27. Subsequently, in 1939, further enriched with experience of struggles, Mao presented this fundamental analysis in a more concrete, precise and elaborate form in his article *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*. He showed in it:

“... since the targets of the revolution are mainly foreign imperialist rule and domestic feudalism, and since its tasks are to overthrow these two oppressors, which of the various classes and strata in Chinese society constitute the forces capable of fighting

them? This is the question of the motive forces of the Chinese revolution at the present stage. A clear understanding of this question is indispensable to a correct solution of the problem of the basic tactics of the Chinese revolution.”

Firstly,

“The landlord class forms the main social base for imperialist rule in China; it is a class which uses the feudal system to exploit and oppress the peasants.... Therefore, the landlords, as a class, are a target...”

Secondly,

"The comprador big bourgeoisie is a class which directly serves the capitalists of the imperialist countries and is nurtured by them ; countless ties link it closely with the feudal forces in the countryside. Therefore, it is a target of the Chinese revolution.”

Thirdly come Mao’s important observations :

“The national bourgeoisie is a class with a dual character. On the one hand, it is oppressed by imperialism and fettered by feudalism and consequently is in contradiction with both of them....

“... But on the other hand, it lacks the courage to oppose imperialism and feudalism thoroughly because it is economically and politically flabby and still has economic ties with imperialism and feudalism....

“It follows ... that, at certain times and to a certain extent, it can take part in the revolution against imperialism and the governments of bureaucrats and warlords and can become a revolutionary force, but that at other times there is the danger of its following the comprador big bourgeoisie and acting as its accomplice in counter-revolution. ... Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to have a prudent policy towards the national bourgeoisie.” (*SW*, Vol. II, pp. 319-321)

By virtue of this prudence the Chinese Communist Party with Comrade Mao as its Chairman could provide a correct

and able leadership in the national liberation movement, that is, the democratic revolution in China and could, in the process, forge ahead successfully to enter into the socialist social system. On the contrary, though the situation was much more favourable for the national independence struggle in India, the leadership of the movement was usurped by the national bourgeois class of this country, largely due to absence of a correct and genuine Communist party in India. Concomitantly, with independence there came into being a crisis-ridden capitalist social system on this soil.

Pointing out who were the enemies of the Chinese revolution and who the vacillating allies, Mao entered into a discussion of the forces on the side of the revolution. First among them was :

“... The petty bourgeoisie, other than the peasantry, consists of the vast numbers of intellectuals, small tradesmen, handicraftsmen and professional people.... these sections of the petty bourgeoisie constitute one of the motive forces of the revolution and are a reliable ally of the proletariat.”

Next, Mao tells about the peasantry :

"The peasantry constitutes approximately 80 per cent of China's total population and is the main force in her national economy today....

“First, the rich peasants. They form about 5 per cent of the rural population (or about 10 per cent together with the landlords) and constitute the rural bourgeoisie. ... But they generally engage in labour themselves and in this sense are part of the peasantry. ... Generally speaking, they might make some contribution to the anti-imperialist struggle of the peasant masses and stay neutral in the agrarian revolutionary struggle against the landlords. Therefore, we should not regard the rich peasants as belonging to the same class as the landlords and should not prematurely adopt a policy of liquidating the rich peasantry.

“Second, the middle peasants. They form about 20 per cent of China’s rural population. They are economically self-supporting ... and generally they do not exploit others but are exploited by imperialism, the landlord class and the bourgeoisie. ... Not only can the middle peasants join the anti-imperialist revolution and the Agrarian Revolution, but they can also accept socialism. Therefore, the whole middle peasantry can be a reliable ally of the proletariat and is an important motive force of the revolution. The positive or negative attitude of the middle peasants is one of the factors determining victory or defeat in the revolution and this is especially true after the agrarian revolution when they become the majority of the rural population.”

After this, Mao deals with the ‘poor peasants’:

“Third, the poor peasants. The poor peasants in China, together with the farm labourers, form about 70 per cent of the rural population. They are the broad peasant masses with no land or insufficient land, the semi-proletariat of the countryside, the biggest motive force of the Chinese revolution, the natural and most reliable ally of the proletariat and the main contingent of China’s revolutionary forces. Only under the leadership of the proletariat can the poor and middle peasants achieve their liberation, and only by forming a firm alliance with the poor and middle peasants can the proletariat lead the revolution to victory.”

About the leading role of the proletariat and their-revolutionary class alliance, too, Mao was very specific :

“... in spite of certain unavoidable weaknesses, for instance, its smallness (as compared with the peasantry), its youth (as compared with the proletariat in the capitalist countries) and its low educational level (as compared with the bourgeoisie), the Chinese proletariat is nonetheless the basic motive force of the Chinese revolution. Unless it is led by the proletariat, the Chinese revolution cannot possibly succeed. ...

“... Among all the classes in Chinese society, the peasantry is a firm ally of the working class, the urban petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally, and the national bourgeoisie is an ally in certain periods and to a certain extent.” (*Ibid*, pp. 321-325)

Lenin’s Teaching Vindicated

Before Lenin proved it through his precise and penetrating scientific analysis, there had prevailed enough confusion even in the International Communist Movement over the dual role of the national bourgeoisie in different countries. Lenin made it clear that in the period after the November Revolution, even a democratic revolution could not reach its goal successfully, except under the leadership of the working class ; that is, the national bourgeoisie could no longer accomplish fully any of the different social and cultural tasks of the democratic revolution even if they might be able to capture the state power. In fact, Lenin had shown that even towards the end of the nineteenth century the advanced capitalist countries were engulfed in an acute, all embracing crisis and had turned into imperialist forces. The first world war was only a cruel expression of this. In this era of moribund and decadent capitalism, it was no longer possible for the national bourgeoisie of any country to perform a revolutionary role in the democratic revolution in the same manner as they did in the eighteenth century.

Already in Mao’s early writings (e.g. *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society*) we find this Leninist concept which in his article *On New Democracy*, he fully expounded in the light of Chinese conditions. Thus, pointing to the change that had occurred in the Chinese democratic revolution after the First World War and the successful November Revolution and precisely because of these, Mao said :

“... The Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution ... has come within the new category of bourgeois democratic revolutions and, as far as the alignment of the revolutionary forces is concerned, forms part of

the proletarian-socialist world revolution....

“Although such a revolution in a colonial and semi-colonial country is still fundamentally bourgeois-democratic in its social character during its first stage or first step, ...it is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with bourgeois dictatorship. It belongs to the new type of revolution led by the proletariat with the aim, in the first stage, of establishing a new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes.” (*SW*, Vol. II, pp. 343-344)

With the end of the era of the bourgeois democratic revolution, the revolutionary character of the bourgeoisie had degenerated into a compromising and reformist character suffering from fear-complex of revolution. That was why, in this era, even the bourgeois nationalist independence struggles could not advance through to success when led by the respective national bourgeoisie. They would end up half-baked and truncated, with only the transfer of political power from the imperialists to the national bourgeoisie of the soil. How unerring was this Leninist analysis and understanding is amply illustrated by the great example of the Chinese revolution and the dismal post-independence social conditions of the different newly independent countries of Asia and Africa, including ours. In these countries, the feudal social and cultural remnants of older, pre-independence days, the scourge of poverty, illiteracy and vulgar culture and renewed imperialist infiltration and domination under the cloak of neo-colonialism, all nakedly point to the correctness of this analysis.

It is true that a section of the national bourgeoisie and the majority of the educated middle class intellectual and student community had tried earnestly to uphold the older bourgeois democratic revolutionary trend through the petty-bourgeois revolutionism. But those attempts, too, were foiled by non-cooperation or inertness or even opposition of the national bourgeoisie. Whatever success this petty-bourgeois

revolutionism could gain was due to active assistance from the communists of the respective soils.

In China, the best representative of this trend was the nationalist leader Dr Sun Yat-sen, a living legend of the country. 'Kuomintang' or 'National Party' was rather a national platform founded by him. It was very similar to the National Congress of India. In his attempt to build the national independence struggle in China, Dr Sun Yat-sen faced failure repeatedly on account of treachery of the powerful warlords and owing to non-cooperation of the national bourgeoisie. This brought him nearer to the example of the Russian revolution of 1917, which inspired him deeply. After having been refused help from 'democratic' Europe on the issue of independence of China, he met with Lenin's representative in 1921 to seek help from the liberated Soviet Union for the liberation of China. In the same year of 1921, the Communist Party of China was founded at a conference at Shanghai. The famous intellectual Ch'en Tu-hsiu was made the General Secretary. In a short period, the party extended its influence notably, particularly among the workers, students, youths and intellectuals of cities and towns. At the conference, Mao was made the Secretary of the Hunan Branch Committee and in 1922 the Hunan District Secretary and a member of the Central Committee. In 1923, the United Front of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party was formed at the initiative of the Comintern. In 1926 began the famous Northern Expedition. Under the leadership of the Front, the rule of warlords was brought to an end in many of the northern provinces. The expedition ended in 1927. By this time, i.e. in 1925, Dr Sun Yat-sen died. Chiang Kai-shek took over the leadership of the Kuomintang. Apprehensive, the imperialists and the warlords of south China came to an understanding with Chiang Kai-shek. The subsequent developments exposed the vacillating character of the national bourgeoisie. In March 1927, in a savage onslaught by the

foreign imperialist forces and the Kuomintang Army together, thousands of workers, students, intellectuals and communist cadres were massacred in cities like Shanghai, Nanking, Canton, Chung Shah, etc. The Communist Party was banned. The United Front got disrupted. Of course, one of the main reasons of this debacle was the weakkneed policy and wrong tactics of the then Central Committee of the Communist Party under the leadership of Ch'en Tu-hsiu as the General Secretary. In April 1927, Chiang Kai-shek formed a so-called national government in the liberated parts of northern China, staining the soil with the blood of thousands of Chinese working people. Thus ended a chapter of the national independence struggle in China with the 'national interest' butchered by the national bourgeoisie themselves. Lenin's teachings were once more vindicated.

About a decade later in 1937, the Kuomintang had no other option but to join the National United Front again with the Communists to fight the Japanese imperialists. But this time, the situation was largely different. The Communist Party was no longer under the incompetent leadership of the older central leadership; Comrade Mao Tse-tung had become the Chairman of the party at the Tsunyi Conference of 1935. The difference became apparent within the next decade with the defeat of the Japanese imperialists and the ultimate victory of the Communists.

In 1949 the Kuomintang rule was overthrown through revolution, and the semi-feudal and semi-colonial state was abolished and replaced by the new democratic state under the hegemony of the proletariat. Herein lies the significance of Mao's teachings as highlighted by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh :

“See, what has been stated in the Report of the Tenth Congress : Chairman Mao teaches us that ‘the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything’.” (*Selected Works* : Vol. I, p. 441)

Question of Correct Base Political Line

By correct base political line is meant, among others, the correct analysis of the class disposition within society based on the correct Marxist-Leninist methodology, determination of which class or classes are to fight which other class or classes and, secondly, determination of the relative strength and position of both the allies and the enemies of revolution. This determines the correct strategy of revolution, and on its basis is determined the tactics of revolution. It is to be mentioned here that without correct strategy, correct tactics cannot be determined, and similarly, if correct tactics are not adopted and are not constantly changed and developed in accordance with the changing situation, correct strategy too cannot be implemented. As a matter of fact, though there was apparently no difference in words between Mao and the older central leadership of the 1921 to 1934 period, on the question of strategy, a fundamental difference prevailed on the question of its understanding, right from the very inception of the party. And because of this difference in understanding, sharp conflict surfaced in determining the tactics.

Further elaboration will be in order here of what the differences were and how the incorrect line of the old central leadership was responsible for putting the party in catastrophic situations three times within a span of fourteen years, whereas Mao could lead the party to victorious new democratic revolution within a short period. But before coming to that, let us first emphasize that the correct political line for the Chinese revolution demanded a proper understanding of the vacillating, dual role of the national bourgeoisie. The party, under Mao's leadership, not only analysed these correctly, Mao was also able to keep the democratic revolution on the Chinese soil free from vacillation and compromising influence of the bourgeoisie by arresting the Kuomintang, the most trusted party of the Chinese bourgeoisie, within the fold of the national united front movement, and ultimately isolating it completely in the process

of this struggle. It was because of this understanding that Mao was able to lead the democratic revolution of China to cross the bourgeois boundary to reach a new state - an intermediate stage, i.e. the new democratic stage leading towards socialism.

Besides this, the correct political line also required a correct attitude towards the peasantry that formed the bulk of the Chinese population and sustained the Chinese agrarian economy. Even at the time of the 1927 massacre of the communists in cities, waves of massive peasant uprisings arose in the Hunan province of south China under the leadership of Comrade Mao. Rapidly they spread out like a prairie fire in other provinces, striking mortal terror in the hearts of the landlords, usurers and rich peasants. In China those were the first instance of a conscious, organized and successful peasant movement led by the poor peasants themselves. Enriched by the concrete experiences of these struggles Mao wrote his famous and significant article *Report on an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan*. In it he emphasized firmly and strikingly :

“Leadership by the poor peasants is absolutely necessary. Without the poor peasants there would be no revolution. To deny their role is to deny the revolution. To attack them is to attack the revolution.”
(*SW*, Vol. I, p. 33).

It is not difficult to understand that by the words ‘deny the revolution’ Mao meant and warned those who accepted the revolution but at the same time did not recognize the revolutionary role of the poor peasants who formed the ‘largest driving force’ of revolution in China. In fact, this criticism of Mao was directed against the then Ch’en Tu-hsiu leadership of the Communist Party. The article contained at its very beginning indications of lack of class consciousness in the leadership which then prevailed, although the condition was ripe with revolutionary potentialities.

On this question Mao differed not only from Ch’en Tu-

hsiu, he had differences with the later Li Li-san leadership of the party and he carried out a prolonged ideological battle against it. This was because Mao's ideas and understanding of the role of the peasantry, particularly the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers, in the social revolution in an agriculture-based feudal China differed fundamentally from those of the leadership. Mao himself indicated that in 1922 when the party was fast developing in cities :

“The work of the Communist Party was then concentrated mainly on the students and workers, and very little was done among the peasants.” (*Red Star over China*, p. 184) About himself, Mao's comments were : “Formerly I had not fully realized the degree of class struggle among the peasantry,...” (*Ibid*)

In the two years of 1921 and 1922, Mao, too, had placed greater emphasis on trade unions; he had organized a workers' strike in the whole of Hunan on the 1st of May 1922. Thereafter, subsequent to formation of the United Front of the Communists and the Kuomintang, he had to spend two more years in Shanghai and Canton to discharge certain specific responsibilities as a member of the Central Committee. He returned to Hunan towards the end of 1924. The joint movement of the Communist Party, and the Kuomintang was rapidly spreading at that time. Preparations were afoot for the Northern Expedition. The famous Whampoa Military Academy had been founded. En masse, workers and students were joining the army as volunteers. But all these happened mainly in major cities of the country. Mao, however, did not fail to note the signs of stirrings among the mute, downtrodden, bowed and cowed-down peasants too. So, accordingly he started organizing these peasants into their own peasants' associations. In a very short period he gathered deep objective and concrete experience of peasant struggle and peasant organizations. On that basis he wrote *Analyses of the Classes in Chinese Society* in 1926.

Controversy over Role of Peasantry

Over the main contention of this article itself fundamental differences cropped up in 1926 between Mao and the then central leadership of Ch'en Tu-hsiu. It was not resolved fully until Tsunyi Conference in 1935. Ch'en Tu-hsiu did not agree with Mao's emphasis on the 'revolutionary' role of the rural semi-proletariat, that is, the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants and on a 'relatively revolutionary' role of the middle peasants. Besides, he did not permit Mao to publish this article in the Central Organ of the party. On his part, Mao in that article of 1926, gave a timely warning against the politics of the Kuomintang, that is, about the vacillating role of the national bourgeoisie.

“The middle bourgeoisie, by which is meant chiefly the national bourgeoisie, is inconsistent in its attitude towards the Chinese revolution : they feel the need for revolution and favour the revolutionary movement against imperialism and the warlords ... but they become suspicious of the revolution when they sense that, with the militant participation of the proletariat ... the revolution is threatening the hope of their class to attain the status of a big bourgeoisie.... As for the vacillating middle bourgeoisie, their right-wing may become our enemy and their left-wing may become our friend - but we must be constantly on our guard and not let them create confusion within our ranks.”
(*SW*, Vol. I, pp. 14,19)

Within a year, Mao's words came true cruelly through the massacre of the Communists, the banning of the party, the breaking up of the United Front and utter betrayal of the national independence struggle - all effected by the Kuomintang. The movement had to pay dearly for the liberal and uncritical attitude of the Ch'en Tu-hsiu leadership towards the national bourgeoisie.

However, by this time, that is, by the start of 1927 organized peasant struggles were growing under Mao's

leadership. In his words :

“By the spring of 1927 the peasant movement in Hubei, Jiangxi, and Fujian, and especially in Hunan, had developed a startling militancy, despite the lukewarm attitude of the Communist Party to it, and to the definite alarm of the Kuomintang.” (Quoted from *Red Star over China* - Snow)

The Fifth Congress of the party was held under such circumstances in May 1927. Here, Mao moved a resolution to set the outlook of the leadership and the party line on the peasant struggle in proper orientation. But, as his words reveal:

“My opinions, which called for rapid intensification of the agrarian struggle, were not even discussed, for the Central Committee, also dominated by Ch’ien Tu-hsiu, refused to bring them up for consideration.” (*Ibid*).

This was because Ch’ien Tu-hsiu

"....did not understand the role of the peasantry in the revolution and greatly underestimated their possibilities"

These incidents and instances make it clear that even after the bitter but valuable experience of six long years between 1922 and 1927 the then highest leadership of the party could not realize that to deny the role of the peasantry in a peasant-dominated Chinese society was to ‘deny the revolution itself.

Not only this, not to speak of not thoroughly probing and judging these serious questions concerning the strategy of revolution and fundamental outlook, the leadership did not even put Mao’s rational opinions to any discussion at all, though they were based on concrete experience of struggles. Nor did the leadership even allow Mao to raise them in the highest forum of the party, the Party Congress. Mao was even removed from Hunan in 1927, on the pretext that he was ‘provocating’ peasants’ movements ‘beyond limit’.

Struggle Against Right and Left Deviation

Ch’ien Tu-hsiu was removed from his post after the debacle

of 1927. Li Li-san became the most powerful leader. But there was no change in the old conservative outlook of the party on the agrarian problem and peasant movement in China. Only, instead of the vacillating rightist trend of Ch'en Tu-hsiu, the party under Li Li-san started leaning towards left adventurism. Naturally, the leadership could not find anything other than 'peasant narrow-mindedness' in Mao's theory of speeding up of the process of the Chinese revolution by developing peasant movements on a vast scale under the leadership of the working class. Surprisingly, virtually at the same time, at a seminar on the background of the 'Chinese revolution and its potentialities, held at the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow, Stalin uttered the following words :

“... the Chinese Communists should be in the front ranks of the agrarian-peasant movement, that they should teach the peasants, especially the poor peasants, to organize in revolutionary associations and committees ...” (*CW*, Vol. IX, p. 270)

In the years of 1928-30, vast areas of liberated zones in south China and armed forces of peasants there, both strongly organized under Mao's leadership, turned virtually into a parallel, alternative power in rural China. Here were founded the Red Army of China as also the People's Liberation Army of later days. But in 1928, after the Sixth Congress of the party, Li Li-san issued a warning note to Mao :

“The Sixth Congress recognized ... that there is a danger that the base of our Party may shift from the working class to the peasantry and that we must make every effort to restore the Party's working-class base.” (*Red Star over China* p. 486)

By a working-class revolution, Li Li-san leadership could only mean the model of the Russian Socialist Revolution. In 1930, after the Li Li-san leadership concluded that China had become 'the centre of World Revolution', it called for armed uprising in the main cities of China, the administrative-military

citadels of imperialists. Naturally, this 'revolution' failed miserably against the counter-attack by imperialist forces and warlords. There were great losses to the party, movement and the Red Army under Mao ; Li Li-san was also ousted. Next came Wang Ming. The following words of Mao, made after the debacle of 1930, bear evidence of this conflict between Mao and the then central leadership :

“Our line was reaffirmed, “Lilisanism” was definitely suppressed, and as a result the soviet movement subsequently scored great gains.” (*Ibid*, p. 206)

In the meantime, Mao had been expelled from the Central Committee and the Polit Bureau for having accentuated peasant movements without permission from the central leadership. He was, however, reinstated shortly afterwards. Each and every stage of Mao's revolutionary life struggle bore the stamp of unflinching faith in truth and rare firmness and boldness of character. Mao had been expelled thrice and thrice suspended from the Central Committee on grounds of waging ideological struggles on fundamental questions, namely realization of the ideology. Each time he accepted the decision with full loyalty, maintaining party discipline and revolutionary code of conduct. But at the same time he carried on an intense and protracted struggle with the leadership to establish the truth on fundamental questions of theory and thought process. Obviously, Mao's struggle against the line of the leadership - be it Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Li Li-san or Wang Ming - was always a struggle against the wrong line pursued by them from time to time. There was nothing personal in it, it was an impersonal ideological battle not only on the foundation of correct and concrete concept of Marxism-Leninism and dialectical methodology, it was at the same time based on communist code of conduct. Surely, Mao Tse-tung emerged as an epitome of unique revolutionary mettle and character. However, with Wang Ming leadership, too, his contradictions on policy and organisational questions

reached an ultimate, critical stage in 1933-34. Mainly because of the wrong political line, lack of experience, and unethical steps of Wang Ming, the first revolutionary base of China and the first provincial soviet government of Kiangsi were completely destroyed by the attack of Chiang Kai-shek. These had been founded and developed under the guidance of Mao through care, sacrifice and bloodshed for over eight long years and now they were destroyed in absence of the Mao leadership.

The Nanking government had already grown mortally apprehensive with the formation of the Jiangxi soviet government in 1930, and soon afterwards Chiang Kai-shek adopted his programme of 'Jiangxi expedition', with money and military assistance from landlords, warlords and imperialists during a period of five years from 1930 to 1934. In 1931-32, Japan occupied a huge territory of north China and started preparations for a bigger war. The Nanking government made a treaty with Japan, but did not abandon its 'Jiangxi expedition'. The Red Army High Command led by Mao gave a call for a united resistance of all patriotic forces and armies against the Japanese imperialism. But the Central Committee under Wang Ming virtually curtailed Mao's right as a Polit Bureau member on the ground of taking this initiative to build up a united national resistance. "By late 1933 Mao Tse-tung was excluded from Polit Bureau policy meeting..." (*Ibid*, p. 488)

In 1932, the highest leaders of the Central Committee and Polit Bureau of the party came from Shanghai to Kiangsi, to take shelter from the terror unleashed by Chiang Kai-shek. They, however, pushed the Kiangsi soviet into grave crisis, reducing Mao to a nominal member of the Polit Bureau in 1933 and suspending him from the same body later in 1934, and lastly, by expelling him from the Revolutionary Military Council, the highest body of the Red Army, built up by Mao himself.

Period of Setback

Amidst these complexities, towards the beginning of 1934, the Kiangsi soviet was virtually liquidated because of the inexperienced and weak-kneed leadership that found itself pitted against the formidable nine hundred thousand strong army of Chiang Kai-shek, equipped with huge quantity of ammunitions in their fifth expedition. The organization suffered a major setback. In Mao's own words:

‘As a result, all the revolutionary bases except the Shensi-Kansu border area were lost, the Red Army was reduced from 300,000 to a few tens of thousands, the membership of Chinese Communist Party fell from 300,000 to a few tens of thousands, and the Party organizations in the Kuomintang areas were almost all destroyed.’ (*SW*, Vol. 1, p. 195)

To save the organization from complete extermination, it was decided that the organization and the core of the Red Army should be removed immediately to the inaccessible hilly terrains of Shensi-Kansu areas of north China, some eight thousand miles away from Jiangxi. That distance is nearly twice the length of India. The unbelievable expedition across this long stretch, through virtually inaccessible route and braving all odds and adversities, became famous in history as the Long March.*

This historic March represents a golden chapter in the annals of human civilization. It changed the whole course of the revolutionary movement in China and has been inseparably and intimately associated with the name of Comrade Mao Tse-tung as the great leader, the beacon that inspired some of the best sons of mankind to forge ahead. It was during this period, while the March was on, there took place the Zunyi

* It is generally accepted that the Long March took one year, from October 1934 to October 1935, covering the time taken by the First Front Army of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army from Kiangsi to northern Shensi. Actually the period covered by all the three main forces of the Red Army that went north was two years. (Quoted from *Recalling The Long March* by Liu Po-Cheng and others)

Conference** of the Chinese Communist Party in January 1935. In this conference, the earlier central leadership was ousted and Mao was made the Chairman of the party which he remained till death and by which name he came to be familiar the world over. He was also made the Chief of the Red Army. The Central Committee was reconstituted. The new Central Committee shunned the hitherto followed wrong political line. The party under the leadership of Mao went on with the Long March.

The Historic Long March

The Long March led by the CPC under the stewardship of Mao is also a testimony of how Mao could turn difficulties into advantages with revolutionary audacity. More than one lakh men and women comprising leaders, rank and file members, soldiers of the Red Army, workers, peasants, doctors, scientists, teachers, students, technical personnel and others traversed on foot about 8000 miles (12,500 km) from Kiangsi in south China to Shensi in the difficult mountainous region near the northern border of China, braving all odds. On its way, the revolutionary army defeated the attacking Kuomintang military and the armies of the warlords of the neighbourhood ; they liberated sixtytwo towns and a host of villages. At the same time, they bade farewell to thousands of comrades-in-arms, the immortal martyrs, with profoundest grief and deepest respect.

None can fathom the unique significance of this March unless, at least a few of its exploits are known to him. For example, the crossing of the great and mighty river of China, the Tatu, on the banks of which had perished many formidable royal armies of China's mighty emperors in the past. Moreover, when the Red Army reached this crucial point, they found the other bank already well-fortified by Chiang's army. And on this side of the river, too, the Kuomintang army was quickly

** In January 1935, the Red Army captured Zunyi in Guizhou province.

approaching from behind, while bombardment from the air was continuing. The bridge, however, consisted of three strong iron chains across the turbulent river, which the army was to have crossed over to the opposite bank ! The planks over the chains which were supposed to be there, had already been removed ! No army could ever cross over such a bridge encircled in such a manner by an enemy armed with superior weapons on land as well as in the air. It was not surprising, therefore, but natural for the generals guarding the banks to be dumb with disbelief, when they saw to their utter dismay the unbelievable : the Red Army soldiers crawling down the swinging chains, one after another and approaching them fast. A fight ensued which was fierce but brief, for the Kuomintang Army, out of their wits, was vanquished morally rather than militarily. And a section of them hailed the Red Army and joined it. The whole army then crossed the river.

This historic Long March encountered many such obstacles on its long and tortuous course, but with courage, determination and revolutionary audacity it overcame all and attained victory. By the time, the Long March ended at Shensi, the desired destination after gaining many victories, nearly three-fourths of the comrades had already become martyrs !

After the victory of the revolution in 1949 when Mao Tse-tung stood on the podium to address the vast gathering at the Tien An Men Square organized for celebrating the victory, tears were rolling down his cheeks in remembrance of the countless thousands of his comrades, martyred in the Long March and in the revolutionary struggle as a whole.

Despite enormous casualties and loss of valuable comrades it strengthened the party and the organization, spread the message of revolution throughout the length and breadth of the country, weakened the enemy and thereby ensured the future victory of the revolution. Though the price was heavy and losses suffered were tremendous, the achievements of the Long March far surpassed the losses.

Mao Tse-tung, the chief architect of this great Long March had explained best its profound significance :

“The Long March is the first of its kind in the annals of history, Let us ask, has history ever known a Long March to equal ours ? No, never. The Long March is a manifesto. It has proclaimed to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes, while the imperialists and their running dogs, Chiang Kai-shek and his like, are impotent. ...

“The Long March is also a propaganda force. It has announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation. ... The Long March is also a seeding-machine. In the eleven provinces it has sown many seeds which will sprout, leaf, blossom, and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future. In a word, the Long March has ended with victory for us and defeat for the enemy. ... Without the Communist Party, a Long March of this kind would have been inconceivable.”

(Recalling The Long March by Liu Po-cheng and others)

II

Strategy of New Democratic Revolution

Following this great, historic Long March the Communist Party of China under the leadership of Chairman Mao could forge ahead victoriously, step by step, towards creating the grounds for, first of all, New Democratic Revolution, and thereafter leading the revolution to its second stage, the stage of establishing a socialist social system in China.

The immediate task before the CPC was to successfully accomplish New Democratic Revolution which demanded a revolutionary strategy of conducting the national liberation struggle under the leadership of the proletariat, organizing the

poor and middle peasants as the largest motive force of revolution and uniting all the other democratic and patriotic forces and classes in a 'national United Front' against the Japanese imperialism. To give shape to this strategy, the party adopted the correct tactics of extending the revolutionary bases gradually in the rural areas and thereby encircling the cities to ultimately deal the final blow. As outlined earlier, as far back as in 1926-27, Mao had shown that the basic and primary cause of the imperialist enslavement of China was her own backward feudal socio-economic system. So, imperialism could not be routed without overthrowing the feudal order. Therefore, to serve both the purposes, the only sensible and scientific revolutionary course was to intensify the class struggles in the rural areas by organizing, expanding and accelerating the peasants' movements against feudal oppression and exploitation under the leadership of the revolutionary working class party.

Indeed, in an extremely backward agricultural country like China, by organizing millions of peasants and enabling them to play their historic revolutionary role and by accomplishing the New Democratic Revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, Mao was the first to set such an example in the international communist movement. He removed all confusion by concretely proving that Marxism would show the path of revolution not only to the working class but to all other exploited and oppressed masses. For, there existed and still exists in a subtle manner a conception among many so-called Marxists, because of their partial and mechanical understanding, that Marxism does not take into cognition the revolutionary role of any other class apart from the working class.

But about hundred years back Marx and Engels had provided teachings on this. In the Preface to the 1890 edition of the book *The Peasant War in Germany*, written in 1870, Engels pointed out :

“... farm labourers form the most numerous class in

the countryside. ... it is there that the industrial workers of the towns find their most numerous and most natural allies”.

It is to be noted that in the anti-capitalist November Revolution in 1917 the main slogan of the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin was, in the initial stage, ‘The dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants’. On the other hand, the slogan of Trotsky was ‘No Tsar, but a workers’ government’. But Lenin clearly showed why the slogan of only workers’ government was politically erroneous and why it was necessary to forge unity between the workers, the poor peasants and rural semi-proletariat in the initial phase to accomplish socialist revolution and run the socialist state in the then condition obtaining in Russia. As a matter of fact, it was the particular and concrete and historical form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Those who have failed to realize the essence of the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, accept these teachings only mechanically without considering the concrete situation obtaining in the given space and time. Comrade Mao Tse-tung, on the other hand, provided a clear and penetrating analysis on the mutually dependent relations between the leading role of the proletariat and the role of the semi-proletariat and other intermediate classes as allies. He said :

“Only under the leadership of proletariat can the poor and the middle peasants achieve their liberation, and only by forming a firm alliance with the poor and middle peasants can the proletariat lead the revolution to the victory. Otherwise neither is possible.” (*SW*, Vol. II, p. 324)

Class Character of the Party

Comrade Mao Tse-tung had to combat another serious confusion. A question arose whether a-communist party could retain its proletarian class character with preponderance of peasant cadres in it.

Central to this question is the correct conception of the character and formation of a revolutionary working class party or a communist party. It is the teaching of Marx that the workers must change themselves first in order to change the world. It means that a worker, simply because of his social position as a worker, cannot automatically have proletarian class consciousness or cannot take the conscious class position as proletariat. So, to acquire the ideology, politics and culture of the proletariat the individual worker also shall have to be a member of the working class party, like others. Coming from the non-working classes, one cannot automatically become a communist only by being a member or simply by active participation in the struggle of workers or just for one's strong support to the struggle for emancipation of the working class. For that, everyone, be he a peasant, student, or from the intelligentsia, including one coming even from the working class, would have to acquire a minimum standard to be a member of the party, and after that he would have to gradually acquire higher and still higher standard of the communist character and communist consciousness by engaging himself in a conscious and all-out struggle for merging the individual interest with the interest of the party, class and revolution. If it is a living struggle in the party, then even those who are coming from classes other than the working class would be transformed into conscious cadres of the working class, provided they carry out successfully the internal struggle in themselves. On the Chinese soil Mao's teachings provided refreshing clarity :

“The Party of the proletariat has members of other class origins. But the latter do not join the party as representatives of other classes. From the very day they join the party they must abandon their former class stand and take the stand of the proletariat.”
(Quotation from *Continuing the Revolution* by John Brian Starr, 1964, p. 107)

The author then goes on :

"... Once an individual has joined the party and has

acquired the experience of participating in the political life of the party he or she is, for all practical purposes, Mao contended, a member of the proletariat..." (*Ibid*)

Political Life of Proletaian Party

But the essence of this concept will be missed if the deep-going significance of this 'political life of the party' remains uncomprehended. The political life of a real communist party is distinctly different from that of the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois parties. The politics of the communists is an all-embracing dedicated life struggle based on higher ideology and culture. So, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had said:

"Not of the leaders only, the sole object of the dedication of the cadres of the proletarian revolutionary movement will be to unleash a struggle covering all aspects of life so as to develop this process of revolution. It is an all-out struggle covering all aspects of life - from the private to the politico-cultural life, even in matters of sex and love - so noble is this struggle to become a communist." (*SW*, Vol. II, pp. 268-69)

Necessarily, by the 'political life of the party' has been meant this all-out struggle of the leaders and the rank and file members to attain the true communist character. Without this struggle none can become a real communist. Thus, developing into a communist from whatsoever class origin involves a real transformation in being a qualitative transformation in consciousness, character and everything else. It involves the process of declassing, that is, transformation of the individual joining the communist party from the previous class makeup to the proletarian class makeup, from the previous class being into the proletarian class being. So, in a given socio-political-economic condition, if the major support or force of a genuine communist party in a given country comes from non-working classes, that by itself and automatically does not degrade the

class character of the party. That doesn't have anything to do with the question of determining the class character of the party.

Naturally, the class character of a party is to be judged not by the fact whether the greater number or majority of the party members come from working class families or not, but by the fact whether this 'political life', among others, is alive in the party or not. It should be realized that the proletarian class consciousness is nothing but the highest and most comprehensive realization of proletarian ideology in all aspects.

Conversely, Marxism-Leninism teaches that bypassing this struggle to attain proletarian class consciousness, i.e. without attaining higher cultural and ethical standard a person cannot correctly grasp the theory of Marxism, not to speak of correctly applying the same. Thus, the utter failure of the earlier leadership of the CPC to correctly understand the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the strategy of revolution and formulate the tactics accordingly raises the question of their class character.

Question of Correct Tactics

The tactics of Chinese revolution formulated by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in course of the long struggle for correct application of the political strategy, suited to the concrete situation prevailing at that time, surely is an illustrious example of creative application of Marxism-Leninism in Chinese soil.

First among these is the famous tactics of encircling the towns and another one is the example of creative and correct implementation of the united front tactics on the basis of Leninist principle. As revolution in each country has its peculiarities and relative independence, so the true ability of the leadership of each Communist Party lies in studying and discovering these particular characteristics. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said :

“So you find Lenin or Mao Tse-tung, whoever did shoulder the responsibility of organizing and leading a successful revolution in his country, contributed something new to the treasure house of Marxism - short of which revolution cannot succeed in a country. To suggest that the Indian revolution will take either the Chinese or the Russian road at best means, in my opinion, that it gives an indicative line, nothing more. Going an inch further is sinking into blindness.” (*SW*: Vol. II, p. 189),

Mao himself said in 1956 in a discussion with representatives of the communist parties of Latin America :

“The experience of the Chinese revolution, that is, building rural base areas, encircling the cities from the countryside and finally seizing the cities, may not be wholly applicable to many of your countries, though it can serve for your reference. I beg to advise you not to transplant Chinese experience mechanically. The experience of any foreign country can serve only for reference and must not be regarded as dogma....” (*SW*, Vol.V, p. 326)

Mao had to strive hard and wage serious battles to combat the mentality of blindly copying the Russian model of revolution in order to formulate the correct and scientific strategy and tactics of the Chinese revolution. What was that concrete situation and what was the scientific analysis of that ?

“It is evident, then, that the enemies of the Chinese revolution are very powerful. They include not only powerful imperialists and powerful feudal forces, but also, at times, the bourgeois reactionaries who collaborate with the imperialist and feudal forces to oppose the people. Therefore, it is wrong to underestimate the strength of the enemies of the revolutionary Chinese people.

“In the face of such enemies, the Chinese revolution cannot be other than protracted and ruthless

“In the face of such enemies, the principal means or

form of the Chinese revolution must be armed struggle, not peaceful struggle. For our enemies have made peaceful activity impossible for the Chinese people and have deprived them of all political freedom and democratic rights. Stalin says, '...in China the armed revolution is fighting the armed counter-revolution. That is one of the specific features and one of the advantages of the Chinese revolution.' This formulation is perfectly correct....

"In the face of such enemies, there arises the question of revolutionary base areas. Since China's key cities have long been occupied by the powerful imperialists and their reactionary Chinese allies, it is imperative for the revolutionary ranks to turn the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas, into great military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the revolution from which to fight their vicious enemies who are using the cities for attacks on the rural districts, and in this way gradually to achieve the complete victory of the revolution through protracted fighting; ... Such being the case, victory in the Chinese revolution can be won first in the rural areas, and this is possible because China's economic development is uneven (her economy not being a unified capitalist economy), because her territory is extensive (which gives the revolutionary forces room to manoeuvre), because the counter-revolutionary camp is disunited and full of contradictions, and because the struggle of the peasants who are the main force in the revolution is led by the Communist Party, Therefore, it is wrong to ignore the necessity of using rural districts as revolutionary base areas, to neglect painstaking work among the peasants, and to neglect guerrilla warfare.

"However, stressing armed struggle does not mean abandoning other forms of struggle; on the contrary, armed struggle cannot succeed unless coordinated with other forms of struggle. And stressing the work in the rural base areas does not mean abandoning our

work in the cities and in the other vast rural areas which are still under the enemy's rule ; on the contrary, without the work in the cities and in these other rural areas, our own rural base areas would be isolated and the revolution would suffer defeat. Moreover, the final objective of the revolution is the capture of the cities, the enemy's main bases, and this objective cannot be achieved without adequate work in the cities." (Mao, *SW*: Vol.11, pp. 316-317)

It will be clear from close scrutiny that this was not a mere war tactics or war strategy. That was why in rural bases Mao stressed the necessity to build up not only military or political bases but cultural and even economic bases. In reality, in the entire area covering these bases, there were besides agriculture, small-scale industry, trade and commerce and even separate currency. It was, of course, due to the peculiar socio-economic system prevalent in China that a parallel self-sufficient, localized agricultural economy with trade and commerce and administration was possible. On the other hand, being guarded by the party and the Red Army in these areas the political freedom and relatively better economic condition enjoyed by the peasants helped a lot to arouse and rally them in the revolutionary movement. Along with this by building up a conscious, social and cultural movement which could be done only in the liberated areas in an unhindered manner in the then Chinese situation, the party under the leadership of Mao was able to develop such an invincible revolutionary army by inspiring millions of common peasants.

For protecting this political, social and cultural movement, the Communist Party had to build up revolutionary armed forces and revolutionary armed organization at each stage. This was the peculiar feature of semi-feudal and semi-colonial China. So Mao once said :

“The main task of the Party of the Chinese proletariat, the task confronting it almost from its very inception, has been to unite with as many allies as possible and,

according to the circumstances, to organize armed struggle for national and social liberation against armed counter-revolution, whether internal or external. Without armed struggle the proletariat and the Communist Party would have no standing at all in China, and it would be impossible to accomplish any revolutionary task.

“In other countries there is no need for each of the bourgeois parties to have an armed force under its direct command. But things were different in China, where, because of the feudal division of the country, those landlord or bourgeois groupings or parties which have guns have power, and those which have more guns have more power. Placed in such an environment, the Party of the proletariat should see clearly to the heart of the matter.” (*SW*, Vol,II pp. 222-224)

It was in this context that he made his very famous and oft distorted statement:

“Political power grows out of the barrels of the gun.”

For presenting a particular tactics of struggle and stressing before the party workers its due importance in a particular situation of China, Mao said this. But if one forgets the concrete situation of China obtaining at that time, this brilliant formulation of Mao based on reality can easily be distorted. And this is just what many a blind follower in different countries did, and thereby created much confusion about Mao Tse-tung and his invaluable teachings in the minds of the people.

Deep Care and Attention to Various Problems of Peasants' Life

But what did Mao himself say? Even after arduously building the Red Army, the guerrilla army, the armed peasant forces and massive organization in south China through protracted and bloody armed struggle since 1927 Mao said to

the comrades:

“If we only mobilize the people to carry on the war and do nothing else, can we succeed in defeating the enemy? Of course not. If we want to win, we must do a great deal more. We must lead the peasants’ struggles for land and distribute the land to them, heighten their labour enthusiasm and increase agricultural production, safeguard the interests of the workers, establish cooperatives, ... and solve the problems facing the masses - food, shelter and clothing, fuel, rice, cooking oil and salt, sickness and hygiene and marriage. In short, all the practical problems in the masses’ everyday life should claim our attention. If we attend to these problems, solve them and satisfy the needs of the masses, we shall really become organizers of the well-being of the masses, and they will truly rally round us and give us their warm support. Comrades, will we then be able to arouse them to take part in the revolutionary war? Yes, indeed we will.” (*SW*, Vol.1, pp. 147-148).

The Marxists’ concept of revolution is a concept of movement for all-round social progress, and armed struggle is one of the means to achieve that goal - it is not the goal itself. Mao clarified it beautifully in his above quoted teachings.

This truth will be more apparent if we get a picture of these liberated bases or the soviet zones. As an eye witness to these bases built up in north China after the Long March, Edgar Snow, the American journalist, said in his description in 1937:

“Now, wherever the Reds went there was no doubt that they radically changed the situation for the tenant farmer, the poor farmer, the middle farmer, and all the ‘have-not’ elements. ... the Reds gave land to the land-hungry peasants. ... Third, they took land and livestock from the wealthy classes and redistributed them among the poor.

“Redistribution of land was a fundamental of Red policy....

‘Additional help was given to the poor farmers in the form of loans at very low rates of interest or no interest at all. Usury was entirely abolished...

“A cooperative movement was being vigorously pushed. These activities extended beyond production and distribution cooperatives, branching out to include cooperation in such novel (for China) forms as the collective use of farm animals and implements - especially in tilling public lands and Red Army lands - and in the organization of labour mutual-aid societies. ... In busy periods the system of ‘Saturday Brigades’ was used, when not only all the children’s organizations but every soviet official, Red partisan, Red Guard, women’s organization member and any Red Army detachment that happened to be nearby, were mobilized to work at least one day a week at farming tasks. Even Mao Tse-tung took part in this work.

“... certain outstanding evils common in most parts of China had definitely been eliminated As an outstanding achievement, opium had been completely eliminated Official corruption was almost unheard of. Beggary and unemployment did seem to have been ... ‘liquidated’. I did not see a beggar during all my travels in the Red areas. Foot binding and infanticide were criminal offences, child slavery and prostitution had disappeared, and polyandry and polygamy were prohibited.

“... changes in marriage, divorce, and inheritance were in themselves radical against the background of semi-feudal law and practice elsewhere in China. Marriage regulations included interesting provisions against mother-in-law tyranny, the buying and selling of women as wives and concubines, and the custom of ‘arranged matches’. Marriage was by mutual consent, ... dowries were prohibited, ... All children were legitimate under soviet law.” (*Red Star over China*, pp. 257-261)

Significance of Struggle Against Japanese Aggression and United Front Politics

It has been discussed earlier that the call for united resistance with all the parties and forces, including the Kuomintang, against Japanese aggression, given by the Red Army since 1931 and by the Communist Party under the leadership of Mao since 1935, rapidly gained support of the patriotic people, particularly of the intellectuals and the students. This was influencing even the members of the Kuomintang. Thousands of common people, intellectuals, youths, students and even the common soldiers and officers of the mercenary army of the different warlords of China were coming to the base areas to join the Red Army to fight the Japanese imperialists. The influence of the 'illegal' Communist Party was increasing not only in towns but in the entire country; the pressure of public opinion on the Kuomintang for building national resistance against the Japanese was snowballing. At last in 1937 in an unbelievably dramatic situation Chiang Kai-shek, being imprisoned by his own army was compelled to agree to the proposal of United Front with the Communist Party.

The national United Front was formed in September 1937. In 1945 Japan was forced to leave China after the Second World War, and the stage of the united front politics came to an end. Thereafter began again the dictatorial rule of the Kuomintang against the revolutionary struggle of the much stronger Communist Party and the Red Army. In 1949 the new democratic state of China was established. The united front movement during 1937-45 was an important stage in the revolutionary struggle of China. In this connection, the great significance of united front tactics with Kuomintang should be understood clearly. It has been discussed earlier that the Chinese Communists have had to face direct onslaught not only of the Kuomintang as a political party, they had also to encounter the armed attack of the Kuomintang army before the

United Front with Kuomintang was forged. Given such a background the degree and extent of hostility, if not animosity, of the Chinese Communists towards the Kuomintang can easily be gauged. Despite all this when China was aggressed by Japan militarily it was at the direct initiative of the CPC led by Chairman Mao that the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek - the age-old hated enemy of the Communists, was compelled to unite with them against the Japanese. It was possible firstly because neither the Chinese Communists nor the Kuomintang could alone face the attack of the Japanese. Secondly, Mao could correctly understand that despite Chiang's long anti-communist hatred and misdeeds in the past, despite the Kuomintang's class position, it was also true that in the background of the major antagonistic contradiction now arising out of Japanese aggression, other antagonistic contradictions which were so long acting as major ones, would become secondary. This clear concept and correct analysis of the then Chinese situation made it possible for the Mao leadership to successfully implement the anti-Japanese united front tactics. It is well-known that large numbers of communists in different countries, including in India, were critical of, rather strongly opposed to, the united front tactics of Mao and held this policy absolutely erroneous. During the anti-Japanese resistance war it so happened that the Red Army merged with the official army of Chiang Kai-shek, with Chiang placed at the head of the combined armed forces. But history has proved how Mao was correct and how difficult was his task. After the victory of the anti-Japanese resistance movement it was found that the strength of the Communists had increased manifold and a huge section of Chiang's followers in the party and the army joined the CPC and the Red Army and a great section becoming ardent supporters. In fact, this heightened greatly the respect of the common people of China for the CPC and the prestige of the party among the masses - which of course had started to grow and develop from the beginning of the resistance war

itself. Moreover, the new democratic revolution of China would undoubtedly have remained unfinished without going through this stage.

The united front politics is one of the basic teachings of Leninism. Lenin showed that for the success of revolution, apart from the necessity of the correct revolutionary theory and correct revolutionary party, the correct policy to conduct the united front movement was essential. To follow this policy is of vital importance in order to establish the leadership of the working class, even in the democratic revolutions of this era. Why is the united front so essential for the victory of revolution? In simple terms the answer is that in a class divided society, there exist vast masses of exploited people under the influence of various political parties representing the intermediate classes in between the ruling class and the revolutionary proletariat, and unless they are transformed through political and ideological campaign into active supporters or at least into benevolent neutral forces, revolution cannot attain victory. But while these classes extend support to revolution for freeing themselves from exploitation, they, at the same time are compromising towards the existing system and vacillating in their attitude to the ruling class because of their vacillating class position. That is why, they may be supporters of revolution but are not themselves revolutionary. Naturally the parties representing those classes always and invariably display their vacillating, compromising and opportunist character, more so at every critical juncture, and by that they may become the worst traitors to revolution. In this era, this role is inevitable for the parties representing the national bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist national liberation struggle, and for the petty-bourgeois social democratic parties mouthing revolutionary vocabulary in the anti-capitalist socialist revolution. So unless the politically unconscious people can be freed from the illusion created by the 'Marxist' or 'nationalist' label of these parties, they cannot be drawn into the fold of the revolutionary or liberation struggle, or be arrested in a position

of benevolent neutrality. The Leninist principle of the united front politics is based on this reality. The only historical, scientific and practical method to organize the people in this way is the united front movement on the basis of minimum agreed common programme against the common enemy, and by involving all these parties in the united front. Firstly, the broadest possible unity of the people is forged against the main enemy. And, secondly, to protect the united struggle from the attack of opportunist and compromising politics from within, relentless ideological struggle against compromising politics, ideology and work style is to be conducted within this united front. This is the kernel of Leninist principle of conducting the united front movement.

If this principle is followed, the political consciousness of the people gradually sharpens in course of the united front movement, and in its wake, all the intermediate compromising parties get isolated from the people. It is because of this very reason, that the pseudo-Marxist parties having a 'Marxist' or a 'nationalist' label stubbornly oppose the ideological and political struggle within the united front ; actually they do not want revolution, be it democratic or socialist.

The struggle conducted by the CPC under the leadership of Mao from 1937 to 1945 is a historic example of successful application of this Leninist principle. Hundreds of thousands of Communists were butchered by Chiang Kai-shek during the long ten year period from 1927 to 1937 and countless villages were destroyed by his army. It has been mentioned earlier that the entire Jiangxi soviet was routed by Chiang in 1934. The CPC was banned during this ten year period and awards were declared for the heads of Mao and other leaders. The Kuomintang did not withdraw all these orders for the sake of national unity until it was forced to. But despite all these facts, the Communist Party did not hesitate to call for unity with the Kuomintang in the interest of national liberation.

Mao Tse-tung said in 1935 :

“Owing to the presence of the pro- Japanese group inside the Kuomintang, it made no definite or thoroughgoing change in its policy ... owing to the pressure of the people and to developments in its own ranks, the Kuomintang had to begin to change its wrong policy ... and it had to begin accepting the policy of an anti-Japanese national United Front...” (*SW*, Vol.1, p. 266)

In the context of the rapid change of this compromising attitude of the Kuomintang, Mao said :

“From now on the demand must be for a thorough change in Kuomintang policy. In order to attain this goal our Party and the people throughout the country must develop the movement for resistance to Japan and for democracy still more extensively, must go a step further in criticizing the Kuomintang, pushing it into action and keeping up the pressure.” (*Ibid.*)

This pressure compelled the Kuomintang to respond to the persistent call of unity. The “Three People’s Principles” enunciated by Dr Sun Yat-sen was accepted as the minimum common agreed programme. The ban on the Communist Party was lifted, and recognition of the minimum rights of the citizens was assured. Thus, the united front against the Japanese aggression was born.

Changed Situation Needs Changed Style of Work

In the greater interest of the united front movement, the programme and style of work of the party were also changed. Herein lies the unique example of the revolutionary wisdom of Mao. In accordance with the well thought out and changed programme of work, the Red Army was united with the national army under the supreme command of Chiang Kai-shek, but keeping its political entity intact. The established soviet bases were declared as special areas of administration and the programme of seizing the land of the rich peasants and

redistributing the same among the poor was temporarily postponed. But criticism of the vacillating and opportunist role of the Kuomintang Party and its government in the national resistance movement was not stopped.

Combating the various confusions and propensities that existed among the rank and file members at various levels on the question of the united movement, Mao presented the correct concept about the functioning of the united front and said :

“In the period of the anti-Japanese united front, struggle is the means to unity and unity is the aim of struggle. If unity is sought through struggle, it will live ; if unity is sought through yielding, it will perish.... However, there are still many who do not understand it; some think that struggle will split the united front or that struggle can be employed without restraint. ... All this must be corrected.” (SR, p. 184)

Such a united front movement was both a golden opportunity and a serious test for the party in the revolutionary movement of China. After continuous guerrilla warfare for long ten years, remaining as a banned organization, the party had a new experience in leading the entire democratic forces, after uniting with the Kuomintang, to a common goal. Mao Tse-tung conducted an unprecedented struggle so that the party might acquire within a short time the adequate ideological-political standard and ability for this new task. His intense ideological struggle during this period for elevating the standard of consciousness of all the leaders and the rank and file members of the party on all questions of philosophy, politics, culture, literature, organization and even individual conduct was perhaps the most significant and memorable struggle in the pre-revolutionary period. Most of his writings on questions of philosophy, politics and organization like *On Practice*, *On Contradiction*, *On New Democracy*, *The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War*, *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*, *Rectify the Party's*

Style of Work, Reform Our Study, Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing, Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership, etc., are the fruits of this struggle.

It was in this period that a programme of all-out struggle was initiated to remould the entire party by removing all retrogression, slackness and limitations and to develop thousands of inexperienced new entrants to the party through rectification movement - an all-out struggle to raise the standard of the party. A historic and revolutionary change occurred in the political and social life of China during the period, 1937-45. This total social revolution would not have been possible without the emergence of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, and also without the emergence of Mao as the personified expression of the revolutionary consciousness of that party.

After the surrender of Japan in the second world war when China became free from Japanese aggression, the Kuomintang, the party of the national bourgeoisie and its topmost leader, Chiang Kai-shek had become lackeys of the US imperialists, getting completely isolated from the people. On the other hand, an unprecedented democratic atmosphere and a profoundly favourable revolutionary situation were created within the country.

About the leading role of the Communists Mao said :

‘We must make sure that the Communists play the leading role in the organs of political power, and therefore the Party members ... must be of high calibre....

“... we must educate the Party members who work in the organs of political power, overcome the narrowness manifested in their reluctance and uneasiness in co-operating with non-Communists, and encourage a democratic style of work, that is, consultations with the non-Party people and winning majority approval before taking action. At the same time, we must do all we can to encourage the non-

Party people to express their views on various problems and must lend an attentive ear to their suggestions. We must never think that because we hold military and political power we can force unconditional compliance with our decisions, and on that account shun the effort to win the non-Party people over to our views so that they carry them out gladly and whole-heartedly.” (*SW*, Vol. II, pp. 418-419)

The conscious and active mass support was due to the principled, tireless and concerted endeavour of the party on the basis of this teaching, and this support gathered such a momentum that the party had to postpone the recruitment of new members for the time being.

To remain in power the desperate Kuomintang started civil war against the Communist Party. In the war, the US imperialists, the most powerful force in the post second world war politics and economy, extended all-out support to Chiang Kai-shek to thwart the onward march of socialism in China. But deposed Chiang Kai-shek had to flee to Taiwan under the protection of the US imperialists in 1949. The victory of the New Democratic Revolution in China under the leadership of Mao is the victory of Marxism- Leninism as concretised by Mao Tse-tung.

The New Democratic Economy and its Significance

In the new democratic economic system under the leadership of the proletariat, a centralized and planned production system was introduced to cater to the social needs instead of individual profit and individual needs.

This system was, however, different from socialist economic system, because in various medium and small trading organizations and small scale industries, particularly in agriculture, individual ownership was retained in a controlled

way, while the basic industries, communication system and trading system were run by the new democratic state. But as this production under individual ownership was controlled by centralized economic planning of the state, run by the working class party for catering to the social needs, the character of this production was not wholly capitalist in nature. This was the intermediate stage of the new democratic social system.

By the middle of the decade beginning from 1950, individual ownership in agriculture, textile and medium industries was abolished, and the socialist transformation was, in the main, complete due to the farsighted policy of Mao. The introduction of co-operative farming by imbuing and educating the peasantry became a mighty movement in the rural areas. At the initiative of the peasants the famous agricultural communes of China spread throughout the country as a result of this movement. The party only gave recognition to them, and gave this a well organized form later on. By 1957, the transformation of the new democratic economic system into the socialist economy one was mainly complete. The democratic state also acquired the character of the socialist state, though in continuation of the historical characteristics of the Chinese revolution other democratic parties and forces were allowed to participate in the government on condition of their recognizing the leadership of the Communist Party. Thus China entered the socialist stage going through the intermediate new democratic stage.

Some Invaluable teachings

Summing up his experience after the victory of revolution, Mao presented a basic teaching of the historic revolution of China. He said :

‘‘As everyone knows, our Party passed through these twenty-eight years not in peace but amid hardships, for we had to fight enemies both foreign and domestic, both inside and outside the Party. We thank Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin for giving us a

weapon. This weapon is ... Marxism-Leninism....

“Our twenty-eight years have been quite different... A well-disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people; an army under the leadership of such a Party; a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a Party - these are the three main weapons with which we have defeated the enemy.”(SR, pp. 372-385)

The life-long struggle of Mao for the victory of revolution and for building the party to be equal to the gigantic task of leading the toiling people of China in the new-democratic and socialist revolution, and in defending the same from the attacks of revisionism-reformism, was indeed exemplary. His teachings, the fruits of this struggle, some of which are presented below, remain invaluable to the communists of all the countries and need to be deeply realized at the present juncture.

Highlighting the correct method of studying Marxism, Mao said :

“The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should regard it not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases but of learning Marxism-Leninism as a science of revolution. It is not just a matter of understanding the general laws derived by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin from their extensive study of real life and revolutionary experience, but of studying their standpoint and method in examining and solving problems” (*Ibid.* pp. 155)

Mechanical approach to Marxism-Leninism is bound to give birth to bureaucratism in the leadership and blind allegiance among the rank-and-file members of the party and both these are alien to Marxism-Leninism and communist ethics. Mao waged a relentless struggle against both these tendencies. He exhorted the party members :

“... In order to get rid of the blindness which exists to a serious extent in our party, we must encourage our comrades to think, to learn the method of analysis and to activate the habit of analysis....

“... Communists must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything, use their own heads and carefully think over whether or not it corresponds to reality and is really well-founded; on no account should they follow blindly and encourage slavishness. (*Ibid*, pp. 308, 227)

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh again and again reminded these teachings to the leaders and the rank and file members of our party. He showed that the only way to get rid of this mechanisation in thought process, blind allegiance, and narrowness in thinking is to constantly raise the ideological standard and level of consciousness of the rank and file through interaction of thoughts between the leaders and the led and to develop uniformity of thinking, oneness in approach, singleness of purpose and one process of thinking on every question on the basis of correct and concretised understanding of Marxism-Leninism. Mao also said to the leaders and rank and file members of the party, and particularly to the leaders :

”...This is of great importance in achieving a common language...

“In the past some of our high-ranking cadres did not have a common language even on basic theoretical problems of Marxism- Leninism...” (*SR*, p. 365)

Mao showed what was most important in the struggle for the ultimate victory of the Chinese revolution and said :

”In the present great struggle, the Chinese Communist Party demands that all its leading bodies and all its members and cadres should give the fullest expression to their initiative, which alone can ensure victory. This initiative must be demonstrated concretely in the ability of the leading bodies, the cadres and the Party rank and file to work creatively,

in their readiness to assume responsibility, in the exuberant vigour they show in their work, in their courage and ability to raise questions, voice opinions and criticize defects, and in the comradely supervision that is maintained over the leading bodies and the leading cadres. Otherwise, 'initiative' will be an empty thing." (SR, pp. 149-150)

Clearly, by initiative is meant political initiative, but for it to come successfully into play in a revolutionary party without leading to ultra-democracy, *laissez-faire* or indiscipline, a correct understanding and functioning of democratic centralism is indispensable. On this vital question Mao provided invaluable guidelines in general and for the leaders and cadres in particular. But democratic centralism remains in words only - it cannot be translated into practice until a higher ideological standard is reached not only by leaders but rank and file members too.

On Rectification Movement, Work among Masses, and Criticism, Self-criticism

In order to elevate the ideological and theoretical understanding and the standard of ethics, morality and efficiency, to elevate the ideological standard of the organizers and even the leaders and to thereby attain logical bent of mind and fine sensibility, it is necessary to conduct an intense and relentless struggle even on the minutest questions of life, as mentioned before. It is by this process that the revolutionaries come to possess profound wisdom, sharp analytical power, indomitable spirit and unparalleled broadness of mind. Again, in the absence of this consciousness a revolutionary may deviate through mental complexity created by even a very insignificant matter. That is why, high level of consciousness is such an important pre-condition in the revolutionary struggle.

In this respect the method employed by Mao even before revolution of developing higher standard involving the leaders, cadres and sometimes even the masses is really unique. Mao

said :

“Ours is a great Party, a glorious Party, a correct Party. This must be affirmed as a fact. But we still have shortcomings, and this, too, must be affirmed as a fact. ... Achievements are the main thing in our work, and yet there are not a few shortcomings and mistakes. That is why we need a rectification movement. Will it undermine our Party’s prestige if we criticize our own subjectivism, bureaucracy and sectarianism? I think not. On the contrary, it will serve to enhance the Party’s prestige. ... The Communist Party does not fear criticism because we are Marxists, the truth is on our side, and the basic masses, the workers and peasants, are on our side. As we use to say, the rectification movement is ‘a widespread movement of Marxist education’. Rectification means the whole Party studying Marxism through criticism and self-criticism.” (*SW* : Vol.V, p. 428)

In this context it is necessary to remember an excellent and educative tradition of the CPC. It was the close and direct bond of love and respect between the party and the millions of the toiling people of China even before the revolution, and it is not known whether this type of bond existed so deep-rootedly in any other party of the world. The unity of the vast masses of the peasants and the toiling and exploited people of all other classes achieved under the wise leadership of Mao was the source of strength of the CPC. Mao Tse-tung taught us :

“We Communists must be able to integrate ourselves with the masses in all things. If our Party members spend their whole lives sitting indoors and never go out to face the world and brave the storm, what good will they be to the Chinese people ? None at all, and we do not need such people as Party members. We Communists ought to face the world and brave the storm, in the great world of mass struggle and the

mighty storm of mass struggle. ... We should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articulated principles and methods, then do propaganda among the masses, and call upon them to put these principles and methods into practice so as to solve their problems and help them achieve liberation and happiness. ... The reason why such evils as dogmatism, empiricism, commandism, tailism, sectarianism, bureaucracy and an arrogant attitude in work are definitely harmful and intolerable, and why anyone suffering from these maladies must overcome them, is that they alienate us from the masses.” (SR. pp. 301, 315)

To the communists the real meaning of going to the people means to educate the people and to learn from them at the same time.

“Communists who really want to do propaganda must consider their audience and bear in mind those who will read their articles and slogans or listen to their speeches and their talks ; otherwise, they are in effect resolving not to be read or listened to by anyone....

“But we are revolutionaries working for the masses, and if we do not learn the language of the masses, we cannot work well. At present many of our comrades doing propaganda work make no study of language. Their propaganda is very dull, and very few people care to read their articles or listen to their talks. ... First, let us learn language from the masses. The people’s vocabulary is rich, vigorous, vivid and expressive of real life. It is because many of us have not mastered language so that articles and speeches contain few vigorous, vivid and effective expressions. (*Ibid.*, pp. 237-238)

“The Communists also cannot work without taking lessons from their experiences of the people. Through Marxist analysis of the practical experiences of the people, they enrich and give them a more systematic form, and again put it into practice among the people. It is only through this process that the broad masses

of people can comprehend the teachings and their level of consciousness rises step by step. Mao beautifully explained: “We must teach the masses clearly what we have received from them confusedly.” (Quoted in Starr, *Ibid.*)

He explained this by saying :

"In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily ‘from the masses, to the masses’. This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action.... (SR : p. 290)

“For twenty years the Communist Party of China has done great and arduous work in the cause of uniting the people of the whole country, ... This does not mean, however, that all our comrades already have a correct style in dealing with the masses and are free from sectarian tendencies. No. ... Many of our comrades tend to be overbearing in their relations with non-Party people, look down upon them, despise or refuse to respect them or appreciate their strong points.... After reading a few Marxist books, such comrades become more arrogant instead of more modest, and invariably dismiss others as no good without realizing that in fact their own knowledge is only half-baked.” (SR : p. 225)

In this context his teachings are very much relevant to us even today. For example, he said :

“We must be able to face criticism. We must take the initiative and carry out self-criticism first. We must examine whatever needs examining for one or at most two hours, getting it all out lock, stock and barrel—that’ll be the lot. If others consider it insufficient, let them go on. And if what they said is right, we’ll accept their criticism.” (Mao : *On Democratic*

Centralism).

And what was the attitude that Mao urged the leaders and members to adopt on being criticised and while criticising others?

“...to fear neither criticism nor self-criticism, and to apply such good popular Chinese maxims as ‘Say all you know and say it without reserve’, ‘Blame not the speaker but be warned by his words’ and ‘Correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not’ this is the only effective way to prevent all kinds of political dirt and germs from contaminating the minds of our comrades and the body of our party. Countless revolutionary martyrs have laid down their lives in the interests of the people, and our hearts are filled with pain as we the living think of them - can there be any personal interest, then, that we would not sacrifice or any error that we would not discard ?” (*SR*, p. 317)

“...So long as a person who has made mistakes does not hide his sickness for fear of treatment or persist in his mistakes until he is beyond cure, so long as he honestly and sincerely wishes to be cured and to mend his ways, we should welcome him and cure his sickness so that he can become a good comrade. We can never succeed if we just let ourselves go and lash out at him. In treating an ideological or a political malady, one must never be rough and rash but must adopt the approach of ‘curing the sickness to save the patient’, which is the only correct and effective method.” (*Ibid*, pp. 227-228)

“Shirking responsibility, fearing to shoulder it and forbidding people to speak out as if one were a tiger whose backside no one dares touch - ten out of ten who adopt this attitude will fail.” (*Ibid*)

Even prior to revolution, in 1948, Mao said :

”We must criticize and struggle with certain cadres and Party members who have committed serious mistakes.... In such criticism and struggle we should persuade the masses to adopt correct methods and

forms and to refrain from rough actions. This is one side of the matter. The other side is that these cadres, Party members and bad elements should be made to pledge that they will not retaliate against the masses. It should be announced that the masses not only have the right to criticize them freely but also have the right to dismiss them from their posts when necessary or to propose their dismissal, or to propose their expulsion from the Party, and even to hand the worst elements over to the people's courts for trial and punishment." (*SW*: Vol. IV, p. 186)

It is dished out by bourgeois propaganda machinery that there is no democracy and individual liberty in socialism, that the communists are totalitarians while the capitalist world is the votary of democracy and individual liberty! Should not these words, translating which into action Mao led the Chinese revolution to success, and revolution in other countries attained victory, be convincing enough to those who fall prey to the bourgeois propaganda?

Mao's Teachings on Bureaucratism Among the Leaders

The aim of the communist ideology, politics and culture is to awaken the dormant revolutionary urge of the people, and it is necessary that the revolutionary leadership accomplish this task. If this proper understanding lacks the leadership falls victim to bureaucratism, routinism, etc., and becomes alienated from the people. The leaders and the rank and file members of a real communist party must be constantly aware of this. The teachings of Mao on this question are very much relevant. He said :

"A Communist Party's correct and unswerving tactics of struggle can in no circumstances be created by a few people sitting in an office; they emerge in the course of mass struggle, that is, through actual experience." (*SR* : p. 46)

“Go down to the grass-roots and study the problems there. ... I have heard that many leading comrades no longer do so, which is not good. ... If you are seeking knowledge, you won't find any by staying put in your office. The factories, the co-operatives and the shops are the real sources of knowledge....The higher the office, the less the knowledge. To tackle problems you must go down personally or invite people to come up. If you neither go down nor invite people to come up, you won't be able to solve any problem.”(*SW*: Vol.V, p. 378)

Mao evolved and pointedly presented a certain process of functioning of the Party bodies to combat the bureaucratic tendency among the leadership, and these teachings are invaluable for us in providing guideline for the correct body functioning.

“It has recently been found that in some (of course not all) leading bodies it is the habitual practice for one individual to monopolize the conduct of affairs and decide important problems. *Solutions to important problems are decided not by Party committee meetings but by one individual, and membership in the Party committee has become nominal. Differences of opinion among committee members cannot be resolved and are left unresolved for a long time.* (Italics ours) Members of the Party committee maintain only formal, not real, unity among themselves. This situation must be changed.... All important problems ...must be submitted to the committee for discussion, and the committee members present should express their views fully and reach definite decisions which should then be carried out by the members concerned. ... On important problems which are complicated and on which opinions differ, there must, in addition, be personal consultations before the meeting to enable the members to think things over, lest decisions by the meeting become a mere formality or no decision can be reached.... ” (*SR*, pp. 360-361)

Struggle to Protect the Leadership of Party from Deviation

The future of the revolution depends on the leadership of the revolutionary party. Similarly, the future of the revolutionary party depends mainly and basically on the character, wisdom and efficiency of leading cadres of the party, despite the fact that in keeping the leadership on the correct track the rank and file members have a great role in the process of party functioning, which again depends on how much conscious and active they are in this respect. So all the great leaders of the proletariat always encouraged this struggle to protect the leadership from deviation. How stem a critic Mao was of himself and of other leaders ! It is exemplary to the communists the world over. He said to the leaders :

“Ask your subordinates about matters you don’t understand or don’t know, and do not lightly express your approval or disapproval.... We should never pretend to know what we don’t know, we should ‘not feel ashamed to ask and learn from people below’ and we should listen carefully to the views of the cadres at the lower levels. Be a pupil before you become a teacher; learn from the cadres at the lower levels before you issue orders.... To do this will not lower one’s prestige, but can only raise it. ... What the cadres at the lower levels say may or may not be correct; after hearing it, we must analyze it. ... We must heed the correct views and act upon them.... Listen also to the mistaken views from below; it is wrong not to listen to them at all. Such views, however, are not to be acted upon but to be criticized.” (*SR*, p. 366)

“The correct relationship between the cadres and the masses is such that, necessary as the cadres are, it is the masses who do the actual work, with the cadres giving leadership, a role which should not be exaggerated. Would things be in a mess without you?

Things can get along without you, as history and many facts of life can testify.... Would the earth stop turning without them ? The earth will go on turning all the same. Things will proceed as usual....” (*SW*, Vol. V, p. 166)

“Our comrades should take note : Don’t live on the power of your office, your high position or seniority. Speaking of seniority, we have been making revolution for many years, and while this record of ours does count, still we must not live on it. True, you are a veteran who has worked for several decades. For all that, when you do something foolish and talk nonsense, the people won’t excuse you. No matter how many your good deeds in the past and no matter how high your post, if today you are not doing a good job, not solving problems correctly and thus harming the people’s interests, they won’t forgive you. Therefore, our comrades should rely not on seniority but on being correct in solving problems.” (*Ibid.* p. 439)

On the communist values Mao’s invaluable teachings was :

“A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions, so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the party and the masses than about any individual, and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a communist.” (*SR*, pp. 136-137)

III

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China

The most significant event and the one to cast the greatest influence during the socialist construction in China was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. As well as focussing the basic problems of socialist struggle, it highlighted the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the task of creating the renaissance man, towards whom history is driving itself. To comprehend the fullest significance of this great event, its historic background has to be recalled in the first place.

Side by side with the progress of socialist production, from the mid-fifties, serious differences of opinion within the Central Committee itself of the party cropped up on the question of correct Marxist understanding or various issues of ideology, politics and culture. These differences sharpened by the mid-sixties. On various vital questions on socialist production, education system, culture and politics, two completely opposite viewpoints clearly appeared in the Central Committee as two opposite lines. Liu Shao-ch'i, next to Mao in the party leadership, was the spokesman of the line which was opposed to the accepted party line enunciated by Mao.

As a matter of fact, a group following the line of Liu Shao-ch'i emerged within the party, and because of their official position they stood as an insurmountable obstacle to carrying the messages of Mao down to all levels in the party. In the organs of the party, run by them, they were publishing their viewpoint as the view point of the party. In 1965 a theatre play with the name *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* subtly attacking Mao was published in the party organ. But despite being the supreme leader of the party, it was not possible for Mao to publish a rejoinder to this writing in the party organ published from Peking. In his own words :

“Our great proletarian cultural revolution ‘ should begin with Yao Wen-yuan’s criticism of *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* in the winter of 1965. At that time some departments and areas of our country were dominated to such an extent by revisionists that they were watertight and could not even be penetrated with a needle. At that time, I suggested that Comrade XX should organize the writing of criticism against *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*. But nothing could be done even in this Red city, and so it had to be done in Shanghai....

“Later I suggested that the essay be published in booklet form, but my suggestion was opposed and never acted upon.

“Comrade Yao Wen-yuan’s essay was only a signal for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. So we especially supervised the formulation of a 16 May Circular at the Centre....

“The Circular clearly raised the question of struggle of line. At that time most people disagreed with me. Sometimes I was all alone. ... So I had to bring my views to the eleventh plenary session of the C.C.P. Eighth Central Committee for discussion....”
(David Milton et al, *People’s China*, p. 260)

This feature cannot but cause serious concern in a democratically centralised Marxist party. This is completely alien to proletarian politics and proletarian moral values, and it is the result of the influence of evil bourgeois politics within the party. So Mao Tse-tung correctly depicted the struggle between the two lines within the party as the struggle between the line of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. Even in 1955, he gave this historic warning.

“In China, although in the main socialist transformation has been completed with respect to the system of ownership, ... there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remoulding of the

petty bourgeoisie has only just started. The class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the different political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times will even become very acute.... In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is still not really settled.” (SR, pp. 463-464)

This warning was painfully proved to be correct in 1965 within the party.

Those who failed to realize the far-reaching significance of this teaching of Mao, remained unalert about the subtle capitalist attack in socialism; despite being responsible office-bearers of the party and the state, those one-time revolutionaries like Liu Shao-ch’i and Teng Hsiao-ping became victims of bourgeois thinking. They started advocating expansion and strengthening of the forces of capitalism to augment production. They began to argue that since modern technology was needed to increase production, politics had to take the back seat, meaning use of technology had nothing to do with political understanding of the process of economic and social construction, that is, understanding of the social character of use of technology - whether it conduced to the revolutionary process or hindered the same. They argued that in modernisation there was no room for the question of class struggle; what was required was the technical skill and efficiency, not the slogan of “politics in command”. Evidently, all this was argument in favour of taking the capitalist road for ‘development’. Whereas, the revolution of China and the socialist construction negated the idea that the emancipation of the Chinese people could be achieved by taking to the road of capitalist development. Technology and modernisation were needed, but not to revive the capital-labour relation in the society, not to sustain the private property mental complex; but

in conformity with the operation of the socialist economic law, to create abundance and the people's initiative on the basis of identification of the individual interest and the social interest. So, the outlook of Liu Shao-ch'i and his likes was deviation from Marxism-Leninism into capitalism, it was revisionism. This degradation was nothing accidental. That many communist leaders and organizers were gradually moving away from ideology and politics while discharging the heavy responsibility of the state and the administration, and were getting isolated from the people, did not fail to attract the attention of Mao.

He said to the leaders even in 1957 :

“You are all pre-occupied with your professional duties, with your day to day work in economic, cultural and educational, national defence and Party matters, but if you neglect political and ideological work, that will be very dangerous....”

He said :

“For a long time now people have been levelling a lot of criticisms at dogmatism. That is as it should be. But they often neglect to criticise revisionism. ... It is revisionism to negate the basic principles of Marxism and to negate its universal truth. Revisionism is one form of bourgeois ideology. The revisionists deny the differences between socialism and capitalism, between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. What they advocate is in fact not the socialist line but the capitalist line. In present circumstances, revisionism is more pernicious than dogmatism. ... In many places, the Party committees have not yet tackled the question of ideology, or have done very little about it. Mainly because they are busy. ... but there is still class struggle - chiefly on the political and ideological fronts and it is very acute too. The question of ideology has now assumed great importance.” (*SW*, Vol. V. pp. 377. 434, 435)

Paying sharp attention to the ideological struggle within the

party was of historic significance particularly at the time of transition to the socialist stage. It is to be remembered that the Chinese revolution was basically a democratic one. Most of the workers joining in thousands in the party came with anti-imperialist and anti-feudal mental make-up, having democratic bourgeois humanist moral values. In feudal China, this undoubtedly reflected the higher moral standard; but in socialist China this proved quite inadequate to meet the needs of the situation. Not only that; the significance of transition from new-democracy to socialism was not grasped by a powerful section of the leadership. Even after skipping over to socialism - the question that there remains the necessity of conducting class struggle was also glossed over by these leaders. Among them were Liu Shao-ch'i and his likes who spearheaded the opposition against Mao's line.

By criticizing their incorrect thinking, Mao said then :

“They failed to realize there is a change in the character of the revolution and they go on pushing their ‘New Democracy’ instead of socialist transformation. This will lead to Right deviationist mistakes....”

“The Right deviation manifests itself in three remarks :

‘Firmly establish the new-democratic social order.’ That’s a harmful formulation. In the transition period changes are taking place all the time and socialist factors are emerging every day. How can this ‘new-democratic social order’ be ‘firmly established’? ...The period of transition is full of contradictions and struggle. Our present revolutionary struggle is even more profound than the revolutionary armed struggle of the past. It is a revolution that will bury the capitalist system and all other systems of exploitation once and for all. The idea, ‘Firmly establish the new-democratic social order’, goes against the realities of our struggle and hinders the progress of the socialist cause.” (*Ibid.* pp. 93-94)

The danger of infiltration of revisionism lies here. He said

in another discussion in 1957 :

“In a matter of six or seven years, the socialist transformation of capitalist ownership and of individual ownership by small producers has by and large been completed. But the transformation of man still has a long way to go, though some progress has been made. Socialist transformation is a two fold task, one is to transform the system and the other to transform man. The system embraces not only ownership, it also includes the superstructure, primarily the state apparatus and ideology.” (*Ibid.* p. 460)

To defend the living soul of Leninism against the attack of the modern revisionists headed by the Khrushchevite clique in the world communist movement, Mao initiated a glorious struggle just after the death of Stalin. In such a situation the appearance of the revisionist deviation within the leadership of the CPC itself posed as a great danger not only to the CPC or the socialist system of China but to the entire world communist movement. Mao took lesson from how the Khrushchevite clique after usurping power shelved the decision adopted by the 19th Congress of the CPSU under the leadership of Stalin for releasing an intense and all-out ideological struggle, involving the entire party from the lowest level with the aim of completely wiping out the evil tendencies and influences of bourgeois ideology. So, Mao went directly to all the exploited people on the issue of differences of opinion within the leadership on the question of class outlook of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat, and called for a countrywide movement of criticism and self-criticism, involving the entire people on all important polemical issues.

This movement was not directed toward just removal of certain person or persons, but it was a great social experiment with the aim of bringing about revolution in the realm of culture and ideology - to root out the deeply entrenched capitalist motives which are persisting in society as forces of habit. It is a

gigantic experiment to change the world outlook.

On 8th August, 1966, the Central Committee of the CPC formally announced the programme of this movement. Responding to the call, the entire cross-section of people was involved in the struggle between the correct proletarian line and the revisionist line on all important questions starting from politics, economy, culture and even the conduct of the individual party leaders.

During the three-year period, 1966-69, a tide of mass political initiative swept over China. An avalanche of struggle began sweeping through the Chinese society. Mao showed that the bourgeoisie had been overthrown from power but the vile culture of the capitalists and the forces of habit of the old society continued to exist in the society. The counter-revolutionaries, the capitalist roaders were taking advantage of this situation to mislead the people and stage a comeback. The proletariat had now to strike back with all power to foil their bid. It was now the task to transform the outlook and entire makeup of the society through practice of proletarian culture, morals and habits. The object would be to do away with everything in the superstructure - in education, art, literature and all else - which did not correspond to and conduce the socialist economic base ; the whole of superstructure had to be transformed radically that it would be in consonance with and conduce to the socialist order.

In every factory, eating house, government office of every town there were handwritten big character posters, posters with the comments of the leaders and the newspapers and announcements of the cultural revolutionary groups set up by the Central Committee. No official policy, decision or directive could be kept hidden from the people. They ventilated their support, amendment or criticism of every official policy or directive through posters on walls, or banners on the streets. Those which were important among them and the general statements had to be published in the

organ of the party and in the newspapers, and the responsible party leaders were required to communicate the decision of the party on those issues in public meetings or through statements; those again became the subject matter of mass discussion and criticism. Not a single country among the bourgeois republics and the bourgeois parliamentary democracy could set up such an example of the exercise of democratic right of the people in their four hundred year history.

Commenting on the spirit of the Cultural Revolution and the fact, among others, that individual monetary incentive had been swept away at that time at the demands of the workers themselves, Joan Robinson, in a report, after a visit to China, said :

“... The enormous pressure to commercialise every aspect of life in our society is substituted in China by an even stronger pressure the other way, and ‘human nature’ seems to fit in just as well, indeed better, since the Chinese seem to be much less neurotic than us.”

Under the instruction of Mao Tse-tung it was stated in the 8th August directive of the Central Committee :

“ In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves, and any method of doing things in their stead must not be used.

“Trust the masses, rely on them and respect their initiative. Cast out fear. Don’t be afraid of disturbances. ...

“Make the fullest use of big-character posters and great debates to argue matters out, so that the masses can clarify the correct views, criticize the wrong views and expose all the ghosts and monsters. In this way the masses will be able to raise their political consciousness in the course of the struggle, enhance their abilities and talents, distinguish right from wrong and draw a clear line between ourselves and the

enemy....

“A strict distinction must be made between the two different types of contradictions: those among the people and those between ourselves and the enemy.... It is normal for the masses to hold different views, contention between different views is unavoidable, and beneficial. In the course of normal and full debate, the masses will affirm what is right, correct, what is wrong and gradually reach unanimity.

“The method to be used in debates is to present the facts, reason things out, and persuade through reasoning. Any method of forcing the minority holding different views to submit is impermissible. The minority should be protected... Even if the minority is wrong, they should still be allowed to argue their case and reserve their views.” (*People’s China*, pp. 273-274)

This statement was indeed unique. It proves that the communists do not want the blind support of the masses, rather the logical and conscious support is the most dependable base of the party, and so the real communists try to ensure the democratic rights of the people, and to develop individual initiative and logical bent of mind. In the history of the world in no other social system there exists any such example of such a massive participation of the people throughout the country with so much enthusiasm and initiative for determining the correct policy and implementing the same on all social question of economy, politics, culture, education and even on the total policy of the state. This was the great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China.

It was for this reason that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our beloved leader and teacher, had said :

“I hold that this Cultural Revolution has a sound scientific basis, judged by yardstick of Marxism-Leninism, and the way the CPC is conducting this Cultural Revolution is really magnificent and full of great significance. Communists all over the world

who have really dedicated themselves to the revolutionary movement have a great deal to learn from it.” (*SW*, Vol. 1, p. 187)

As a result of this unprecedented political upheaval the revisionist line pursued by Liu Shao-ch’i was defeated in the party in 1969, and all capitalist readers including Liu Shao-ch’i and Teng Hsiao-ping of the Central Committee were ousted from the party. But Mao issued a very serious warning to the communists of posterity:

“... struggles against the capitalist readers in the Party is the principal task, but not the object. The object is to solve the problem of world outlook and eradicate revisionism.

“If world outlook is not reformed, then although 2,000 capitalist readers are removed in the current great Cultural Revolution, 4,000 others may appear the next time. ... The struggle between the two classes and two lines cannot be settled in one, two, three or four Cultural Revolutions, So we must keep in mind the uprooting of revisionism and strengthen our capability to resist revisionism at any time.

“... Capitalist readers are power-holders who follow the capitalist road. During the democratic revolution they took an active part. ... But in the fight against the bourgeoisie after the nationwide liberation, they - were not so enthusiastic. ... they were not so enthusiastic when it came to collectivization of farming after the nation-wide liberation. They do not take the socialist road, but they now hold power.” (*People’s China*, p.262)

In the context of the present state of the socialist camp and the international communist movement, and particularly in the context of the complex situation of socialist China run by the Teng Hsiao-ping revisionist clique, it is undoubtedly necessary to consider with due importance this teaching of Mao.

The magnificent achievements in the noble revolutionary life of Mao Tse-tung were many. His contribution to the treasure-house of Marxism-Leninism through uniquely creative and concretised application of Marxism-Leninism in China, which is known as the Mao Tse-tung Thought, is an invaluable asset to the communists of the world. But of all his achievements the highest form of class struggle in socialism through Proletarian Cultural Revolution which Mao conducted as a worthy successor to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin by uniquely assimilating and creatively concretising their teachings would provide guidelines to the communists of the world even in the distant future, and particularly to the working class and its party in socialism.

The historic importance of the Chinese Cultural Revolution lies in this universality. And it is because of this that the bourgeoisie and the revisionists of the entire world have made this Cultural Revolution their target of attack. So also revisionist Teng Hsiao-ping is not ready to give recognition to the cultural revolution though he, in line with Liu Shao-ch'i recognizes Mao's thesis on New Democratic Revolution.

Again, the inevitable result of the denial of existence of class struggle in socialism, and consequent neglect in developing the standard of consciousness of the people through all-out and relentless ideological battle against the subtle and complex attacks of bourgeois ideology in socialism, is the revisionist deviation and ultimately restoration of capitalism. This is exactly what happened in the Soviet Union and other east European socialist states. Capitalism has been restored there. As a result of that the correlation of forces in world politics has changed, the imperialists have become most aggressive, and severe attacks are heavily coming down on the democratic and revolutionary movements of the exploited people of different countries.

Main Historic Task of the Proletariat during Socialist Revolution

From the statements of the revisionist leaders of the erstwhile socialist countries, and particularly of the erstwhile Soviet Union, and also from bourgeois confusion and propaganda about socialism, there exists a wrong notion that the class struggle does no more exist in socialism. Even many a communist worker is a victim of this liberal bourgeois thinking because of lack of adequate ideological consciousness. When the socialist economy attains relative stability, this seriously wrong notion may get further strengthened unless the revolutionary party becomes alert in time.

In 1957, there was a counter-revolutionary uprising against the socialist state of Hungary. Analyzing the root cause of the incident, Mao gave this caution to the leaders of the party :

“Strengthen our work and overcome our mistakes and shortcomings. What kind of work should be strengthened? Political and ideological work in the spheres of industry, agriculture, commerce, culture and education as well as in the army, government and Party. You are all preoccupied with your professional duties, with your day-to-day work in economic, cultural and educational, national, defence and party matters, but if you neglect political and ideological work, that will be very dangerous. Now that our Party General Secretary Comrade Teng Hsiao-ping has turned up personally at Tsinghua University and given a talk, I would like all of you to get cracking. The leading comrades of the Central Committee as well as of the provincial, municipal and autonomous region. Party committees should all personally take on political and ideological work. After World War II the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and certain East European Parties no longer concerned themselves with the basic principles of Marxism. They no longer concerned themselves with class

struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat.” (*SW*, Vol.V, pp. 377-378).

Mao actually warned all communists of China to take lesson from the sad experience of the Soviet Union.

So, the possibility of restoration of capitalism does not cease after the capture of power through revolution; even after the overthrow of the capitalist state machine, the resistance of the bourgeoisie is not automatically destroyed and the old ideals and cultural heritage, developed over a historical epoch cannot easily vanish; and herein lies the root of the strength of the bourgeoisie. Lenin also showed that since socialism is the period of transition between capitalism and communism, there remains the urgent necessity to step up class struggle all the more. Otherwise the danger of restoration of capitalism cannot be ruled out.

Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat in socialism does not mean only the political hegemony of the proletariat, but the establishment of proletarian ideology and proletarian moral values embracing the entire social life. As a matter of fact, it is far more difficult to bring revolution in the realm of culture, ideals and moral values than to conduct the political struggle only. Lenin said :

“We must overcome resistance from the capitalists in all its forms, not only in the military and the political spheres, but also ideological resistance, which is the most deep seated and the strongest,” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.31 p. 370).

Lenin unambiguously stated the task of the communists in socialism :

“Education workers, and the Communist Party ... should consider it fundamental to help enlighten and instruct the working masses, in order to cast off the old ways and habituated routine we have inherited from the old system, the private property habits the masses are thoroughly imbued with. *This fundamental task of the entire socialist revolution*

should never be neglected (Italics ours) during consideration of the particular problems....” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31 p.365)

From these invaluable teachings of Lenin three things are clear. First, socialist revolution does not become complete with the seizure of power by the proletariat; it is only the beginning. That is why Lenin termed the intermediate stage between the beginning of socialism to the establishment of communism - the classless, stateless, partyless and all disparityless stage - as the ‘entire period of socialist revolution’

Second, during this entire period, even in socialism, the field of capitalist restoration gets silently fertilized with the decadent bourgeois philosophical, political and cultural outlook acting through forces of habit as the firm foundation of capitalism. Hence, the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat assumes a complex, subtle and difficult form in socialism ; the class struggle in socialism acutely sharpens in the sphere of ideology.

Third, the main task of the proletarian party during this intermediate stage of socialism is to crush the ideological resistance of the bourgeoisie. This really means, in the language of Mao, to transform the man. So, in explaining the aim of the Cultural Revolution he said that, though some capitalist roaders might be removed by it, this was however not the aim of this revolution ; its aim was to change the world outlook, that is, to fundamentally change the ideology and outlook of life.

In the event of any obstruction to this struggle for whatsoever reason, even the understanding of the communist ideology is bound to be vitiated by the liberal bourgeois outlook; and through this path begins the process of revisionist deviation. So to guard against revisionism it is necessary to conduct relentless and all-out ideological struggle against the bourgeois world outlook within the party. Being fully conscious of the unnoticeably subtle but sure influence of the class ideology and class culture in a class divided society, the real

communists always resort to the method of criticism and self-criticism. They do not act differently in words and deeds like the bourgeois politicians, the votaries of 'democracy'. So the real communists invite criticism, and acquire real experience through rectification. That is why in socialism the relation between the communist party and the people is not like that of the rulers and the ruled.

The proletarian democracy in socialism, i.e. the recognised right of the people to criticise, advise and take active role in the running of the state and administration is the main foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This process of conducting the party, the state and the administration along the path of socialism by involving the entire people, is the correct and scientific way to combat bureaucratism in leadership on the one hand and to fight the tendency toward mechanical discipline and lowering of consciousness of the people, on the other. So Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin again and again stressed the necessity of conducting struggle on all questions of economy, politics and culture involving the people in socialism. At the same time they put maximum stress on the class struggle in the ideological sphere in socialism. By this dual process man will be changed into new man under socialism, his consciousness will develop higher and still higher and the struggle against revisionism will remain relentless.

Mao applied these teachings in a most befitting and educative way through the cultural revolution of China. In order to change radically the world outlook, the accustomed thought process derived from the old society, forces of habit, i.e., the firm foundation and the most powerful resistance of capitalism, for irresistible onward march of socialism, one has to take lessons from the history of the Cultural Revolution of, China.

But the lesson has to be drawn as the ever vigilant communists should draw. In the absence of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's authority, the Teng Hsiao-ping revisionist clique, who

had been lurking in wait for an opportunity to come their way, took advantage of the low level of consciousness of the party rank and file and the masses in general to usurp the party leadership and the state. Doing away with the basic tenets and outlook of Marxism-Leninism and distorting the teachings of Mao Tse-tung, they are fast introducing capitalist practices in the Chinese society today, gravely threatening its socialist foundation. Whence came this perilous drift ? Alarmed by real possibility of capitalist infiltration of socialist China, drawing lessons from the betrayal by Khrushchev leadership in the USSR, Comrade Mao had taken the people along for the great leap of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution. And repeatedly he said that it was only the beginning and “the object is to solve the problem of world outlook and eradicate revisionism.” What does stand in the way of carrying the socialist struggle forward to achieve this object of transformation of the world outlook?

Pointing to this question Comrade Shibdas Ghosh warned during the progress of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution itself:

“But the present programme of Cultural Revolution will not be able to free the party completely from the danger of reappearance of revisionism in future. That the individual’s struggle for emancipation enters a new and complex height in a socialist society - they have not been able to correctly grasp the nature of this particular phenomenon and give it a theoretical basis. ... This is one of the fundamental weaknesses of the present Cultural Revolution.” (*SW*, Vol. I, p. 246)

Elaborating this fundamental question during the phase of socialist transition, Comrade Ghosh said :

“In the socialist society of today, it is the old bourgeois concept of individual freedom and mental makeup that stands in the way of conducting a new struggle for the individual’s freedom and emancipation at this new stage. And this old mental

makeup is obstructing individual necessity and individual interest from merging and becoming identified with the social necessity and social interest. ...So, while conducting the struggle for the complete victory of socialism, the main object of the struggle for emancipation of the individual should be to transform the antagonistic nature of contradiction existing between the individual necessity and social necessity into a non-antagonistic one. It is only by achieving a complete success in this struggle through cultural revolution that a basic and qualitative transformation in the content and outlook of the individual's desire and its fulfilment would take place. ...So, it is obvious that the individual's struggle for emancipation has reached a new and complex height and has assumed a new character in the socialist society where, to resolve this problem, a more intense and arduous struggle is to be conducted for complete identification of the self-interest with the interest of society through unflagging dedication and constant vigil." (*Ibid*, pp. 243,244)

In other words, a new standard of ethics, morals and values, that is completely and basically different from and higher than the standard of the bourgeois humanist ethics, morals and values, will have to be attained in course of a most intense, fierce and unrelenting class struggle during the socialist phase of revolution. Because, the contradiction between the individual interest and the social interest is antagonistic in nature. And so long as this antagonistic contradiction persists the state will not wither away ; it will not disappear even after the problems relating to production and other issues have been resolved.

"... so long as the State exists as a reflection of this antagonistic contradiction, even in socialism, the individual must have to submit to the social interest, and trend of revolt against the repressive character of the socialist State would appear repeatedly in individuals and, for this, the social objective would

suffer time and again. ...As a result, the appeal of the nobility of the communist ideology and the power of communist dedication would lose their attraction, or it would lead to the trend of liberalisation. ...And if this process continues, then it would give birth to revisionism and that would only help in the restoration of capitalism.” (*Ibid*, p. 243)

Grim reality has turned out that in the east European socialist countries and in the Soviet Union itself capitalism has been restored and the danger veritably looms over China although there exists a socialist state no doubt. Mankind is passing through one of its darkest hours. But the knowledge of the historical process and the laws of social change, with which the great leaders of the proletariat Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Comrade Mao Tse-tung cautioned the working people against the danger of revisionism, emphatically points to the irrevocable march of society to communism through socialism. That should help the true communists dispel all doubt and sense of uncertainty about what to do now.

History has charged them to be the guardsmen of the bastion of human civilization in its present stage. No doubt they will be the target of fiercest attacks from the imperialists and the revisionists, and sometimes attack from even the helpless and misguided multitude of the masses. They are to endure it all with abiding patience, with their mind and heart set on their mission to reach their cherished goal. Today they have this test to give to prove their love and respect to the giant communist leaders and their allegiance to the cause of humanity. Who else are here to bear this brunt ? Are not the people coming out on the streets across the world cities, holding aloft the portraits of the great leaders of the proletariat ? Is not the rumbling of the thunder rippling the air again ? If man has learnt a single truth it is that truth never dies. Marxism is truth, it will live ever to guide us on. And the east will be red.
