

CHAPTER I

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Section 1 Scope and Objective of Study

The seminal point of enquiry pursued in this study was to examine communist thinking in India on agrarian reforms and rural democracy. This study has analysed these two aspects from the programmatic positions and practical activities of the two leading communist parties in India, namely, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M). Besides the examination of the programmatic positions of the two communist parties over these two issues, their actual practices have been examined on the basis of data collected from the selected areas of West Bengal.

For an appraisal of communist thinking the study has confined the period since 1964 to the late 1980's. The year 1964 is significant in the history of Indian communist parties because of two important reasons. Firstly, in this year there was the first split of Communist Party resulting

in the emergence of the two communist parties with reference to which this study has been carried on. Secondly, it is in this year that communist parties in India for the first time felt it necessary to indicate their respective distinctiveness by adopting programmes on the basis of their own assessment of the socio-economic and political condition of the country and of their own assessment over the international communist movement.

The two communist parties understand as their programme reveal, that the democratic revolution has not been completed in India even to this day under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. Though they differ on the nomenclature of the appropriate revolution which is due to be achieved at the present historical stage of the Indian society, both the parties emphasize that it has to be a democratic revolution - the CPI calls it the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and the CPI(M) calls it the People's Democratic Revolution (PDR) as a step towards the next socialist stage of revolution. Both these parties again emphasize the fact that in Indian society the rural masses constitute the largest segment and therefore, naturally in their thinking the extension of rural democracy is an important element in their targetted democratic revolution. Besides, both the parties admit that agrarian relations in India remain dominated by the feudal, semi-feudal and landlord sections and the bourgeoisie (though

they differ on the amount of domination of the former) so largely that the country's economic, social and political development cannot proceed in the right direction. Therefore, agrarian reforms and rural democracy constitute together a crucial area in the pursuit of their respective programmes in their respective democratic stage of revolution. This study has provided considerable attention in highlighting their respective programmatic positions based on their individual understanding over the national and international situations (as the communists adhere to the aims of Communist Internationalism). The ideology of a Communist Party finds its expression in concrete terms in a given historical context in its programme. Therefore, to make a study of its activities, one has to begin with a study of its programme.

For ascertaining the actual practice on the two programmatic issues, this study has been directed to find the actual practice of the two parties in West Bengal during the period mentioned earlier. For the purpose of understanding the two parties' activity along their lines laid down in their programmes, the study has examined the practical activities through their respective organisations at the lower level (peasant fronts, agricultural labourers' associations, youth organisations etc.) of the two parties. Along with this, the study has analysed the activities of both these parties while they were and are in power in the

state government of West Bengal. But in regard to actual practice the study has been based on data collected from three districts of West Bengal, namely, Midnapore, Burdwan & West Dinajpore where both these parties have marked areas under their respective influence. For this purpose a field survey has been conducted to seek primary information about their separate ways of thinking as well as activity. Such information collected therefrom have been compared with the understanding analysed from their respective programmatic positions on agrarian reforms and rural democracy.

Initially, the study had proposed to cover the period from 1964 to 1986, but since in some cases data have been available upto the year 1990, they have been used only in corroboration of trends already found.

In fine, this study has attempted to examine their programmatic differences and difference between their individual practices on the real political plane over mainly the issues mentioned earlier. Besides, this study has highlighted as to how far the programmatic assertion of the two individual party is being translated into practice.

Here the issues under study have received much thought and attention from many political groups and parties since before and after independence. Therefore, besides the

concern of the CPI and the CPI(M), the two representative views have been drawn in this study from the two political extremities - one from the Indian National Congress and the other, from the Communist Party of India (Marxist -Leninist) (CPIM-L). This has been done to mark the relative position of the CPI and the CPI(M) over these issues from altogether different corners of analysis.

Another aspect revealed from this study is that, however much the cadres and supporters of each communist party may try to appreciate the merit of its own, there has not been any sound attempt to obtain actual data with an academic orientation; the present study is intended to fill this gap.

In addition, this study has thrown light on the question of split of the Indian communist movement in 1964 and on the tension and disagreement in pursuit of a correct programme within the Communist Party of India since its foundation.

In this connection, it may be useful to add the list of research questions to which answers have been sought through this study.

Research Questions

- (a) How does the Communist Party of India (CPI), indicate the nature of democratic revolution ahead for this country ?
- (b) How does the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) indicate the nature of democratic revolution ahead for this country ?
- (c) How does agrarian reform figure in the democratic revolution as the programme and other authoritative literature of the CPI indicate ?
- (d) How does agrarian reform figure in the democratic revolution as the programme and other authoritative literature of the CPI(M) indicate ?
- (e) How does rural democracy figure in the programme and other authoritative literature of the CPI ?
- (f) How does rural democracy figure in the programme and other authoritative literature of the CPI(M) ?
- (g) Are there any other communist or non-communist parties the programmes of which on agrarian reform and rural democracy constitute the boundaries of CPI and CPI(M) on those questions ?
- (h) Do the rural cadre and activists of the CPI show conscious understanding of this party's position

indicated in answer to question nos. (a), (c), and (e) ?

- (i) Do the rural cadre and activists of CPI(M) show conscious understanding of this party's position indicated in answer to question nos. (b), (d) and (f) ?
- (j) Does actual practice vindicate the conscious understanding of the CPI's position indicated in answer to question nos. (a), (c) and (e) ?
- (k) Does actual practice vindicate the conscious understanding of the CPI(M)'s position indicated in answer to question nos. (b), (d) and (f) ?

While pointing to the programmatic differences between the two communist parties in India, this study has duly highlighted the Marxist, Leninist and Maoist principles of programme and their influence over the CPI and the CPI(M) in the framing of their respective programme of action for India's revolution.

As the study concerns - activities of the two communist parties in India, the entire study has been carried out following the Marxist framework of thought elaborated in the methodology. A conscious effort has been made all along to avoid any kind of subjective bias whatsoever.

To be clear enough this study did not incorporate the influence of recent political changes in the socialist world upon the activity of the two communist parties in India as they have not considered it necessary so far to change their positions on the main issues involved in this study in the context of any such changes in the socialist world.

Section 2 On Communist Party Programme

Programmatic difference between the two Communist parties is the result of division of the Communist Party of India into Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M) and Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1964. The latter retains the earlier name of the party. The division of the party and adoption of separate programmes have had far-reaching consequences in the left political movement in India.

It is stated that division of the party¹ was the product of a prolonged inner-party struggle on the question of national and international issues over decades specially in the years following India's independence in August 1947.

The inner-party struggle mainly centered on the class assessment of the transfer of power, the controversy over the role of Indian bourgeoisie in the national liberation struggle and the role of its main political organ i.e. the Congress Party, and Jawaharlal Nehru at its head. They seemed to differ over the significance of Nehru's increasing friendship with the socialist bloc particularly with Soviet Union's, Non-alignment movement, five-year plan, etc. On the other hand, inner-party struggle was also more aggravated by the ideological difference that surfaced in

the world communist movement after the 20th Congress of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in 1956 which took some controversial ideological positions. The India-China border dispute added a new dimension to the political and ideological division inside the CPI².

Thus the ground for the party split was being laid earlier, though the formal split took place in the middle of the year 1964, when 'Tenali Convention' was convened by a section of the party and later they met at Calcutta and adopted a programme in October-November, 1964 in the Seventh Congress. This section of the divided party was named as the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M). The other section which met in December, 1964, at Bombay and adopted a separate programme retained the earlier party name, the Communist Party of India (CPI). Again both of them claim to be the real successor to the pre-split Communist Party of India and its several party Congresses.

After being divided in 1964, each of the two communist parties unequivocally claims itself to be committed to Marxism and Leninism and the ultimate cause of socialist revolution in India. At the same time both are critical of each other; and each one hurls the allegation that the other has deviated from Marxism-Leninism and misreads India's actual situation. This sort of inter-party aspersions is presented in their respective party documents in their habitual polemic manner.

Their ultimate commitment to the historical task of performing socialistic and then communistic revolution in India have been clearly spelt in their respective party programmes. The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) in its programme declares "The Communist Party of India [Marxist] firmly adheres to its aim of building socialism and communism [in India]"³. So also does the programme of the Communist Party of India (CPI) explain : "The Communist Party of India believes that real socialist reconstruction of society ... can be undertaken only by applying the scientific and universal truths of Marxism-Leninism to Indian condition"⁴.

Before we delve into the programmatic differences and their actual practice on certain specific issues which form the subject-matter of this study, it is essential to understand the meaning of 'programme' in communist literature, and the importance, or even indispensability, attached by the architects of communist thought and movement to the programme of a communist party. The practice of prominent communist parties in the world in regard to the use of a programme will also be enlightening.

It is an imperative for the Marxist-Leninist party to have a 'scientific'⁵ programme of action for the attainment of socialism and communism. It should be remembered that the celebrated Manifesto of the Communist Party (February,

1848) was the first of its kind to guide the international organisation of the communists. "... the Manifesto of the Communist Party ... which was the most important programme document of scientific communism appeared in 1848. It openly proclaimed to the whole world the existence and aims of the communists"⁶.

Both Karl Marx and Frederick Engels admitted the necessity of a political programme. They clearly stated it in the 'Preface to the German Edition of 1872' of the 'Communist Manifesto' that "The Communist League, an international association of workers ... commissioned the undersigned [them] at the Congress held in London in November 1847, to draw up for publication a detailed theoretical and practical programme of the party. Such was the origin of the following Manifesto ..."⁷.

To acknowledge the necessity of this historical programme so long capitalism remains, Engels stated "However much the state of things may have altered ... the general principles laid down in the Manifesto are, on the whole as correct to-day as ever"⁸; and "... the Manifesto became a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter"⁹.

Last, The importance of the Manifesto has also been acknowledged by the later Marxists. "The Manifesto was a document of tremendous inspiring force, a document whose

entire contents called for a struggle against the economic and political yoke of the bourgeoisie. Today, too, the Manifesto exerts a strong influence on the minds of millions of people. Its world historical significance and the role it plays in the development of working-class communist movement are a fine proof of the prophetic words uttered by Lenin : 'This little booklet is worth whole volumes ; to this day its spirit inspires and guides the entire organised and fighting proletariat of the civilised world'¹⁰.

So it is clearly meant that any communist organization or any communist party of any individual country must recognise the indelible postulates of the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' and to act likewise for the purpose clearly spelt out in the 'Manifesto'. In doing so, one is free to choose the strategy and tactics i.e. 'revolutionary measures' by properly considering the peculiar 'historical conditions for the time being existing'¹¹.

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that it is indispensable for a communist organisation and a communist party to have a 'revolutionary programme'. 'The Communist League' and the successive 'Communist Internationals' had adopted programmes for chalking out present and future political actions. Again it is seen, each and every communist party in different countries in the world where communist movement has taken place has adopted its own programme for the organised task of it.

In this regard Lenin's view can be recalled. Lenin, the great architect of Socialist Russia emphasised the need for a scientific party programme. In the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) which was convened in exile, London in August 1903, a programme was adopted with the statement that the Party of the Russian Proletariat was one of the contingents of the international working-class movement. It consisted of two sections, framed with a view to the then Russia, namely, a minimum programme of immediate democratic objectives and a maximum programme which declared that 'socialism would be the ultimate goal'¹².

The minimum programme as a whole demanded the complete democratisation of state and social life and the same would be achieved by complete liquidation of tsarist rule and feudalism including remnants of serfdom in the countryside. And the implementation of the minimum programme ensured the optimal conditions for the struggle for socialism, as stated in the maximum programme.

A programme in Lenin's definition represents "a brief, clear, and precise statement of all the things a party is striving and fighting for"¹³ [Emphasis original]. For Lenin, the party programme serves as an ideological, theoretical and political platform for uniting the communists in a voluntary union of like minded persons. He emphasised that

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"a programme must be built on a scientific foundation. It must explain to the people how the communist revolution arose, why it is inevitable, what its significance, nature, and power are, and what problems it must solve"¹⁴. Now, this means that, based on revolutionary teaching and taking into account concrete historical conditions, the Programme should determine both the closest and prospective tasks, and the ways and means of completing them. Historical experience shows that without a clear programme of action the party cannot consolidate and lead the masses, cannot successfully fight for the liberation of the working people, for the elimination of the system of exploitation and for the construction of a new society.

Another question often put in case of a communist party programme is whether it should contain tactical questions of the movement. Commenting on the desirability or otherwise of incorporating the question of tactics and means of struggle in the communist party programme Lenin wrote :

"The Programme should leave the question of means open, allowing the choice of means to the militant organisations and party organisations and Party Congress that determine the tactics of the Party. Questions of tactics, however, can hardly be introduced in the programme - with the exception of the most important questions, questions of principles, such as our attitude to other fighters against autocracy. Questions of tactics will be discussed by the party newspapers as they arise and will be eventually at Party Congresses"¹⁵.

So the party programme is not the place where tactical questions can be discussed and decided as the tactics will have to be changed frequently depending on the ebb and tide of the revolutionary movement and several other factors need to be constantly assessed from time to time and issue to issue. In a very precise way one can say that strategy is meant for revolutionary war, and tactics is meant for revolutionary battle; though the tactics can not be followed in isolation from strategy of a communist party programme. Tactics should constitute an integral part of strategy. The latter can sometime, though not always necessarily, give some valuable hints of tactics. The ultimate aim of tactics is to expedite the strategy; and it has no independent aim other than that of strategy¹⁶.

Views of Mao Tse-tung, the architect of Socialist China, may be referred in matters relating to the communist party programme. Mao emphatically asserted : "we communists do not conceal our political views, definitely and beyond all doubt, our future maximum programme is to carry China forward to socialism and communism"³⁰.

He explained that communist party "programme may be divided into two parts, the general and the specific"¹⁷. He further explained that "Our party must also have specific programme for each period based on general programme. Our

general programme of New Democracy will remain unchanged throughout the stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution"¹⁸.

It is said that programme remains valid for the entire stage of a revolution. But it is not that it can not be amended or elaborated. Only the Party Congress or the Politbureau or Central Committee has the authority to do the same whenever necessary by properly i.e. critically understanding the existing national situation. However, a communist party can elaborate or amend its programme only the matters of national questions particularly the issues relating to tactical matters or for determining the nature of the given stage of revolution.

So, to the Communist Party, the programme must be scientific whose significance is beyond question. Lenin expressed his view in an article "Our Programme" that "There can be no strong socialist party without a revolutionary theory [embodied in the programme] which unites all socialists, from which they draw their convictions, and which they apply in their method of struggle and means of action"¹⁹. A scientific programme is a store-house of ideological weapon, which is resolute and uncompromising for the revolutionary war, and in absence of it, the revolutionary movement is deprived of the right to exist and is inevitably drawn sooner or later to political collapse²⁰.

A communist party adopts a programme and acts according to the guidance of the programme for the sake of the goals to

achieve which the communist party had come into existence, namely, for the socialist transformation of society by making revolution i.e., changing the production relation that existed in capitalism in particular and the mode of production in general.

At the time of the adoption of a programme a communist party must seriously take into consideration a practical and critical understanding of the given situation, i.e., national and international situations, in a way for which Marxist philosophy provides the basic outlook. Particularly, historical materialism indicated by Marx and Engels serves the basic foundation.

Section 3 Concept of Democracy Treated in Marxian Literature:
Sub-section a) i. Concept of Bourgeois-Democracy in the
thoughts of Marx and Engels

The programmatic positions of the CPI and the CPI(M) differ widely on the nature and type of 'democratic' revolution. This stage is obviously to precede the ultimate socialist revolution and is necessary for preparing the prerequisites for that revolution. This overwhelming issue has shrouded the whole gamut of Marxist thinking in India particularly since the 50's. In 1964 when the Communist Party of India was divided into the present Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) this issue became a hotly debated one.

Indeed, the nature and type of 'democratic' revolution and 'alliance of classforces' for this revolution are burning questions before the Marxists in India. Although various analytical syndromes start from almost the same factual points of departure still the points of arrival are wide apart. So, before going into details, it is necessary to place an overview on this matter from the writings of Marx himself, Engels and later Marxists. Their approaches to the democratic revolution in dealing with their specific situations are certainly not similar to the present Indian condition, but their basic theoretical postulations may

present an analytical paradigm which, at least, can help in tracing out the cause and their position behind the difference of understanding of the present CPI and CPI(M) in Indian context for democratic revolution.

Both Marx and Engels, themselves were fully pre-occupied with the problems of capitalism in Europe at their times. Although, side by side, they had formulated a broad theoretical framework for the belated presence of capitalism specially in Germany during the late 40's and 50's of the last century, still this variation was within the general limits of European capitalism. The only similarity between the German and Indian condition is that 'bourgeoisie' is weak in both the cases and unable to complete independently bourgeois-democratic revolution in their respective countries. Indeed, it is to be borne in mind that lateness of capitalism in Germany and the backwardness of capitalism in the ex-colonial countries like India are quite obviously different. Ex-colonial countries are backward in a different way, suffering from a different kind of backwardness, because of the all-important difference of colonialism. Therefore, any sort of linear or mechanical formulation only leads one into a methodological quandary.

Though capitalism as a world phenomenon emerges out of decadent feudal system yet its growth and development

is not uniformly spread over in all the countries at a single moment. Slowly growing but weak (for any reason) bourgeoisie historically strives to take the help of proletariat for early completion of bourgeois democratic revolution. Marx's reaction in this regard left a significant theoretical proposition. While he was writing his magnum opus the Capital, Marx dealt with not only the case of Germany but also left rough notes [later published as Grundrisse], where he took up the question of the notion of pre-capitalist societies²¹.

Besides, Marx viewed the Indian problem of his time, but that too was with a journalistic interest. In his time, he had foreseen the possibility of a capitalist transformation of India under British rule²², but when he had written about Indian situation, the Indian bourgeoisie had not yet grown; consequently, the relations of class-forces were entirely differently structured. Therefore, we have to get an idea of his view on bourgeois-democracy and its relation with the proletariat from his exhaustive study on Germany during the disastrous rising of 1848-49 and a telescoping idea in the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' (written with Engels) and some other writings.

The Manifesto of the Communist Party declared that the communists everywhere were cooperating to unite and bring to an understanding the democratic parties²³ of all

countries and that the struggle for democracy is the first step in the workers' revolution. Marx and Engels viewed that bourgeois-democracy is the first step before the socialist revolution. For them, bourgeois-democracy which is characterised by universal suffrage, political liberties, rule of law and political competition, pre-eminence of legislative power, limited rights and freedom, freedom of speech, the press and of assembly and also the freedom of movement. However, all this can help the proletariat and their party to further its cause. But it is full of complexities with contradictory possibilities, i.e., it can turn with severe reaction to the proletariat.

Marx and Engels in their Address of the Central Council to the Communist League (1850)²⁴ give instructions to the disorganised remnant of Communists in Germany in the wake of disastrous rising in 1848-49. This document has a great significance in that it explicitly contains Marx's views covering the role to be played by a Communist Party in such circumstances. They advise that it is in cooperation with, but at the same time not losing the independence of the working class it is advisable to take cooperation from the petty bourgeois democrats and bourgeois liberals struggling against the weakened reactionary elements who have seen forced to yield limited concessions to the bourgeoisie.

They also worked out the strategy and tactics of the proletariat in the coming bourgeois-democratic revolution

in a different way. They laid "special stress in the Address on the need for the setting up of an independent proletarian party and for isolation from the petty bourgeois democrats"²⁵ without any "special union"²⁶ in the case of struggle against a common opponent. The workers' party would fight independently against the enemy when the democratic petty bourgeois would begin fighting the same enemy. Furthermore, they were not even interested in directing the workers' party to join the bourgeois-democratic government rather they argued for setting up of a "revolutionary workers' governments"²⁷ alongside the bourgeois ones.

Later this rich source of Marxist heritage was endowed to Lenin who carried forward the Marxist thought of his changed circumstances. Marx's theoretical position on bourgeois-democracy was translated in Russia when the bourgeoisie was rising at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries.

Marx and Engels' strategy for revolution in backward countries has taken an obvious importance from their strategy for backward Germany in 1848. Lenin was a close student of this writing on Germany in the 1848 period, and his disciples in other developing countries have generally followed suit. From the most obvious source, the Communist Manifesto, every one can recall, how concluding paragraphs forecast a certain telescoping of revolutions in Germany that we may label a "permanent revolution" (even though Marx and Engels adopted the term momentarily in 1850).

Frederic L. Bander observed very rightly that the Address of the Central Council to the Communist League (1850) of Marx & Engels "... has been extremely influential upon the way in which Lenin conducted the Bolsheviks during the year between the first Russian Revolution of 1905 and the February Revolution of 1917. This scenario has been repeated scores of time in other countries, as Communists seek to gain control on nationalists (i.e. bourgeoisie) against colonial and neo-colonial domination, as well as democratic opposition to bourgeois regimes"²⁸.

Section 3

Sub-section a)ii. Concept of Bourgeois-democracy in the Thoughts of Lenin and Stalin :

The great service Lenin rendered was that he creatively developed the Marxist teachings with reference to the changed historical conditions, and gave it a concrete form on the basis of his practical experience of the Russian revolutions and the international proletarian movement since the death of Marx and Engels. The milestones of his revolutionary struggles were the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905, the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February, 1917 and the victorious October Socialist Revolution of 1917.

"Leninism" Stalin remarked "is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular ... Lenin ... pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy ..."²⁹.

The goal of proletarian revolution which Lenin by his unparalleled leadership achieved was a culmination of successive revolutions. He started his struggle gradually for democracy against the Tsarist-military-feudal regime and then to replace the bourgeois democratic state by the People's Soviets in the final proletarian revolution. Naturally the stamp of his genius has marked many steps, tactical and strategic, in these struggles of the then Russian situation. These instructions have left rich revolutionary heritage to the successive generations of the Communists who dedicated themselves to the cause of proletarian revolution even in their changed perspectives in the later part of the twentieth century.

Since the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P in August 1903 to the February 1917 democracy was the objective. To

attain this objective it was necessary to destroy radically the economic and political power of the feudal lords and the Tsar upon which that system was based. It was seen from the outset that the democratic revolution connoted, to Lenin, as much an economic programme as a political programme. As a Marxist he knew that constitutional measures to alter the political balance of forces in the country would be meaningless and futile without a simultaneous assault on the economic basis which had so long sustained the autocracy. So, for him, the question of democratic revolution was the question whether the proletariat could dispose of sufficient real force to wipe out the landlords and the Tsarist autocracy and to prevent the bourgeoisie from vacillating in this course.

Lenin's theoretical position regarding the democratic revolution and participation of the proletariat therein is evident from his following remark. He argued, it "... was a stage in the transition to socialism and ... socialists had the duty to struggle for democratic rights, even if only a few of them could be fully attained"³⁰.

Moreover Lenin has left a landmark analysis important to the later Marxists of the future generations about the participation in the constitution controlled by the decaying feudal elements and relatively weak bourgeoisie. On the event of the 1st Russian Duma in 1905, the bourgeoisie participated wholeheartedly and it was pretending optimistically that the Russian Duma was no less than that of British Parliament.

Lenin warned the Russian working class and the toiling people that they must not be cheated by the bourgeois illusions. His analysis in this regard founded the basis for the course of his future action up to February 1917. Lenin explained ;

"By constitutional illusions we mean deceptive faith in a constitution. Constitutional illusions prevail when a constitution seems to exist but actually does not ; in other words, when affairs of the state are not administered in the way parliament decides ... the liberal bourgeoisie, dreading the extra-parliamentary struggle, spreads constitutional illusions even when parliaments are impotent ... social Democrats [i.e., members of RSDLP-Bolsheviks] stand for utilising the parliamentary struggle, for participating in parliament; but they ruthlessly expose 'parliamentary cretinism', that is, the belief that the parliamentary struggle is the sole or under all circumstances the main form of political struggle"³¹. (Emphasis original).

Repeatedly Lenin pointed out that the Russian Communists had to insist the point that so long as the autocracy remained undisturbed in its power, so long as the Duma remained 'a fig-leaf for the autocracy',³² and so long as the popular movement was growing in extensiveness and depth, the main object of attention must be the active preparation of an armed uprising. For him it was the obligation of the communists to be the first in the field to give out the slogan of last uprising which would sweep away the remnants to tsarist autocracy and feudalism for ever by the leadership.

of them relying on the bond between the proletariat and the rural proletariat. However, it was successful in Feb. 1917 by the Russian Communists under the guidance of Lenin.

To be brief, in the Russian case the tactical alliance with the bourgeoisie by the proletariat and the whole of peasantry upto the period 1905-07 was the first stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution³³. In the next stage, the bourgeoisie specially the big bourgeoisie moved with the remnants of the tsarist autocracy and feudalism, formed the enemy circle against the radical aim of the proletariat and its close ally the poor peasantry and the rural proletariat and petty bourgeoisie which were actually interested to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution. So it was proved that where the bourgeoisie was not capable of carrying the bourgeois-democratic revolution singly then it urgently sought the help of the proletariat, but at the moment of partial victory when some of their objectives would be fulfilled they turned against their erstwhile ally, the proletariat. It was Marx and then Lenin who uttered cautions for the proletariat about the very

objective nature of the bourgeoisie. They consequently drew up the course of action by which the proletariat and its close ally could fulfil the duty to carry the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the stage of completion, simply because their aim was to carry it further to the socialist stage. To the proletariat, the teachings of Lenin are this that they must be ready for permanent revolution.

In the above, the nature and type of the bourgeois-democratic revolution under the guidance of Russian proletariat and above all under the leadership of Lenin is briefly cited to arrive at a clear methodology about the nature, character and aim of the various participants in the democratic battles. The tactical alliance of the class forces and floor-crossing, betrayal of the bourgeoisie in the work of completion of the democratic revolution and the role of the proletariat to carry the revolution forward are indeed the most important tactical answers left for the future occasions in other countries. Leninism proved the teachings of Marx of 1848-51 as fully scientific, but what was more in Lenin was that he translated the theory of Marx into practice in the given Russian condition.

Lenin's analysis of bourgeois-democracy was theoretically based upon Marx's class analysis. He later developed

it and interpreted this in his own time when new historical phenomena significantly emerged such as imperialism. Following Marx's distinction between the revolutionary progressive and the reactionary phases in the development of the modern bourgeoisie, Lenin distinguished such phases.

The first stage from the French Revolution to the Franco-Prussian war was accordingly the period of the rise and complete triumph of the bourgeoisie, of bourgeois-democratic movement in general and of bourgeois-national movements in particular - the period in which the absolute feudal-absolutist institutions were destroyed. The second phase was that of the full domination and decline of the bourgeoisie towards reactionary even ultra reactionary finance capital. The third phase just beginning in (1907), according to Lenin, found the bourgeoisie in the same situation as the feudal lords were during the first period³⁴. What Lenin observed and concluded in general, is : "From a rising and progressive class the bourgeoisie has turned into a declining, decadent, and reactionary class"³⁵.

Basing on the above framework Lenin developed his analysis on capitalism in his memorable work, 'Imperialism : The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1915)' and many other discourses. In his life time he saw the first imperialist

war in 1914-19. All these were signs of, according to him, decadent bourgeois phase and it was the proper time of the rising of the proletarian movement.

The foregoing theoretical analysis on bourgeois -democracy briefly discussed from Lenin's writings is important to the communists as a method of further analysis for carrying forward proletarian movement. Particularly the strategy and tactics of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in general have a major implication to the colonial and dependent countries. Lenin gave significant attention to the problem of colonial countries in the later phase of his life. Particularly after 1920's Lenin turned his eyes to the problems of colonial and dependent countries. In the Second International Lenin duly discussed the problem of colonial countries. Actually the problem of a theory of revolution, particularly the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in the colonial and dependent countries was taken up very seriously by that International. The clarity of discussion came in the Second Congress in Moscow in 1920 in the course of debate between Lenin & M.N.Roy³⁶. Lenin produced a draft colonial thesis³⁷ which started on an implicit distinction between two qualitatively different situations, i.e., between Russian case and colonial case.

For Lenin Russia was a backward country in Europe, so in the Russian case, it was a question of applying Marx's

general paradigm of a revolution in 'late capitalist' system, such as Marx thought about the case of Germany with the logic of lateness. Quite obviously, Lenin considered the lateness of capitalism and the backwardness of the colonies as different. He developed an altogether different theory with quite a number of the Russian suppositions reversed. It was a qualitative break at least in theory. Lenin's methodological point about the colonial thesis was that - colonies were not just backward because they were suffering from a different kind of oppression by the ruler countries. So the formula of the Russian revolution could not be mechanically applied to the colonies and the dependent countries. It would be a transgression of the methodological basis of the Marxist dialectic.

Various commentators have subsequently interpreted Lenin's 'National and Colonial Question'. Here some important points are worth mentioning which have been considered as providing general guideline to the backward colonial and dependent countries. First of all the thesis called for "the closest alliance with soviet Russia, of all national and colonial liberation movements"³⁸. Another important task is "with regard to the more backward states and nations, in which feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations predominate, it is particularly important to bear in mind : first, that all communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation

movement in these countries, and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rests primarily with the workers of the country the backward nation is colonially or financially dependent on"³⁹ .

In this thesis Lenin further stated, "the need, in backward countries, to give special support to the peasant movement against the land owners, against land proprietorship, against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism, and to strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character ..."⁴⁰

Here Lenin advised the completion of the first stage of bourgeois democratic revolution and his further advice was to "struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois democratic liberation trends in backward countries"⁴¹ . At this time there was a trend in this congress that revolution in the colonies must be a communist revolution⁴² . This trend was mainly held by M.N.Roy.

Lenin asserts in his thesis,

"the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in the countries, the element of future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e.,

those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form⁴³.

Lenin, the successful leader of the successive bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions, had grasped the full significance of the movement for colonial emancipation. His ideas on the proper tactics for harnessing the national revolution in Asia to the overall goal of world revolution had been taking place gradually since 1905 and in the Second Congress of the Communist International in July 1920, his views on the 'National and Colonial Question' were formulated in a set of theses, and formally adopted by the International with minor modifications of this 'Draft Theses'.

Historians recorded the controversy developed in this Congress on the proper tactics for bourgeois-democratic revolution or national revolution in the colonial and backward countries mainly between Lenin & M.N.Roy. The latter was an Indian but formally, the Mexican delegate to that Congress.

Roy's original draft⁴⁴ was a total theoretical alternative to Lenin's thesis. Roy expected the bourgeoisie to betray national revolution and go over to the side of imperialism. For him it was a predetermined certainty that the economic interests of the exploiting classes - of the imperialist and the colonial bourgeoisie - were similar. To Roy contradictions between imperialism and the colonial bourgeoisie were not too fundamental as might help the colonial liberation movement. Therefore, in regard to the colonial liberation movement he was in favour of the consistent revolutionary stream under the leadership of the proletariat, expected to be the hegemonic force in the close future rather than of the movements under bourgeois leadership.

Roy explained the Indian society by applying Marxism straight without any qualification of the specificity of its condition. "India was not under the feudal system"⁴⁵. Feudalism was destroyed peacefully by the induction of British capitalism and the emergence of indigeneous bourgeoisie. This breakdown of feudalism gave rise to a strange capitalism, almost a capitalism by proxy. The Indian economy was controlled by British Commercial capital, not by the indigenous bourgeoisie. As a matter of fact he had built his theory that feudalism was insignificant and had no remarkable dominance in Indian society. For him it

generated a curious situation, existence of capitalistic exploitation, without a capitalistic socio-economic structure. The Indian society, for Roy, was divided into four distinct classes - the landed aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, the petty peasantry and the working class including the landless peasantry⁴⁶. Perhaps it was a simplified model of the class structure calculated to make the Indian and European capitalist societies alike⁴⁷.

Roy could not see the historically progressive nature of the indigenous bourgeoisie in the liberation struggle in India. Even he did not believe that there could be any irreconcilable contradiction between the British and the Indian capitalist classes. Its (bourgeoisie's) ideologies and practices, therefore, were calculated to bring pressure on the imperialists by the help of the masses for simply accomodating a berth in the economic field. Therefore, Roy rejected the movement led by Gandhiji on behalf of the Indian National Congress as it was not a movement for bourgeois democracy, nor a socially based movement. For him, "The movement for national liberation is a struggle of the native middle class against the economic and political monopoly of the imperialist bourgeoisie"⁴⁸. (Emphasis original). So for him, it was not a popular movement. He went on saying that "when the latter [the working class] will begin the struggle earnestly it is expected to be more of a social nature than a political

movement for national liberation. Since 1918, the Indian Movement has entered this stage. It may still have the appearance of a national struggle introducing the masses of the population, but fundamentally, it is a social strife, the revolt of the exploited against the exploiting class, irrespective of nationality" ⁴⁹.

Roy considered that the leaders of the Comintern Congress, basically the Soviet leaders, were to go much too far in conciliating the bourgeoisie, and did not insist sufficiently on the leadership of the proletariat in the Asian revolution. On the other hand, he affirmed categorically that the key role to the world revolution lay in Asia, and that the European proletariat would never accomplish anything until a prior upheaval in the colonies had shattered the foundations of the capitalist order and prepared the ground for its overthrow. Lenin had long fought the tendency of European Social Democrats, including even such radicals as Rosa Luxemburg, to minimize the revolutionary capacities of the non-European peoples and consider the latter as mere passive objects waiting deliverance at the hands of the European proletariat. He was not prepared, however to follow Roy to the opposite extreme. Finally the Congress adopted a position which was basically that of Lenin, with some limited and largely verbal concessions to Roy. Over tactics, it was laid down

that in the colonial countries the communists, both the International and the local, should collaborate with the "bourgeois-democratic" movements (as Lenin had written in his original Draft). Immediately later, on 28th July 1920, in the colonial thesis finally adopted, there was one important change. The words, "bourgeois-democratic" changed into "national revolutionary" or sometimes "revolutionary liberation movements" - a change fraught with contradictory possibilities⁵⁰.

Subsequently there had been intensive debates on exactly how to interpret the significance of this change; whether it was a mere terminological change to pacify Roy, or a more basic analytical shift. Somebody explained that Lenin made quite clear in his report to the Congress that this change was purely formal, since by the nature of things any nationalist movements in the colonies would be of a bourgeois-democratic character⁵¹. Again, on the contrary, it was apparently quite a substantial change, and could have serious applicatory implications in concrete practice⁵². A Soviet economist, Y. Verga in the late 60's thought it was merely a verbal change⁵³. According to him, it did not change the formulation fundamentally, it was nothing more than a terminological manoeuvre to get round Roy's objections. All colonial movements were led by the bourgeoisie or at least, two most important ones of

that period, in China and India, were. According to Verga, the concepts 'national revolutionary' and 'bourgeois -democratic' were interchangeable. In the final analysis, it is seen that Lenin specifically asked for more empirical material for the construction of a theoretically valid and empirically correct colonial thesis for the guidance of the Comintern. Later what was seen is that history was in favour of Lenin's in the long and arduous battle of the colonial liberation movement.

A few years later, specially after the demise of Lenin in 1924 a kind of development was found in the colonial China, that there, the communists who were participating with the bourgeoisie in the antiimperialist struggle were expelled by the Kuomintang, the party of the Chinese bourgeoisie. At the first sight it was a kind of development that may not seem consistent with Lenin's thesis of 1920. Naturally and inevitably the Chinese question figured in the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928 in a big way, because all other colonies were actually being translated into the language of Chinese politics.

"The findings of the Sixth Congress were, in a way, paradoxical. Of course, every body knew that the debate on China was an implied debate on the entire colonial question. Chinese experience naturally determined the later Marxist assessment of the colonial situation. The Sixth Congress thesis implied that the

conditions had sufficiently altered to make a 180° turn from Lenin's position in the Second Congress"⁵⁴ .

The thesis started with the assessment that the internal situation had changed in terms of "the economic & social structure"⁵⁵ - "strengthening of elements of capitalist and industrial development, intensification of the agrarian crisis, growth of the proletariat 'and' intensified deprivation of the peasantry"⁵⁶ . The external situation had also changed in two lines : intensification of aggressiveness of the imperialist countries on the one hand, and growth of the anti-imperialist power of the Soviet Union, on the other. As a result of this change, colonial movements of the future were to develop anti-imperialist emancipatory struggling front with the forces of internal class struggle.

The debate over the Chinese question was historically important because the expulsion of the Chinese communists by the Chinese bourgeoisie from the anti-colonial struggling front forced the colonial question into the face of debate with the earlier thesis formulated by Lenin and adopted by the Second Congress in 1920.

The thesis of the Sixth Comintern Congress noted that "the hegemony of the proletariat in the national-revolutionary movement finally impelled the native

bourgeoisie in the camp of reaction"⁵⁷. Besides, by the augmentation of the agrarian revolution the petty bourgeoisie also joined the reactionary camp⁵⁸. After all, these were the positive developments, the thesis welcomed, in the liberation movement in the colonies.

The basic understanding of the colonial question in the Second Congress had gone into a sea change in the Sixth Congress. Not only the terminological change (i.e. from bourgeois-democratic revolution in the Draft thesis to the national revolution in the final thesis of the said Congress) made by Lenin, but also actually the concept was almost entirely altered in the due course of time. Now in the Sixth Congress, the composition of class forces for liberation movement was radically realigned which showed a marked contrast of Lenin's Thesis in the Second Congress. Lenin thought of the proletariat, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and even a section of the national bourgeoisie to be a part of the movement. Lenin found dualism among the ranks of bourgeoisie in the colonies. So for him it was a predictable behaviour that ultimately the bourgeoisie would take shelter in the reaction camp of the imperialists for fear of the growing upsurge of the proletariat. Then there were only the proletariat and the peasantry with the communist party as the hegemonic force.

The Sixth Congress remarkably altered the perspective of the revolution included the hegemony of the communist party as a political precondition in the national revolution.

Historically the findings of the Sixth Comintern Congress took the support of the Chinese case of 1927 and the first great antiimperialist struggle in India (1919-22) which ended in the betrayal of the case of the national revolution by the Indian Bourgeoisie. The thesis of the Sixth Congress which contained a section specifically on India which visualised and explained the Indian situation of 1919-22 as "The real threat to British domination comes, not from the bourgeois camp, but from the growing mass movement of the Indian workers"⁵⁹ and in the maturing of an agrarian revolution, a forcing of the Indian reality into the Chinese pattern. The thesis saw a "collapse of the national-revolutionary movement and gradual decline of bourgeois nationalism".

The findings of the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928 for the colonial question had left a bunch of radical and unilinear oversimplified concepts, had no match with the reality of Indian condition. It overlooked, for example, the basic reality of the Indian movement. "The national movement in India presented a much more complex picture here in terms of the class patterns of leader and the led. The

movement movement was no doubt a mass movement. The bourgeoisie supplied the leadership, the mass provided the ordinary cadre. It was patently unreasonable, in the Indian case, to think of a text book division between the bourgeois movement and the mass movement. Actually, the bourgeois movement had a mass following; the mass movement had a bourgeois leadership. It was one movement, not two"⁶⁰.

'Theses on Revolutionary Movements in the colonies and the semi-colonies' in the Comintern and National and Colonial Questions of the Sixth Comintern Congress convened in Moscow from 17 July to 1 September, 1928, had opened with a formal declaration, actually quite misleading, of continuity with the theses of the Second Comintern Congress held in Moscow in 1920. "Methodologically, and in the abstract sense what the new theses attempted was not wrong. The basic methodal and epistemic tenets of Marxism sanction a reservation of conclusions if the situation has qualitatively changed. The defect of theses was not that it attempted a change. It was that it saw a long-term and essential change, where there was none. So the defect of then theses was empirical, not methodical"⁶¹.

In the end, this line of argument actually made a series of collapse of the specifics of various revolutions at various levels of historical development and national particularisms and denied Lenin's basic theory of a differentiation of levels leading to differentiated models of social change.

Section 3

Sub-section b) i. Mao's New Democracy (People's Democracy)

Mao Tse-tung, the Chief architect and leading theoretician of modern socialist China whose adoption of Marxism-Leninism to Chinese condition has a greater significance to the cause of revolutionary movements towards the road of socialism in the Third World and in the Asian countries in particular.

His major significance lies in the continuation of the well-established Leninist principle that revolution in a pre-capitalist country must have two stages a 'bourgeois-democratic' and a 'socialist' one⁶².

Concept of New Democracy :

In his own country, Mao proceeded to declare that in China the first of these would take the form of what he called 'New-Democracy'⁶³. This new-democracy would be distinguished from the 'old' bourgeois-democratic revolutions of Europe and America by the fact that it would result "not in a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie but in a dictatorship of the united front of all revolutionary classes under the leadership of the proletariat"⁶⁴.

At the time of Mao, the Chinese society was colonial, semi-colonial and semifeudal, and the principal enemies were imperialism and feudalism. The tasks of the revolution were to overthrow these two enemies by means of a national and democratic revolution, in which the bourgeoisie sometimes could take part, because the edge of revolution directed against imperialism and feudalism and not against capitalism and capital, private property in general even if the big bourgeoisie might often betray the revolution and become its enemy; the character of Chinese revolution in this stage was a democratic variant of bourgeois democratic revolution⁶⁵. Then the revolution was to be carried forward to the second stage, in which a socialist society would be established.

The forces behind the new democratic revolution were "the proletariat, the peasantry, the intelligentsia and the other petty bourgeoisie which undoubtedly constitute the basic forces determining China's fate"⁶⁶.

The role of the Chinese bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, Mao assessed in the following manner. "Being a bourgeoisie in a colonial and semi-colonial country and oppressed by imperialism, the Chinese bourgeoisie retains a certain revolutionary quality at certain periods and to a certain degree ... and it may ally itself with the proletariat, and the petty-bourgeoisie

against such enemies as it is ready to oppose"⁶⁷. He further argued, "Here the task of the proletariat is to form a united front with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism and the bureaucratic and warlord governments without overlooking its revolutionary quality"⁶⁸.

Mao has explained the dual character of the Chinese bourgeoisie when they are confronted by dual enemy. They may unite with the workers and peasants against imperialists and feudal lords, but when the workers and peasants are awakened they may turn round to united with their erstwhile enemy against the workers and peasants⁶⁹. He goes on saying, "This is the general rule applicable to the bourgeoisie everywhere in the world, but the trait is more pronounced in the Chinese bourgeoisie"⁷⁰.

The leadership for the new-democratic revolution, Mao preserved very significantly for the Chinese proletariat and not the Chinese bourgeoisie. Mao explained, "In China, it is perfectly clear that whoever can lead the people in overthrowing imperialism and the forces of feudalism can win the people's confidence, because these two, and specially, imperialism, are the national enemies of the people ... [but] History has proved that the Chinese bourgeoisie can not fulfil this responsibility, which inevitably falls upon the shoulders of the proletariat"⁷¹.

In the ultimate analysis Mao reached the conclusion that "The Chinese democratic republic which we desire to establish now must be a democratic republic under the joint dictatorship of all antiimperialist and anti-feudal people led by the proletariat, that is a new-democratic republic ..."⁷² .

In short, the concept of Mao's new-democracy is vastly different from that of the democratic revolutions of Europe and America in that it results not in the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie but in the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes under the leadership of the proletariat.

Again it also differs from a socialist revolution, in that it overthrows the rule of the imperialists, feudal lords and reactionaries in China but it does not destroy any section of capitalists who were capable of contributing to the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle. So the Chinese revolution taken as a whole involves two-fold task - the new-democratic revolution in the first stage, and proletarian socialist revolution in the next stage⁷³ . For him, the Chinese society can advance only through such revolutions, there is no other way⁷⁴ .

Historical Analysis made by Mao to Reach the Conclusion of the Concept of New Democracy :

Mao's theoretical conclusion in 'new democracy' as an intervening stage towards socialist revolution, can be understood by his critical understanding of the Chinese history and his assessment of the changing world. Now let it be examined how has this historical characteristic, i.e., the concepts of 'new-democracy' come into being. To justify this answer Mao goes over to the study of the historical development of China and of the world.

According to Mao, "A brief study of the historical development of China and the world shows that this characteristic [of new-democracy] did not emerge immediately after the Opium War, but took shape later, after the first imperialist World War and the October Revolution in Russia"⁷⁵ .

The colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal character of the Chinese society justifies that the Chinese revolution must be divided into two stages. The first step is to change the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal form of society into an independent, democratic society. The second is to carry the revolution forward and build a socialist society⁷⁶ .

Mao analysed the Chinese history. The preparatory for the first step began with the Opium War in 1840, i.e., when

as the alignment of revolutionary forces is concerned, it forms part of the proletarian socialist world revolution. Therefore, for him, after 1917 the Chinese revolution of its first stage must be new-democratic revolution which is to be completed to go to the next socialist stage.

Mao emphasised much on the first imperialist World War and the first victorious socialist revolution which changed the whole course of world history and ushered in a new era in which the world capitalist front has collapsed in one part of this earth. It has revealed its decadence everywhere else, in which the remaining capitalist part can not survive without plundering the wealth of the colonies and semi-colonies, in which the socialist state has been established and has proclaimed its readiness to give active support to the liberation movement of the colonies and the semi-colonies⁷⁹ .

Mao goes on saying, in this era, any revolution in any colony or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism, i.e., international bourgeoisie or international capitalism, no longer comes within the old category of bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within the new category. It is no longer part of the old bourgeois, or capitalist world revolution, but is part of the new world revolution, the proletarian socialist world revolution. Such revolutionary colonies and semi-colonies can no longer be

regarded as allies of the counter revolutionary front of world capitalism, they have become allies of the revolutionary front of world socialism. Therefore, such a revolution inevitably becomes part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution⁸⁰ .

The concept of 'new-democracy', Mao advocates, as a general theory or concept applicable to the colonial and semi-colonial countries where the imperialist domination is an existing fact.

In support of Mao's concept of 'new-democracy' as a general theory, Liu Shao-Chi wrote "The thought of Mao Tse-tung ... make great and useful contributions to the struggle for emancipation of the peoples of all countries in general, and of the peoples of the East in particular"⁸¹ . Therefore, it meant that when the Chinese revolution was victorious the masses of many colonial countries would follow the example of China and similar victories of their own, because all these revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial countries would have a 'new democratic' character like that of China. However, this statement has been interpreted simply as an affirmation of the solidarity uniting all dependent countries, and of the family resemblance characterizing their political forms⁸² .

In people's democracy, Mao states "who are the people ? At the present stage in China, they are the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. These classes, led by the working class and the Communist Party, unite to form their own state and elect their own government; they enforce their dictatorship over [the stooges of] imperialism - the landlord class and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, as well as representative of those classes"⁸³ . He spells out the concept of people's democratic dictatorship in this way. "The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the people's democratic dictatorship"⁸⁴ .

Mao states "The people's democratic dictatorship is based on the alliance on the working class, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, and mainly on the alliance of the workers and peasants ... these two classes are the main force in overthrowing imperialism and the ... reactionaries"⁸⁵ .

The people's democratic dictatorship needs the leadership of the working class. For it is only the working class that is most farsighted, most selfless and most thoroughly revolutionary. The entire history of revolution proves that without the leadership of the working class revolution fails and that with the leadership of the working class revolution

triumphs⁸⁶ . Mao stresses upon the role of the working class leadership, on the epoch of imperialism, for the unity over the imperialism, feudalism and big bourgeoisie and for establishing people's democratic state or new democratic state. Working class and the peasantry are the close allies. The transition from new democracy to socialism also depends mainly upon their alliance.

Mao states "apart from who leads whom, the principle of democracy stated above corresponds as a general political programme to what we call People's Democracy or New Democracy"⁸⁷ . Therefore, there is no difference between people's democracy and new democracy. Mao summed up in this manner "it is the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class (through the Communist Party) as based upon the alliance of workers and peasants. This dictatorship must unite as one with the international revolutionary forces. This is our formula, our principal experience, our main programme"⁸⁸ .

Role of Peasantry in the Democratic Revolution may be a Lesson to the Colonial, Semi-colonial and Backward Countries :

The role of peasantry in the democratic revolution particularly in the countries where feudalistic features

are prominent has been given importance. In the context of democratic revolution in China, i.e., in the stage of New Democracy, Mao stated "... the Chinese revolution is essentially a peasant revolution and that the resistance to Japan now going on has essentially peasant resistance. Essentially, the politics of New Democracy means giving the peasants their rights⁸⁹ " where the economy and polity of a society is predominantly dominated by the strong presence of feudal and semi-feudal relations of production and necessity of peasant participation in the revolution has been acknowledged. J.V.Stalin once delivered a speech Concerning the National Question in Yugoslavia in the Yugoslav Commission of E.C.C.I. March 30, 1925; he stated, "... the peasantry constitute the main army of the national movement, ... there is no powerful national movement without the peasant army, nor can there be. That is what is meant when it is said that, in essence the national question is a peasant question"⁹⁰ . [Emphasis original].

While assessing the role of the national forces participated in the anti-Japanese War Mao observed, "The anti-Japanese war is essentially a peasant war ... And essentially it is the peasants who provide everything that sustains the resistance to Japan and keeps us going. By 'essentially' we mean basically, not ignoring the other sections of the people, as Stalin himself has explained.

As every school boy knows, 80 per cent of China's populations are peasants. So the peasant problem becomes the basic problem of the Chinese revolution"⁹¹.

[Emphasis original]. But he reserves the duty of leadership in the hands of the working class as that is the most farsighted and selfless revolutionary force among all the forces in the revolution. In the epoch of imperialism, in no country can any other class lead any genuine revolution to victory⁹². Therefore, under the leadership of the working class, the peasantry constitutes the main & strongest force in the countries where feudal, semi-feudal elements are present and the spread of capitalism is limited to degree due to circumstances - the presence of imperialists from the above, and the existence of feudal and semi-feudal forces.

In formulating tactics Mao was very categorical that poor peasants & rural proletariat are the vanguards of the revolution⁹³ where the middle peasants are always gripped with vacillating attitude and they think that the revolution will not bring them much good. Mao stated, "If it essential for the peasant associations to get the middle peasants to join and to do a good deal more explanatory work among them"⁹⁴. Mao has deserved, that "the rich peasants are not keen on doing any work for the [revolutionary] associations. They remain inactive throughout"⁹⁵, because they are not the

benefited section in the peasant revolution. Although the rich peasant stratum is exploited by the imperialist and bourgeois market and landlords (warlords) still this stratum does not see any effective provision in the peasant revolution. Therefore, the demand of the situation is to make it inactive in siding with the reactionaries in the peasant revolution in the democratic stage.

This China's experience serves as a lesson before the communists of the countries where imperialist, feudal, semi-feudal forces are strong.

Relation and Impact of the World Proletarian Revolution :

Mao claimed that his theory of 'new democracy' is a general theory emerged after the first World War and the Socialist Revolution of Russia in 1917, and it has world wide applicability where imperialist domination is a standing fact. He further goes on saying that "The correct thesis the Chinese revolution (i.e., new-democratic revolution) is a part of world revolution"⁹⁶. He argued, "The World Revolution' no longer refers to the old world revolution, for the old bourgeois revolution has long been a thing of the past, it refers to the new world revolution, the socialist world revolution. Similarly, to form 'part of' means to form part not of the old bourgeois but of the new

socialist revolution. This is a tremendous change unparalleled in the history of China and the world"⁹⁷ .

Mao acknowledges that his political thesis has been formulated with help from Stalin. He wrote, "This correct thesis [the new-democracy] as advanced by the Chinese Communists is based on Stalin's theory"⁹⁸, Mao quoted Stalin where Stalin wrote an article (in 1918) commemorating the first anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin wrote;

"The great world-wide significance of the October Revolution chiefly consists in the fact that :

i) It has widened the scope of the national question and converted it from the particular question of combating national oppression in Europe into the general question of emancipating the oppressed people's, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism;

ii) It has opened up wide possibilities for their emancipation and the right paths towards it, has thereby greatly facilitated the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples of the West and the East, and has drawn them into the common current of the victorious struggle against imperialism;

iii) It has thereby erected a bridge between the socialist West and the enslaved East, having created a new front, a revolution against world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian Revolution, to the oppressed people of the East"⁹⁹ .
[Emphasis original].

Mao further wrote, "since writing this article, Stalin has again and again expounded the theory that revolutions

in the colonies and semi-colonies have broken away from the old category and become part of the proletarian-socialist revolution"¹⁰⁰.

Mao states, "The new-democratic revolution is a part of the world proletarian-socialist revolution, for it resolutely opposes imperialism, i.e., international capitalism"¹⁰¹. To oppose international capitalism i.e., imperialism the revolutionary forces headed by the proletariat in the colonial and semi-colonial countries seeks to advance towards socialist revolution through the completion of new-democratic revolution which is what Mao has described as proletarian-socialist in character in lieu of old bourgeois type. Mao states "This revolution has the proletariat of the capitalist countries as its main force and the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies as its allies"¹⁰². Mao explains it "No matter what classes parties or individuals in an oppressed nation join the revolution, and no matter whether they themselves are conscious of the point or understand it, so long as they oppose imperialism, their revolution becomes part of the proletarian - socialist revolution and they become its allies"¹⁰³. Mao Tse-tung views his theory of new-democracy is not an isolated fact applicable to the Chinese condition only, but is an extensive phenomenon which has emerged after the first imperialist world war and the first socialist

revolution in Soviet Russia in 1917. From them, according to Mao, it is applicable to the colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries of the Third World with necessary consideration of their national peculiarities. Again this concept has a definitive link or itself a part of the world-proletarian-socialist revolution, a variant of, or rather in place of old bourgeois-democracy, simply because it opposes the world imperialism and capitalism. He has argued this theory of 'New-Democracy' and its follow up actions leading to the socialist revolution have full integrity with the communist-internationalism rejecting the claim of his close comrades both inside and outside his country who claimed his theory put forward a 'Chinese path'.

Mao's Debt to and Departure from Marx and Lenin ;

Mao's debt to and departure from Lenin the leader of the socialist revolution in Russia has been the subject of prolonged polemics participated by both the Marxist and non-Marxist scholars.

As Marxists both Lenin and Mao regard Marxism as a scientifically-based system of philosophical, economic and socio-political views; it is the doctrine of the cognition and transformation of the world. But the difference is apparently in the application of Marxism to the peculiarly different societies. Both of them face different subjective

and objective conditions of their respective national societies to transform them into the stage of socialism.

Lenin being the fore-runner, Mao's debt to him is obvious. He owes to Lenin, among other things, very significantly the Leninist principle of two stages of revolution (in a country where democratic revolution has not bloomed, i.e., pre-capitalist phenomena are dominant), the first stage becomes the bourgeois-democratic (or its variant, to Mao, it is a new-democratic) and the second stage is the socialist.

Mao owes to Lenin the theory of 'imperialism' which explains how normally hostile classes, for example the different sections of bourgeoisie, in colonial and semi-colonial or dependent countries are united by a common interest in opposing foreign exploitation. In this democratic revolution against imperialist, feudal and semi-feudal forces a broad alliance can be made on the basis of joint revolutionary democratic dictatorship with the bourgeoisie led by the proletariat¹⁰⁴.

Besides, Mao has debt to Lenin for the idea of an alliance between the proletariat and certain other classes particularly the peasantry, as the form of state power during the 'democratic' phase of the revolution. More, even to Lenin's disciple, Stalin, Mao owes the formula of the 'four-class block' (workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and

national bourgeoisie) which lies at the heart of his theory of 'people's democratic dictatorship',¹⁰⁵.

Mao got the rich source of heritage of Marxism from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. He gathered, very scientifically, together all the scattered elements, i.e., raw materials in the treasure of Marxism and transformed them scientifically suited to the condition of China for furthering Chinese revolution in particular and world revolution in general in the era of decaying imperialism. It is not improper to say that Mao's thought is a variant of Leninism, because Mao has taken over unchanged elements from Lenin and transformed them for changed circumstances. Here lies the departure of Mao from his heritage. It is argued that "... though much of this Leninist and Stalinist heritage is still apparent in Mao Tse-tung's thought, it has been transformed into something which is not only different but which has its own characteristic unity"¹⁰⁶. Besides, Lenin had developed the general theory of imperialism and had spelt out, at the second Comintern Congress, the detailed tactics of collaboration with 'bourgeois' nationalists to be applied by communists in colonial and semi-colonial areas¹⁰⁷. However, this was in theory in Lenin, but for Mao all such compromise with the 'bourgeoisie' and 'nationalism' were dictated by necessity rather than by choice and he had to work with it practically. Again, for Lenin and Stalin, the necessity of compromise with the national bourgeoisie and

petty bourgeoisie was a mere passing phase in the development of revolution, but for Mao, it was possible to go all the way with them at least until the cultural Revolution was successful.

Critics further argued, Lenin was European primarily interested in world revolution, who regarded the very existence of national difference as a misfortune, though as a realist he was quite prepared to compromise with nationalism if in this way he could harness the revolutionary energies of the colonial countries to his larger goal. Mao, on the other hand, for whom nationalism is not a necessary evil but an authentic value in itself. If there can be no doubt that Mao is authentically nationalist, it is scarcely to question that he is also authentically revolutionary he belongs to the Leninist tradition¹⁰⁸.

Mao's subjective orientation was fully made up with the Marxist and more often by the Leninist principles and the objective understanding was made up with the existing Chinese society and the impact of imperialist and semi-feudal influence on it.

However, there are some of the main aspect of Mao's thought regarding the democratic revolution before going to the socialist revolution relevant to the dependent countries of the Third World and Asiatic countries in particular.

Mention may be made in this place that Mao was confident in judging the objective conditions of Asia and

India in particular to utilise China's experience in launching the democratic revolution with the tactical alliance of forces resemble to that China. Mao wrote "The Indian people is one of the great Asian people, with long history and vast population; in many respects, her past fate and her path to the future resemble those of China. I firmly believe that India, relying on the ... Communist Party ... and the unity and struggle of all Indian patriots, will certainly not remain long under the yoke of imperialism and its collaborators. Like free China, a free India will one day emerge in the socialist and people's democratic family ..."¹⁰⁹ Mao's conviction was that India's path of revolution would be quite nearly similar to that of China, although, as a Marxist, he believed the influence of national peculiarities sometime might steer the revolution in a non-conventional way still he emphasised the basic strategic policies which might be similar to that of China particularly the class alliances.

Section 3

Sub-section b) ii. Other National Aspects (National Democracy)

The seminal idea of the two-stages of revolution - one 'democratic' and another 'socialist' has been recognised as well-established Marxist-Leninist principle for social

change. The debate over the democratic revolution has been the part of ideological and tactical exercise since it attaches many national peculiarities. Both Marx and Lenin were of the opinion that democratic revolution in the European countries was 'bourgeois-democratic revolution'. This theorem holds good for the European countries where bourgeoisie emerged as a strong social force and led the revolution against the feudal and monarchical rule. For this revolution the bourgeoisie sought the help of the working class¹¹⁰, peasants and intelligentsia and was successful in establishing its hegemony over all other classes. Therefore, the immediate stage of social change, according to Marx and Lenin, was socialist stage by the leadership of the proletariat and its party - the communist party in alliance with the peasantry against the bourgeois government.

But the case of the Asian and other colonially ruled countries was quite different. Particularly the bourgeoisie in these countries are not sufficiently matured largely due to the imperialist pressure over them. Therefore the dynamics of social change does not necessarily follow what has been prescribed for the European countries.

The social paradigm of the Asiatic, African & Latin American countries is quite different from that of the European counterpart. The bourgeoisie of these countries is not powerful enough to launch decisive struggle against the imperialist, feudal and landlord power-pressure. Imperialism

and feudalism with their variants exist in these countries. They wield maximum state power. The bourgeoisie of these countries, therefore, is not capable of completing bourgeois-democratic revolution. Naturally the burden of democratic revolution rests with the other progressive sections which emerged in the meantime to carry out the struggle for socialist society.

Another historical fact, the October Socialist Revolution of Soviet Russia (1917) has paved the way for the organisation of the proletarian party, i.e., Communist and Workers' Party which has emerged as a fully revolutionary force. In this changed context the democratic revolution must not be the same old bourgeois-democratic. For the first time, Mao Tse-Tung practised it and was successful in the Chinese condition. He coined this democratic revolution as 'New Democracy' or People's Democracy¹¹¹.

The revolutionary forces for the new democracy or people's democracy are "the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. These classes, led by the working class and the communist party, unite to form their own government, they enforce their dictatorship over [the agents of] ... imperialism - the landlord class and bureaucratic bourgeoisie as well as representatives of those classes"¹¹².

Mao states "the people's democratic dictatorship is based on the alliance of the working class, the peasantry

and the urban petty bourgeoisie, and mainly on the alliance of the workers and peasants ... These two classes are the main force in overthrowing imperialism and the ... reactionaries"¹¹³.

Mao summed up, in this manner : "... it is the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class (through the communist party) and based upon the alliance of workers and peasants. This dictatorship must unite as one with the international revolutionary force. This is our formula, our principal experience, our main programme"¹¹⁴.

The Chinese experience of people's democracy or new democracy has got definite followings in the Asiatic, African & Latin American countries with states ruled by imperialist, feudal & landlord and big bourgeoisie. The Asiatic countries, particularly the countries like India which are recently liberated from direct colonial rule are yet to finish democratic revolution. This is the opinion of the national and international communist circles. Naturally the communists of these countries get impetus from the new democratic revolution practiced in the Chinese soil, although they have an earlier example - the bourgeois-democratic revolution of Lenin.

What is more, the communists of India and some other Asiatic countries are in search of democratic revolutionary strategy which will be suitable to their peculiar and particular national condition. In India, some of them

(Communists in the CPI-M) proposed the people's democratic revolution, a prototype of Chinese example¹¹⁵ and some of them (communists in the CPI) argued for national democratic revolution as a variant of bourgeois-democratic revolution¹¹⁶. The strategy and tactics of these two types of democratic revolution are quite different. Therefore, at least a brief discussion is warranted to know the respective programmes for democratic revolution they preach for.

National Democracy

The concept of "national democracy" as opposed to people's democracy has its genesis in the Second Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in 1920¹¹⁷. The thesis of the Second Congress of the Communist International (which was also called as Second Comintern Congress) marked the intense debate over the role of communist party regarding its strategic and tactical relationship with the national bourgeoisie. The role of national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries, Lenin's thought, was always opposed to imperialism and colonialism. Although M.N.Roy, an Indian Communist but Mexican delegate in that Congress held the view that the bourgeoisie in a colony to betray the national revolution and go over to the side of imperialism during the mass upsurge of emancipatory struggle.

But Lenin had an altogether different understanding regarding the colonial issues which had some influence of the Russian experience. He was not categorically against the bourgeois-leadership in the colonial liberation movement. The Draft theses called for "the closest alliance with Soviet Russia, of all national and colonial liberation movements"¹¹⁸. It exhorted all communist parties in the colonies to "assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries" to give "special support to the peasant movement against the landowners, against the landed proprietorship, and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism"¹¹⁹. He further advised to "struggle attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in backward countries"¹²⁰. Lenin further suggested in the Draft theses that, "The Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in the colonial and backward countries ... The communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois-democracy in the colonial and backward countries ..."

When the colonial theses were finally adopted, there was one important change in the face of strong opposition from an alternative thesis placed in that Congress by M.N. Roy. The words "bourgeois-democratic" were changed into "national-revolutionary" or sometimes "revolutionary-liberation movements"¹²¹.

However, Lenin's theoretical formulation for the colonial and backward countries was guided by the Marxian methodological understanding of the contradiction between bourgeoisie in the colonial and backward countries and imperialism. The strategy for 'national democratic' revolution is based on the acceptance of the theoretical understanding of Lenin provided in the Second Congress of the Communist International (1920). Communists in the countries newly liberated from colonial exploitation consider the contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the colonial and neo-colonial powers as the basic contradiction even at this stage. Therefore, they call for a broad democratic front including the national bourgeoisie to end the anti-imperialist anti-feudal, national democratic revolution in this democratic stage as a prelude to the next socialist revolution.

Lenin in his colonial theses did not prescribe any precondition of the proletariat leadership but it asked for participation with the national bourgeoisie for early completion of the democratic revolution.

But the shift of policy in view of the change of some empirical facts was clearly echoed in the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928 held in Moscow. The betrayal of the Kuomintang party the party of the Chinese bourgeoisie in 1927 and the withdrawal of the mass movement

in India during the national upsurge of 1919-1922 forced the Sixth Congress to reconsider its earlier colonial policy. Although this Sixth Congress had taken a paradoxical view of the working-class leadership still an alternative policy was in the verge of emergence which was practised by Mao and his Chinese communists since then, and later which was popularly known as 'people's democratic revolution' in this democratic stage. This stood for absolute proletarian leadership in this democratic revolution and a front composed of working classes, peasantry, middle class and the national bourgeoisie.

The Maoist formulation of People's Democratic revolution as an immediate democratic stage towards the socialist revolution was not opposed by the CPSU leaders during the entire Stalin era as anti-Marxist-Leninist tradition. At that time many countries in Asia accepted the People's Democratic revolution as a strategic goal in the democratic stage of revolution. In India, the CPI (before split) in its 1951 first Party Programme declared People's Democratic revolution as its immediate strategic goal, so also did the Burmese Communist Party for Burma. Many Communist Parties of the Asiatic countries found close resemblance with the Chinese path.

But this scenario had begun to change following the ideological dispute between the CPSU and the CPC for the former's declared policy of peaceful transition to socialism

and peaceful co-existence with the capitalist bloc in its 20th Party Congress in 1956. This change of attitude of the CPSU leaders in the post-Stalin Russia and the tense situation of the Cold War period and the presence of Socialist China as an alternative axis within the socialist bloc which might threaten the CPSU's hegemonic influence over the World Communist movement were the important events which influenced the later course of communist thinking and attitudes. Their relationship sharply deteriorated when the CPC withdrew its endorsement on the resolution of the 81 Socialist and Workers' Parties' Conference held in Moscow in 1960. The CPC strongly criticised the CPSU as revisionist because it had abandoned the Marxist-Leninist path of revolution and it had become a social imperialist force. On the other hand, the CPSU accused the CPC that it had broken the solidarity within the socialist bloc and had become left sectarian. Thenceforth the CPSU leaders started to discard everything Chinese and began to formulate its policy based on its understanding for the colonial, semi-colonial and newly liberated countries so that it could mobilise the communist parties of these countries in its favour.

The CPSU's formulation on the question of democratic revolution which was basically opposed to the Maoist line was to call for the early completion of national democratic revolution in the colonial, semi-colonial and even in the newly liberated countries. It has been claimed as quite

different from the classical bourgeois or bourgeois-democratic revolution¹²². For it, "The urgent tasks of national rebirth facing the countries that have shaken off the colonial yoke can not be effectively accomplished unless a determined struggle is waged against imperialism and the remnants of feudalism by all the patriotic forces of the nation united in a single national-democratic front"¹²³. [Emphasis added]. It considered the principal threat surely to come from the imperialist forces, therefore participation of all patriotic forces including the national bourgeoisie should be ensured. In its assumption, "In present conditions, the national bourgeoisie of the colonial and dependent countries unconnected with imperialist circles, is objectively interested in the accomplishment of the principal tasks of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution, therefore retains the capacity of participating in the revolutionary struggle against imperialism and feudalism. In that sense it is progressive"¹²⁴. And "The national-democratic tasks on the bases of which the progressive forces of the nation can and do unite in the countries which have won their freedom, are : the consolidation of political independence, the carrying out of agrarian reforms in the interest of the peasantry, elimination of the survivals of feudalism, the uprooting of imperialist economic domination, the restriction of foreign monopolies and their expulsion from the national economy, the creation and development of national industry,

improvement of living standard, the democratisation of social life, the pursuance of an independent and peaceful foreign policy, and the development of economic and cultural co-operation with the socialist and other friendly countries"¹²⁵. In doing so, "The alliance of the working class and the peasantry is the most important force ... This alliance is called upon to be a broad national front. The extent to which the national bourgeoisie participates in the liberation struggle also depends to no small degree upon its strength and stability. A big role can be played by the national -patriotic forces, by all elements of the nation prepared to fight for national independence, against imperialism"¹²⁶.

This position which prescribed for a national democratic front of all the forces within the colonial, semi-colonial and newly liberated countries did not stipulate the precondition for working class leadership in this national democratic stage. This line of thinking was repeatedly hammered on many occasions and in many documents by the CPSU¹²⁷. The successfulness of this path was claimed in view of the development in the Arab states where communist and socialist parties were successful in mobilising the patriotic forces against the threat of world imperialism in the 1960's¹²⁸.

This formulation for the colonial, semi-colonial and newly liberated countries was propagated on many occasions

by the CPSU leaders and the Russian academicians since the Moscow Conference of 81 parties in 1960¹²⁹. Perhaps this line was adopted to meet the twin aims of challenging the U.S. imperialism in mobilising all the forces in the newly liberated countries including the bourgeoisie and on the other hand, it could pose a mighty ideological fight against the CPC.

Their ideological dispute had considerable repercussions within the individual communist and socialist parties of the newly liberated countries. In India a considerable section of communists within the CPI went in favour of the CPSU's line for building a 'national democratic front'. After the split of the CPI, in 1964, into the CPI and the CPI(M), the CPI went in favour of the CPSU's position by repudiating the Maoist thesis of People's Democratic revolution. The programme of the CPI, after split, adopted the National Democratic revolution as the strategic goal in this democratic stage of revolution in India. Actually, after the split, the CPI in its 8th Congress altered the earlier position for People's Democratic revolution (adopted in 1951) in toto. But the CPI(M) remained in favour of the Maoist 'People's Democratic revolution' in this stage for India.

A close examination of the CPI's (after the split) call for 'National Democratic Revolution' could see the

resemblance with the prescription of the CPSU leaders since 1960. The concept of 'National democracy' is explained below in details from the concrete analysis cited in the programme of the CPI - one of the leading communist parties in India. The CPI accepts the strategy of National Democracy as a strategy for democratic revolution in this democratic stage.

The 'national democracy' is a form of democracy proposed for the countries under colonial, neo-colonial or semi-colonial authority where feudal residues and landlordism are still there. The old bourgeois -democratic revolution is no longer necessary because the objective situation has changed enormously. The October Revolution of Soviet Russia in 1917 gave birth to a new world order which facilitated the organisation of the working class and its party - the communist party. Again, the imperialist domination at least in the field of economy is flagrant over the colonially ruled or recently liberated countries. The bourgeoisie as a self-independent class force did not emerge to drive away the predicaments of imperialist and feudal residues. Besides these features, a strong nationalist sentiment prevails within the petty bourgeois and middle class intelligentsia.

In this perspective, the party of the proletariat - the communist party should call for 'national democratic revolution' for establishing 'national democracy', in this

stage. Therefore, the national democratic stage is the stage towards socialist transformation.

In India, many communist revolutionaries thought in this line during the freedom movement and after. An intense debate prevailed among them about the nature of democratic revolution when the direct colonial rule existed. However, this has continued in the post-independence era but the basic proposition remains the same that colonial or imperialist rule over the national economy has not come to an end. The feudal remnants and landlords ruled the countryside as a result of which to a large extent the growth of agricultural production has remained arrested and this state aggravated the misery of the peasants. Monopoly bourgeoisie emerges and has a direct link with the world-wide imperialist chain. As the general crisis of capitalism deepens, the contradiction between the imperialists including the monopoly and the national bourgeoisie will grow sharper. As the monopoly big bourgeoisie will try to pass the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the lower strata, the national bourgeoisie also becomes a revolutionary force against the imperialist and monopoly domination. This idea among a considerable section of the Indian communists has prevailed. Therefore, they call for building up a national democratic front for national democratic revolution and thereby seek to establish 'national democracy'¹³⁰.

The national democratic revolution is "the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic revolution"¹³¹. And

"It would be a government of national democracy, directing the country's development along the non-capitalist path"¹³². The first and foremost task of this government will be the replacement of the existing government with a government of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly classes. These forces are capable and determined to carry out revolutionary changes, and can reverse the present process of development of capitalism.

In order to create the instrument for implementing the programme of national democratic revolution, it is prerequisite to build a national democratic front, "... bringing together all the patriotic forces of the country, viz. the working class, the entire peasantry including the rich peasants and agricultural labourers, the intelligentsia and the non-monopolist bourgeoisie. The workers - peasant alliance will be the basis and pivot of the front"¹³³.

One section of the Indian communists believes, that the democratic masses are divided into a number of political parties including the ruling party. The national democratic front will arise and take shape in the process of overcoming this division and uniting the broad democratic masses in the course of struggle. It will consolidate mass movements, parliamentary and extra parliamentary struggles, against the reactionary anti-people policies, simultaneously isolating and defeating the right reactionary forces - the imperialist,

feudal and landlords and the monopoly big bourgeoisie¹³⁴.

Nationalism or patriotism exists in the minds of the broad masses of people against imperialist exploitation. Therefore, it is necessary to bring all the nationalist forces into their democratic movement and lead it to success¹³⁵.

The leadership question has been settled in this way that the national democratic revolution and the national democratic government will be led by the joint leadership. The working class hegemony has been considered a left sectarian idea¹³⁶. "In this class alliance, the exclusive leadership of the working class is not yet established, though the exclusive leadership of the bourgeoisie no longer exists. The leadership of this alliance belongs to firm anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, anti-monopoly forces"¹³⁷.

The national democratic front is born out of struggles organised by the working class in alliance with the peasantry and the revolutionary middle classes, along with whom the patriotic sections of the national bourgeoisie will also play a positive role and become its component part.

It is presumed that the national democratic revolution is quite different from the one available from the Chinese communists. It has a close resemblance with the 'bourgeois-democratic revolution' as it has no reservation

for working class hegemony. Therefore, it is far away from the people's democratic type. Patriotism and national question against imperialist oppression have got a bigger place in this national democratic revolution. This is the first time when the question of nationalism has found place in the democratic revolution so directly, and thereby finds a place in the Marxist Leninist heritage of democratic revolution . It is not the proper time to assess its success in the soil of newly independent countries of Asia, Africa & Latin America because it is in the anvil of practice by some communist parties of these countries. However, the process and practice are going on depending on their dialectical understanding of the situation of the countries like India.

Section 4 Significance of Agrarian Reforms and Rural Democracy for Democratic Revolution

The democratic revolution is a necessary historical prelude to the socialist revolution. On the basis of historical tasks completed in the stage of democratic revolution, it becomes possible for a society to undertake the tasks of a socialist revolution. It is in this connection helpful for us to refer to two important tasks of democratic revolution, namely, agrarian revolution and achieving rural democracy and study the significance of these two tasks in the stage of democratic revolution.

Marxists put special importance on radical agrarian reforms in the democratic stage, because remnants of the mediaeval oppression still persisted in the rural economy. The feudal and landlord usurpation over the land and life of the rural people requires to be ended. A thorough agrarian reform is necessary for the rural people to keep pace with the already democratised life of the industrial economy. The solution of the agrarian problem, which directly affects the interest of the vast majority of the population, is of the utmost importance for national regeneration for the countries where democratic revolution is yet to be achieved. Without a radical agrarian reform and a conscious movement to increase productivity in agriculture, it is impossible to solve the food problem and accelerate economic growth. Hence a clean break has to be

made with the past by reorganising the vast agricultural sector by a logical and scientific democratic programme. Therefore, a radical agrarian reform figures in the topmost position of economic programme at the democratic stage of revolution.

Democracy in general and rural democracy in particular are the other important targets of the democratic revolution. The establishment of democracy in the rural areas, where so far the age-old feudal and landlord hegemony persists over the life of the rural people is the immediate task. Without democratic revolution, all the rural areas of the country like India have become the sanctuaries of the existence of mediaeval social evils.

The feudal and landlord usurpation, bondage, share-cropping, occasional eviction from land, caste divide and social prestige of the upper caste and hatred towards the so called lower castes, women's sufferings, mass illiteracy and multiple types of social prejudices have been preserved by the landlords and the other semi-feudal interests in the countryside for centuries. Therefore, Marxists think of annihilating social discrepancies and of snatching the rural political power from the hands of the stooges of the feudal remnants, landlords and their bureaucratic lackeys by launching an all out democratic revolutionary movement in the countryside by ensuring the participation of the vast mass of agricultural labourers and small peasants in the

rural administrative and decision making bodies.

In this revolutionary movement the proletariat finds that the sharecroppers, poor peasantry and the agricultural labourers are the core allies. Actually they are the rural counter-part of the industrial proletariat. This section is the largest in number in the rural population and since they are the greatest beneficiaries, they are expected to be interested in performing this task. The take-over of the power of the rural administrative body and the power of cancellation of the feudal and landlords property and distribution of the same among the land-hungry poor peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers by the rural proletariat are the main democratic measures in the countryside. Actually all these democratic tasks are meant for bringing the rural people into the mainstream of economic and political change called for by the proletariat and its party - the communist party in this democratic stage for expediting the historical move towards socialist revolution.

Thus the edge of the democratic revolution is oriented to the agrarian reform and rural democracy. This will expedite the inner dialectics of the rural economy and its superstructure. This historic task will be initiated and led by the proletariat which is a more conscious and progressive class of the epoch. This will awaken the rural proletariat - the agricultural labourers and poor peasants to shake and mould the mode of production in the agricultural

sector. For the democratic set up in the rural areas they will not only launch a massive struggle against feudal and landlords, but also defend the changes against the reactionary attempts of the vested interests. It will also help to carry forward this stage to the socialist stage by the leadership of the proletariat.

Historically these democratic tasks are the tasks of the bourgeoisie in their revolution which was known as bourgeois-democratic revolution in the West. It is well known that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the West, particularly in Britain, France, Austria, etc. was carried out by the liberal bourgeoisie as a strong and independent political force which not only democratised the social and political life of the people but also successfully changed the feudal economy, thereby facilitating the unbridled economic progress of capitalism even over the rural economy. All this in course of time sharpened the class polarisation in the countryside without which the ultimate march towards socialism would never come off. In these countries the workers and the peasants were more or less passive in this struggle of that time between the bourgeoisie and the feudal lords and monarchs. But what is important to note is that the leadership and the organisational responsibility were vested in the hands of bourgeoisie solely.

However, this paradigm does not occur everywhere largely due to the specific national peculiarities and due

to the changes of time. Even the condition of Germany during the time of Marx in the middle of the Nineteenth century was dissimilar from the other European countries. Actually the starting of capitalist penetration in Germany was late compared to the rest of the European countries. On the other hand, capitalism thrives on colonial exploitation whether that is direct or indirect. But the German bourgeoisie were initially lacking all these facilities to amass the wealth which ultimately could make them capable of overthrowing the feudal-monarchical rule. In the meantime, the proletariat as a distinct social and political force appeared in Germany. In this perspective, both Marx & Engels advised the German proletariat to fight the absolute monarchy with the German bourgeoisie for early completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany. In doing so, whatever concession it could reap for the proletariat would ultimately benefit the proletarian struggle for the next socialist stage.

Both Marx and Engels were in favour of early completion of democratic revolution where it was yet to be finished by the active participation of the communists with the bourgeoisie against the monarchy and feudalism. In the context of Poland and Germany in the 1840s, Marx and Engels stated in the Manifesto of the Communist Party :

"In Poland they [communists] support the party [of the Polish revolutionary democrats] that insists on an agrarian revolution as the prime condition for national emancipation, the party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846"¹³⁸.

"In Germany they [communists] fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squir-
earchy, and the petty bourgeoisie"¹³⁹.

During the mid Nineteenth century both in Poland and in Germany the bourgeoisie were relatively weak to expel the feudal monarchy from power. But the proletariat as a social force had appeared in those countries in the urban and industrial sectors. In this context Marx and Engels advised the communists of these two countries to take part in the bourgeois-democratic revolution along with the bourgeoisie against feudalism and monarchial rule for making a speedy headway for the next socialist revolution.

The classical Marxian idea did not set any precondition for proletariat leadership for the completion of the bourgeoisie-democratic revolution. But it warns the proletariat that it should not forget the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat but regard the bourgeoisie as a tactical ally against the feudal monarchical rule.

However, Marx did not see any perceptible role of the peasantry in the movement for democratic revolution. The bourgeois-democratic revolution was to be launched by both

the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeois leadership and its supremacy over the struggle were accepted for this stage of revolution in classical Marxian thinking.

This is after all, the classical Marxian concept of social change from the feudal system to capitalist system and which was ultimately to be supplanted by the socialist order. This Marxian paradigm of social change is based on the laws of dialectics, the dialectics of the mode of production - the interplay between productive forces and production relations. This is the motive force of the human history.

In the beginning of the Twentieth century in the age of imperialism the concept of bourgeois-democratic revolution got altogether a different connotation in the hands of Lenin. Lenin and his Russian proletarian party called for early completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia which was completed in two phases - one phase in 1905 and other phase in February, 1917. Actually the total period of 1905 - February 1917 was the period of fulfilment of the bourgeois-democratic revolution against the tsarist and feudal autocracy.

The departure of Lenin from Marx is on the role of the peasantry in the unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution in the Russian context. Lenin began his experiment on the peasant question as a leader of the RSDLP. "It is known

that the serious study of the peasant questions in the ranks of Russian Marxist began precisely on the eve of first revolution (1905) when the question of overthrowing tsarism and of realizing the hegemony of the proletariat confronted the party in all its magnitude and when the question of the ally of the proletariat in the impending bourgeois revolution became of vital importance"¹⁴⁰. It is also known from Lenin's writings that the peasant question in Russia assumed more urgent character during the proletarian revolution. In this sense the peasant question is one of the most vital problems of Leninism.

Lenin saw that in the analysis of the peasant questions by the parties of the Second International there was displayed an attitude of indifference towards the peasant question and a tendency to treat it as passive recipient of good delivered by the bourgeoisie after the bourgeois democratic revolution and proletariat after the proletarian revolution. The peasantry was considered as the reserve of the bourgeoisie during the bourgeois revolution in the west. The Second International thought the peasant question only on the light of developed West. The striking matter in Lenin was that he correctly shunned any dogmatic understanding of the peasantry's role in the bourgeois democratic revolution. However, Lenin and Leninists sought to find out the revolutionary potential among the peasantry in the Russian context against the tsarist and feudal oppression which would act as a reserve of the proletariat both for the

unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution and subsequent socialist revolution.

It is quite clear that for Lenin a radical solution of the agrarian problem was the fundamental economic objective of the democratic revolution. As a Marxist revolutionary Lenin sought the answer to the question : which class and political groups in his contemporary Tsarist Russia had an objective interest in the destruction of landlordism and which would strive to preserve it ? Lenin's own theoretical analysis had long provided him with the answer that only the proletariat and the poor peasantry were wholeheartedly committed to the destruction of landlordism. But the bourgeoisie would vacillate, make concessions and ultimately side with the landlords.

Lenin recognised the existence of revolutionary capacities in the ranks of the majority of the peasantry and the possibility of using them in the cause of the revolutions. Hence the practical conclusion that the toiling masses of the peasantry must be supported in their struggle against bondage and exploitation in their struggle for deliverance from oppression and poverty and which helps to transform the peasantry into a reserve and ally of the working class. "That is how the alliance between the workers and the peasants in the bourgeois-democratic revolution took place that is how the hegemony (leadership) of the proletariat in

the common struggle for the overthrow of tsarism took shape - the hegemony which led to the February Revolution 1917"¹⁴¹.

Lenin's theoretical position regarding the bourgeois -democratic revolution was clear in his Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in Democratic Revolution written in June & July 1905. He states - "The democratic revolution is bourgeois in nature. The slogan of general redistribution, or 'land and freedom' - the most widespread slogan of the peasant masses, downtrodden and ignorant, yet passionately yearning for light and happiness - is a bourgeois slogan"¹⁴².

Lenin's unequivocal stand for agrarian reform and rural democracy is clear from the following statement. He states, in the Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in Democratic Revolution, that "... it is not only by the prospect of radical agrarian reform that the peasantry is attached to the revolution [i.e. bourgeois democratic revolution], but by all its general and permanent interests as well. Even when fighting with the proletariat, the peasantry stands in need of democracy, for only a democratic system is capable of accurately expressing its interests and ensuring its predominance as a mass, as the majority. The more enlightened the peasantry becomes ... the more consistently and resolutely will it stand for a thorough going democratic revolution; for, unlike the bourgeoisie, it has nothing to

fear from the people's supremacy, but on the contrary stands to gain by it. A democratic republic will be the peasantry's deal as soon as it begins to throw off its naive monarchism ..."¹⁴³.

But Lenin did not consider the peasantry as a pure proletarian class, therefore he did not compromise the leadership of the movement with the peasantry. He correctly analysed the class position of the peasantry in the ensuing bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia in the beginning of the 20th century. He analysed, "The peasantry includes a great number of semi-proletarian as well as petty bourgeois elements. This makes it also unstable, compelling the proletariat to rally in a strictly class party. However, the instability of the peasantry differs radically from that of the bourgeoisie, for at present the peasantry is interested not so much in the absolute preservation of private property as in the confiscation of the landed estates, one of the principal forms of private property. Without thereby becoming socialist, or ceasing to be petty bourgeois, the peasantry is capable of becoming a whole-hearted and most radical adherent of the democratic revolution"¹⁴⁴.

Lenin was successful in formulating the programme and in putting it into the practice and political and economical aspects of the agrarian question in the Russian context (1905 - Feb.1917) which not only overthrew the feudal

-monarchical system in the bourgeois-democratic stage of revolution but also curbed the absolute influence of the Russian bourgeoisie in the bourgeois-democratic revolution successful in February 1917.

In the Chinese context Mao had to experiment a kind of democratic revolution which was altogether different from that of the European and Russian democratic revolution. The entire second quarter of the Twentieth century was the period of Mao's experiment with the democratic revolution which was gone through as a prelude to the socialist revolution in China. The peculiarity of Chinese society and economy and the changed circumstances in the international political order due to the emergence of Socialist Soviet Russia were the factors which Mao had to consider before formulating his theory of democratic revolution and its principal tasks of agrarian reforms and ensuring democracy.

Chinese society was basically a feudal society of the Asiatic nature. After the Opium War in 1840 China was gradually exposed to colonial exploitation. In 1911 the Imperial rule of thousand years was ended under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The May 4th (1919) was marked as democratic upsurge in Chinese history. The penetration of capitalism¹⁴⁵ and the emergence of working class in the 1920's were important developments in China. The external factor was the emergence of the Soviet Socialist

Russia in 1917 through a revolution based on the principles of Marxism and Leninism in the epoch of world imperialism.

For Mao, in the democratic stage, the participation of the peasant masses was a must in the predominantly agrarian countries like China. The edge of the revolution is oriented against feudalism and imperialism. Therefore, in this stage, according to Mao, "the Chinese revolution is essentially a peasant revolution ..."¹⁴⁶ For him "the politics of New Democracy means giving the peasants their rights"¹⁴⁷.

The basic economic programme in the New Democratic stage, according to Mao, is the following : "The republic will take certain necessary steps to confiscate the land of the landlords and distribute it to those peasants having little or no land, carry out Dr. Sun Yat-sen's slogan 'land to the tiller' abolish feudal relations in the rural areas, and turn the land over to the private ownership of the peasants. A rich peasants economy will be allowed in the rural areas. Such is the policy of 'equalization of landownership'. 'Land to the tiller' is the correct slogan for this policy. In general, socialist agriculture will not be established at this stage, though various types of cooperative enterprises developed on the basis of 'land to the tiller' will contain elements of socialism"¹⁴⁸.

In the democratic revolution, the programme of

configuration of land from the feudal-lords and the distribution of the land to the tillers not only facilitated the millions of Chinese peasants but also ended the feudal economic and political relations of the three thousand years in the history of China. In this stage the rich peasants' economy was allowed to an extent under the policy of 'equalization of landownership' which limited the unhindered growth of land monopolization. The unfettered growth of economy in the capitalist line was checked by the New Democratic government because it was not and never could be the same as the pure bourgeois-democratic government of the West.

Thus the agrarian policy of the New Democratic government was to end feudalism from the village economy forever and to begin a private ownership of land up to a definite level conducive to let out the class contradiction in the countryside which could sharpen the same for carrying the movement towards the socialist revolution.

For Mao, "The people's democratic dictatorship is based on the alliance of the workers and peasants, because these two classes comprise 80 to 90 per cent of China's population. These two classes are the main force in overthrowing imperialism and the Kuomintang reactionaries. The transition from New Democracy to socialism also depends mainly upon their alliance"¹⁴⁹.

This was the general formulation of Mao's conception of democratic revolutionary class forces and the role of the peasantry in view of the peasant problems in the democratic stage and their alliances and leadership against the reaction during his time in China for establishing people's democracy.

Within the general paradigm of Mao's people's democracy, the concept of rural democracy forms a significant part. In the Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan, March 1927 at the end of the first revolutionary victory after the Northern Expedition, Mao states, "Once the peasants have their organisation the first thing they do is to smash the political prestige and power of the landlord class, and specially of the local tyrants and evil gentry, that is, to pull down landlord authority and build up peasant authority in rural society. This is a most serious and vital struggle. It is the pivotal struggle in the second period, the period of revolutionary action. Without victory in this struggle, no victory is possible in the economic struggle to reduce rent and interest, to secure and other means of production, and so on"¹⁵⁰.

Mao put the slogans "Down with the Local Tyrants and evil gentry !" and "All Power to the Peasant Associations !" in this stage (in 1927). He elaborated, "The main targets of attack by the peasants are the local tyrants, the evil gentry and the lawless landlords, ... [and] hit against patriarchal

ideas and institutions, against the corrupt officials ... and against bad practices and customs in the rural areas". Mao unreservedly emphasised "All power to the peasant association"¹⁵¹.

Mao from the beginning asked the Chinese Communist Party to put the people's democratic programme into practice in the areas liberated from Kuomintang and Japanese occupied territory. He stated, "In all our work in the Liberated Areas, we must take great care to help the local people administer local affairs and to cultivate many local cadres from among the best local people. It will be impossible to accomplish the great task of the democratic revolution in the rural areas unless comrades who come from other places identify themselves with the local people and help the local cadres whole-heartedly, painstakingly and in ways that fit the actual conditions, and unless they cherish them like their own brothers and sisters"¹⁵². He considered "China's Liberated Areas" as the "centre of gravity in the nationwide people's struggle to resist Japan"¹⁵³.

In the rural democratic set up Mao had a noticeable concern for the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants than any other rural classes. He stated very categorically that "The interests of the poor peasants and farm labourers and the forward role of the poor peasant leagues must be our first concern. Our party must launch land reform through the

poor peasants and farm labourers and must enable them to play the forward role in the peasant associations and in the government organs of the rural districts"¹⁵⁴. (Emphasis added). Mao also favoured the unity forged with the "middle peasants"¹⁵⁵ in the governance of the rural areas. He opposed the sectarian unity of only the poor peasants and farm labourers in the countryside (although they constituted the basis of the rural govt.) casting aside the middle peasants and small independent craftsman and small traders. For him, therefore, the slogan was "In the villages, it is the farm labourers, poor peasants, middle peasants and other working people, united together under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party who ... should rule the country"¹⁵⁶. In the later years Mao changed the outlook of the party regarding the middle peasants and brought them within the fold of united front to govern the countryside for the completion of the people's democratic revolution. Thus the stage would be ready for the immediate socialist revolution.

The Indian communists particularly the communists within the CPI and CPI(M) have accepted the Marxian tradition of two stages of revolution and they think that democratic revolution has not yet been fully established even after the end of direct imperialist domination and adoption of a constitution and parliamentary government. Therefore, they call for the immediate democratic revolution. For CPI(M) it is - People's Democratic and for the CPI it is National

Democratic revolutionary stage respectively as prelude to the socialist revolution.

Although they have remarkable differences regarding the analysis of the existing state power of India, the alignment of the classforces in their respective democratic revolution and on the question of leadership during and after the democratic revolution, still they commonly agree that a democratic revolution is a must in the present context of the Indian condition. Furthermore, they agree that the first stage of Indian revolution against the direct foreign imperialist rule was over in 1947 by the achievement of independence by the united national front but even then they consider alike that the democratic revolution is not yet over in India. This is, for them, basically due to the fact that the Indian bourgeoisie is still weak to extend its hegemony over the sphere of economy and polity, and the share of state power is enjoyed by the semi-feudal and landlords in the various spheres of state power with varying degrees and the world imperialist oppression indirectly affects the life of the people. But what is important, with the growth of bourgeoisie the emergence of working class and its party have emerged; and in due course they have gathered enough strength, therefore, they are not destined to sit idle in performing the democratic tasks in this democratic revolutionary stage in India. Their ultimate aim is to build a socialist India.

In the present democratic stage they (i.e. both the CPI and the CPI-M) called for active participation in this revolution to expedite the same. The CPI(M) is one step ahead, it calls for control over the democratic revolution and democratic state after the revolution by the proletarian party. They argued that henceforth the proletariat will not and should not wait for the deliverance of democracy from the hands of independent bourgeoisie because it will not be the old bourgeois-democratic revolution of the West where the proletariat had no active role to play in the democratic revolution.

Therefore, both the parties think in this changing context of India, the active participation is a binding necessity on the part of the proletariat and its actual allies - the vast agricultural labourers and poor peasants of the countryside.

The main slogan in this stage is to end semifeudal and landlords rule over the agrarian economy and to wipe out their hegemony over the social and political life in the countryside and to put a ban over the outright capitalist path of development. Their respective party programmes contained clauses demanding a thorough land reform by abolishing landlordism and distributing the same to the vast majority of the agricultural labourers and land hungry poor peasants.

The magnitude of the need of agrarian reform arose out of the existing monopoly over the landholding and existing semi-feudal relation based on land. It is seen that in the country as a whole 2.43 per cent of the total rural households each own more than 30 acres of land totaling 28.5 per cent of the arable land; whereas the other 82.5 per cent own between them only 27.43 per cent of the total land¹⁵⁷, and the holding amount vary from less than one acre to four acres. Therefore the elimination of the concentration of land from the grip of semi-feudal and landlords is of utmost importance in this democratic stage. Without a radical agrarian reform and a conscious movement the poor peasants and agricultural labourers who constitute the majority in the vast rural areas can not be saved from the age-old depredation by the feudal forces¹⁵⁸.

They (communists within the CPI and the CPI-M) think that the ruling fabric of the countryside is monopolised by the few landed aristocracy by their innumerable tactics. The rural level administration is run at the behest of them through their lackeys - bureaucracy, police administration. Justice is shelved by the propertied and the influential. All these constitute an organised violence and exploitation over the vast majority of the country's population. Government at the state level has always been in favour of the landed aristocracy though it has enacted some paper legislation for the land ceiling and power to the people

still it lacks sincerity from the point of view of its class interests and continuance in the state power. The majority of the rural folk is worst exploited by the twin ravages, one from the landlords and other by the capitalist market economy. Therefore, the communists in India call for the conscious proletarian movement allying itself with the agricultural labour and poor peasants to fulfil the radical agrarian reform and sweeping social political reforms as most urgent and important tasks in the democratic stage in the Indian context.

Bourgeois-democratic revolution has got different nomenclatures given by the communists with the changes of time and context. Popular among them are the bourgeois -democratic, democratic, new democratic, people's democratic, national democratic etc. However, the major tasks of the democratic revolution, the end of semi-feudal and landlord economic oppression and semifeudal relations of production in the countryside remain the same. Only exceptions are visible on the questions of alliance of class forces for the revolution and the question of leadership and direction of the revolution. This study already noted the departure from classical Marxian idea about bourgeois-democracy at the hands of Lenin in Russia and later Mao in China. In other words, they successively extended the Marxian idea in the changed circumstances and practised the same in the peculiar national contexts successfully. Therefore, it has got an altogether different dimension from the classical

Marxian understanding.

Although Marx and Engels were basically engaged in the socialist revolution in the context of fullfledged bourgeois -democratic or capitalist states in Europe still the nucleus idea in the 'Manifesto' for the German condition where workers' participation in the bourgeois-democratic revolution was a binding necessity, provided the clue to the communists in the countries lacking democratic revolution. Semi-feudal landlordism, existence of mediaeval prejudices compounded by the direct and indirect imperialistic oppression, emergence of bourgeoisie and the working class, vacillation of the bourgeoisie were the dominant features in the backward countries like China, India and other backward nations. Therefore, on the question of bourgeois-democratic revolution a significant departure (or extension of Marxian idea in the changed circumstances) of Lenin from Marx, of Mao Tse-tung from Lenin and of other communists (for example the Indian communists in the CPI and CPI(M) since 1964) all these have enriched the revolutionary tradition on the line of Marxian thinking of social change.

Section 5 Methodology : Method and Techniques of Study

This study has aimed at discovering differences in the perception and practice of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) in respect of agrarian reforms and rural democracy. It has been necessary to understand the concern of both these parties on these two issues from their respective perceptions of the historical context and the reality of the Indian situation in which they drew up their own goals, tasks and tactics. Since both these parties professedly adopted Marxism as the basic philosophy for their guidance, their points of view on the historical context, national situation, goals, tasks and tactics can be understood only by following the Marxist methodology. And the present study has followed this methodology in the perception of the views and activities of the two parties. The Marxist position and concepts have been followed simply because any communist party, whether it is in India or outside, determines its activities following the Marxist concept of social change. For better comprehension the Marxist paradigm has been accepted and its vocabularies and concepts have accordingly been used.

To the communists, every party has a class basis and its class interest. Therefore, a communist party, a party of the working class or the proletariat as has been claimed by the Marxists, has its own class interest or class outlook¹⁵⁹. According to the Marxists, the 'programme' of

the communist party is otherwise the statement of strategy which embodies goals for a defined stage of revolution and remains valid entirely for that stage of revolution; and short-term political activities in response to the existing situation for attaining the programmatic goals are spelt out as tactics.

India has at present several communist parties or groups. However, this study has concerned two major communist parties, namely, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M). They actually are the off-shoots of a single communist party bifurcated in 1964 to provide their different outlooks or programmes for the ensuing democratic revolution as a step to the final socialist revolution. It has been remembered, however, that the two parties have their own different views about the nature of the democratic revolution. For understanding this difference too, the Marxist framework of thinking has been followed.

To examine the programmatic differences between the said two communist parties the basis of class-relations of society in India has been principally followed for this study because the context of class-relation is the main theme of any communist party's programme and activities. Therefore the study has started with due consideration of the Marxist-Leninist contributions to the thoughts on the formation of a communist party and determination of its programme. It is

in this background that an attempt has been made to appraise the position of the two communist parties of India in respect of their contentions on the questions of agrarian reforms and rural democracy.

The programmatic approaches of the two communist parties of India have thus been examined side by side for a close comparison on the basis of their individual party literature and other authoritative commentaries available so far. Efforts have been made to use maximum information from the primary literature of the concerned parties.

While pursuing this research, we had to keep in mind that a political party is not a totally autonomous organisation or its growth and activities do not constitute an autonomous process involving merely the political ideology, important personalities and events of its own. Hence it can not be studied purely on the basis of its own self-consciousness. What is logical is a richer sensitivity that it always acts in an environment in which other political parties carry on their activities, pursue their ideological positions, and are bound to work in their respective national historical settings. It has been considered that there is in every society a social, economic and cultural milieu in a given period of time where political parties work¹⁶⁰. An additional thing considered while studying communist parties is their faith in communist internationalism and ideological coherence

with the international communist movements, although they are bound to work for their given countries over their peculiar national questions.

We have made a comparison of the two communist parties in respect of the issues indicated earlier. But, since the content of such comparison may be fully intelligible only in a Marxist framework of thought, comparison made has been concentrated on such dimensions and evaluation made on such scales as have been relevant to Marxism.

However, the study has aimed at finding the differences, if any, in the practices and understanding of the two communist parties. For this, a field survey has been necessary. This field survey covered two basic issues - agrarian reforms and rural democracy. The period covered in this survey is from 1964, the year of emergence of the two parties out of the split of the Communist Party of India to 1985. (In some cases data have been available upto 1990).

This survey has been conducted through a structured questionnaire prepared on the basis of the common factors dealt with by the programmes of the two parties. This questionnaire has been used as a tool to retrieve actual information about the ground realities of the said two parties during the period mentioned above. The questionnaire is appended as Appendix II.

The respondents have been chosen from those in the two parties who have been actively engaged in politics in rural areas particularly over these issues since 1964. The number of respondents has been more or less equal from each of the two parties.

Through this field survey, information has been collected from areas where both the communist parties have considerable political base since 1964 and therefore have pursued the political activity particularly over the issues mainly dealt with here.

The areas of field survey have been chosen from the State of West Bengal. These are Panskura (West) Legislative Assembly Constituency in Midnapore District, Bhatar Legislative Assembly Constituency in Burdwan District and Itahar Legislative Assembly Constituency in the District of West Dinajpore. These three Assembly constituencies are located in three distant geographical parts of West Bengal. Panskura (West) is in the extreme West of West Bengal, Bhatar is in the middle of West Bengal and Itahar is situated in the northern part of West Bengal. All these three surveyed areas are purely rural, based on agricultural economy.

Another important feature of these three Assembly Constituencies is that the concerned communist parties are not merely significantly present with their strong organisation in these areas but also have helped electing their

candidates or have finished seconds at different times.

The period of liberation struggle in (undivided) Bengal had the distinction of launching peasant movements with the other parts of the country. One such successful movement spread over a large part of Bengal was the historic Tebhaga movement launched immediately around the time of Indian independence and organised by the undivided CPI.

When the Communist Party of India was divided, and two communist parties emerged out of the split, the peasant question came to the forefront. This peasant question became more important with an unprecedented momentum when the CPI(M) faced and suffered from another split from which the CPI(ML) has emerged as a separate party which put exclusive importance on the question of agrarian revolution as the immediate democratic stage of the revolution.

It is not an exaggeration that Bengal is the fertile land of leftism. Therefore, West Bengal has been chosen for the areas of field survey where considerable activities on agrarian reforms and democratisation of rural life have been done. Moreover, the CPI and the CPI(M) which constitute the targetted parties for this research have had some alliances at different times in forming the state governments. Therefore, they had opportunities to put forward their individual programmatic measures for practice in an ambient condition. The questionnaire for the field survey has also

been framed to touch upon their relationships from either side at the grassroots level.

An utmost care has been taken to present a totality of the programmatic differences and the actual differences in practices on the two basic issues extensively.

In fine, it should be mentioned here, that, since this study has required collecting data through field survey, it has been necessary also to make use of such techniques and tools of survey research as have helped for ascertaining facts on a scientific basis and avoiding any subjective bias whatsoever. The analysis of data has been carried out by employing techniques of quantification accepted by the science of social research.

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