

CHAPTER V

The Path of Socialist Revolution

140. Liquidation of capitalism and establishment of a socialist republic is the only correct objective for the Indian Liberation Movement at this stage. Socialism cannot be attained through parliamentary reforms, it has to be won by the masses in course of a revolutionary struggle.

141. In India today the main ideological struggle for socialism is a struggle against various brands of reformism. Leadership of the working-class can be established over the liberation movement only through a ceaseless ideological struggle against the reformist leaderships being offered on behalf of other classes, and liquidating the influence of these reformist leaderships over sections of the masses.

Struggle against Reformism

142. Reformism is primarily an effort on the part of the ruling class to stem the tide of revolution by creating delusions that revolution is unnecessary ; this campaign of deception is sometimes accompanied by minor concessions to the people which are then exploited as evidence of success of reformism.

143. Reformist trends within the toilers' struggles are generated by such campaigns of the ruling class. Reformism under capitalist system becomes particu-

larly noticeable during periods of relative stability of capitalism. Reformism draws its strength from the upper layers of the toiling classes who derive certain benefits under capitalist dispensation.

144. Reformism in India until recently drew its main strength from those sections of the people who derived some of the benefits of heavily increased state expenditure, large foreign aid and the increased money-supply. Illusions of prosperity in the near future were created among certain sections of workers of large enterprises, and there was a general loss of impetus for militant struggles. Reliance was placed on parliamentary methods and elections for securing further concessions from the ruling class, and the perspective of the general movement for liberation was often forgotten.

145. In addition to this general source of reformist illusions, an additional source of reformism was provided by the abject defeat of the premature clashes with the government engineered by the muddle-headed adventurist policy of the Communist Party of India during 1948-50. Adventurism always leads to retreat; but the Communist Party retreated all along the line, including spheres of ideology and programme, virtually capitulated to the bourgeoisie, and then followed a policy of bourgeois reformism. The sense of defeat coupled with the reformist preachings of the Communist Party of India helped the bourgeois campaign of reformism.

146. Reformism in India was further strengthened by certain revisionist pronouncements of the Soviet

leadership under N. S. Khrushchov on the question of forms of transition from capitalism to socialism.

147. These leaders claimed that in the changed world situation of today it is possible for the working class in a number of countries to come to power through parliamentary democracy and achieve socialism through peaceful means. The Communist Party of India, along with others, considered that India was one of these countries, and the Leninist method of revolutionary seizure of power for socialism was declared out-of-date.

Marxism & Parliamentary Democracy

148. There can be no doubt that such pronouncements of the Soviet leaders, echoed by many Communist Parties, constituted a revision of Marxism. In the name of creative application of Marxism-Leninism these leaders threw overboard the most fundamental teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the question of the state and the form of the state during the transition from capitalism to socialism. Marxism shows that the very structure of the parliamentary democratic state, historically conditioned, corresponds to the requirements of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat cannot employ this state for building socialism.

149. The socialist revolution differs from all other previous revolutions in this that in the socialist revolution not only does power pass from

the hands of one class to another, but also the form of power is altered. It was not for nothing that Marx declared that "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state-machinery and wield it for its own purpose" (—*Civil War in France*, Karl Marx). It was not for nothing that this was quoted with emphasis, as a lesson of the Paris Commune, by Marx and Engels in the Preface to the 1872 German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*. It was not for nothing that this was again quoted and elaborated upon by Lenin in his book *State and Revolution*. This formulation remains valid even today, and will remain valid as long as the problem of power for the working class remains.

The Changed World Situation

150. Undoubtedly, there have been great changes in the world situation since the time of Marx, Engels, or Lenin. But the character of parliamentary democratic state has not altered. It remains an instrument of coercion in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and its structure corresponds to the requirements of bourgeois rule. The bureaucratic apparatus—with its permanent executive, its army and police, isolated from the society and held over the society,—which is the basis of the parliamentary democratic state, remains unaltered in its essence. The conditions of elections under parliamentary democracy, the party-system and the division of labour between the legislature and the executive remain. These are some of the basic features which make the parliamentary democratic

state unsuitable for purposes of socialism. Those who talk of the changed world situation having made it possible for the proletariat to use this state-machine for its own purpose ought to show in what respects these basic features of parliamentary democracy have been changed. Marxists are not dogmatists and should always be prepared to revise their views if new evidences render the previous views incorrect. But mere talk of 'new times' or 'changed world situation' is no evidence.

151. The changed world situation undoubtedly shows that socialism is now organized in a world camp of states, and the strength of the socialist camp has grown sufficiently to become a decisive factor in international developments. As yet it is not the only decisive factor, imperialism still plays its dirty games. But imperialism alone cannot decide world events any more. This is a situation that must be a source of additional strength for the struggle for socialism in the capitalist world, and the struggles for national liberation in the colonies and semi-colonies.

Strength of Socialism

152. The military might of the socialist states, their economic prosperity, and the generally increased strength of the socialist camp are factors of the world situation today which should not only provide inspiration for the toiling masses everywhere, but should give grounds for great confidence and courage in the struggle for socialism. For the socialist camp will

now act as a great protective shield for young socialist states that will come into being as a result of successful struggles of the revolutionary masses in the capitalist world. No country today should have to suffer from imperialist intervention in the same way as the Soviet Union had to suffer when it was the only socialist state of the world. The military strength of socialist camp is a guarantee that imperialism cannot destroy a socialist state today. The economic strength of the socialist camp is a guarantee that imperialism today cannot smother a young socialist republic by economic blockades or embargoes. The generally increased strength of the socialist camp is a guarantee that the people fighting for national liberation and socialism are sure to be supported by millions and millions of people all over the world. Events in Cuba and East Asia and Africa have amply demonstrated these features of the changed world situation.

153. It is one thing for the people in the capitalist countries to draw courage and hope and confidence from the fact of increased strength of the socialist camp and corresponding weaknesses of international capitalism, and advance to build socialism in one's own land along correct revolutionary lines with redoubled energy. It is a completely different thing to use this fact as a pretext for ideological capitulation to reformism and right-wing opportunism, and replace the plan of organized mass struggles along revolutionary lines by a plan for electioneering and parliamentary alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie. This second course is to be rejected with all the contempt that it deserves.

Parliamentary Struggles

154. While rejecting reformism and the revisionist theories of parliamentary democracy as a likely means of achieving socialism, the revolutionary leadership must guard against the danger from the other extreme, namely complete neglect of parliamentary forms of struggle. So long as the bourgeois order offers scope for parliamentary struggles, these must be taken up. Parliamentary struggles must be conducted as struggles and not as shows held by arrangement with the ruling class. They must be firmly linked with the people's struggles outside parliament, with other forms of struggle. They must be so conducted as to reinforce the other forms of struggle. Not to utilize the parliamentary platform for purposes of the revolutionary struggle when it is available would mean abandoning these platforms for exclusive use of the ruling class. Parliamentary struggles, when properly conducted and intensified, can expose the moral bankruptcy of the ruling class and the government, can precipitate disorder within the ranks of the ruling class, and generate widespread fighting determination among the masses.

155. But to achieve these ends, parliamentary struggles must always be inspired by the correct revolutionary programme, and form an integral part of the general movement for liberation. Parliamentarism isolated from the revolutionary programme, is bound to degenerate into right-wing opportunism and corrupt vote-catching.

156. In their struggle for socialism the people must be prepared to use and develop all known forms of struggle, and be ready to take up and develop new forms of struggle that may arise out of the movement. The revolutionary leadership must neither make a fetish of any particular form, nor consider any form as tabooed. Only the living movement, guided by correct theory, but not fettered by any doctrinaire recipes, can indicate the correct form for any given moment. Forms of struggle must also be seen in the perspective of the general movement and its likely developments.

157. The question regarding 'peaceful path of the movement for liberation' has to be viewed in this context. It is at once foolish and dangerous to ask the working class of any country to give a simple answer to this question. Whether the struggle in any country would achieve success without violence depends upon the ruling class in that country and imperialism as a whole. If the ruling class in any country does not employ violence against the people, if the movement for liberation is allowed to proceed without forcible interference and repressive measures, and if imperialism does not employ armed intervention against the people's movement, there is no reason why the struggle should be otherwise than peaceful. But if these conditions are not fulfilled, if the ruling class and imperialism seek to destroy the people's struggles by violent means, then by the immutable law of social dynamics, the people will soon learn how to retaliate and destroy the ruling class. And the degree of popular violence will be in direct proportion to the violence of the ruling class.

158. Here, too, the people must guard against the two opposite kinds of deviation. The reformist and right-wing opportunists try to sow illusions among the people by dogmatically asserting the peaceful path as the probable path of development. They undermine fighting strength of the toilers. On the other side the romantic adventurists and ultra-left extremists turn to sectarian conspiracies isolated from the people, and to engineered incidents, and fritter away the vanguard forces in precipitate and premature actions.

159. The revolutionary struggle for socialism in India must grow out of the concrete conditions in India today. The forms of struggle, too, must be developed in accordance with the concrete situation and requirements of the situation. The revolutionary leadership must learn from the experiences of revolutionary struggles in other countries, and must be able to apply the lessons of these experiences. But attempts to apply mechanically some forms of struggle simply because they have been successful elsewhere, without taking into account differences in the concrete situation, are bound to lead to disastrous defeats.

160. Objective analysis of the concrete situation in India, not only in respect of the relation of class-forces and socio-economic developments, but also in respect of problems of development of the mass struggles and technique of struggles, must be one of the principal tasks of the Indian revolutionary leadership.