

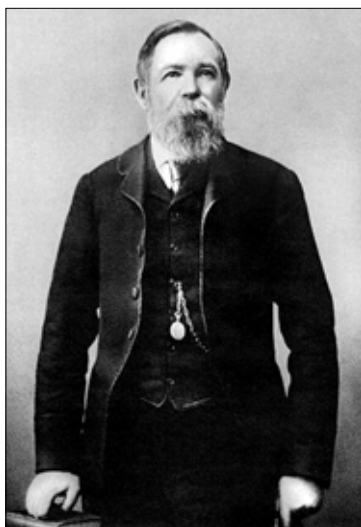
Proletarian Era

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Remembering Engels



28 NOVEMBER, 1820 — 5 AUGUST, 1895

“... a certain petty-bourgeois socialism finds representation in the Social Democratic Party itself... This is done in the following way: while the fundamental views of modern socialism and the demand for the transformation of all the means of production into social property are recognized as justified, the realization of this is declared possible only in the distant future, a future which for all practical purposes is quite out of sight. Thus, for the present, one has to have recourse to mere social patchwork, and sympathy can be shown, according to circumstances, even with the most reactionary efforts for so-called “uplifting of the labouring class”.”

[*The Housing Question*]

Mass suicide of cotton farmers of Vidarbha Fallout of Macabre Capitalist Exploitation Devastating Rural Poor

The revelation has shaken the conscience of the whole nation. Over 2200 small and marginal peasants of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra holding less than 10 acres of land, have committed suicide as they failed to pay interest even on a modest crop loan of Rs 1 lakh taken from the district co-operative banks and found no other option with the burden of debt becoming unbearable and penury reaching its nadir. Once known as a prime producer of high quality cotton adorned as “white gold”, Vidarbha today is an arid landscape with no hope of drawing even a single crop a year for scores of farmers who sit like destitutes in their own field. Woefully inadequate irrigation facilities combined with the vagaries of insufficient monsoon allegedly due to indiscriminate assault on ecological balance and systematic destruction of ozone layer as well as non-availability of remunerative prices of crops has brought the condition of the poor peasants to such deleterious extent that this region has turned into a killing field.

Customary shedding of crocodile tears

The situation took such a worse turn that the Prime Minister of the Congress-led CPI(M)-backed UPA government who otherwise remains busy in eliciting approbation from the proponents and implementers of capitalist globalization in favour of India’s astounding economic growth and all-round prosperity, had to, in an apparent show of concern, rushed to the affected districts and shed customary crocodile tears for the plight and misery of the affected peasant families of course in media glare. After finding (!) that “the farmers who form the backbone of the economy of these districts are in acute distress forcing many of them to take the extreme step of committing suicides when they see all avenues for relief blocked”, as well as discovering (!) that “Agricultural indebtedness is a nationwide problem”, the economist Prime Minister announced a Rs. 3750 crore aid package for the 6 Maharashtra districts hit hardest by farmers’ suicide. While the legitimate demands of the 13-lakh woebegone cotton growers like

higher price for home grown cotton, a steeper duty on cotton import and complete waiver of loans went unheeded, the Prime Ministerial promise has only been of rescheduling of the Rs.1300 crore loan and a three-year programme to complete 82 pending irrigation projects at a cost of Rs 2172 crore. In other words the farmers have only been spared of past interest burden and made eligible for fresh loans with all other factors remaining as they were. In the backdrop of the ceremonial governmental promises about improvement in irrigation, better cultivation facilities and so forth during the last 59 years since independence, one can not but keep the fingers crossed about even a miniscule portion of the project getting materialized in the distant future. Incidentally, some sources have said that these 6 districts may not be worst affected of the 31 perennially drought-struck districts covering Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala identified for long term relief measures. It is stated that 6 districts in Andhra Pradesh have dubious distinction and another 6 in Karnataka are neck and neck in farmer distress levels.

What was government doing to mitigate the hardship

But the obvious question that arises is why has this problem been allowed to multiply and why the farmers find all avenues of relief blocked? There is a Congress ruled state government. There is a central agricultural ministry headed by one of the Maharashtra heavy weights of Congress origin. Tons and tons of economic surveys, reports, statistics, commission findings and so forth are heaped on the tables of the ministers and bureaucrats everyday. There are not the telling tales of appalling poverty and starvation of the rural populace, constituting over 70% of the Indians, contained in these papers?

Just take the case of accumulating debt burden on the peasants. Prior to 1991, 25% of the peasants fell into that category. Now, according to the figures provided by P. Sainath, 70% of farmers in Andhra Pradesh are in debt. In Punjab

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Rural India — a spectre of horror

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(which the power that be often proclaims to be a cash rich agriculturally prosperous state), the figure is 65% followed by 61% in Karnataka and 60% in Maharashtra. Across India over 43.4 million peasant families are deeply indebted. Small and medium peasants are the worst affected. (*Our land, their industry* — Kunal Chattopadhyay — *The Statesman*, July 11 2006) Moreover, according to RBI report of 2003, the World Bank dictates resulted in a steady decline of rural credit to small and middle peasants from government banks and co-operative societies. Lending declined from 15.9 % in June 1990 to 9.8% in March 2003. Sources say that while 50% have no access to any kind of credit off-take, an estimated 27% farmers manage to secure institutional credit while another 22% depend on money lenders who charge even 60% interest per annum on the loans advanced. Maharashtra alone has about 1,00,000 registered moneylenders. Fact is that some of these moneylenders are elected representatives in the state assembly even as ruling party nominees. Many of the debt-burdened small and marginal peasants had to sell out whatever little land they held to become landless peasants. According to latest figures the number of rural landless families increased from 35% between 1997 and 1998 and shot up to 45% between 1999 and 2000. Between 2003 and 2005 there is a quantum jump of this figure to 55%. Agricultural Ministry has admitted that income of paddy farmers in West Bengal has fallen by 28% since 1996-97 and during the same period the income of sugarcane growers in Uttar Pradesh had dropped by 32% while the sugarcane growers of Maharashtra have lost 40% of their income. (ibid) Census 1991 showed that the number of agricultural labour had increased from 27.5 million in 1951 to 74.5 million in 1991 confirming accelerated pauperization of rural poor.

Next, despite being pressed into the job of suppressing reality, the bourgeois media could not hide that there is a procession of death in the villages. Many are dying of hunger and starvation as it happened in Amlasol and Murshidabad in West Bengal, others are courting death by

eating non-eatables like poisonous mango seeds as it happened in the poverty-stricken districts of Orissa. Over 10,000 peasants committed suicide in Andhra Pradesh. Between 1996 and 2000, 10,959 peasants in Karnataka alone preferred suicide a better alternative. Even in Punjab, 133 peasants were reported to have killed themselves. (*The Tribune*, 04-01-98)

Everyone knows that with the passage of time the costs of cultivation have been sky-rocketing and all the bourgeois governments including the current Congress led central as well as Maharashtra state governments have done nothing to arrest the spiral. On the contrary, all of them have been criminally callous in taking any concrete step to stop sale of spurious agriculture inputs by unscrupulous traders and merchants aided and abetted by the big monopolists and many government-run organizations. Similarly, they have only been giving lip service to the imperative need of ensuring remunerative price of produces to the peasant and stall distress sale by farmers. Rather they are enacting one after another legislations like Seeds Act-2004, Patent (Amendment) Act, Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act, etc to exacerbate the plight and penury of the poor peasants.

In view of this, how could the government and administration plead ignorance of the unbound misery of and galloping instances of self-annihilation by the peasants? What were they doing all these days other than propping up figures of GDP growth, FDI inflow and astronomical rise in speculative share market indices to claim economic development and progress? How could they cry hoarse of 'green revolution', self-sufficiency in food production, rural development and so forth, produce costly TV commercials and documentary films at public cost to flaunt spurt in rural economy and prosperity of rural people?

Killing assault of capitalism in rural India

This has been but inevitable. Since independence, the people of India, both urban and rural, are gruelling under the grinding wheels of ruthless capitalism. More the days are rolling by, more intense and acute is their privation and

destitution. Ruling Indian bourgeoisie, an inalienable part of crisis-ridden despotic world imperialism-capitalism now in its death throes, is, in order to sustain satiation of its slobbering greed of minting maximum profit by hook or by crook, passing the entire burden of its insoluble crisis on the common people tearing them apart in every sphere of life. Following dismantling of the USSR and world socialist camp as a result of revisionist clique and intrigue, the world imperialism-capitalism, undeterred in their savage loot and plunder, bedlam and butchery, invoked the atrocious doctrine of capitalist globalization and the ruling Indian bourgeoisie desperate to emerge as a formidable regional superpower and a formidable imperialist force, spared no time in implementing the newly-fangled formulation with alacrity to take yet heavier toll on the life of the toiling people the rural poor included.

It has been the capitalist relation of production that is at work in Indian agriculture during last 59 years of rule of Indian capitalism. The agricultural production is governed by the capitalist owner and wage labourer relationship. Concomitantly, the condition of the poor peasants went on deteriorating on a rapid pace. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our departed leader and a foremost Marxist thinker of the era, in course of his penetrating analysis of the root cause of agrarian problems and those facing the poor peasants had shown how in a backward country like India, capitalism and capitalist land relation stood in the way of modernizing and mechanizing agriculture and creating alternative employment opportunities without which the piling agrarian problems can not be solved and rural uplift achieved. Faced with accentuated market crisis endemic of the system, capitalism could in no way go for unfettered industrialization. Hence the Indian bourgeoisie could not dare to modernize agriculture since that at one stroke would have thrown millions out of employment adding to the mounting number of urban unemployed—a near collapse situation it could ill-afford. So the attempt in the beginning was to keep as many people as possible engaged in rural economy by way of small land farming and offering a host of other palliatives like green

revolution etc. As there has been no gainful engagement of each of the able individuals of poor peasant families whether by allotment of enough land or through provision of round the year job at sufficient wages, a severe economic predicament gripped the rural poor. Gradually, most of them have been losing land as the holding became either uneconomic or warranted to be sold out under distress. Small and marginal farmers have been getting transformed into landless peasants, sharecroppers into agricultural labour. In the process, ownership of land has been getting concentrated in the hands of a few rich, the rural bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the middlemen and market manipulators, in connivance with the corrupt government machinery and rural kulaks, force the poor peasants to sell their hard-grown crops at throwaway price. While the produces find way to the national capitalist market as commodities to be sold at much higher margin to fill the coffers of such intermediaries mostly backed by rural kulaks and monopolists, the peasants, the producers, find them deceived and deprived, left in the lurch, half-fed, half-clad. Forget about repayment of the loans they made to cultivate the small piece of land they could still manage to hold on, these wretched peasants are pestered by the haunting thought of bare survival. Finding no other means of earning in the villages, they as destitute have been flocking the urban pockets in search of work, becoming beggars and ultimately dying like animals on the roadside or have been committing suicides, either singly or en masse. And trading on the hunger and death of the impoverished penurious millions, a handful of rich has been amassing astronomical fortune.

The national council of agricultural research in a recent survey has admitted that during green revolution the rich peasants had reaped most of the benefits in seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, etc. Agriculture today has become most sought after place for capital investment by profit-greedy monopolists and rural kulaks. Economic surveys of 1990-2000 revealed that as against Rs. 4,594 crores in 1990-91, the figure of rural capital accumulation in '97-98 touched Rs, 20,995 crores. As high

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The danger 'Social Democracy' poses before world revolutionary movement today

Today, despite all-pervasive attack of decadent, moribund, crisis-ridden world capitalism-imperialism the ferment is buoyant with workers' protests, strikes and mass agitations in almost all countries, including in USA and European countries as well. Faced with such massive dissent, the bourgeoisie desperate to preserve and prolong its oppressive class rule, is also eying for forces who could serve it best at this hour of need, the forces of compromise between labour and capital, forces that can prevent such protests from being transformed into anti-capitalist revolutionary movement. These forces are, therefore, its last resort to hold on to the fortress of ruthlessly exploitative capitalism-imperialism. In this background, social-democracy is assuming a significantly important political role in all countries. Social democracy has not died down with the end of Second World War. On the contrary, it is continuing from the past and is posing greatest danger before the world revolutionary movement of the day. Hence, it is imperative that there is a serious and thorough analysis of the phenomenon of Social Democracy right from tracing the origin to the present form.

When anatomically dissected, 'social democracy' connotes advocacy of 'socialism' and 'democracy' in general. But inside its generality, it did exhibit and do exhibit many a colour of multi-dimensional characteristics in different periods of historical development and even today. Once, ideas of social democracy came out as an anti-thesis of capitalism and at a certain stage, was almost akin to or synonymous with Marxism, so that the Marxist parties assumed the name Social Democratic Labour Party or Social Democratic Party world over. But later on and especially to-day, Social Democracy has come to mean ideas of the bourgeois agents within the working class movement. Social Democracy with its latest exposition has become a menace to the progress of revolutionary movement and scientific socialism as well. And as 'it is impossible to overthrow capitalism-imperialism without putting an end to social democratism', let us examine it right from its historical starting point.

Brief Historical Sketch of Social Democracy

Concentrating on France, Karl Marx observed in 1852, "As against the coalesced bourgeoisie, a coalition between petty-bourgeoisie and workers had been formed, the so-called Social Democratic party. The petty-bourgeois saw that they were badly rewarded after the June days of 1848,¹ that their material interests were imperiled and the democratic guarantees which were

observed, "As far back as the forties, when it was first widely used politically in France, it was applied to a party professing petty-bourgeois socialist reformation and not a party of the revolutionary proletariat." (Col.Works, Vol.30, P.234) Lenin was referring to petty-bourgeois socialist theories that sprang up in France in 1840s. Lenin categorized two distinct big periods of social-democracy as he explained, "Two big periods are to be distinguished in the history of international social-democracy. The First period was that of the birth of socialist ideas and the embryonic class struggle of the proletariat: a long and stubborn struggle between extremely numerous socialist theories and sects. This was the period of preparation and the birth of Marxism ... the period occupied approximately the first two-thirds of the last century and ended with the complete victory of Marxism, the collapse of all pre-Marxian forms of socialism." (Col. Works, Vol. 19, p.195) The Manifesto of the Communist Party had observed, "In countries where modern civilization has become fully developed, a new class of petty-bourgeois has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and the bourgeoisie... In countries like France, where the peasants constitute far more than half of the population, it was natural that writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, should use in their criticism of the bourgeois regime, the standard of the peasant and petty-bourgeoisie and from the standpoint of this intermediate class should take up the cudgels for the working class. Thus arose petty-bourgeois socialism. Sismondi was the head of this school, not only in France but also in England. ...Ultimately ... this form of socialism ended in a miserable fit of the blues."

Then came socialists like Saint Simon, Fourier, both of France, Robert Owen of England and the like who were called "utopian socialists". Describing the breeding ground for these utopians Engels wrote, "The proletariat, which was only just separating itself from these property-less masses as the nucleus of a new class and was as yet quite

incapable of independent political action, appeared as an oppressed, suffering estate, to which, in its capacity to help itself, help could at best be brought in from without, from above down. This historical situation also dominated the founders of socialism. To the crude condition of capitalistic production and the crude class conditions corresponded crude theories. The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, was attempted by the utopians to evolve out of the human brain. These new social systems were foredoomed to be utopians." (*Socialism : utopian and scientific*)

Engels further explained, "The earlier socialism certainly criticized the existing capitalist mode of production and its consequences. But it could not explain the mode of production and therefore could not get the mastery of it. It could only simply reject it as evil." (*ibid*) And finally it was Karl Marx, the great leader of the proletariat, who placed socialism on the scientific basis – "two great discoveries, the materialist conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus value, we owe to Marx. With them socialism became a science." (*ibid*) So, the emergence of Marxism ushered in a new era in the history of social democracy which did reach its second big period.

"The second period", as Lenin phased out, "is that of the formation, growth and maturing of mass socialist parties with a proletarian class composition. This period is characterized by the tremendous spread of socialism, the unprecedented growth of all kinds of organizations of the proletariat and the all round preparation of the proletariat in the most varied fields for the fulfilment of its great historic missions." (Vol.19, p.295) At this second big period there was a tremendous growth of such parties assuming the name 'social democratic party' or 'social democratic labour party', all over the world. Then, Marxist parties were also called social-democratic party. Tracing back history, Stalin explained its the-then feature as, "formerly, *before the victory of the*

¹ Marx here refers to the uprising of the Paris workers of June 23-26, 1848, which was suppressed by the French bourgeoisie with extreme brutality.

Revolutionary socialism and opportunist socialism — two trends in labour movement

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dictatorship of the proletariat, social-democracy, while refraining from openly repudiating the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but doing nothing, absolutely nothing, to bring nearer the realization of the idea, could flaunt the banner of Marxism, and it is obvious that this behaviour of social-democracy created no danger whatever to capitalism. Then, in that period, social-democracy was formally taken as identical, or almost identical with Marxism.” (*Problems of Leninism*)

Initially, Lenin's Party was named R.S.D.L.P

It is noteworthy that the revolutionary party of Russia led by Lenin was also called Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) initially. Explaining the ‘why’ of it Lenin said, “At first, socialism and working class movement existed separately in all European countries... The separation of the working class movement and socialism gave rise to weakness and underdevelopment in each: the theories of the socialists, infused with the workers’ struggle remained nothing more than utopias, good wishes that had no effect on real life : the working class movement remained petty, fragmented, and did not acquire political significance, was not enlightened by advanced science of its time. For this reason we see in all European countries a constantly growing urge to fuse socialism with the working class movement in a single social-democratic movement... By directing socialism towards a fusion with the working class movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did their greatest service: they created a revolutionary theory that explained the necessity for this fusion and gave socialists the task of organizing the class struggle of the proletariat. Precisely this is what happened in Russia... The founding of the Russian Social-democratic Labour Party (in the spring of 1898) marked the biggest step towards this fusion. At the present time the principal task for all Russian socialists and all class-conscious Russian workers is to strengthen this fusion, consolidate and organize the social democratic labour party.”

(Vol.4, p.257, 1899)

Analyzing the “why” from another angle Lenin explained, “The name ‘social-democracy’ is scientifically incorrect, as Marx frequently pointed out, in particular, in the Critique of Gotha Programme in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894... Marx and Engels knowingly put up with the inaccurate, opportunist term, ‘Social Democracy’. For, in those days, after the defeat of Paris Commune, history made slow organizational and educational work, the task of the day. Nothing else was possible ... the workers of Britain corrupted by imperialist profits, the commune defeated in Paris, the recent (1871) triumph of the bourgeois national movement in Germany, the age-long sleep of semi-feudal Russia. Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately: they understood the international situation; they understood that the beginning of the social-revolution must be slow.” (*The task of the proletariat in our revolution*, Vol.24, p.86)

But, later on, Lenin visualized a *third period* of social-democracy when social-democratic parties of the ‘Second International’ went the opportunist and chauvinist way. In 1913, he wrote, “In recent years a third period has been making its appearance”. (Vol.19, p.296) Inside Social-Democracy there were two trends, one of revolutionary Social-Democracy led by Lenin and the other of non-revolutionary social-democracy led by Plekhanov, Kautsky and the ilk. “The struggle between the two trends in the labour movement – revolutionary socialism and opportunist socialism – fills the entire period from 1889 to 1914.” (Lenin) Concomitantly opportunist, reformism and social-chauvinism raised their ugly heads. Lenin, in the course of exposing the features, explained – “opportunist means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of workers or in other words, an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie, directing against the mass of the proletariat.” “Reformists try to divide and deceive the workers, to divert them from the class-struggle by petty concessions.” “By social-

chauvinism we mean acceptance of the idea of the defence of the Fatherland ... a refusal to propagate and support proletarian revolutionary action against one’s “own” bourgeoisie.” They “have the same political content, namely, class-collaboration, repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, repudiation of revolutionary action, unconditional acceptance of bourgeois legality”. So Lenin had to launch a long and resolute fight against these trends.

As the First World War broke out in 1914, the gulf between the revolutionary social-democracy and the non-revolutionary one, became crystal-clear. Most of the social-democratic parties sided with the bourgeoisie of their respective countries and became social-chauvinists, throwing out ‘proletarian internationalism lock-stock-and-barrel’. Lenin explained, “It is perfectly obvious that social-chauvinism’s basic ideological and political content fully coincides with the foundations of opportunism. It is one and the same tendency. In the conditions of war of 1914-15, opportunism leads to social-chauvinism. The idea of class-collaboration is opportunism’s main feature. The war has brought this idea to its logical conclusion ... The war has changed this opportunism, which has been fostered for decades, raised it to a higher stage.” (*The collapse of the second international*)

Placed in this situation, when most of the social-democratic parties betrayed internationalism and revolutionary struggle for scientific socialism, Lenin began thinking of changing the name of his party from social-democratic labour party to communist party.

RSDLP Changes its name to RCP (B)

Thus, when most of the social-democratic parties of the ‘Second International’ betrayed revolutionary Marxism, Lenin observed, “Social-democrats like Kautsky ‘scientifically’ defend the most despicable chauvinism, or, like Plekhanov, declare the propaganda of civil war against the bourgeoisie a harmful ‘utopia’! Indeed, if such ‘social-democrats’ wish to be in the majority and to form the official ‘International’ ... then is it not better to give up the name of ‘social-

democrats’, which has been besmirched and degraded by them, and return to the old Marxist name of communists?” (Vol.21, p.93, 1914) In 1917, in his *April Thesis* Lenin pleaded, “Instead of ‘social-democracy’, whose official leaders throughout the world have betrayed socialism and deserted to the bourgeoisie (the ‘defencists’ and the vacillating ‘Kautskytes’), we must call ourselves the communist party.” And, finally, in the Seventh All-Russian Conference of the RSDLP (B) in 1918, the name was converted to Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) or RCP (B). In that Conference Lenin argued, “...the most important argument in favour of changing the name of the party is that the old official socialist parties in all the leading European countries have still not got rid of their intoxication with social-chauvinism and social-patriotism that led to the complete collapse of European official socialism during the present war, so that up to now almost all official socialist parties have been a real hindrance to the working class movement, revolutionary social movement, a real encumbrance to it ... our party must make the most decisive step, sharp clear and unambiguous statement that it .. has broken off connections with the old official socialism, for which purpose a change in the name of the party will be most effective means.” Lenin argued further, “It has already been explained to our press that the name ‘social-democratic party’ is scientifically incorrect. When workers set up their own state they realized that the old concept of democracy – bourgeois democracy – had been surpassed in the process of the development of our revolution. We have arrived at a type of democracy that has never existed anywhere in Western Europe. It has its prototype only in the Paris Commune ... we cannot therefore uphold democracy in its old form. On the other hand, as we begin social reforms we must have a clear conception of the goal ... that is, the creation of a communist society.” Thus the connotation of ‘socialism’ and ‘democracy’ parted with ‘democracy in general’ and ‘socialism in general’. Marxism parted completely with social-

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Present day Social-Democratism

— key support to capitalism

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democratism.

Social democracy Turns into Enemy of Marxism

This is how, a Chinese wall was erected between social democracy and Marxism. The November Revolution of Russia in 1917 was also a significant phenomenon to the history of social democracy. Stalin explained, “after the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, when everybody has seen for himself to what Marxism leads and what its victory may signify, social democracy is no longer able to flaunt the banner of Marxism, can no longer coquet with the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat without creating danger for capitalism. Having long ago broken with the spirit of Marxism, it has found itself compelled to discard also the banner of Marxism: it has openly and unambiguously taken a stand against the offspring of Marxism, against the October Revolution, against the first dictatorship of the proletariat in the world.

Now it had to dissociate itself from Marxism, and has actually done so: for under present conditions one cannot call oneself a Marxist unless one openly and devotedly supports the first proletarian dictatorship of the world, unless one wages a revolutionary struggle against one's own bourgeoisie, unless one creates the conditions for victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in one's own country. A chasm has opened between social-democracy and Marxism.” (*Problems of Leninism*)

Again he said, “But matters did not end there ... Present-day social-democratism is an ideological support of capitalism. Lenin was thousand times right when he said that the present day social-democratic politicians are “real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class movement, the labour-lieutenants of the capitalist class”, that in the “civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie” they would inevitably take the side of ‘Versailles’ against the communards’.

It is impossible to put an end to capitalism without putting an end to

social-democratism in the labour movement.” (ibid)

Now, this debased social democracy is a phenomenon visible in every capitalist country, big or small. This phenomenon has two basic sources of germination. One is, in Lenin's words – “Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty-bourgeoisie, small proprietors, capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new “middle strata” are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism (appendages to the factory, work at home, small workshops scattered all over the country to meet the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.) These new small producers are just as inevitably being cast again into the ranks of the proletariat...” The other source is labour-aristocracy, whom the capitalists of the countries bribe with the money earned from ‘super-profits’ or at least by some of that to represent their interest in the working class movement. Hence, “certain strata of working class ... as well as petty-bourgeois sympathizers within socialist parties have proved the social mainstay of these tendencies, and channels of bourgeois influence over the proletariat.” (Lenin) Let us now have a glimpse of the many facades of the debased social democracy.

Social Democracy – A Changing Chameleon

Ever since social democracy appeared as a menace to the advancement of revolutionary struggle, it changed its colours, took up different hues like a changing chameleon. Right from Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, the theoreticians of German social democratic party and leaders of the degenerated second international up to ‘modern revisionism’ leading to the fall of the soviet USSR – social democracy appeared in different cloaks. However, the essence remained the same – ‘socialism’ in words, ‘bourgeois democracy’ in practice. Without getting into detailed history of such parties and protagonists, let us have a brief account of its salient features.

Broadly speaking, social democracy appears with two categories – right-wingers and left-wingers. One variety of debased social democracy speaks of socialism, but does not subscribe to Marxism. They are proponents of ‘democratic socialism’ or something alike for which they cater different elucidations other than ‘scientific socialism’ of Marx. They are right-wing social democrats. (Scheidemann, Noske and the like) These parties finally degenerated into bourgeois parties.

The left-wing social democrats also had many features of difference among them. Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, treated Marxian and Hegelian dialectics as identical. To him socialism was only a moral and ethical ideal and he parted with scientific communism. He rejected the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and believed in dying away of class struggle. He refused to recognize any goal except winning reforms within capitalism, expressed by his dictum, “The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing.” Karl Kautsky of German social democratic party followed him. While speaking of proletarian revolution, Kautsky did not understand the importance of demolishing bourgeois state machinery and replacing it by the dictatorship of the proletariat state. He did not understand the difference between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy. He spoke for ‘Democracy in General’, or ‘pre-socialist democracy’ which were nothing but ‘bourgeois democracy’, a term which he willfully avoided. He said, “...the word dictatorship means the abolition of democracy”, to which Lenin answered, “...as long as there are exploiters who rule the majority, the exploited, the democratic state must inevitably be a democracy for the exploiters. A state of exploited must fundamentally differ from such a state; it must be a democracy of the exploited and a means of suppressing the exploiters. ...As you see, the relation between the exploited and the exploiters has vanished in Kautsky's argument.” Another variety of left-wing social democracy, while assuming the name ‘communist’, though pays, in theory, all intellectual service to

class struggle, proletarian internationalism, democratic centralism, scientific communism and all the concepts and categories of Marxism – but in practice, in their way of thinking, methodology, behaviour, mode of existence inculcate bourgeois world outlook and bourgeois democracy upon themselves. They are champions of left-wing social democracy and submerged fully in bourgeois parliamentary politics.

Departure from the principle of proletarian internationalism is another form of debased social democracy. These people become “national communists”, chauvinists serving the national bourgeoisie, the imperialists of their respective countries. Most of the parties of the ‘second international’ showed this feature at the beginning of the First World War. Like many, Plekhanov, one time great pillar of Russian Marxism, also fell to social chauvinism during the war. Plekhanov once fought brilliantly against Kautsky's social democratism. But, later he degenerated into Menshevism. He did not support the November revolution of 1917. On philosophical question, Lenin criticized him for his erroneous conception about ‘experience’ and ‘Hieroglyph’ (symbolism) which brings agnosticism in epistemology.

These are few of the many facades of debased social democracy of which the right-wingers degenerated into bourgeois parties and the left-wingers assembled on the broad platform of “Revisionism”. Let us look into ‘Revisionism’ as a form of debased social democracy of the day.

Revisionism – a Manifestation of Debased Social Democracy

“The dialectics of history were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism compelled its enemies to disguise themselves as Marxists” – observed Lenin. (SW, Moscow, 1977, p 180) The unprecedented growth of working class movement holding high the banner of Marxism, also compelled the adversaries of Marxism take the cover of Marxism. Bourgeois liberals, petty-bourgeois socialists, socialist opportunists disguised

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Many facades of debased Social Democracy

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themselves within the wider canvas of Marxism-socialism. The result was the creation of new category of social democracy, called 'revisionism'. They try to revise the fundamentals of Marxism in the name of 'developing Marxism', 'changed situation', 'consideration of national characteristics' etc. They attempt at "Bourgeois Emasculation" of philosophy, political economy, scientific formulation of Marxism. According to Lenin, "the second half-century of the existence of Marxism began (in the nineties) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself." It was revisionism.

Eduard Bernstein of German social democratic party is regarded as the founder of 'revisionism'. Engels's occasional refutation of Bernsteinian revisionism is well recorded in history. But after the death of Engels, Bernstein made systematic revision of Marxism which was fought out by the great Lenin. Bernstein and Kautsky of Germany, Adler and Bauer of Austria, right-wing socialists of France, 'economists' and 'Mensheviks', Trotskyites, Plekhanovs, Bukharinites in Russia were forebearers of revisionism. After Lenin's death Stalin waged a tough battle against revisionism especially against Trotsky and Bukharin. *Problems of Leninism* and *On the opposition* – the two collections of writings by Stalin bears glaring testimony to it. But 'revisionism' as a consolidated world phenomenon and as a menace to the growth of revolutionary struggle carried on. We now proceed to have a look at its course.

Revisionism from 'Second International' carries on, giving rise to 'Modern Revisionism'

After the first world war, Lenin observed in 1917, "the international socialist and working class movement in every country has evolved three trends – (1) The social chauvinists i.e. socialists in words and chauvinists in deed ... They represent a stratum or groups or sections of the working class which objectively have been bribed by the bourgeoisie... (2) The second trend, known as the "Centre" consists of people who vacillate between the social chauvinists and the true internationalists. The "Centre", all

vow and declare that they are Marxists and internationalists ... 'revolutionaries in word and reformist in deed.'... (3) The third trend, that of the true internationalists". (*The task of the proletariat in our revolution*) It is clear from this categorization that besides from revolutionary socialism there were two other trends – right social democracy and left social democracy marked the working class movement in the post-first world war period.

In 1919, social chauvinists, opportunist parties tried to revive the dismantled 'second international' and convened the first post-war international conference at Berne (Switzerland) known as "the Berne Conference". There were two main agenda – the questions of 'Democracy' and 'Dictatorship'. Kautsky and Bernstein insisted that all should condemn Bolshevism and socialist revolution of Russia. Finally a resolution was adopted by offering hypocritical greetings to the revolution of Russia, but condemning the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and hailing the bourgeoisie democracy as "Democracy in general".

Lenin denounced this conference as "yellow International" and commented, "It is not mere accident, therefore, that the Kautsky's followers all over the world have now united in practical politics with the extreme opportunists (through the second or yellow international) and with the bourgeois governments (through bourgeois coalition governments in which socialists take part)" (Preface to *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*)

Here, mention may be made of a chapter of 'Two-and-half' international in the history of social democracy when in 1920 the 'centrist' social democrats (Kautsky and Co.) left this "yellow" second international and formed their own. This was called "Two-and-half" international. Lenin commented, "The petty-bourgeois democrats in the capitalist countries, where foremost sections are represented by the second and Two-and-half Internationals, serve to-day as the mainstay of capitalism, since they retain an influence over the majority, or a considerable section, of the industrial and commercial workers and office employees." (Col. Works, Vol.32, p.454, 1921)

Again, in 1923, the two ('yellow' and 'two-and-half') fused together to form "socialist workers international", the abode of international opportunism, reformism and chauvinism acting as physicians by the bed of sick-capitalism. Backed by the bourgeoisie, this 'international' acted as god-father of right and left social democracy in a world scale.

Fascism and Social Democracy

The menace of this trend attained the superlative degree when, with the cry for "National socialism", "workers' cause" and chauvinism leading to national jingoism, Hitler duped even the workers of Germany to fascism, the greatest enemy to civilization. In 1922 in Italy, in Germany in 1933 and also in other countries, fascism following the course of social democracy did make good its appearance, annihilating real communists and rejuvenating capitalism.

Fascism, as defined Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our departed leader, "is a historically conditioned form of counter-revolution in which capitalism seeks to stave off proletarian revolution by anticipatory move". It is a perverted attempt on the part of the crisis-ridden moribund decadent capitalism-imperialism to keep alive a thoroughly outworn capitalist order when it is outliving historic usefulness and has become the stumbling block to social progress. So, in the current phase of third general intense insoluble crisis of capitalism, fascism has become the order in all capitalist countries today, no matter whether developed or underdeveloped. Fascism is economic centralization, maximum concentration of political power in the state, rigid firmness in administration all leading to more identification of the state with the interest of the monopolists, in defence of the aggregate interest of the capitalist class. It assumes different forms in different countries to suit local conditions. It may come in the form of naked military dictatorship, or may take a deceptive look by keeping alive parliament and allowing various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties to give appearance of bourgeois democracy or through a two-party democratic system. Always and everywhere, Fascism adopts a dual policy of

suppression and persuasion. It adopts social-democratic plans and creates confusion in mass mind by uttering social-democratic postures and utterances and in the midst of this confusion crushes the revolutionary party, force and movement. It propagates class harmony and supra-class national interest. It promotes national jingoism, fosters racial and communal hatred and such other backward sentiments among the masses. Culturally, as brilliantly analyzed by Com. Ghosh, Fascism is a peculiar fusion of spiritualism with science. It takes only technological aspects of science for building economic and military prowess but inculcates mysticism, age-old obsolete creeds, blind faith, bigotry, obscurantism and fanaticism in the cultural-social fields. It is, therefore, an outrage on man's creativity, minimum human dignity and sense of values, a curse on human civilization.

Since fascism in order to capture imagination of the people and enlist their support, adopts social democratic plans and programmes containing socialistic promises and bases itself on nationalism, class collaboration and hostility to communism, it found its best refuge in social democracy which flaunts these thoughts and ideas to prepare grounds for its growth and development for carrying out its mission to hoodwink the people by putting up a radical cloak and then strangle them from all sides, terminate communism ideologically and communists physically and in the process provide extra lease of life to worn-out gasping capitalism-imperialism. Social Democracy masquerading as progressive and pro-people, stab the masses from the back, emasculate them from within, impede the process of development of united conscious class and mass struggles against capitalist onslaught and ultimately make the toiling people surrender to the fascist dictates of the bourgeois class.

So though fascism was defeated in Second World War, it did not vanish but found a haven in Social Democracy which, in the absence of appropriate sustained ideological-political struggle on the basis of correct grasp of Marxist-Leninist science, began to spread its menacing tentacles over the working class movement throughout the

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Capitalist globalization pulverizing poor peasants

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as 79% of this capital is private. There is no doubt that this figure has substantially increased over these years. It is this swelling fortune of the rural kulaks that the rulers, their hirelings, political agents and sycophants have been trumpeting as thriving rural economy. While the power that he has been boasting of self-sufficiency in food, starvation, malnutrition, privation and ruination have been sniffing out innocent lives of the actual producers of food crops. In keeping with the inexorable law of capitalism, the yawning gap between the few rich and myriads of poor, is so glaring in rural India, the social stratification so vivid, so cruel.

Capitalist globalization worsens the situation

And to slay the slain, there are prescriptions of capitalist globalization today. In terms of it, the governments are made to gradually withdraw all subsidies from agriculture and handover the land to the private monopolists for cultivation of so-called cash crop (crop that has market in the country or abroad) or for any other purpose. Through World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank and such other global imperialist-capitalist bodies, various edicts are issued and made to implement in agriculture to make it an exclusive domain of the monopolists and MNCs. So lucrative has become agriculture sector to the monopolists that they have demanded of the government to make available to them on 50 year lease all non-cultivable and vested land. Indian agriculture has itself now turned into a big industry. We have mentioned earlier about the World Bank asking for steady withdrawal of rural credit. While the Prime Minister mocks of having been left a deep impression "after his interaction with distressed cotton-growers and widows of those having committed suicide in Vidarbha, his office gives final touch to the proposal of establishing an organization to keep Indian farmers in the loop about WTO rules, local implications of global trade in agro-products and plan their activity in tune with international and domestic climate of capitalist globalization.

The intention is very clear. Stack the odds against them so heavily as to make them genuflect before the monopolists and MNCs, the

protagonists and beneficiaries of capitalist globalization. Michel Chossudovsky, a well known Canadian economist, has written in the book titled *The Globalization of Poverty* that "The extension of markets for global corporations and destruction of the domestic economy the state under the neo-liberal policy agenda has become increasingly repressive in curbing the democratic rights of its citizens" (Kunal Chattopadhyay in *The Statesman* – July 11, 2006). These rights obviously are those counter posing the freedom of economic activity of the monopoly in the globalized environment. "If you are small peasant, your freedom is violated because the state enacts laws that make it ever more difficult for you to stay afloat." (*Ibid*) Apart from cultivation, capital is now being invested in technology-driven agro-based industries, food-processing and trade and commerce in agricultural produces that promise super profit but hardly needs manpower. Even MNCs have started taking significant forays in rural market and both central as well as all state governments including those run by the CPI(M) are offering red carpet to them in the name of encouraging cash crop production to 'better the lot of the farmers'.

Enslaving the peasants

And the peasants have already been getting a feel of the MNC-endowed 'betterment'. A good section of peasants in North Bengal were lured to cultivate tomato, an ingredient of lucrative food processing industry, only to be duped subsequently about procurement of the produces at so-called market price. Enraged and frustrated, many of the peasants burnt their crops in the open. Similar have been the stories of some hapless sunflower growers and potato farmers.

While the poor peasants slap chest being denied subsistence level price for the crop, the MNCs, most of whom own the food processing industries and trade in cash crops, have been minting huge profit by selling special type of seeds, pesticides and fertilizers required for the cash crops. They have calculated that if they could replace 50% of the common seed market by such kinds of special stuff, their annual profit would go up by Rs 6,000 crores.

Likewise to spread their

tentacles over the peasants, the monopolists and MNCs, are strongly pitching for contract farming in which contracting firms would give cash advance to the peasants for producing a particular crop and undertake to purchase the produces at market price. Obviously the peasants would have no control over the price which will be determined by these profit-greedy MNCs and monopoly firms. Moreover in case of failure of production due to natural or any other reason, the contracting firm will bear no responsibility. In that event, the peasants, it is clear, would not be able to repay the advances received, get enmeshed in debts and become slaves of these contracting monopolists. Already such banal consequences of contract farming have come to the fore.

"A review...in the context of African and Latin American countries reveals that contract has led to many ill-effects in the spheres of livelihoods of producers, community organizations and the institutions, environment and gender ... there is considerable evidence to show that in general benefits have not been sustainable, farmers have been indebted and worse off due to contract farming project failure...and many social and environmental conservancies have been particularly serious." (*Economic and Political Weekly*, 31.12.2005). It goes without saying that the Indian scenario will be no different but yet more precarious.

No respite from destitution under capitalism

So, this is the harrowing spectacle of rural India, the context in which instances of committing suicide by the peasants out of extreme privation are becoming galore. This reality remains obfuscated behind the pomp and grandeur of bourgeois propaganda machine, the surfeit of counterfeit facts and figures. Only when it assumes alarming position in certain pockets so as to surface by taking off sheen of high voltage propaganda of economic growth and propaganda that the government responds in knee-jerk fashion. But this ought to be clear to everyone that these so-called gesture of forgoing interest backlog and such other palliatives and gestures would not even touch a figment of the problem. So long capitalism rules, capitalist globalization entrenches

firmly in economy, it is only destitution and devastation on an increasing scale that is in store for the rural poor. Today the Prime Minister, in order to salvage his and his party's position as well as pre-empt any advantage that his parliamentary oppositions could derive out of the situation announced waiver of the outstanding interest on the existing loans to the Vidarbha farmers. But one would not be surprised if, on the plea of farming being no longer remunerative, the banks and organized sector gradually withdraw from extending credit to poor farmers thereby compelling them to go to the private moneylenders and invite total ruination and thus make the Would Bank dictates fully operational in rural credit sector. So even if the Vidarbha peasants are waived a part of the interest component of their loan, they would never be able to come out of the debt trap and after selling out whatever little land they have today, will gradually turn into landless peasants, from landless peasants to agricultural labourers and then from agricultural labourers to mere labourers in absence of employment scope in agriculture. Again there would be a spate of self-termination of unbearable life. Under capitalism, there is no escape from this for the small and marginal peasants whom the Prime Minister, himself an ardent proponent of capitalist globalization-liberalization, describes as "backbone of rural economy".

Build up militant peasant movement

Thus it is evident that until and unless capitalism is overthrown by revolution, there will be no emancipation of the poor peasants from all out exploitation. Till that time, as a part of necessary preparatory step, there ought to be developed a countrywide powerful sustained militant peasant movement uniting all strata of rural poor, small and marginal peasants, landless peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers on the burning problems of rural life conducive to anti-capitalist revolutionary movement. At this hour of grave tragedy that took place in rural Vidarbha, it is incumbent on the left and democratic peasant organizations to come forward and

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SUCI strongly deplores cowardly bomb blast in Mumbai and attack on tourists in Kashmir

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement issued on July 12, 2006 severely condemned the horrific serial bomb blasts which rocked the city of Mumbai on July 11, 2006, resulting in death and grievous injuries to several hundreds of innocent people. Comrade Mukherjee strongly indicted both the central and Maharashtra state governments for their utter and unpardonable failure in ensuring safety and security of life of the common residents of Mumbai who, since 1993, have been periodically facing such brutal and barbaric attacks that pose serious threat to their minimal security as citizens of one of the biggest metropolis of the

country.

He also severely deplored the cowardly attack on the tourists in Srinagar yesterday, the July 11, 2006 in which 6 innocent travellers died and many others sustained serious injury. Demanding immediate hauling up and exemplary punishment of the culprits having perpetrated these crimes on the people as well as adequate compensation to the injured and the families of the dead, Comrade Mukherjee emphasized that it ought to be mandatory on the part of the government to evolve a full-proof security network to insulate the common people from being vulnerable to such dastardly acts of

the enemies of the people.

In this connection, Comrade Mukherjee also strongly deprecated the manner in which the Shiv Sena supporters in the name of protesting against defacing of the bust of the wife of their supremo went berserk and attempted to rouse communal passion.

Comrade Mukherjee urged upon the countrymen to be on guard against the outbreak of any kind of communal flare-up in the wake of these ghastly acts of bomb blast and attacks on the tourists and maintain communal harmony as that alone provides the bulwark against all these heinous attacks on the life and livelihood of the common people.

SUCI denounces US-backed Zionist Israeli attack on Lebanon

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement issued today severely condemned the latest all-out military offensive through air, sea and ground on Lebanon by the Zionist Israeli regime with full backing of US imperialists causing indiscriminate destruction of life and properties of innocent civilians. He also strongly denounced the way the US and Israeli rulers are issuing serious threat to Syria. It is evident, said Nihar Mukherjee, that after illegally invading and occupying Iraq under fraudulent pretext, the US imperialism is after the blood of Syria, Lebanon and Iran using the Zionist Israel as a stooge so as to compel these sovereign independent countries surrender to its aggressive design. This, if not resisted, warned Comrade Mukherjee, will escalate tension in the entire Middle East, might gradually snowball into a greater war involving larger number of countries in the Gulf causing devastation of not only the target countries but also Israel herself and embolden the barbaric US imperialists to run down other countries of the world.

Comrade Mukherjee called upon all the freedom loving people of the world to come out in strong denouncement of this bestial savagery of the Zionist Israeli rulers and their mentor, the US imperialists and force them to stop this nefarious game of launching military offensive on others, on even false pretexts. He also demanded of the Government of India to decry this US-backed aggression in unequivocal terms.



Delhi SUCI protests unbearable price-rise of essential commodities on July 3

Suicide of cotton farmers

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build up a massive movement on the following demands : —

- 1) Adequate compensation to the families of those having committed suicide.
- 2) Complete waiving of all loans (both principal and interest).
- 3) Ensuring availability of adequate loan throughout the year at minimal interest (say 1% pa) on easy terms.
- 4) Ensuring fair price of agricultural produces.
- 5) Stopping World Bank, WTO and such other imperialist organizations from interfering in Indian agriculture.
- 6) Quitting of all imperialist organizations by Indian government.

Social Democracy — last prop of Fascism

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world aided and abetted by reactionary world imperialism-capitalism. It is for this reason that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat made his historic comment way back in 1949 that "Once Fascism came out of the womb of Social-Democratism, now Social-Democratism is the last prop of Fascism". (*Gandhism—ideological base of Fascism in India*) He also observed "Social democracy after committing suicide in Europe and after having been thoroughly discredited and isolated as an organized political force from the proletarian revolutionary

movement, no doubt is still continuing as a powerful political trend in the world communist movement. And 'Modern Revisionism' is nothing but an outcome of this trend." (*Why SUCI is the only genuine communist party in India*). At the demise of Comrade Stalin, the communist party of the USSR under the leadership of Khrushchev brought about the phenomenon of "Modern Revisionism" which ultimately led to dismantling of the socialist camp and caused serious set back in the international communist movement.

(To be continued)

Confession of a masked face

"What we are practising here is capitalism. Socialism can not be created in the given situation even if we preach it. I am a realist and not a fool." These were the words of the chief minister of West Bengal and the ruling Left Front's mascot Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee today.

Emphasizing that he was not "embarrassed" by his government's befriending of corporate houses and advocating "harmonious relations between labour and capital", he added : 'I know Marxism teaches us that the contradiction between labour and capital is irreconcilable....(but) we are no more in the Opposition and our responsibility to govern makes it imperative that we cooperate with captains of industry to maintain the momentum of the flow of investment into Bengal.' "we do want workers to take care of the industry for their own survival," he added.

(The Statesman, 13-04-06)

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