

## FIFTH LECTURE

# INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

### BASIC PRINCIPLES

The communist movement has been and always will be an international movement. It is based on the working class which exists in almost every country of the world. It leads the struggle of the working, toiling masses and other oppressed sections of society against a common enemy—world imperialism. It adheres to a common ideology—Marxism-Leninism—which is the generalisation of the experience of humanity's struggle against nature and for social advance through class struggle. "Workers of the World, Unite!" was the great battle-cry sounded by Marx and Engels at the very inception of our movement. It remains as valid as ever today. Communists all over the world are both ardent patriots and proletarian internationalists.

We have had experience of this proletarian internationalism in our freedom struggle. The British communists gave all help to our fight for freedom and mercilessly castigated the British imperialists who not only ravaged India but used the exploitation of India to hold up the British workers' struggle for socialism. No other party in Britain ever took such a clear-cut stand. British communists stood together in the dock with the founder-leaders of the Communist Party of India in the Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929). To take a still more recent example, when India liberated Goa, the Portuguese communists sent a message of greetings from the underground in Portugal. Every communist party greeted the action of India. Such examples can be multiplied many times over.

There is no conflict between patriotism and proletarian internationalism. Communists of all countries love their country and their people. They struggle and sacrifice for their liberation from the imperialist oppressors and "their" local oppressing class. They struggle to bring about a socialist society in their country. In this struggle the workers and other oppressed classes afford each other mutual support. There is no basic and inherent conflict between the workers and other toilers of one country and those of another.

We have before us the tremendously inspiring struggle of the Vietnamese people. They are fighting US imperialism in defence of their country. At the same time, their struggle is an international one—against the most vicious and worst enemy of the freedom of all peoples everywhere. Hence, their struggle is also supported by communists, progressives and peace-lovers all over the world. The Communist Party of the USA is in the forefront of the magnificent struggle of the common people of the USA against the US aggression. This is in the best interests of the people of the USA, of the Vietnamese people, of world peace and of all the peoples of the world.

#### *Proletarian Internationalism*

Communists are slandered in every country that they are agents of a foreign power and follow a foreign ideology. The charge is often made by those who are themselves the agents of imperialism. But some well-intentioned people are also taken in sometimes. We must argue with the latter in a patient manner. Our ideology is a science and like any science, knows no frontiers, e.g. the law of bridge-building or manufacture of fertilisers is the same in India as in Australia. So also the laws of revolution and class struggle. At the same time, this universal science of Marxism-Leninism has to be creatively applied to the concrete conditions of each country. Such creative application also develops Marxism-Leninism.

The communists of any country are part of the inter-

national movement, but in that movement, all communist parties are equal and independent, responsible, in the first place, to the working class of their own country. The international communist movement has no leading party, no "superior" and "inferior" contingents. It works out commonly agreed documents through mutual consultation and discussions at international conferences. No communist party can dictate to another party or interfere in its internal affairs. Communist parties study each other's experience, learn from one another and where they differ, engage in fraternal criticism and self-criticism.

A negative example proves this point. The Maoists in Peking tried to impose their line on the international communist movement. They crudely interfered in the internal affairs of the Communist Party of India, split it and did so all over the world. As a result, the Maoists have been condemned by the overwhelming majority of the communist parties of the world for not only deviating from but repudiating Marxism-Leninism. This proves how the communist party in each country always preserves its independence and insists on equality, at the same time upholds the unity of the international movement.

The international communist movement is now getting ready for another international conference to be held in Moscow in November-December 1968. In order to prepare for this a preparatory conference was first held in Budapest in March 1968. Then an international commission is going to prepare draft documents. These would be discussed by the leadership of various communist parties. Then the redrafted documents would be considered by the world conference. Every communist party is joining in this preparatory work as well as the conference on an entirely voluntary basis.

But proletarian internationalism is by no means confined to meetings and conferences. It is, above all, expressed through joint action against imperialism. Solidarity with Vietnam is an outstanding example. But it is far from the only one. Proletarian internationalism is manifested in the

coordinated action of the world communist movement, in alliance with all anti-imperialist forces, against the aggressive world imperialist system.

Proletarian internationalism also means doing the utmost to speed forward the revolution in one's own country. The best contribution one makes to the cause of proletarian internationalism is to push ahead with the revolutionary work in one's own country. This applies to the communist parties which are ruling parties. The best help that the communists of the Soviet Union can render to the world movement is to as rapidly and as best as possible build a communist society in their country. This is what they are doing. Negatively, the Maoists betray proletarian internationalism by screeching about "world revolution" but making a thorough mess of socialist construction in their own country.

Proletarian internationalism must not be confused with identity of views between all communist parties and the absence of any differences. This is a wrong, mechanical understanding which became prevalent during the period of the cult of Stalin. It is natural that there are differences and there is nothing to be frightened over this. But these differences need not come in the way of unity of action. And these differences should be discussed in a fraternal way, by bilateral discussions and at international conferences. Commonly agreed positions have to be upheld. The Maoists are condemned because, on the one hand, they insist that all communist parties must obey Mao (this is against the principle of independence and equality) and, on the other, they refuse to uphold the line worked out collectively in the Moscow Conferences of 1957 and 1960 and attack all who differ from them as "agents of imperialism" (this is against the principle of unity).

#### *Multifarious Forms of Struggle and Unity*

Proletarian internationalism must not be taken to mean uniformity of tactics of the communist parties or identical forms of revolution. This is to make a mockery of that

great principle. The international communist movement has never accepted this principle. The revolution in Russia was different from that in China and in Cuba, again, different from both. As for tactics, take the position in the world today. In India the Communist Party of India is organising strikes, demonstrations, satyagraha, bundhs, etc. The Communist Party in South Africa is carrying on armed struggle. The Communist Party in Italy is making full preparation for general election. The Communist Party in Colombia is discussing guerilla tactics. The CPSU is leading communist construction and giving all help to the anti-imperialist struggle. The Communist Party of Portugal is underground and working out actions against the Salazar dictatorship.

It is wrong, as the Maoists are doing, to insist that the "Chinese path" is the only path to revolutionary success. Still worse is their insistence that every communist party has immediately to start armed struggle in the rural areas in order to qualify as "revolutionary". Other parties which try to make out that their revolutionary path is the only path are committing the same mistake. There are diverse revolutionary roads, depending on the concrete conditions and the given international balance of forces.

There are, however, certain fundamental laws of revolution. The need to base one's activity on the class struggle; uniting all the classes who can be united at a given stage of revolution; the leading role of the revolutionary party; the seizure of power; the establishment of revolutionary state power which smashes the resistance of the enemy classes; the freeing of the creative energies of the masses; the skilful combination of various forms of struggle and so on. These laws have been summed up in the classical works of Marx, Engels and Lenin as well as in the commonly agreed upon documents of the international communist movement. These laws have to be creatively applied in each country.

So also with regard to the forms in which proletarian internationalism manifests itself. The Communist Inter-

national set up by Lenin was one form, suitable for those times. In today's conditions this form would be totally unsuitable. It was, in fact, dissolved in 1943. Today the form of proletarian internationalism is joint action, bilateral and multilateral contacts and conferences, world conferences. It is wrong to hold either that proletarian internationalism demands an international organisation or that the absence of a world organisation means that there is no need for **proletarian internationalism**. Communists never make a fetish of forms.

### *Growth of World Communist Movement*

If we date the starting of the world communist movement from the founding of the Communist League in 1847, we find that the movement has been in existence for only 120 years. And yet it has grown from a handful of persons to a 50 million strong army existing in all countries and at the helm of 14 states with a population of over 900 million. It is naturally a matter of great pride that no other movement, at any period of human history, has grown in this tempestuous manner. It gives communists everywhere a tremendous sense of confidence. It rouses the anger and envy of our opponents. How was this possible and what is it due to?

*First*, the communist movement is the expression of the objective contradictions existing in the world ever since capitalism appeared. These contradictions exist independent of the wish and will of anybody. Such contradictions reflected in human consciousness give rise to the communist movement. It, therefore, can never be stamped out and it can never cease growing.

*Second*, the communist movement is guided by a scientific, revolutionary doctrine, worked out by Marx and Engels and developed by Lenin and in our day by the world communist movement as a whole. This doctrine is constantly being enriched by fresh generalisations. Theory and practice are indissolubly linked. Without a revolutionary theory, there could not have been such a revolutionary

movement. And without a revolutionary movement, revolutionary theory cannot also develop.

*Third*, the sacrifice and struggle of millions of workers and toilers, many of whom made the supreme sacrifice. Without the patient work as well as the revolutionary courage of countless men and women, the communist movement could never have been built.

The international communist movement has advanced only through implacable revolutionary struggle against the class enemy. This applies also to each individual communist party. Without struggle at different levels in different forms, no communist party can hope to grow and neither can the world communist movement as a whole.

The international communist movement has advanced only through a constant struggle against deviations and in its own ranks. It has grown through struggle against dogmatism and revisionism. Dogmatism hinders the development of Marxist-Leninist theory and its creative application as well as development. It replaces the study of the concrete situation with merely quoting the classical works without reference to the time and conditions. It leads to sectarianism, to the isolation of communists from the masses. It is a great enemy of the revolution. Revisionism, which is a manifestation of bourgeois ideology, paralyses the revolutionary energy of the working class and demands the preservation or restoration of capitalism. It declares the very fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism to be "out-moded". It denies the class struggle and the need for revolutionary seizure of power. It denies the need for a communist party and decries democratic centralism. It condemns proletarian internationalism and gives free rein to bourgeois nationalism. It paralyses the revolutionary will of the workers and other toilers and demobilises them. It, too, is a great enemy of the revolution. Both have to be ruthlessly fought. One cannot fight dogmatism by encouraging revisionism nor combat reformism by encouraging dogmatism. It is absurd to "prefer" one to the other. Both are obnoxious. Both are enemies of Marxism-Leninism

and of the world communist movement. Which deviation is the main danger has to be decided concretely from case to case and from time to time.

The struggle against dogmatism and revisionism has to be conducted from positions of creative Marxism, i.e. applying and developing the fundamentals of Marxism through a constant generalisation of fresh experience, by continuous concrete studies and by persistent review. A splendid example of this was afforded by Lenin. He fought the degeneration and revisionism of the social-democratic leaders not only by recalling the basic teachings of Marx but also by developing these teachings. He developed the theory of imperialism, of the revolutionary break at the weakest link, of the revolutionary party and so on. Today also the international communist movement combats both dogmatism and revisionism from the positions of creative Marxism.

#### HISTORY OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

##### *Communist League (1847-52)*

It grew out of Communist Committees of Correspondence organised by Marx and Engels from 1846 onwards. These established relations with the remnants of the Federation of the Just, set up by some French utopian revolutionaries with anarchist leanings. First Conference of both these groups was held in London in the summer of 1847. There the Communist League was founded. It was mainly made up of exiled workers and intellectuals. At the Second Congress (November-December 1847) Marx and Engels were commissioned to write the programme. This was published in February 1848—the immortal *Communist Manifesto*.

Immediately 1848 Revolution broke out in different European countries. These revolutions confirmed the basic ideas of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Marx and Engels had to struggle against utopian concepts and constantly reiterate the fundamental doctrine of revolutionary class struggle.

The Communist League was disrupted and split in 1852.

##### *First International (1864-72)*

Seizure of political power by the united action of the workers and building a socialist society were the proclaimed aim of the International set up by Marx and Engels. Its organisation was based on democratic centralism—all committees from the lowest to the highest were to be elected. Lower committees had to follow the directives of the higher committees—national committees to work as directed by the international committees. It was a broader organisation than the Communist League.

The International became very popular with the workers from the beginning. It succeeded in preventing the use of foreign labour by capitalists to break strike movements and also mobilised support, both moral and material, from different countries for struggles of workers.

The First International was not only the first organ and leadership of international working class through all the economic and political issues of the eight years of its existence. It was also the battleground where, in the fire of debate at successive Congresses, as well as in the General Council and within the national sections, all the conflicting trends and theories within the working-class movement were tested and fought out, and where the supremacy of Marxism was established once and for all in the working-class movement.

Two main conflicting trends appeared in the First International: (1) Proudhonism and Lassalleanism; (2) Anarchism of Bakunin. While Proudhon and Lassalle preached denunciation of political struggle by the working class for the capture of power and promised success through mutualist credit societies, people's banks and cooperative societies, the anarchists denounced organisation and asserted that the revolutionary instinct of the masses would by itself draw them into the revolution. The anarchists believed in the "revolutionary" actions of individuals which would "galvanise" the masses. They decried all forms of the state.

The First International put an end to the economism of

Proudhon and Lassalle and defeated Bakunin's anarchism at that time.

#### *Paris Commune (1871)*

This formative period of the modern working-class movement and the rise of Marxism culminated in the Paris Commune of 1871.

Its historic significance lies in the fact that it was the first demonstration in history of working-class, proletarian, power.

Its experience showed that it was necessary to destroy the bourgeois state machine in the course of the socialist revolution and replace it with the proletarian dictatorship. This conclusion amplified upon some principles of the *Communist Manifesto* and was later mentioned in the preface by Engels (German Edition 1872).

The Paris Commune was the culmination and high point of the International. After its overthrow the disintegration began.

#### *Second International (1889-1914)*

The period between the Paris Commune of 1871 and the October Revolution in 1917 was an epoch of "complete domination and downfall of the bourgeoisie" (Lenin), an epoch of "transition from progressive bourgeoisie to reactionary and the most reactionary finance capital".

The Second International was an international organisation of the proletarian movement whose growth was in breadth, at the cost of a fall in the revolutionary level and an increase in the strength of opportunism, which in the end led to the disgraceful collapse of this International.

Its positive achievements were: the development of mass workers' parties, of trade unions, of cooperatives, workers' participation in all legal forms including bourgeois parliamentarism in the interest of the working class, founding of working-class newspapers, etc., celebration of May Day as the day of working-class solidarity.

In the ideological sphere the International became the battlefield of the fight between communists on the one hand and social-democrats and anarchists on the other.

Absolutising the comparative peaceful growth of working-class organisation and their minor economic gains, the leaders of the social-democracy attempted to revise Marxism, to abandon the concept of revolution, to undermine the struggle of the colonial people for their liberation and oppose all political movements of the working class for the capture of power.

These revisionists under the leadership of Bernstein abandoned materialism as well as dialectics and declared that the Marxist theory of crisis of capitalism, theory of inevitable doom of capitalism and even Marx's theory of value have become outmoded. They believed that the international imperialist trusts and the cartels have done away the contradictions of capitalism by replacing competition by planned production. In politics they abandoned class struggle and asserted that political freedom, democracy and universal adult franchise have removed the grounds for class struggle. The natural complement to these economic and political tendencies of revisionism was their contempt for the aim of the socialist movement. "The movement is everything", declared Bernstein "the final aim is nothing". This opportunism later consummated into social chauvinism at the time of the first imperialist war when these revisionists allied with the imperialists of their own countries and cooperated with their war efforts. The Marxists under Lenin's leadership conducted a relentless ideological war against these doctrines, against cooperation with imperialist war efforts and finally came out of the International.

The most significant feature of Lenin's fight against revisionism was that it was not just a fight for reestablishing the Marxist principles and theory but for its creative development. With the approach of war another conflicting trend in the international working-class movement appeared, this time from the orthodox Marxist Karl Kautsky, which challenged Leninist concept of imperialism as the last

stage of capitalism, of moribund capitalism and proposed in its place the theory of ultra imperialism. History has proved its utter fallacy and has confirmed Lenin's theory of uneven development.

The beginning of the 20th century saw the end of the peaceful period, the centre of gravity of revolutionary movements shifted to the East. Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905, Chinese revolution, Turkish and Persian movements.

The first imperialist war broke out in 1914 closely followed by the October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917. With the victory of October Socialist Revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat a new era opened in world history—the era of the downfall of capitalism and victory of socialism.

Lessons of October Socialist Revolution may be summarised as follows:

1. The formation of the dictatorship of the proletariat indicated the future of all countries.
2. It demonstrated example of working-class internationalism—"Hands off Russia" movement in Britain and France.
3. It unleashed a series of revolutions in Europe—Hungary, Germany, etc.
4. It sparked off a new wave of national-liberation movements.
5. It demonstrated that the socialist government is the bulwark for peace.
6. It initiated the general crisis of capitalism.
7. It showed the possibility of revolution in one country, demonstrated the uneven development of capitalism.

#### *Third International (1919-43)*

With the success of the October Revolution, Lenin took the initiative of building up the Third International (1919) in the capital of the world revolution. This marked the culmination of the long-drawn struggle against opportunism

and social chauvinism. The Third International was also called the Communist International.

The Third International began to initiate formation of communist parties all over the world—including colonial countries—and guided revolutionary movements in different countries. Conflicting trends of ideologies appeared in different countries, also in the international organisation. By application of creative Marxism, these controversies were solved and revolution advanced. Particularly important was the defeat of the Trotskyites who denied the possibility of building socialism in the Soviet Union and wanted to "export" revolution.

With rise of fascism, first in Italy and then in Germany and Japan, the international working class was confronted with the most reactionary, militarist force trying to dominate the world to usher in the age of savagery and barbarism. When the old imperialist powers failed to destroy the first and only socialist state in those days, they helped to create and nourish fascism to use it as a spearhead of attack against the socialist country. History has its own logic. In the period of advance of socialism the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union smashed fascism and emerged as the most powerful nation in the world. In the period of rise of fascism the Third International repeatedly warned the working class against the danger of fascism and appealed to all workers, irrespective of their political affiliation, to unite and resolutely fight against the savage enemy which is out to destroy everything that humanity cherished ever since.

In 1935 Georgi Dimitrov on behalf of the Communist International declared:

"The Communist International puts no condition for unity of action except one, and that an elementary condition acceptable for all workers, viz. that the unity of action be directed against fascism, against the offensive of capital, against the threat of war, against the class enemy. This is our condition."

The Second International supporters refused to join.

Fascist dictatorship started emerging out in Spain against the Republican Government. It was supported by the all imperialists and more openly by German and Italian fascists. The International organised the historic International Brigade to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Spanish comrades in support of their government against Franco fascists.

The intransigence of the leaders of the Second International, their complete dissociation from revolutionary movements and slavish surrender to capitalism thwarted all attempts of the CI to form the united front against fascism and, thus, failed to prevent the Second World War.

Following the complete rout of the fascist forces and the emergence of Soviet Union as one of the mightiest powers of the world, tremendous development of revolutionary movement took place all over the world.

The countries of Eastern Europe succeeded in overthrowing their collaborationist governments and establishing people's democracies. China successfully carried through its revolutionary movement and established the people's democratic dictatorship. The victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 was of historic importance, second only to the 1917 October Revolution.

As a result of these victories of socialism, and the accompanying successes of the anti-imperialist colonial liberation movements, which grew and developed in this period of crisis of imperialism, a new era was ushered in—the era of advance of socialism. The characteristics of this new era and the consequent changes in the strategy and tactics of international communist movement will be discussed in the following lecture. It has to be noted in this connection that the Communist International was dissolved in 1943. It was realised that the growth of the communist movement in a large number of countries have attained such maturity as to be able to formulate its own strategy and tactics in accordance to the specific requirements of its own national political situation and relation of class forces and hence a central organisation in the old form would be a hindrance rather than a help.