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THE **A. SPIRKIN, O. YAKHOT**
BASIC
PRINCIPLES
OF
DIALECTICAL
AND
HISTORICAL
MATERIALISM

PROGRESS PUBLISHERS

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DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

CHAPTER ONE

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM— THE PHILOSOPHY OF MARXISM

The Purpose of Philosophy The fact that philosophy made its first appearance in very ancient times—long before any of the natural sciences, physics, chemistry, biology or geology—indicates that philosophy is one of the most basic needs of man. But unlike many other sciences its importance and place in the life of society are not immediately obvious. Nevertheless, all our actions and sometimes our innermost thoughts are influenced by definite philosophical views.

Think for a moment of the kinds of questions that we all repeatedly come up against and have occasion to puzzle over—questions concerning the politics of particular countries, political parties or social groups, or questions about the planets and stars, how they and the Earth and everything on them came into being. The answers we give to these sorts of questions depend largely on our general outlook on the world and our actual understanding of the things going on around us. Different people approach such questions differently, according to their world outlook.

One's outlook is the sum total of one's views on life, on the world as a whole, and on particular phenomena and events in it. We are in need of a correct understanding of the world more often than we realise. Lenin wrote: "...A socialist requires a well-thought-out and consistent world

outlook, so that he may control the events and not the events him."¹

If one wants to be more than a passive observer of life and an active fighter in the great battle to change the world, one must understand that it is necessary to present a distinct face of one's own to the world, i.e., take a firm stand in life and have lasting convictions in the shape of an advanced, scientific world outlook. And the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism equips one with just such a world outlook.

We need general ideas about the world not so that we can have only a passive acquaintance with the events occurring in it but so that we can exert an active influence on them. The builder of a new world needs knowledge to change the course of life and transform it. But knowledge alone is not enough. Chemistry can teach us how to make new materials, but it is indifferent to the way it serves people. For example, American imperialists use chemistry to make poisonous substances to eliminate crops in South Vietnam. But one may say with certainty that people of democratic convictions could not act in this way. Here the imperialist outlook of racials, who think nothing of killing "natives", is expressed. Science gives us knowledge, but the Marxist world outlook is required to direct us to use knowledge for the good of ordinary working people. Only by combining knowledge with a deep ideological Marxist conviction can one acquire a complete world outlook, and only then can the latter begin to play its tremendous role in one's life.

Here is a striking story that proves the importance of firm convictions. The Tatar poet Musa Jalil, a man of legendary courage and hero of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 executed by Hitler's hangmen, was kept for a time in prison in Berlin. The man sharing his cell was a Belgian partisan, André Timmermans, who became his best friend and who preserved the last of Jalil's poems to come down to us. Timmermans recalls that both were wary of one another and did not trust each other at first. But when people are close in their beliefs, Timmermans observes, they do not need even so much as a sign in order to understand each other, but do so by intuition. "That was how I got the

feeling that Jalil was deeply convinced that the Soviet Army would win, that he was an unshakeable patriot."

Yes, conviction is a great spiritual force! Convictions truly constitute the soul of a man. That is why it is essential that they reach the deepest recesses of his heart and mind. Lenin criticised those whose "convictions are very often not more deeply seated than the tip of their tongues".¹

The importance of a world outlook, therefore, consists in its providing the solid convictions so necessary in the struggle to transform the world and to liberate the working people from poverty and exploitation, and it should not now be difficult to see what the purpose of philosophy is—it is to provide the basis for this world outlook.

The word "philosophy" has its origin in two words of ancient Greek, *phileo*, which means "love", and *sophia*, which means "wisdom" or "knowledge". Translated from the Greek "philosophy" means love of wisdom, i.e., knowledge. The question now arises: every science furnishes us with knowledge, but can it be said that any science is also philosophy?

It is true that every science provides knowledge, but it is knowledge of a different kind from philosophic knowledge. Each science provides knowledge only about a special part or aspect of reality: astronomy about the heavenly bodies, biology about plants, animals and man, history about human society. No science is able to give us knowledge about nature and the world *as a whole*. But, you may ask, cannot all the sciences taken together give us knowledge of the world as a whole? The point, however, is that knowledge of the world as a whole is not the same thing as the mechanical sum of the knowledge provided by the separate sciences. Philosophy, while employing the data of particular sciences, deals with general questions that can be solved neither by individual sciences nor by all the sciences together. Science does not make philosophy "redundant", as some modern bourgeois philosophers claim.

Physics, mechanics, biology and all other sciences study so-called particular laws, i.e., laws followed by some particular class of natural phenomena. But philosophy studies the most general laws, i.e., the laws that are at the basis of all the phenomena of nature, including human society and

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 316.

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 72.

human thought. This is why it helps man to work out a definite outlook on the world around him. Philosophy, in fact, forms the basis of this outlook.

The Partisan Character of Philosophy

But why, then, do different people hold different views of the world? Let us take the question of the meaning of life. What is happiness? It is plain to see that the people living in the socialist countries and those living in the capitalist countries understand life and happiness differently. In the bourgeois world, where everything may usually be bought and sold for money, happiness means, above all else, wealth, so that many see the meaning of their life in the pursuit of wealth. This lies at the root of their narrow philosophy of petty "happiness". As for the man of socialist society, he rejects this philistine philosophy—for him the height of happiness is to feel that he is indispensable to his collective, his country, to people who are building a new and progressive society through their own toil. Marx wrote in one of the works of his youth: "Experience demonstrates that the happiest are those who make most men happy."¹ Thus one may meet with two approaches to the question of happiness, two outlooks—the bourgeois and the proletarian. This is one example of the confrontation of these two directly opposite and opposed philosophic positions.

Where a society is divided into hostile classes it is impossible for there to be a world outlook common to the whole of that society. One class has one philosophy, the other class has another. This is not difficult to understand if one considers that the position of the working people in such a society differs from that of the bourgeoisie, the exploiters. Each class treats and understands the events of the world in its own way; each has its own, different world outlook and philosophy. There can be no "neutral" philosophy, no philosophy which does not serve some definite class of society. From this we can draw the most important conclusion that philosophy is always partisan in character, that is to say, it always defends particular class interests. Philosophy is never neutral in the struggle between the social classes that is taking place throughout the world. And this was no

¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, 1. Abt., Bd. 1, 2. Halbband, Berlin, 1929.

less true of the philosophies of past ages. The philosophies of both past and present all represent one or the other of the two trends—called *Materialism* and *Idealism*.

Materialism and Idealism

Before explaining what "materialism" and "idealism" are, we should note that these words are not always used accurately. For instance, there are people who think that "idealism" got its name from the word "ideal" and that "an idealist" is therefore a person who selflessly serves some cause or ideal. There also exists the widespread opinion that a materialist is a man who takes good care of his private gains and that materialism thus denotes total absorption in one's private material interests. But these views do not represent a correct and scientific understanding of either materialism or idealism.

The idea that materialism means excessive concern for the satisfaction of one's material interests is a vulgar distortion of the true meaning of materialism that is commonly peddled by anti-communists. But a century ago, in his book *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Engels ridiculed the bourgeois who means by materialism selfishness, gluttony, drunkenness, vanity, lust for and enjoyment of the pleasures of the flesh, avarice, miserliness, profit-chasing, playing the stock exchange—in short, all those dirty vices that comprise his private pleasures. As for idealism, said Engels, the bourgeois regards this as meaning faith in virtue and in a "better world"—which he is fond of shouting about in front of others, and in which he himself begins to believe when he has a hangover or after he goes bankrupt, i.e., when he has to go through the inevitable consequences of his "materialist" excesses.

Anyone with an open mind can see for himself the great importance that is attached in a socialist society to the manufacture of material goods for the benefit of the people living in it; but it is equally clear that the people of the socialist countries believe in the power of ideas and are inspired by high ideals.

In order to understand the real meaning of the concepts "materialism" and "idealism" one should first consider the fact that the phenomena of the world are of two kinds: material and spiritual. A stone, a piece of wood or a beam of light are all material phenomena, while thoughts, feelings and desires are spiritual phenomena.

In what way are these two kinds of phenomena connected? Which is primary, which came first—matter, being, nature or spirit, mind, consciousness? Sometimes the question is put somewhat differently: is it spirit, mind that creates matter and the whole universe of nature, or matter, being that generates spirit, mind? This is known as *the fundamental problem of philosophy*.

Different philosophers give different answers to the fundamental problem of philosophy—some maintain that matter is primary and that spirit, mind has its origin in it. Such philosophers are called *materialists*, since they proceed from the fact that matter provides the basis for everything that exists. Others consider mind, spirit primary and matter and the world of nature secondary, a derivative of mind. Mind, according to them, came before matter, so that nature is a product of some spiritual force. Such philosophers are called *idealists*: they consider that ideas, thought, provide the basis for all existing things. These are the two camps into which the philosophers are divided—the camp of the materialists and the camp of the idealists. And these two camps have fought one another throughout the entire history of philosophy.

Within the camp of idealism we must make a distinction between *objective idealism* and *subjective idealism*. The philosophy of *objective idealism* was originated by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 B.C.). In order to understand why objective idealism is so called one should bear in mind that objects in general are things that exist outside of man, independent of his consciousness, and towards which his actions are directed. Materialism believes that the world *really exists*, that material things represent objective reality. But objective idealism claims that only ideas make up the objectively existing reality, and that the world of matter is generated by these “objectively existing” ideas (though it is not known *where* they exist!). The basic ideas of Plato have been repeated by his numerous followers, the German philosopher Hegel the most important of them.

Subjective idealists reason in another way. A prominent representative of subjective idealism was the English clergyman George Berkeley (1684-1753). *The subjective* is that which exists in a particular, given mind or subject. *Berkeley denied that the outside world exists at all and believed that*

only the individual human mind has real existence. Only when, he claimed, a man immediately perceives things, senses them—sees them, hears them, touches them—do they exist. When one does not perceive them, then things do not exist. The world, accordingly, exists only in the mind of the subject, i.e., only insofar as he perceives it.

But both objective and subjective idealism have been refuted by science.

Philosophers, then, are divided into materialists and idealists, depending on the way they solve the fundamental problem of philosophy.

Materialists and idealists have always been locked in mortal combat on all the basic questions of philosophy. Consider, for example, their different attitudes to science. Materialism takes the world as it is and hence always bases itself on science. Science and materialism are allies. Idealism, on the other hand, misrepresents the world, and so science is not only unable to lend it support but, on the contrary, demonstrates its total inconsistency. Moreover, idealism frequently distorts and interprets essential findings of science wrongly. Idealism and science cannot enter into a true alliance, for idealism is essentially hostile to science.

Or consider the attitudes of philosophers to the problems of human society. It is well known that an exploitive society consists of classes standing in opposition to one another. The philosophical works of idealists would appear at first sight to be remote indeed from “the vanity of this world”, from the struggles of parties and classes. But this is in fact far from true. Their books as a rule express the interests of conservative and reactionary sections of society, and in this way serve as means of enslaving working people spiritually. Plato justified slavery. Hegel justified Prussian monarchy. Many modern idealists in the same way try to justify the obsolete bourgeois system and some are dedicated anti-communists.

Philosophical systems also differ from one another in the methods they employ to study reality.

Dialectics and Metaphysics

The method that is used to study the phenomena of reality is vitally important. The word “method”, which comes from the Greek, means “a way to something”. The concept “method” thus denotes the approach

and the means that are used as aids in the study of the world and the acquisition of the knowledge needed to change it. Much depends on the method chosen. Bacon, the English materialist philosopher of the 17th century, compared a correct theory to a lantern which lights the path of the traveller. And he likened the scientist who does not arm himself with a correct method to a man who decides to travel at night and finds himself forever groping for the road.

Every science has its own methods of studying reality. The chemical composition of the remotest stars, for instance, is studied by the method of spectral analysis. The so-called method of random selection is often employed in sociology and economics. Essentially, this consists in the research worker studying thoroughly only some of the phenomena under investigation, rather than all of them, but by this means he derives general indices and data which provide sufficiently accurate information on the total body of facts. The method of random selection is therefore of invaluable help to the research worker when it is either very difficult or impossible to study the sum total of facts in a given field.

As we see, particular methods of investigation are not determined arbitrarily: they depend on the subject of study, and every subject demands its own appropriate method.

What, then, is to be the general method for making a philosophical study of reality? It must, evidently, correspond to the object, i.e., to the world around us as a whole. It follows that it cannot be a method belonging to any of the natural sciences, it must be a method belonging to philosophy: a method involving a correct general approach to nature, one which corresponds to nature. If nature is in eternal motion, change and development, then the philosophical method of studying it must itself give expression to the general idea of development. *Materialist dialectics*, worked out by Marx and Engels, is just such a method. It forms and contains those general requirements that are absolutely essential to a correct approach to the study of the phenomena of nature, of reality.

The dialectical method regards the phenomena of the world as processes in constant motion, development and change. The metaphysical method, on the other hand, treats the world as something unchangeable, frozen, given once and for all.

In ancient times philosophers understood that the world was in a constant state of motion, development and change. It was Heraclitus (c. 540-480 B.C.), one of the outstanding philosophers of ancient Greece, who said: "All things flow, all things change." The world never stands still, it is forever advancing. "One cannot enter the same river twice, for ever new waters flow by," the philosopher wrote. He likened the world to a river or stream, forever flowing. A remarkable analogy! Just as water in a river never ceases to flow and move on, so with the phenomena of nature. It is not accidental that the thoughts of Heraclitus were held in high regard by the founders of Marxism-Leninism.

We have discussed one of the key aspects of the dialectical method—its inescapable requirement that the world be treated as something in a state of perpetual motion and development. And now let us turn our attention to the second, no less basic feature of dialectics: it regards the world as something that is united, connected, integrated, and studies the connections between its component parts, separating what is essential from what is not, what is primary from what is secondary, subordinate or incidental. In contrast to dialectics, metaphysics treats the connections existing in the world in a simplified way: it regards them as purely external and accidental in character. But with this approach it is impossible to understand the essence of the laws governing any phenomenon.

From the above we see that *dialectics is the science of the general laws of movement and development of nature, including the human mind and human society, the science of the general connections existing between all the phenomena of the world.* That is why it opposes every kind of metaphysics.

**What Is
Dialectical Materialism?**

The essence of dialectical materialism consists in the fact that in it *materialism and dialectics are indissolubly united.* The philosophy of Marxism is therefore called *dialectical materialism.* This means that Marxist philosophy not only provides us with a correct theory, it not only correctly interprets the things that happen in the world and understands them correctly, it also arms us with the right method, the correct approach to the phenomena of reality. Its theory and method comprise a united, indissoluble whole.

Unlike the other sciences, which study particular laws, *Marxist-Leninist philosophy studies the most general laws that govern all parts of reality—nature, society, the human mind.* We shall discuss these laws in detail somewhat later.

But it is not only the laws of reality that comprise the subject of philosophy. Philosophy also solves the question of how to study these laws, how to perceive them.

So, *Marxist philosophy is the science of the most general laws of development of nature, society and the human mind, and of the methods of learning about the world and its revolutionary transformation.*

CHAPTER TWO

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHY

Marxist philosophy has produced a veritable revolution in science. In order to understand this one should remember that Marxism, as Lenin repeatedly observed, did not emerge away from the main highroad of world philosophic thought, but inherited all the best in preceding philosophy and the positive achievements of the social sciences. Marxism was the necessary outcome of the combined advance of social life, the natural sciences and philosophic thought. Marxist philosophy was a product of definite socio-economic conditions, and also had certain natural and philosophical prerequisites.

The Socio-Economic Conditions

Marxism emerged in the 1840s, at a time when a new revolutionary class, the proletariat, appeared on the stage of history. The birth of the proletariat dated, of course, from earlier times, but by the eighteen forties it had begun to come forward as a powerful revolutionary force prepared to assert its rights, as could be seen from its revolutionary activities at the time in Britain, France and Germany.

The great achievement of Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895) consisted in their arming the proletariat with a new revolutionary, socialist theory. Marxism, therefore, was a direct product of certain social conditions: as capitalism

developed, the workers' revolutionary movement developed with it, but for this a revolutionary theory was a vital necessity. The conditions of man's life themselves put the creation of Marxism on the order of the day.

The Natural-Scientific Prerequisites

The state of the natural sciences in the middle of the 19th century also pointed to the need for a new world outlook. As science advanced, it found itself coming into greater and greater conflict with the metaphysical idea that the world is, in all its essentials, fixed and unchangeable. The concept of the world as an integrated whole had received particularly strong support from *three great scientific discoveries*. The great English naturalist Charles Darwin had proved that the species of animals and plants that we now see have not always existed in their present form but are the result of a very long process of development. Further, it had been discovered that all animal and plant organisms are made up of small cells in which the most complex processes of life take place. This discovery laid the basis for a correct understanding of organic development. The law of the conservation and transformation of energy had been also discovered. It was found that motion cannot appear from nowhere, just as it cannot disappear without trace: it was shown that the various kinds of motion are transformed one into another, so that all matter is perpetually and necessarily in motion. This was a great victory for the dialectical theory of development.

Scientific progress—especially these three great discoveries of natural science: the law of the conservation and transformation of energy, the theory of the cellular structure of organic beings and Darwin's theory of evolution—prepared natural science for the victory of the new dialectical materialist view of the world which Marx and Engels worked out.

Let us now consider the philosophical sources of Marxism.

The Philosophical Prerequisites

Marx's doctrine was the natural successor of all the best in advanced philosophical thinking. Nineteenth-century German classical philosophy and, above all, the teachings of Hegel (1770-1830) and Feuerbach (1804-1872), were the immediate theoretical sources of Marxist philosophy.

Hegel developed a system of objective idealism. He believed that an absolute idea, a world spirit, formed the basis

of nature and society. This was a false, idealist teaching, but Hegel's philosophy nevertheless contained many thoughts of great value, above all his ideas about the constant motion and development of the world "spirit", his well-known dialectics. Marx and Engels attached the utmost importance to these latter ideas because they contained a rational kernel which they were able to make use of. True, Hegel failed to create a truly scientific method, for he thought that it was the world "spirit", philosophical concepts and categories, that followed the laws of dialectics rather than nature and society: there were no dialectics of nature but only the dialectics of concepts in the realm of "pure thought". This was idealistic dialectics. But it contained a rational core—the theory of development.

Ludwig Feuerbach then produced a criticism of Hegel's idealism. The starting point of his philosophy was the idea that nature was the basis of everything that exists. Nature generates man and his mind. The material world can be the only basis for science too. Feuerbach said that philosophy separated from nature remains empty and deprived of content. Materialism was at the very heart of Feuerbach's philosophy and Marx and Engels were able to make use of it after considerably refashioning it.

What was substantially new in the ideas of Marx and Engels, compared to all previous philosophical systems? Since materialism and dialectics together comprise the essence of Marxist philosophy, how does this philosophy differ from the materialism and dialectics of the past? By answering this question we shall be able to grasp what is essentially new about the materialism and dialectics of Marxism, i.e., the principal content of Marxist philosophy. Let us begin with materialism.

Materialism first emerged over three thousand years ago. History has seen such outstanding materialists of the past as Democritus (ancient Greece), Holbach (France), Chernyshevsky (Russia) and many others. Pre-Marxist materialism had a number of limitations: in the first place, it was *mechanical materialism*, i.e., it tried to explain every phenomenon of nature by means of the laws of mechanics. Even man was regarded as a machine by the pre-Marxist materialists. In the second place, it was a *metaphysical materialism*. Dialectics and the idea of development were alien to it. Furthermore, the materialists of the past sought to give a

materialist interpretation to nature alone, interpreting the phenomena of social life in an idealist way. They considered that history developed solely for ideal reasons, i.e., from causes of mental origin. They failed to see the material sources of human progress. Another shortcoming of pre-Marxist materialism was its purely contemplative or passive character. It followed that philosophers failed to understand the part played by social practice. They observed the world, interpreted it, at best, but could not see how to transform it through revolutionary practice.

It should be clear to you now that Marxist philosophical materialism differed completely from the materialism that had existed before it, and which suffered from all the limitations and restrictions of its *metaphysical* approach. Marx and Engels developed *dialectical materialism*, the product and summing-up of contemporary scientific and social progress.

The same is true of dialectics. Marx's dialectics is radically different from that of Hegel's. The point is that Marx and Engels created *materialist dialectics*, as distinguished from Hegel's *idealist dialectics*. They taught that dialectics reigns supreme in nature itself. History goes through dialectical development too. Human thought studies and, as it were, photographs the dialectics of natural and social development. Hegel has it all upside down: thought develops all by itself, independently of, and despite, nature. Marx was perfectly right when he said that Hegel's dialectics had been standing on its head, and had to be set on its feet in order to uncover the rational core that was hidden under its mystical shell. Marxism put Hegel's dialectics on its feet. But this means that Marxist dialectics is the direct opposite of Hegel's dialectics.

"My dialectic method," Marx wrote, "is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgus of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."¹

¹ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1965, p. 19.

Let us sum up what we have said. *The unprecedented unity between materialism and dialectics achieved by Marxism is the most important aspect of the revolutionary upheaval which it produced in philosophy. Marxist philosophy differs radically from all previous philosophical systems by its class nature. It is the philosophy of a new revolutionary class—the proletariat.* The proletariat differs in every way from all preceding classes, even progressive ones, and its philosophy is likewise fundamentally different from all past philosophies, including progressive ones.

The appearance of Marxism also produced a complete revolution in prevailing ideas about history. Marx and Engels were the first to provide a materialist interpretation of mankind's history and developed a new philosophical theory of history—historical materialism.

Moreover, Marx and Engels set philosophy a new task: to become an instrument for transforming the world. This, indeed, is *the essential feature of Marxist philosophy—its revolutionary character.*

Marxist philosophy demands conscious, active intervention in life in order to change it, transform it. This was expressed by Marx in his famous words: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it."¹

Its militant, revolutionary character is the most important thing about Marxism. It is first of all a guide to action, a fighting weapon of the working class and all working people, who, armed with a revolutionary theory, become fearless fighters for the realisation of Marxist ideals, the ideals of all progressive mankind. That is why, with the emergence of Marxism, history set mankind the vital task of *uniting Marxist socialist theory with the proletarian movement: of uniting the spiritual, theoretical weapon of Marxism and the material force, the proletariat, the people, who alone can put this weapon to use.*

Lenin's Development of Marxist Philosophy

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) gave his whole life to the historical cause of wedding socialist theory to the workers' movement. This was, of course, no easy job. The difficulty of it was aggravated by the fact that after the death of Marx and Engels the revi-

¹ Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1968, p. 647.

sionists of a number of workers' parties in the West consigned the revolutionary spirit of Marxism to oblivion. But Lenin again raised the Marxist banner high and carried it through many storms to victory.

Lenin not only defended Marxism but developed its main tenets and ideas further in the new historical period—the age of imperialism—in which he lived; to meet the changes that had occurred in the life of society during this new epoch it was necessary to develop the main points of Marxism while retaining its central core—its revolutionary spirit—in all its purity. Lenin accomplished this task brilliantly. He created the great teaching of *Leninism*, which is *Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, of the transition from capitalism to socialism and the building of communism*.

There can be no Marxism of the present day that does not incorporate the great new advances introduced by Lenin. For this reason all the various attempts of bourgeois philosophers and revisionists to separate Marxism from Leninism, and to oppose one to the other, serve only one purpose—to divert people's attention away from the most revolutionary theory of modern times. These attempts encounter the criticism they deserve from Marxists.

Lenin's work in the field of philosophy constituted an entire phase, an epoch in the development of philosophical thought. It covered the period from the late 19th century to the present age.

What were Lenin's contributions to Marxist philosophy? To begin with, Lenin made substantial contributions to the theory of dialectical materialism. Late in the 19th century and early in the 20th a number of fundamental discoveries were made by science (which we shall be discussing in greater detail in the next chapter), on the basis of which Lenin was not only able to defend Marxism successfully from the attacks of idealists but to develop further the most important parts of Marxist philosophy, the theory of matter and the theory of cognition, so deepening our understanding of the laws and categories of dialectics.

Lenin also contributed greatly to the development of historical materialism, establishing the most essential theses of Marxism in the new historical period of imperialism. For example, he worked out a new *theory of socialist revolution* which was the lodestar of the working people of Russia

in their struggle to bring about the revolutionary transformation of their country through socialist construction, and remains the guide to action of the world working class and its vanguard, the Communist and Workers' Parties.

Lenin enriched the Marxist *teaching on the class struggle* by providing a definition of classes and developing the ideas of Marx on *the dictatorship of the proletariat*—successfully defending them from the attacks of revisionists and creating a new *theory of the socialist state* based on his recognition of the Soviets as a new form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin's was a great example of the creative approach to theory. He produced unsurpassed models for the theoretical and practical solution of many of the cardinal problems of socialist revolution and the building of a new society. As a result, his ideas, plans and instructions continue to exert an invaluable influence on all our day-to-day public, political and economic life.

After Lenin Marxist philosophy was developed by his comrades-in-arms and disciples and is still being developed by outstanding workers of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the fraternal Communist and Workers' Parties. Their theoretical works and reports, and speeches at Party Congresses and C.C. plenums, constitute the development of Marxism-Leninism in the modern conditions of struggle for communism.

The Creative Nature of Marxism-Leninism

Marxist theory, then, is constantly developing. It does not remain fixed in any stereotyped mould. Marxism-Leninism is incompatible with dogmatism in any of its shapes and forms. Dogmatism tries to force living phenomena into dead patterns and in this way inhibits creative initiative and revolutionary thought. But Marxism-Leninism requires a creative approach to reality.

Metaphysics, with its rejection of development as such, inevitably leads to dogmatism. Dialectical materialism, on the other hand, regards the world as something in constant motion, changing and developing, and therefore recognises no "eternal", "unchangeable" dogmas. It generates the true spirit of creativity. Dialectics, as Lenin put it, is the revolutionary soul of Marxism, and it is so because it is creative in character.

Marxist dialectics is as incompatible with any manifestation of revisionism as of dogmatism. Revisionism results

from any attempt to "overhaul" the main tenets of Marxism-Leninism. This makes relentless struggle against revisionism, dogmatism and sectarianism, against every kind of deviation from Marxism-Leninism, an essential condition for the further strengthening of the unity of the international movement and the consolidation of the socialist camp.

CHAPTER THREE

MATTER AND THE FORMS OF ITS EXISTENCE

What Is Matter?

Life, daily practice, convinces us that the world exists objectively, independently of man, his mind, senses and desires. Science has confirmed this, too, by proving that the Earth came into existence long before man or any other living organism, i.e., that the world has always existed independently of them. That is why Lenin observed that any healthy person who has never been an inmate of a lunatic asylum, or a pupil of the idealist philosophers, would never doubt that the world exists objectively. The objectivity of the world, the fact that it exists outside, beyond and independent of the mind, means that it is *material* (for there can be no other meaning of this word).

It is our daily practical life, or productive labour, that convinces us that the world exists objectively, and is material.

The recognition of the material nature of the world, of its existence beyond and independent of our consciousness, is the cornerstone of the theory of materialism, and the basis of Lenin's contributions to the theory of matter.

We are surrounded by an infinite number of objects and phenomena. Stones and trees, grains of sand and deserts, seas and oceans, the sun, stars and planets, animals and plants, etc., etc. We refer to all these things by the single word *matter*. Such words are called concepts.

Concepts can be more or less broad in their range of reference. The concept "thing", for instance, is much wider than the concept "table". Now, it is possible for there to be extremely wide, or very general, concepts. If a concept embraces all objects and phenomena, from a grain of sand to the human brain, then such a concept must be a very general one. The concept "matter" is such a concept. "Matter" includes all other concepts such as "a thing" or "a flower", etc., and is therefore a very broad concept. It differs from less general concepts in that it expresses the essential and common qualities not of some single group of things but of all the things and concepts in the world—of everything that exists. Such very wide or general concepts are the subject of philosophy and are also called *philosophical categories*. *Matter is one philosophical category.*

What are the most general and essential properties and qualities common to all things? To begin with all things are material, i.e., they exist objectively, beyond and independently of man's mind. But this is not their only common property. They possess another important property. When we wash with warm water we feel a sensation of warmth. When we look at the trees of a forest we see different colours—the white colour of birch bark, the green colour of leaves, and so on. Generalising, we can say that *everything that exists independently of us possesses some quality or other which can affect our sense organs and evoke corresponding sensations.*

Having established what the most general properties of all things and phenomena are we may now define the concept "matter". In his book *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* Lenin writes: "Matter is a philosophical category denoting the objective reality which is given to man by his sensations. . . . Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation, and so forth."¹

So, matter is simply everything around us, everything that exists objectively—the whole of the vast external material world.

One should bear in mind that matter is not to be identified with mere substance. "Matter", translated from the Latin, means, literally, "substance". Some materialists have meant

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 180, 146.

by matter some definite "material" from which all things were supposedly made. Democritus, for example, considered atoms to be the ultimate basis of all matter.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, science believed that atoms were indivisible, indestructible, and eternal. They were "the ultimate building blocks of the universe", from which the entire world was built. This view prevailed in the 19th century, too. But at the end of the last century scientific discoveries were made which threw doubt on the belief that matter had any such "ultimate basis".

In the late 19th century it was firmly established that the idea that the atom was indivisible was simply not true. The atom is divisible. The atom has been smashed, and many obsolete ideas destroyed along with it.

Other discoveries have been made which also demonstrate the bankruptcy of the old notions of matter and its properties. Scientists thought from the time of Newton that the mass of a body, whether moving or not, remains constant, unchangeable. But subsequent investigation has shown that the mass of an electron *does not remain constant*, is not unchangeable, but *varies* according to its velocity. As Lenin noted, a revolution has begun in the natural sciences.

Bourgeois idealist philosophers were quick to take advantage of these discoveries in natural science by interpreting them as follows: since the atom was the basis of matter and it has been shown to be divisible and destructible, then the very basis of matter itself, and hence of materialism, has collapsed. They claimed that "matter has disappeared".

Lenin convincingly refuted this claim. He pointed out that matter did not always take a substantial form. Light, for example, is a non-substantial form of matter. Not only is the atom material, but the electron and the other "elementary" particles discovered by modern physics are material, too. New scientific discoveries do not indicate that matter has disappeared in the least. They have simply brought to light new kinds or forms of the existence of matter of which the materialism of the past had no idea.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries man acquired much new knowledge. The existence of electrons, protons, atomic nuclei, etc., was unknown before. So that the new discoveries have entirely changed our ideas about the world of nature, and our scientific picture of the structure of

matter. At first, only the electron and the proton were brought to light, but now over 30 such "elementary" particles have been discovered. And who can doubt that every one of them is material when they make possible such things as nuclear power stations!

Not only is the atom material, so is the electron and all other elementary particles. Materialism has certainly not been "refuted" by science.

Thus, one should be careful not to confuse the philosophical concept of matter with the natural-scientific picture of the world. Our ideas about the structure, state and properties of particular kinds of matter, and, as a consequence, our natural-scientific picture of the world, are constantly changing as scientists acquire ever deeper knowledge of the world and its structure. New discoveries refute old knowledge and ideas about the world, but they cannot refute the philosophical concept of matter, which relates not to the structure of the world but to its objective existence. No matter how our views of the world-picture change they can never constitute proof of matter's disappearance. To use Lenin's words, the limit within which we have hitherto known matter disappears. The fact that the world is material, the objective reality of matter is once more proved.

All this is to say that one must draw a clear line of distinction between metaphysical materialism and dialectical materialism. According to the former, matter is composed of unchangeable and indestructible atoms. Dialectical materialism proceeds from the impossibility of reducing matter to any "ultimate building block"—the atom—or to any "eternal" property. Matter does not possess only one property but an infinite number of properties: various are the things of the world and various are their properties. This is what is confirmed time and again by the discoveries of science. Lenin wrote: "Modern physics is giving birth. It is giving birth to dialectical materialism." Whatever new particles have been or will be discovered this can never lead to the refutation of materialism, since these very particles are themselves material, they also exist objectively, independently of man.

But why are idealists so keen to attack the concept of matter? A bitter struggle of ideas is centred around the concept of matter. This is because the concept of matter is the basis of materialism. One of the founders of subjective

idealism, the English 18th-century bishop George Berkeley, observing that all "impious schemes" have their foundation in the theory of the absolute existence of matter, wrote: "All their monstrous systems have so visible and necessary a dependence on it that, when this cornerstone is once removed, the whole fabric cannot choose but fall to the ground..."¹ Berkeley concludes that "all friends of knowledge, peace, and religion have reason to wish" to refute materialism.²

These words of Berkeley serve as a guide to the modern idealist philosophers of the bourgeois West, who still make use of such statements in their struggle against materialism. But their arguments are shown to be inconsistent and are disproved by the advance of science, whose every discovery provides fresh confirmation of materialism and its teaching that matter is eternal and indestructible.

The idea that matter always has and always will exist often provokes the question: "How can it be that matter has always existed? It must have had a beginning one day, must have appeared from somewhere?" There is nothing surprising in this question. Everyone can see from his own experience of life that everything has a beginning and an end. It seems then that matter too must once have had a beginning. Hence the question: who created matter? Science answers: it has always existed, throughout the whole of time. What are the proofs of this vital conclusion? There are very many facts which prove it. Take, for instance, the law of the *conservation of matter*.

The great Russian scientist M. V. Lomonosov came to the conclusion that there is no body or element in nature that can disappear, or could appear from nowhere. Lomonosov formulated this in the well-known law of the conservation of matter. It follows from this law that nothing emerges in nature from nothing, and nothing ever disappears without trace. But if this is so, then nature, matter, has always existed. For if there was ever a time when there was nothing in the world, i.e., when there was no matter, then the matter would have had nothing to emerge from. Since matter exists it must always have existed—could never have appeared

¹ George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Chicago, London, 1920, p. 84.

² *Ibid.*, p. 86.

from nowhere—and always will exist. It is eternal and indestructible. It could never have been created: anything that can be created can be destroyed! So matter never emerged, it has always existed and always will exist. It is immortal.

The Unity of Matter and Motion

The following argument is sometimes advanced: let us grant that matter has existed for an infinite time, but materialism is still unable to answer many important questions—for example, where did the first impulse to motion come from? Let us imagine, it is argued, some infinitely remote period of time when there existed only formless, unmoving matter instead of the present-day Universe, and that matter had been in this state and position for an infinitely long time. But a moment then came when matter moved out of the position it had always been in. Now, it is asked, if matter had been standing still until that moment, why did it suddenly start moving? Idealists and churchmen answer that there were no internal causes in matter itself to produce such a change, so there must have been some external, higher force outside of nature and matter which awakened “dead” matter from its state of eternal “sleep” and immobility.

But is matter really in need of a higher, outside force to set it in motion? Could not motion, perhaps, come from within matter itself?

The argument we have just presented is based on the idea that motion means simply change of position, movement from one place to another. If a thing remains in one place, then it is not moving. A stone, for example, does not change its position until someone picks it up and throws it. But this is a very superficial, unscientific idea of motion. Consider the stone lying still in one place. There is movement in the stone: the perpetual movement of the molecules, atoms, electrons and protons that are known to exist in everything. A house does not stand still either, it moves together with the Earth around the Sun. When we sit still, our blood continues to circulate and complex bodily processes go on undisturbed: new cells are generated, old ones die away. All this is motion too. Motion is thus not as simple as is sometimes imagined.

People can see a stone lying on the ground before it is thrown, a motorcar standing still before the driver starts it. Such observations provide the basis for the notion that

matter was in a state of immobility before “a supreme power”, a spirit, gave it its “first push”.

Until about two hundred years ago science had studied only one kind of motion—bodies changing their position in space. It was therefore still possible to suppose at that time that every body remains in a state of rest until some external force pushes it out of it. This supposition was applied to nature as a whole. But as physics, chemistry and biology advanced, it became apparent that motion took many and various forms.

Let us take heat. It was discovered that heat is the motion of a tremendous number of molecules, those, say, of water. Water becomes hot because of the movement of its molecules. But it is not mechanical movement, but something more complex. An electric current is produced by the movement of electrons. And a chemical reaction is movement, the joining of ions, an even more complex process. A living body, as we have mentioned before, is always in motion. And human society is in constant motion. Social systems change, people change. It cannot be asserted nowadays that motion means simply the mechanical movement of bodies in space. Such movement is but one kind of motion.

We must now ask ourselves what motion means in its most general, philosophic sense. First of all, we must ask what is the main or essential characteristic feature of all kinds of motion. Engels wrote that motion “comprehends all changes and processes occurring in the universe, from mere change of place right up to thinking”¹.

Motion is any change in things and phenomena, in the world, in matter. It is change in general.

We know from what we have just said that there are different kinds of motion in nature. First, there is the movement in space of matter particles or bodies, i.e., the *mechanical* form of motion. Secondly, there are thermal and electrical processes, or *physical* forms of motion. Thirdly, there are chemical reactions and combinations (the joining together of ions)—the *chemical* form of motion. Fourthly, there are the changes that take place in living bodies, the *biological* form of motion. Fifthly, there is the *social* form of motion, the changes that occur in the life of society.

¹ F. Engels, *The Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow, 1966, p. 69.

Now we can return to the question discussed above: could matter ever have been in a state of immobility, never moving, never changing? Of course not. Even before there were men, animals or any living cells, there were changes in matter. Indeed, since material bodies are made up of atoms and molecules and they are in constant motion, there never can have been even one absolutely immobile and frozen body. Moreover if atoms, molecules and electrons have always existed, then there have always been chemical reactions, chemical motion, too.

So *there never was a time when matter existed without motion*. That is why we say that *motion is a form of the existence of matter, a form of matter's being*. Motion is an inseparable property of matter or, as the philosophers say, an *attribute* of matter. There is no matter without motion, it can exist only in motion.

Does this mean that dialectical materialism denies that there is any state of rest? No, it does not. Rest exists in nature. But it is *relative* rest. It is impossible for there to be any state of matter or phenomenon of nature in which there is no motion. If a body is at rest it is so relative to something else. For instance, we are at rest relative to a moving car when we are inside it. But it is not absolute rest, since changes are constantly taking place in our bodies.

The dialectical idea of rest differs radically from the metaphysical idea. *Metaphysics means by rest the absence of all motion*. It is to this understanding of rest that dialectical materialism is opposed.

It is not rest that is decisive in nature (though it exists), but motion, change, development. Motion is inherent in matter as a basic and inseparable property of it. There is no sense in asking where matter got its motion from, as matter, which has always existed, has always moved. For this reason there is also no sense in asking who first gave motion to matter since the former is inseparable from the latter, being one of the forms of its existence.

We have discussed motion as a form of the existence of matter. But in what other forms does matter exist?

Space and Time

In order to understand space we must first remember that everything has three dimensions—width, length, height—a certain definite size, occupying a certain definite amount of space.

Besides, all things are related to one another in some way by virtue of their positions in space, i.e., they bear some spatial relationship to one another: higher or lower, near or far, to the right or to the left. It follows that everything exists in space and cannot exist in any other way. There is not and cannot be a single particle of matter that does not reside in space, from the planets to the human brain, to the atomic nucleus. But we know already that everything in the world makes up what is usually called matter. Hence it follows that *matter cannot exist in any other way than in space*. That is why *space* is defined as *a form of the existence of matter*.

Everything in the world, as we have said before, is perpetually changing, moving, developing. But in what way do these changes occur? A simple example will show us. Take the photographs of our whole lifetime. They not only show that the years leave their traces, but that all the changes that take place in us do so over definite periods of time, little by little, day by day.

Moreover, all things and processes in the world follow one another in a definite order or sequence: day follows night, socialism follows capitalism, and communism socialism. One event takes place before another, subsequent event. And all events last for a certain, definite length of time. This ordering of events, and their duration, can only take place in time; there is no other way. No thing or phenomenon in the world can exist outside of time.

So everything that happens in the world happens in time. For this reason, time, too, is *a form of the existence of matter*. Lenin wrote: "There is nothing in the world but matter in motion, and matter in motion cannot move otherwise than in space and time."¹

All the things and phenomena of the world around us exist in both time and space. Nothing can exist in space but outside time. If a thing occupies some place in space, it must do so either now, or yesterday, or at some other time. Everything exists in both time and space. An ordinary railway time-table can convince you of this. A train is at a definite place, at a definite time. It is not possible to separate the location of the train from the time it is at that

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 175.

location. Where? When?—the answers to these two questions, the time of an event and its location in space, are indissolubly linked.

So, *time and space are inseparably linked*. It is impossible to tear the one from the other. *Space does not exist without time, as time does not exist without space*. And since matter exists in space and time, space and time are as inseparable from matter as from each other.

From what has been said it should be clear that *space and time exist objectively*. The world exists outside man, i.e., it is objective, and so the forms of its being or existence are also objective.

Lenin attached great importance to the idea that space and time exist objectively, because it is directed against the subjective-idealistic view of space and time. This view derives from the 18th-century English philosopher Hume and the German philosopher Kant (who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries) according to both of whom time and space have no objective content. And modern idealists try to falsify some of the vital discoveries of modern science, in particular those of physics, in order to revive this subjective-idealistic view—for example, *the theory of relativity*, one of the key advances of 20th-century science, is bent to this end.

Newton believed that space and time exist independently of matter and material things. He thought that space was something like an enormous box, or an endless room without walls, ceiling or floor, into which one could put things or take them out. The world around us was, as it were, "put" into this "box" or "room". From this Newton concluded that space is absolute, i.e., independent of matter. The geometrical properties of space, he supposed, are the same in all directions. His was the view of metaphysical materialism.

Einstein's theory of relativity showed that there is no unified, unchangeable, Newtonian space. The properties of space change, they are dependent on material things. For instance, it was found that the length of a body decreases as its speed increases. There is no absolute unit of length in the Universe. Let us imagine that a train is rushing past a station platform with a velocity close to that of light. We should naturally suppose that the length of the platform as measured by the engine driver and by someone on the platform would be the same. But precise mathematical cal-

culatation based on the theory of relativity shows that this is not so. The engine driver will find that the platform has decreased in size, while the person standing on the platform will find that the moving train has decreased in size. And this is not an optical illusion, but objective fact. Space is relative.

The same can be said about time. As the speed of a material system increases, time in it slows down. Time also slows down in a very strong gravitational field. If a future spaceman is put in a space orbit, the flow of time in the spaceman's ship will be much slower than on the Earth he has left behind. To make this fact as graphic as possible, it is often pointed that, on returning to Earth, such a spaceman will be amazed to discover that his own son is older than himself!

So Einstein's theory of relativity has proved that space and time are not absolute in the Newtonian sense, because they are not, as Newton thought, the same unchangeable things throughout the whole of the Universe. But space and time *are* absolute in the philosophical sense: everything in the world has spatial properties and exists in time, nothing has existence outside of time and space. But space and time are relative in the physical sense, for they depend on the properties of moving matter. Matter, space and time are organically bound together, and can in no way be separated from one another.

Modern idealists try to distort the theory of relativity. They say: since space and time are relative they do not exist objectively, they are subjective categories. But this argument is false. The new discoveries have not proved that the materialist interpretation of space and time is incorrect. On the contrary, it is the earlier metaphysical ideas of space and time that have been proved wrong. As the physicists put it, every system of co-ordinates has its own time—a relative time. But this time exists objectively. So does space.

Infinity and the Unity of the World

Space is infinite and time is without end. Modern science confirms this conclusion. Astronomers have discovered that some stars are at distances of thousands of millions of light years away from us. Such distances are difficult to imagine. But astronomers say that even they do not represent any kind of limit.

Look at the night sky: it is strewn with stars. The star

system to which the Sun belongs is called the Galaxy. It comprises about 150 thousand million stars. And there are many millions of such galaxies. Scientists are able to study all this with the help of the most powerful modern means of observation, enormous optical and radiotelescopes. But even they have not reached "the edge of the Universe" yet.

The Universe has no limit or boundary, no end in space. Neither has it any end in time; it has never had a "beginning" and will never have an end. It follows from this that there is not and cannot be any non-material "other" world. Indeed, if there is nothing but matter, then there can be only one universe, a material one. Thus the various things and phenomena of the world possess one property that unites them—their materialness. The world presents itself as a unified entity. That is why Marxist philosophy teaches that the world is *monistic*, single, unified. It does not follow that only the Earth on which we live exists. The great Italian scientist G. Bruno (1548-1600) proved long ago that there are many worlds. But all of them are material. And in this sense they together comprise one, single material world. Moreover, the unity of the world means that all things, phenomena, processes are mutually linked together so that they do not appear as a heap of disconnected objects but as a single, united, material system.

The problem of the unity of the world has occupied the minds of philosophers throughout the entire history of philosophy. Especially the minds of materialists: for if the world is based on matter they want to know what the nature of matter is. Various ideas have been advanced by different philosophers as to the single material basis uniting the world, but all have defended the view that all things are but different forms of organisation of a single substance, matter. A violin is made of wood, a statue of stone, a man of muscle, bone, blood, etc. But all these material substances have their root and origin in a single universal substance—matter.

There is no phenomenon in the world that is not the result of the motion and development of matter. Matter is everything, it reaches everywhere, there is and can be nothing except moving, developing matter in its various forms. It follows that there is only one, material world. That is why Engels asserted that *the unity of the world*

consists in its materiality. In other words, *the world is united because it is material.*

How has science and philosophical materialism proved that the world is united on a common basis? Engels answered this question by saying that the unity of the world is proved by the long and difficult course of philosophical and scientific advance. In ancient times, when people had no scientific ideas about the Sun, the Moon, the planets and the stars, they thought that the "heavenly world" was entirely different from the earthly world. That was how the idea that there were two worlds originated. But gradually, as science made progress, the veil of mystery was lifted from the "heavenly world" and it proved to be as material as the world we live in.

Copernicus (1473-1543) was the first to deal a powerful blow to religious and mystical conceptions of the Universe. He advanced the idea that the Earth was not the centre of the Universe, but just an ordinary planet of our solar system, so that the Earth could not be regarded as any different from "heaven", or "heaven" from Earth and there was nothing supernatural in the sky.

The great scientist Isaac Newton proved in the 18th century that the Earth, revolving around the Sun, follows the same laws of mechanics as compel the Moon to revolve around the Earth—and the other planets around the Sun, too. The law of universal gravitation proves that the Earth and all celestial bodies, not only of our Galaxy but of all constellations, are bound together, and thus constitute a single, unified system—our world, the Universe.

Celestial bodies consist of the same elements as does the Earth. The same common basic elements have been discovered in all other bodies of the Universe as on Earth. The main ingredient of meteorites, for example, which come from the depths of space, is iron, i.e., an element very common on Earth. This is convincing proof that there is nothing immaterial and supernatural about these "envoys from heaven".

The world is material. It exists outside human consciousness and independently of it. But what is consciousness? This requires special analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness Is a Property of Highly Organised Matter

Consciousness is made up of thoughts, sensations, concepts, will. Together they create the very important ability of man to become aware of, to perceive, the things in the world surrounding him, and to attain a conscious understanding of what is happening in it.

Man possesses consciousness. Where has it come from? One may say with confidence that there is no more complicated question than this. The Russian physiologist I. P. Pavlov once said: "The difficulty is that the brain has to study itself." Others have added that it is like a drowning man trying to pull himself to safety by his own hair. While Pavlov's remark is true enough, in that it points to certain difficulties, the analogy is not a true one: it suggests that it is futile to attempt to understand the nature of consciousness, while the history of science has shown that despite the extreme complexity of the problem, it has been possible to unravel it. The path to truth was a tortuous one, however.

From time immemorial there had existed the legend that God created man from clay. But the clay remained a dead statue until God breathed the soul of man into it. Only then did the first man begin to move, think, live. The source of life and thought, religion teaches, is the soul, the spirit. The soul is "God's spark" in Man.

The body cannot exist, is dead, without the soul. The soul, however, is said to get along perfectly well without the body. It takes up residence in it at birth and leaves it after death. Belief in "life after death" has been the cornerstone of all religions, and is so even today.

Idealist conceptions about the nature of consciousness have taken various forms but they all boil down to the following: 1) the spiritual world, mind, consciousness, existed before the material world came into existence; 2) the spiritual can exist apart from matter, i.e., it does not depend on it; and 3) the material is "perishable", destructible, but the ideal, spirit, consciousness, is eternal, indestructible.

Materialism takes the directly opposite view to this, based on the irrefutable and proven fact that consciousness (mind) does not and cannot exist apart from matter. In the absence of a sensing being, there can be no sensations; without a man who desires, there can be no desires. The will of man, his senses, desires, and all other manifestations of mind, psyche, thought, cannot exist apart from man, outside him.

Nature, matter, is known to have existed before either man or consciousness came into being. Hence it is clear that matter is primary and mind, thinking, secondary.

Nature existed not only before man but before any living organism. It therefore exists *independently of mind*; it is *primary*. And *consciousness* could not have existed prior to nature. *Consciousness is derivative*. This is the most important fact confirming the materialist solution of the biggest of all the problems of philosophy. There is not and cannot be consciousness without matter.

But can all kinds of matter think? A mere glance at the world around us is enough to answer this: no, not every kind. A stone, for example, cannot think, nor the whole of inanimate nature. Many living organisms possess no sign of consciousness either.

Thinking is human thinking. Man can think because he possesses a developed brain. The brain is the organ that thinks. The whole vast realm of the mind—ideas, feelings, will—is generated by the activity of the brain. It follows that all spiritual life is based on material processes going on in the human brain. Modern science has shown that there are no thinking organs other than the brain.

So, *consciousness is not produced by all matter but only by highly organised matter in the shape of the human brain.*

It is unable to exist without the brain, which is its material carrier. Psychic activity is founded on the material processes going on in the human brain, or to be more precise, in the outer cortex of the large cerebral hemispheres.

We have learned that nature, matter, existed when there was no mind, consciousness, which appeared later. Man's mind is dependent on his body and his nervous system. We can state that the brain is the organ of thinking, that thought is a function of the brain. But this statement requires some qualification. One must note that the brain is not of itself the source or cause of thinking, of consciousness, but only the organ of thought. Consciousness is not *determined* by the brain as such. The brain by itself is unable to generate a single idea. The source of our knowledge is the world around us and the processes going on in it. The brain reflects these processes and as a result we acquire knowledge. The brain does not generate this knowledge itself, it is not the cause of it. It is simply the organ of thinking. Thinking is a function of the brain. Thinking is dependent on the brain in the sense that it is only with a brain in evidence that any idea can emerge at all.

The Russian revolutionary writer A. I. Herzen once wrote that to say that the soul could exist without the body was like saying that a black cat could leave the room but leave its black colour behind. And everyone will agree that that is impossible. The soul can no more exist without the body than a swallow can fly without wings. When the body is destroyed, consciousness goes with it. This is convincing proof that man has no special, immaterial soul. He has a mind, consciousness, generated by a material organ, the brain.

Dialectical materialism thus asserts, in full accordance with the findings of science, that "one cannot separate the thought from matter which thinks".¹ "Our consciousness and thinking, however suprasensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. . . . Mind itself is merely the highest product of matter."²

Having understood this, we are now in a position to understand in greater detail the nature of consciousness.

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family*, Moscow, 1956, p. 173.

² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, pp. 372-73.

First let us ask the question: what *are* the thoughts, ideas, that emerge in our brain?

**A Thought Is
a Reflection of Reality**

Take any idea, any utterance: "I can see yellow sand in front of me." Obviously, if someone says

this, his head does not contain sand but the thought or idea of it. In other words, our minds contain *concepts* of the things and phenomena we encounter in the world. Every thought consists of such concepts. For example, the thought: "Imperialism is an enemy of mankind" is expressed by means of the concepts "imperialism" and "an enemy of mankind". Where do these concepts come from? From life, from reality. Sand *is* yellow. Imperialism *is* mankind's enemy. *Things exist objectively and we derive our concepts of them from them.* First comes the sand—my entire concept of it is got from it. Concepts are consequently derivative. First comes reality, then its reflection—an idea of it. That is why Lenin said that thoughts are copies, reflections, photographs of reality. Reality is reproduced, depicted, photographed in the process of thinking.

One must keep in mind the fact that an idea of a thing is not the thing itself but an image of it. This image is not material in nature but ideal. It cannot be seen or photographed, it exists only in the brain as an ideal copy of reality. Thoughts are not material and must not be confused with their material basis, i.e., identified with it. It was for this reason that Engels and Lenin criticised the so-called vulgar materialists—philosophers who say that the brain secretes ideas in the same way as, say, the liver secretes bile. Ideas, they allege, are the brain's secretion—the brain producing thoughts in the same way as the glands of the body produce substances essential to the body's physiological activity. Philosophers who interpret thinking in this way are called *vulgar materialists*. They are called so because they interpret thinking in a crude, vulgar, shallow fashion. Their interpretation is vulgar because in it consciousness is identified with matter.

The idealists try to use the impotence of the vulgar materialists to discredit materialism altogether. Modern bourgeois philosophers often claim that materialism recognises only the material and denies the existence of the spiritual, consciousness, human will. In other words, they identify the viewpoint of the vulgar materialists with the

Marxist-Leninist teaching. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dialectical materialism has nothing in common with vulgar materialism. The way in which dialectical materialism interprets the nature and significance of consciousness is directed not only against the idealists but against the vulgar materialists, too.

Lenin sharply criticised the vulgar materialists for identifying consciousness with matter. He pointed out that consciousness is not material, but a copy, an image of reality. But the brain does not, of course, reflect or photograph reality in the way that an ordinary camera does. The human mind transforms reality in the sense that it does not contain the things and objects of reality themselves but ideal images of them. Marx wrote that "the ideal ... is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought".

The Social Nature of Consciousness

In our analysis of the materialist solution to the fundamental problem of philosophy we have emphasised all along that science, particularly physiology, confirms the primary nature of matter and the derivative nature of mind. But having understood this, we do not yet know enough to understand the nature of human consciousness and thought.

Pre-Marxian materialists were aware that thinking involved the brain. They also knew that consciousness emerged as a natural process, that there was nothing supernatural about it. This was the great contribution of pre-Marxist materialism. But Marxism went much further. It demonstrated that neither the origin nor the essence of the human mind could be explained by natural, biological factors alone. Marxism indicated that the essence of consciousness can be grasped only when its social nature is understood. This means that the laws of human society, of the life of people in society, are of cardinal importance in determining the appearance and growth of human consciousness. Without human society there is no human consciousness, no thought. This was the radically new contribution made by Marxism to the solution of the problem of human thought.

Consider now the following very interesting facts. We have all heard of cases of children who have been discovered in forests where they had been "brought up" by animals. Probably the most dramatic case of this kind

occurred in India in 1920. The head of an orphanage, one Mr. Singh, learned that some strange creatures were living together with some wolves in their lair. The local population said they were "ghosts", but they turned out to be two little girls. One was only eighteen months old and the other about eight years old. They were taken away from the wolves and put in the orphanage, where they were reared along with the other children. But they were a great trouble to their hosts. For though they were born of a woman, they were perfect little animals, especially at first. Life among animals had left its stamp not only on their behaviour but also on the structure of their bodies. The vertical manner of walking, an essential human feature, was unknown to them. And they showed no signs of having any human consciousness and ability to think, nor any human feelings or emotions. They lived a twilight existence. They slept during the day and only displayed noticeable animation as darkness fell.

The years passed by. Then human features began to appear, slowly, with great effort, but they came. The first words were spoken. The first signs of human understanding of what was happening around them were displayed. Their first rudimentary concepts were formed. The "little animals" were turning into children. Unfortunately they died before growing up.

What do these facts tell us? In the first place they tell us that the so-called theory of the natural biological origin of consciousness is totally wrong. Pre-Marxian materialists asserted that "Man is the child of Nature". There is an element of truth in this assertion, inasmuch as it contradicts idealist and theological claims that consciousness is of a supernatural origin. But metaphysical materialism, which stresses only the natural basis of human consciousness, is not quite right either. This is proven beyond a doubt by the case of the children rescued from the wolves: consciousness is not a simple product of nature in the way that, say, our hands, blood, eyes and hair are. *For consciousness to emerge and function, besides its natural biological basis, social conditions are required—social life in a human environment, human society.*

Human consciousness is social in character. It cannot emerge in isolation from human social life and activity, from human social contacts. It is not an isolated phenom-

enon even of any one individual human brain, let alone of an individual soul. A child is only moulded as a human being, as a personality, by living in a human community.

There is no human thought outside the human community. Thinking results from man's life in society, from the contacts he has with other people in the course of work. *Work created man, human society.* Accordingly it created man's brain, too—his consciousness. That is why Marx observed that *consciousness* has been a *social product* from its first appearance, and will remain so so long as human beings exist. Consciousness is a product of man's life in society. It is a social phenomenon. *Man's mind and man himself established themselves and progressed under the influence of social laws.*

Mind and Language. Speech

Speech also first appeared in the period when human society, and with it human consciousness, arose. When working together in the process of producing the necessities for their survival, people inevitably began to feel the need to say something to one another. This need, Engels said, created its own organ: the undeveloped larynx of the ape slowly but surely transformed itself, and the organs of the mouth learned to utter one coherent sound after another. In this way meaningful speech emerged, i.e., *language, the means for the exchange of ideas, for communication, and the material shell of thought.*

The unity of language and thought results from the nature of consciousness itself. A thought becomes real only when it takes the form of words. While it is in a man's mind it is dead because unavailable to other people, inaccessible. In Marx's words, language is the immediate reality of thought. Thinking cannot take place other than in a language, its material "shell". Even when we do not express our thoughts aloud but only think to ourselves, our thoughts also take the form of words, language. Thanks to language, thoughts are not only formed but conveyed to other people. And with the aid of written language, they are passed down from one generation to another. It is impossible to express an abstract idea, a thought, in any other way than in words.

Human consciousness is thus formed from early childhood on the basis of words, language. As a result, thought is closely bound up with speech: in fact it is impossible to

separate human consciousness and thought from speech. *An indissoluble, organic unity between language and thought is established,* and this is a feature of man alone.

Engels stressed that the emergence of coherent speech promoted the gradual transformation of the brain of the ape into the human brain.

Mind and Machine

Consciousness has its origin in society, in social life. This fact enables us to dispose of one of the most "burning" issues of modern science—the problem of so-called "thinking" machines. The work performed by "intelligent" machines is widely known. They do the most complex operations: they translate from one language into another, pilot aeroplanes, drive trains and even play chess. They also perform some of the logical operations characteristic of the human brain. They "guess" when it is necessary to slow down a train, "remember" what operations they have already carried out and so on. Here we have, as it were, human thought in metallic dress.

But is it possible to make a machine to replace the human brain entirely? No, it is not. Thinking cannot be reduced only to certain automatic acts—thought is above all else a social product, a product of human life in society. And such life is, in principle, unavailable to a machine.

One cannot, of course, set any limit to the improvement and perfection of cybernetic machines. It is quite possible that in the future they will solve such logical problems as will make them really seem to represent human logic in metal dress. But a machine will always be a mere assistant to the human mind. Without man, any machine is "dead metal".

Why is the human brain immeasurably superior to any machine? Because it is a product of social relations, as is thought. And the brain's work is as complicated as these relations. No "electronic brain" will ever be able to "reproduce" the inner spiritual world of man, its creativity, its flights of fancy, its dreams, the complex world of art, or man's ability to exercise his will.

A machine can perform only those human functions that are of an automatic, machine-like character. Whatever functions cybernetic machines may have in the future, however much they may replace man, they will always remain the servants of man to be used by society to help

solve its productional, educational and other tasks. The machine is unable to think: it can only help man to think. The job of cybernetics is to make man's mental work easier.

Materialism and Man's Spiritual Wealth

The opponents of materialism say that if materialism denies the soul, it must also deny such important human qualities as faith, hope, passion and all fine feeling in general, everything that is meant by man's spiritual wealth. Some modern bourgeois neo-Thomists, for instance, allege that materialism refuses to recognise spiritual values because it recognises only material values. Is this really the case? Of course not! It is a slander against materialism. Marxism denies that man has any special, immaterial "soul". But it obviously cannot deny that man's inner, spiritual world exists. Neither does materialism deny that the human spirit is infinitely rich.

The point is that Marxists reject the mystical, religious concept of the soul. But it by no means follows that we reject the concept of the soul as such. Moreover, we are proud of the fact that the revolutionary enthusiasm of Communists, which has more than once aroused the admiration of the world, is one of the most clear manifestations of the power and beauty of the human spirit! That is why we describe, for example, that great son of Spain, Gernau, a Communist who was executed by the fascists, as "a man with the soul of a giant".

We have now dealt with some of the main ideas of dialectical materialism. But for their deeper understanding we must know more about Marxist materialist dialectics. We shall therefore now study the laws and categories of dialectics.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BASIC LAWS AND CATEGORIES OF DIALECTICS

What Is a Law?

A law is a certain kind of connection or relation between the objects and phenomena of the world.

In order to understand what sort of connection is meant, consider the following example. If one throws a stone up into the air, it will always fall to the ground. The same thing will happen to an arrow or any other object shot into the air. For definite reasons there is a constant, unbreakable connection between the Earth's gravitational field and an object thrown up, a connection that is not temporary or accidental. Therefore we are not considering here a phenomenon that may happen or may not happen, but one which *is certain to happen because it cannot help happening*. A thing thrown up in the air is sure to come back to Earth because of the pull of the Earth's gravitation. This happens with strict regularity, infallibly. When we come across such phenomena in our practical life we say that they represent some *regular, essential, basic* connection or relation between things. In other words, *a law is a relationship between mutually connected things and phenomena that is not accidental, external, passing or circumstantial, but one which stems from their inner nature*. A law does not reflect all the connections between phenomena, but only the most basic, essential ones.

This does not exhaust the definition of a law, however. You will know the saying: "A law has no exceptions." This is the whole point about a law—it applies to all the phenomena of a given class, not just to some of them alone. Archimedes' Law, for example, applies to any body placed in any liquid. In other words, the connection expressed in Archimedes' Law (that between a body's capacity and its resistance) is universal in character. Engels observed: "The form of universality in nature is law."¹ *A law gives us knowledge of what is most deep and general in nature.*

Since things and phenomena exist objectively the connections between them also exist objectively, that is, the laws they follow exist objectively. Hence, *the most important thing about any law is its objectivity.* It follows that neither the laws of nature nor those of society depend on human will and consciousness, and this is proved by everyday human practice. The laws of nature were in operation long before human society came into existence. Human beings appeared on Earth only comparatively recently. And the laws that our planet follows as it moves around the Sun have existed as long as the planet itself. The same goes for the other laws of nature.

The laws of social development are also objective in character. People can neither invent nor eliminate laws, nor alter them arbitrarily.

Idealist philosophers hold different views. They deny the objective character of laws. The German philosopher Kant claimed that there were no laws of nature. He asserted that everything is in a state of chaos, and that it is only man's mind that introduces order and regularity into nature. But for man himself there can be no laws at all. Modern bourgeois philosophers repeat this idea in a hundred different ways. But is it a correct idea?

The primeval savage had no idea that regular laws of nature existed. He never even looked for them. It was only later, when people learned from their practical life of the existence of regular connections between things, that they began to look for such connections and to discover them in reality. We conclude from this that the idea that laws are subjective in origin is a non-scientific view which contradicts the evidence of practice. Practice testifies to the

¹ F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow, 1966, p. 234.

objective character of the laws both of nature and society.

A law expresses a general, essential, objective and relatively permanent connection between phenomena and things of the real world.

Why do idealists deny the existence of laws? Because they support the dominant exploiting classes, who have an interest in distorting the truth. It is not to the imperialists' advantage, for example, to let the masses know the truth about the laws of the inevitable demise of capitalism. That is why they fear science in general.

People Act in Accordance with Laws

One sometimes hears it argued that since the laws of nature and society are objective, and it is impossible to change them, it must follow that people are helpless in the face of them. But this view is also unscientific. Moreover, it can only harm people, since it inevitably kills all their initiative and desire to improve their lot. It is not difficult to see why this "theory", which in effect preaches passivity, inertness, and denies the usefulness of any kind of revolutionary struggle, is very favourable to the exploiting classes. It undermines the working people's faith in their own power. That is why the idea that the working people are "powerless" to win their freedom is supported in every way and propagated in the capitalist countries.

The experience of many centuries shows that people *are not helpless before the forces of nature.* They have constantly triumphed in the battle against nature. Man has long since subordinated the power of water to his will and made it work for him. The power of the wind was long ago utilised in windmills and in sailing boats. And steam, electricity and nuclear energy have all been harnessed by man. Man has thus shown himself to be far from helpless, for he is capable of consciously influencing nature, winning victories over it, using it in his own interests. Man is not the plaything of nature's laws. He himself governs nature. He does not control it arbitrarily, but by making skilful use of natural laws in his activities.

Thus, *the objective character of the laws of the world does not preclude man's active intervention in it. On the contrary, man actively transforms both nature and his own society. But in order to reach a desired goal it is necessary to act in accordance with objective laws. He who tries to go against them inevitably meets with failure.*

The entire history of science and technology is graphic testimony of the way people make use of the laws they discover in the course of their practical work. Nowadays the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism has become a powerful force that is helping hundreds of millions of people all over the globe to refashion the old world along new lines.

An arbitrary approach to any of the phenomena of human society, an approach not guided by reality but based on the belief that it is not objective laws and objective economic conditions that play the decisive role in social development but the will of man, is termed voluntarism. The actions of Mao Tse-tung's group are typical examples of voluntarism. Without considering the objective source of historical advance and paying no heed to the regular laws of history, they want to turn the wheel of history back. The propagators of "Mao's thought" belong to those who refuse to take regular laws, causes and economic conditions into account, but suppose that in order to achieve any goal the mere will of "the great helmsman" is sufficient—his resolution, his all-conquering persistence. But this is the road of adventurism, a "Left" deviation, not a scientific approach.

The laws determining the most fundamental connections between all the things and phenomena of nature and society, including consciousness, are of particular importance. Such laws are called general laws and it is these laws that are studied by Marxist dialectics. They are the law of the transition from quantity to quality, the law of the unity and conflict of opposites, and the law of the negation of the negation.

The Law of the Transformation of Quantitative Changes into Qualitative Changes

Quality, Quantity and Measure

It is sufficient to look at the world around to realise that any thing—a table, an inkstand, a tree, a man, or any object whatever—possesses certain *features, aspects, descriptive marks*, which define it, express its most important characteristics, its essence.

Why do I say that this object in front of me is a pencil? Because I have in front of me a thin lead stick worked into wood which I can use for writing and drawing—these are its chief properties and make it what it is, i.e., they define its quality.

The quality of a thing is the sum total of all those essential features which make it possible to define its inner nature.

But things and phenomena are characterised not only by their qualitative aspects but by their quantitative aspects, too. We not only want to know about the qualities of things (i.e., what they are like); we also want to know how big they are, how many there are of them, and all their other quantitative attributes. For the phenomena of nature possess quantitative "definiteness" just as much as qualitative definiteness. Every house or flat has its own definite floor space expressed as a definite number of square feet or yards. Every chemical element has its own particular atomic weight, each atom its own specific number of electrons, etc., etc.

The quantitative characteristics of things and phenomena are many and various and are expressed in a variety of ways. For example, if you want to know how many machines are at work on the building site of the Aswan Dam at any time, the figure can be given as a simple number—3, 4, 10, or whatever. But if you want to know how much rice or how many peanuts were produced this year as against last year, the figure will be given as a percentage, in tons or as some other indicator.

Quantity characterises things and phenomena by their number, size, volume, etc.

Now we know that when the quality of a thing changes, the thing itself changes. But in order to understand what now follows, we must ask ourselves the question: do changes in *quantity* also bring about changes in the thing itself? Let us consider this question.

People who witnessed the damming of the Nile at Aswan might tell the story thus: first a batch of rock was thrown into the riverbed. There was no dam as yet. And there was still no dam after the second and the third batches. But a moment came when the number of rocks that had been thrown into the river was such that they began to have a radical effect on the flow of the water. A few more rocks

and the river was dammed. A *dam* had been built from separate rocks.

Let us think about what happened here. While the quantitative changes were taking place within certain limits they did not seem to result in the formation of a new quality (in this case, the dam). But as soon as they reached a certain, definite quantitative limit, or *measure*, the changes began to produce visible *qualitative* effects.

What is measure, as a philosophical category? All things and phenomena possess certain qualities to which correspond more or less definite quantities. Every different atom possesses a different but fixed number of electrons corresponding to its quality. The hydrogen atom has one electron, the oxygen atom eight electrons, nitrogen seven and uranium ninety-two. There is measure in everything. "Everything has a limit."

Measure is the mutual correspondence, the conformity, the unity of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of things. Hence every object has measure, for its qualities necessarily have definite quantities corresponding to them. This conformity, this correspondence, this measure, cannot be violated without a thing ceasing to be what it is. The qualities of a thing cannot exist in unity with any arbitrary quantities, nor, vice versa, quantities with arbitrary qualities. Quantity and quality always conform to one another as long as they are within the limits of measure.

A vital conclusion follows from this: when quantitative changes are taking place in things, they do not affect quality only for a certain time, within certain limits, the limits of measure. Within these limits a thing will appear to be unaffected by quantitative changes, as if it failed to notice them. But then, as soon as measure is violated, quantitative changes are reflected in the qualitative state of the thing. *Quantity is then transformed into quality.*

The Transformation of Quantity into Quality

We can see from the example of the dam that quantitative changes pile up or accumulate imperceptibly, gradually, and do not seem at first to involve the qualitative nature of a thing. But there comes a moment when quantitative changes, having accumulated, lead to changes in a thing's quality.

Everyone has watched a kettle of water as it is being boiled. At first, the water merely becomes warm. Then the

temperature rises to 50, 60, 70 degrees Centigrade. But the water remains water. True, some changes are already in evidence. But not such as to make the water lose its essential quality as water, so that it ceases to be water. The process continues in this way up to 99 degrees. But then as the water's temperature rises through only one more degree, the water begins to boil violently and it changes into steam. The accumulated quantitative changes now result in the formation of a new quality. The water becomes steam.

The essence of the law of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative changes consists in the fact that small, at first imperceptible, qualitative changes, by gradual accumulation, lead at some stage to radical qualitative changes, involving the disappearance of old qualities and the emergence of new ones—which bring about, in their turn, further quantitative changes.

But how does the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative ones occur? Recall again the process of boiling, when water is suddenly and rapidly transformed into steam. Think also of how, when you scramble an egg, the mixture in your pan solidifies suddenly, rapidly, almost instantaneously. Or consider what happens as a rocket gradually increases its velocity. At some point, when it is travelling at about five miles per second, the rocket will "escape" from the Earth and become a satellite, unable to return unless its speed is lowered again. As a consequence of quantitative changes essential changes of a qualitative nature occur, and occur at a certain moment. This moment of transformation to a new quality is called a *leap*.

Both in nature and in society it is always a leap that brings about new qualities. This was how inanimate nature produced animate nature. The entire evolution of the animal world, the transformation of animals from one species to another, also occurred by a succession of leaps. Such transformations, or leaps, take place in human society, too. The transition from the primitive communal system to slavery, from slavery to feudalism, and from capitalism to socialism has always occurred by means of leaps or sudden interruptions of the process of gradual evolution.

So the answer to the question of how a quantitative change is transformed into a qualitative one is: by means of a leap; and the transformation cannot occur in any other way.

The Two Forms of Development

It is clear from what we have said above that the development or evolution of any thing or phenomenon goes through two stages, taking two different forms: the stage of slow, imperceptible quantitative changes and the stage of rapid, fundamental qualitative changes. Slow, quantitative changes always take place within the limits of the old qualities and the old measure. They can be called, in this sense, evolutionary changes. *Evolution is smooth, gradual, slow development without sudden leaps, without the appearance of new qualities.*

The development which involves the radical destruction of the old—for example, the qualitative changing of existing social relations, scientific concepts, rates of technological advance, etc.—is called revolution.

The Inconsistency of Reformism—"Right" Revisionism

Some metaphysical theories claim that only evolutionary progress is possible—that there can be no leaps or interruptions in processes of gradual advance, i.e., that only quantitative changes take place in the world, that there is never anything qualitatively new in nature. This is the viewpoint of so-called vulgar evolutionists who give a crude or vulgar and distorted interpretation of evolution.

The vulgar evolutionary point of view is widely applied in the interpretation of social life. Social changes are alleged to take place exclusively by smooth, slow, evolutionary means without affecting the foundations of social systems. Reformists, Right socialists and Labourites make use of this metaphysical viewpoint to defend the capitalist system. They reject working-class revolutionary struggle and try to replace it by struggle for partial reforms and petty concessions which do not affect the foundations of capitalist society.

Lenin called reformism the bourgeois deception of the workers, for even after such reforms are conceded power remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The old reformist theories are forever being refurbished and torted up and presented as new discoveries in theory. A case in point is the so-called theory of "the industrial society". Large-scale industry is becoming more and more the typical form of production of all modern industrially developed nations. This, according to some bourgeois writ-

ers, is resulting in the gradual step-by-step appearance of a new type of society. Both the socialist and the capitalist countries are gradually moving in the direction of this "industrial society". At some point they will meet and a new society be formed. There will then be no need for revolution and the elimination of capitalist private property—all things will be accomplished by means of petty reforms and the gradual "renovation" of the capitalist system.

From what has been said, however, it should not be thought that Marxists are against reforms as such. There are reforms which are of tremendous revolutionary importance—for example, land reforms which gradually undermine the foundations of exploitation. Such reforms have been carried through in many of the liberated countries of Asia and Africa and are an extremely progressive phenomenon, in that they are undermining the traditional power of the landowners. But Communists are opposed to reforms which are merely designed to strengthen capitalism and to divert the people from revolutionary struggle.

So *reformists are metaphysicians* because they can see only one aspect of the process of social advance—the quantitative or evolutionary aspect.

The Inconsistency of "Left" Revisionism

The opposite viewpoint, that of anarchists and "Left" adventurists in general—often called "Left" sectarians—is no less harmful and metaphysical: Mao Tse-tung's group is typical. The rejection of evolutionary advance is common to all such people. They accept only "leaps" without any prior preparation or gradual accumulation of forces. Lenin wrote that "both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism must be regarded"¹ as a direct product of the bourgeois world outlook and its influence, leading to a one-sided solution of the question of the relation between evolution and revolution in social development.

Mao Tse-tung's anarchic, "Left" sectarian actions do a great deal of harm, as is made clear by his claims that it is possible to "seize" power even where no conditions exist for it and to solve the radical tasks of building socialism by means of "great leaps forward" and "cavalry charges" without preliminary preparation and sober-minded planning.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 349.

Voluntarism is always harmful. That is why Marxism-Leninism wages an irreconcilable struggle against both Right and "Left" revisionism.

**Dialectics
of the Unity of Evolution
and Revolution**

In opposition to these one-sided metaphysical approaches of reformism and anarchism, or "Left" sectarianism, dialectical materialism proceeds from the fact that *there exists a profound connection between the evolutionary and the revolutionary aspects of every process of development.* "...Real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity," Lenin wrote.¹

The stage of uninterrupted gradual change plays a great part in development. But this does not yet involve any change in existing quality. To achieve this there must be a leap, a revolution which radically changes the old quality.

One can see from what we have said above that practical work should combine slow, thorough preparatory work with radical qualitative transformations. Qualitative changes must be prepared gradually in the course of everyday organisational work. "Revolutionariness", "courage" and "resoluteness" do not require one to hurl oneself headlong into an adventure without due preparation. Revolutionary action of any sort must be prepared for by a period of gradual evolutionary actions to create a lasting basis for victory.

**The Law of the Unity
and Conflict of Opposites**

**Permissible
and Non-Permissible
Contradictions**

As can be seen from the title of this section we shall now discuss contradictions. But what kind of contradictions? We must clear up

this point first, for one can mean very different things by the concept "contradiction".

Who has not had to refute some statement that seemed wrong to him? "You are contradicting yourself," you say when you notice a contradiction in some remark of a friend.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 349.

This means that you have discovered an inconsistency in his statement.

The Bible, regarded as a "holy book" by believers, is full of such inconsistencies and obvious contradictions. For instance, St. Luke's Gospel in the New Testament alleges that Jesus Christ spent his childhood in Galilee, while St. John's Gospel claims that it was in Jerusalem. But he could not have lived in both places at the same time, could he? One of the Gospels says, further, that Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist, but the others testify that John was in jail at that time, and was not, therefore, able to baptise Christ at all. This is a contradiction too. There are a great number of them in the Gospels. That is why it is absolutely impossible to believe what is written in them.

Our thinking is correct only when it is free from contradictions of this kind. If I say to a group of philosophy students: "Everyone has learned the material well", and then go on to remark about some members of the same group of students that "some have learned it badly", then you have the right to object: "Why do you say quite different things about the same people at the same time? Either only your first statement is correct, or only your second one." And you will be right. For you will have discovered a contradiction in what I said.

Contradictions of this kind are called formal logical contradictions. They are explained by the science of correct thinking, viz., formal logic. A line of thought that contains a contradiction is inconsistent, wrong.

This is the first thing that we can mean when we speak of contradictions. They appear as a sign of confused thinking. That is why they are called logical contradictions.

Before we introduced the second meaning of the concept of contradiction we must consider the following question: Is it possible to conclude from the fact that logical contradictions are impermissible that there cannot be contradictions either in nature or in society? So that you may better understand the meaning of this question I shall tell you about a conversation which took place in a philosophy class when the tutor mentioned that formal logical contradictions were impermissible.

"Do contradictory aspects and trends exist in things and phenomena?" the teacher asked his students.

"Of course not," one of them answered. "You have just told us that there cannot be any contradictions."

"Then think of the structure of the atom. It possesses both positively charged particles and negatively charged particles. So I can make a contradictory statement about the atom: it is both positive and negative. And this is a true scientific fact."

You may protest that the very possibility of formal logical contradiction has just been rejected and now we are speaking of it as a true scientific fact. What is the explanation? This is a very complex question that cannot be answered in a few words. So let us go into more detail.

The minds of scientists have for a long time been occupied with the idea of contradiction. The metaphysicians, proceeding from the impermissibility of formal logical contradictions, have claimed that nature must be free from contradictions, from conflicting properties, aspects or definitions. Zenon, the ancient Greek philosopher, who lived in the 5th century B.C., tried to prove that contradictions of all kinds were impossible, meaningless, untrue.

Some modern bourgeois philosophers take the same view. For instance, the reactionary American philosopher S. Hook alleges that it is judgements, statements, proofs, that can be contradictory, but certainly not things and phenomena.

But is this view correct? Is it correct to say that all contradictions are logical contradictions, and that is why they should be rejected, avoided? When we have answered this it will be clear that what we are discussing are contradictions of an entirely different kind from logical contradictions.

We can see from the example of the atom that contradictions, opposing aspects, do exist in things, in nature. Let us look at man and the animals. Two opposite processes are going on within their bodies at the same time: cells are both growing and dying away. And if one of these processes ceases the living organism dies. Similar examples are encountered everywhere in nature and we shall make repeated mention of them as we continue. These are contradictions of nature itself. One cannot get away from them. They are not logical contradictions but contradictions belonging to reality itself, or *dialectical contradictions*. These are what Marxist philosophy is about, and one of the basic

laws of Marxism is the law of the unity and struggle of opposites.

Thus, *there exist contradictions that originate in the mind and which reveal themselves in our thinking, our statements and our actions—contradictions which testify to our inconsistency and which we generally attempt to avoid. But there also exist other quite different contradictions—those of reality, of nature—called dialectical contradictions.*

What Are Opposites and Contradictions?

Let us turn to everyday life. What we mean by "opposites" here is clear to everyone. We mean the North and South Poles, the right- and left-hand sides of the road, good men and bad men. But why do we say they are "opposites"? Because one of each pair excludes the other. The good is, as it were, abstracted from, excluded from what makes up the bad; the North is excluded from the South, the left from the right. *Opposites are mutually exclusive phenomena or aspects of phenomena.*

One might suppose that since opposites are mutually exclusive they have nothing in common. One may say: white is not black, the South is not the North. But this is only how things appear on the surface. If one goes deeper, one sees that the opposites that exist in life and in nature are not separated from one another by a Chinese Wall. Each can be comprehended only in its relation to the other. Mechanical action and counteraction can exist only in conjunction with one another. When you apply a force in giving a boat a push, you are yourself pushed in return by an equal force. There is no action without a counteraction. And in chemistry such opposites as association and dissociation of atoms are also inseparable.

There is always some *relationship* between connected opposites. It follows that *whenever opposites come up against one another and enter into some relationship, this gives rise to contradictions between them, because opposite tendencies, trends, forces run against one another. Hence, a contradiction can be defined as a relationship between two opposites, and the opposites appear as two sides of the contradiction.*

The Unity of Opposites

From what has been said above you know that opposites are linked to one another. Now the link between them is so tight, indeed indissoluble, that each opposite is unable to exist alone. We call this link the *unity of opposites*. Meta-

physicians deny this unity. They say that each opposite exists by itself. But this is not in fact so.

Present-day Right-wing socialists and revisionists stand on metaphysical positions. They claim that there are "good" and "bad" aspects to capitalism. In order to cure it of all that is "bad" in it they suggest developing the "good" sides and overcoming the "bad" ones. Then, they allege, we shall get a society of "universal prosperity". This is like wanting to keep only the new cells generated in the human body and somehow to prevent the old ones from dying. But just as one cannot do this with a living organism, so it is impossible to do it with bourgeois society.

The opposites here do not simply exist side by side but are united to one another—they interpenetrate and together constitute what is called bourgeois society. That is why it is impossible to "abolish" one of its sides while leaving the other intact. The British Labour Party has tried and is still trying to "liberate" the country from the vices of capitalism. But nothing has come of it. It is quite clear that in order to do away with the "bad" aspects of capitalism, its evils, capitalism itself must be eliminated. There is no other way.

The unity of opposites consists in their indissoluble connection. Together they comprise a single contradictory process. Opposites determine one another's existence, i.e., the one exists only because the other does.

We have said that *opposites oppose one another, are in conflict with one another.* Let us examine this point in greater detail.

The Conflict of Opposites Is the Source of Development

The cause of the conflict between opposites lies in their simultaneously being linked and united to one another while at the same time rejecting and excluding one another. Therefore wherever there are united opposites there is also a struggle going on between them.

The conflict between opposites signifies the striving of each to obtain predominance over the other in a process or phenomenon.

We have seen that there is both unity and struggle between opposites. But which is the more decisive in the development of any process or phenomenon? Hegel claimed that the main thing in development is the unity, or essential

identity, of opposites. Right socialists and revisionists seek to make use of this thesis of Hegel's to prove the possibility of social harmony, i.e., they wish to gloss over the contradictions that exist between hostile classes in bourgeois society. But they have met with failure.

It is the struggle between opposites that plays the main part in development, and not their unity. This struggle is constant and never ceases, it constitutes the very meaning of the relationship between opposites. Because they exclude each other, they are in conflict. That is why the unity or identity of opposites is only relative, temporary, passing, while their struggle is, as Lenin taught, "absolute, just as development and motion are absolute".¹ This means that the conflict of opposites is the source of development, of motion. "Development is the 'struggle' of opposites,"² wrote Lenin.

Let us look at some examples. Take living nature. Here one can see very clearly the part played by dialectical contradiction as the source of development. We all know that children look like their parents. But they are not copies of them in every detail. There is no stereotyping in nature. This is because the law of heredity acts alongside its opposite, the law of mutation. Mutation ensures the "unlikeness," the "inimitability", i.e., the mutability of all species, so that they constantly develop. Heredity in its turn stabilises mutations in subsequent generations. But for this fact changes could not last but would instantly disappear as soon as they occurred. In this way organic nature is "pushed forward" by the eternal struggle of two opposite forces—mutation and heredity.

Natural selection operates through these two conflicting opposites: mutations generate new useful features, while heredity accumulates them, thus producing new species of living beings. Nature's own internal contradictions are the sources and original motive forces of organic evolution, not some external agency and not God.

A contradiction of any kind possesses, so to say, a history of its own: its emergence, growth (sharpening) and resolution. A contradiction is resolved when the conflict between the opposites comprising it becomes so sharp

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 360.

² *Ibid.*

that their further existence together becomes impossible.

When the contradictions corroding bourgeois society lead to a socialist revolution this is because the hour has struck for their resolution: the struggle of opposites and the resolution of contradictions result in the advent of a society a stage higher. The old, bourgeois society is replaced by a new, socialist one. *The conflict of opposites and its resolution is the source of the development of society, i.e., of social advance.*

The essence of the law of the unity and conflict of opposites thus consists in the fact that internally contradictory aspects—indissolubly united but, at the same time, in constant conflict—are inherent in all things and processes. It is this conflict of opposites that is the internal source, the driving force, of progress. Lenin called this law the heart and soul of dialectics.

What, now, are the different kinds of contradictions?

Basic Contradiction

Let us begin by considering the complex organism of modern capitalist production. All its various parts are linked together, and for this reason capitalist production is, essentially, social in character. But at the same time factories, plants, mines and all other means of production are in the hands of private owners, capitalists. All goods made by the hands of workers belong to the capitalists. We can see from this that the social character of production is in contradiction with the private form of ownership and the private form of appropriating the fruit of social labour. Marx called this *the basic contradiction of capitalism*, because it determines the numerous other contradictions that are undermining the capitalist system, in particular the contradiction between labour and capital.

So: that contradiction which determines all other contradictions in a phenomenon is called its basic contradiction.

Consider now the question of the basic contradiction of the modern world. A number of groups of contradictions exist in the world today: a) those between the two world systems, the socialist system and the capitalist system; b) those between labour and capital; and c) those between colonies still fighting for their liberation and countries which have liberated themselves from imperialist oppression, on the one hand, and the imperialist nations, on the other.

But which of these is the basic contradiction of the modern world? To answer this we must first recall that only 20 or 30 years ago the imperialists could successfully and ruthlessly suppress the struggles of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America for their independence, while now their helplessness to prevent these same peoples from liberating themselves from imperialist oppression is becoming more and more evident.

No special enquiry is required to establish the fact that imperialism is no more the omnipotent master of the world's destiny. Gone forever are the days when London, Paris and Washington could dominate the world. The socialist system has its say whenever the destinies of the peoples of the world are endangered. And every time the imperialist aggressors have to retreat.

After analysing these facts, the Communist Parties, in the Main Document passed by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow in June 1969, came to the conclusion that *"the world socialist system is the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle.* Every liberation struggle receives indispensable aid from the world socialist system, above all from the Soviet Union".¹ And because the socialist system opposes the imperialist system, it is the contradiction between them that determines the fate of the modern world and sets the main course of mankind's advance. Hence we must necessarily draw the conclusion that *the basic contradiction of the modern age is that between the socialist and the capitalist systems.* The struggle of world socialism against world imperialism is the main content of our age, and lies at the heart of the class struggle the world over.

That is why the claim of Mao Tse-tung's group that the central contradiction of our times is the contradiction between imperialism and the national liberation movement—socialism being merely a "base" and an auxiliary arm of this movement—is groundless. It is nothing but an attempt, doomed to failure, to drive a wedge between socialism and the working-class movement, on the one hand, and the national liberation movement, on the other.

Of course, the national liberation movements of the peo-

¹ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 21.

ples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America play a great part in the anti-imperialist struggle and deal it increasingly powerful and damaging blows. But when speaking about the basic contradiction of modern times one should not forget that the historical progress of modern society is determined by the world socialist system, by the forces fighting against imperialism for the socialist reconstruction of human society. The socialist world is the focus of the best organised forces of the world working class, the most advanced class of modern society, destined, as our teachers Marx, Engels and Lenin pointed out, to become the grave digger of capitalism.

In addition to isolating the basic contradiction in any phenomenon we must distinguish between *internal* and *external* contradictions and between *antagonistic* and *non-antagonistic* ones. We shall now examine these.

Internal and External Contradictions

One often hears it said that revolution cannot be made to order. Let us ponder over this. A revolution cannot be carried through in any particular country if it does not have its cause and origin in *internal* forces within the country. It must result from the deep internal and international contradictions of capitalism. The victorious proletariat cannot force happiness on another nation without in this way undermining its own victory. Communists have always come out against "the export of revolution". Lenin opposed the "Left" phrases of the Trotskyites, who demanded, in the name of the world revolution, that the revolutionary fire be "transferred" to other countries. The attempts of the Trotskyites of today (Mao Tse-tung's group) to "speed up" the world proletarian revolution artificially—which means "exporting" revolution and interfering in the internal affairs of other nations—are equally misguided. The Communist Parties are also struggling strenuously against the imperialist export of counter-revolution.

"Relying on its steadily growing economic and defence potential, the world socialist system fetters imperialism, reduces its possibilities for exporting counter-revolution," the Communists declared at their recent international forum.¹

¹ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 23.

All progressive mankind has taken up the fight against American imperialism, the strangler of all revolutionary movements of the people.

The causes that lead to the elimination of capitalism are to be found *within* each capitalist country, where "the interests of a handful of monopolies are in irreconcilable contradiction with the interests of the whole nation".¹

So there are *internal* contradictions, which exist *within* a phenomenon or process, and which are to be distinguished from *external* contradictions *between* phenomena or processes. *But it is the internal contradictions that play the decisive part in all development.* This is not to say that dialectics treats external contradictions as of no importance. For there are historical facts to prove their importance. The weakening of the entire system of imperialism, for example, the contradictions between imperialist states, i.e., external contradictions, undoubtedly facilitated the struggle of the colonial peoples to secure their liberation from the colonial yoke. But internal forces were *decisive* in ensuring the victory of this struggle, viz., the contradictions between the peoples of the colonial countries and the British, American, French and Dutch imperialist bourgeoisie.

Internal contradictions are those at the very heart or core of a thing or event. External contradictions are contradictions between different things, processes and events.

Apart from distinguishing internal and external contradictions, we must also distinguish *between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions.*

Antagonistic and Non-Antagonistic Contradictions

The contradiction between a capitalist and a worker, who have opposite class interests, is one thing, but a contradiction between two workers, who have common class interests, is quite another. In the first case, irreconcilable class contradictions are involved, in the second, contradictions between fellow workers. The means by which these two different kinds of contradictions can be resolved also differ: in the first case the overthrow of capitalist rule, a proletarian revolution, is required. In the second, only comradely criticism and self-criticism. The first kind of contradiction is an *antagonistic* one, the second, a *non-antagonistic* one.

¹ *Ibid.*

Antagonistic contradictions appear wherever there is a struggle between irreconcilable class interests. In human society, antagonistic, i.e., irreconcilable contradictions take the form of conflicts between hostile social forces and classes—conflicts between landowners and peasants, bourgeois and workers, colonial peoples and imperialists. Because of this capitalist societies are being steadily eroded by their own antagonistic contradictions, both internal and external.

There is deep antagonism between the imperialist nations and those countries which have recently won their national independence or are still struggling for freedom. The peoples of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America have decided not to put up with imperialist plunder any longer and are struggling to liberate themselves. The antagonism between labour and capital, the contradictions between the people and the monopolies, the growing militarism, the disintegration of the colonial system, the contradictions between young national states and old colonial powers, and, most important of all, the rapidly growing world socialist system, are all undermining and destroying imperialism, so that it is now weakened and will, with time, die away. That is why present-day capitalism, torn apart by antagonistic contradictions that are leading to its death as a socio-economic system, presents such a grim and unhealthy face.

How are *antagonistic* contradictions resolved? Their development follows a regular pattern: they grow and sharpen until they result in open conflicts between opposing tendencies or aspects.

Antagonistic contradictions are irreconcilable contradictions between hostile forces, interests, aims, views, and always lead to conflicts and clashes; they are only overcome through bitter struggle, by social revolution. Such antagonisms cannot be resolved within the framework of the old social relations. These relations have therefore to be done away with by revolutionary means.

But this does not mean that the methods used to resolve antagonistic contradictions are always the same. They depend on the conditions in which such contradictions have to be resolved. Hence in varied historical conditions one can see various methods used. That is why those people are wrong who recognise only one method for the resolution of antagonistic contradictions, viz., the bloody strife

so beloved by the Maoists. The proletariat has never given up and will never need to give up peaceful means of resolving antagonistic contradictions—but neither can it give up non-peaceful means of struggle against imperialism if existing historical conditions demand it. This is a vital tenet of creative Marxism.

The fact that the means are various by which antagonistic contradictions are resolved is confirmed by the experience of those nations that have liberated themselves from imperialism. Some of them (Algeria, for example) won their national independence only after a long armed struggle against the colonialists. But such countries as India won it after a long and difficult struggle of the people that did not require resort to direct armed action.

Non-antagonistic contradictions differ from antagonistic ones in that they are contradictions between social forces and tendencies that have, at some point and for some time, common basic interests. Such, for example, are the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry and between the advanced and backward elements of a socialist society.

In the conditions of non-antagonistic contradictions typical of a socialist society, there is no tendency for the contradictions in it to become sharper and deeper and to develop into hostile irreconcilable contradictions. On the contrary. The contradiction between the working class and the peasantry, for example, tends to soften and become smoother because these two classes have basic interests in common. The means of resolving non-antagonistic contradictions differ from the means that must be used to resolve antagonistic ones in the same way that the contradictions themselves differ from each other. Non-antagonistic contradictions are not done away with by means of social revolutions or political upheavals, but by persuasion, education, criticism and self-criticism and other means prompted by the concrete situations met with in socialist and communist construction. Contradictions in a socialist society are remedied in due time but in any case can never develop into irreconcilable clashes of hostile forces and interests, for there exists a fundamental unity of interests throughout a socialist society.

We can see then that the absence of antagonistic interests and contradictions in a socialist society does not mean that it has no contradictions at all. But they are non-antagonistic

contradictions, contradictions that can be successfully resolved within the framework of the existing social system. And developing countries which have liberated themselves from colonialism can also resolve all their social contradictions only if they, too, take the non-capitalist path of development.

Thus, the law of the unity and struggle of opposites reveals the internal source of development. We may now ask: does development follow a direct line or is it a more complicated process involving the elimination of what is old and the emergence of something new?

We shall answer this question in the following section.

The Law of the Negation of the Negation

What Is Negation?

We know that death, destruction, decay, growing old, are everyday phenomena of life. Whatever natural phenomenon we care to take, it has a beginning, a period during which it develops, grows and gains strength, and finally a period when it grows old and outlives itself. Engels wrote in his book *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* that for dialectical philosophy "nothing is finite, absolute, sacred". Everything bears the stamp of inevitable negation, disappearance, and nothing is able to withstand this except the continuous process of emerging and dying away itself, and the endless advance from the lower to the higher.

This continuous process of renewal, the dying away of old phenomena and the emergence of new ones, is what we mean by negation here. The replacing of the old by the new means that the old is continually being negated.

The continual negation of what is old and its replacement by something new is obviously necessary if the world is not to die out altogether in time.

The Negation of the Negation

The new phenomena that appear in nature and society also go their natural way: they grow old with time and then more new phenomena and forces take their place. What was once new and had emerged as a negation of the old, is now itself negated by something new

and more vigorous. This is called the negation of the negation; and as the world possesses an infinite number of phenomena, the process of negation goes on without end and without interruption.

What does all this mean in practice? Consider this example: when a crop is grown it goes through a number of stages: the germination of the seeds, their growth and the ripening of the crop. The seeds cease to exist in the course of germination, i.e., they are negated. The plants that grow from them take their place. But then the plants flower, are fertilised, and finally bear fruit. Then the plant dies away. This is the second negation: it is the negation of a negation.

It is important to observe that the process of negation in this case involves not only the destruction of the seeds in the soil, but the emergence of new seeds, their number increasing ten- or twentyfold. This result indicates the significance of the law of the negation of the negation. What had we to begin with? Some seeds. What have we got as a result? More seeds. The process seems to have repeated itself, the "circuit" has been closed, as it were; we are back where we started. But obviously some development has also taken place: we had only a certain, relatively small, number of seeds to begin with, but now, at the end of the process—we have an entire crop. This is more than mere repetition. It is creation. The beginning of the process (the sowing of the seeds) and the end of the process (the harvest) constitute two qualitatively different stages of development: lower and higher stages. The development that occurs between them consequently does not lead us back to our starting-point. There is no standing still, but movement from the lower to the higher, from the simple to the more complex.

So the law of the negation of the negation states that in the course of development each higher stage negates or eliminates the previous stage by raising it a step higher while retaining all that is positive in it.

Dialectical Negation. The Criticism of Nihilism and Scepticism

Now not all kinds of negation lead to, or are a source of, development. Suppose that instead of planting the seed and creating the necessary conditions for it to grow, so that the seed is in this way negated dialectically, we simply destroy the

seed by mechanical means—by crushing it, say. This would be negation, too, but certainly not dialectical negation. It would not serve as a source of development. It would simply be the elimination of a phenomenon, no more. Lenin called such negation “futile”.

This kind of negation is often met with in life. There are people who negate everything, who are never pleased, who believe in nothing. Such people are called *nihilists*. There are also people who doubt everything, who mistrust everything. They are called *sceptics*. They negate too, but theirs is also “futile” sceptical negation. Lenin always came out against such “empty negation”, as he described it. *Negation is dialectical only when it serves as a source of development, when it retains and preserves all that is positive, healthy, valuable.* Negation should not be an end in itself. Negation for negation’s sake is nihilism. The whole point about dialectical negation is that it “overcomes” an earlier stage of development without rejecting it outright, without jettisoning what is good in it. Negation, if it is dialectical, retains and preserves everything positive and useful.

Nihilists and sceptics think and act differently. This is easy to see from the way bourgeois political figures reacted to the appearance of the socialist countries. Some of them came out openly against the October Revolution and for many years would not recognise the existence of Soviet power. Even today, sceptics still have doubts about the ability of the working people to build a new society of their own. They also doubt the ability of the nations that have liberated themselves from colonial oppression to build a new life.

When the Soviet Union undertook a nation-wide programme of industrialisation many politicians of the capitalist world said that it was a utopian scheme, a dream that would not come true. But the years have passed and both the nihilists and the sceptics have been put to shame. The Soviet Union is now, beyond a shadow of doubt, a powerful industrial nation.

The enemies of Marxism-Leninism often portray Communists as destroyers who are incapable of constructive, creative activity. But this is not true. Communists have destroyed the system of exploitation hated by the people in order to build a new social system—the most just system

possible—socialism and communism. For Communists negation is always linked with constructive creation. Communists are going down in history as the greatest constructors of all time, transforming and renewing the world. Communists negate all that is reactionary, all that has outlived itself. But they take care of everything of value.

For example, the Communist Party has always struggled against any neglect of world culture. Lenin showed that working-class culture cannot be created from scratch, from nothing. It can only arise as the natural outcome of previous cultural progress. Socialist culture negates, does away with bourgeois culture, but it does so in such a way that it retains all that is of value in it. That is why the actions of Mao Tse-tung’s group are anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist in attempting, in the course of “the cultural revolution”, to do away with the cultural inheritance of the Chinese nation and of all other nations of the world.

The Progressive Nature of Development

It must be clear from what has been said above that *development* that takes place by means of the negation of the negation is progressive in character. This is true both of progress in nature and in human society. In nature we can trace the progressive transition from the non-organic world to a higher stage, the organic world, and the evolution in the animal world from the first living beings to man. In human society we can see the road traversed from the primeval commune system to socialism, the first stage of communism. Development in science is likewise progressive. The knowledge that the savage possessed cannot be compared to the knowledge that modern science provides man with.

The same law-governed tendency is to be observed everywhere: *development is always progressive, from the lower to the higher, from the simple to the complex. That is the meaning of the law of the negation of the negation*, and it explains an important feature of the Marxist-Leninist world outlook, viz., *its essential optimism*. Optimism is a philosophical outlook that regards human life as following a road of progressive advance that takes it ever closer to perfection. Optimism derives directly from the dialectical understanding of negation, for those who reject negation for negation’s sake and who recognise that negation is the basis

of progress inevitably have an optimistic view on things—and this is precisely the Marxist world outlook.

Those who are guided by the idealist bourgeois outlook are full of pessimism; theirs is a gloomy, joyless view of life. Seeing the capitalist system in a state of decline, some bourgeois philosophers and sociologists present this decline as a crisis of human society in general. They speak about the coming “nuclear holocaust”, “the end of civilisation”, “the end of the world”, etc. This is the result of their denial of human progress, which has become fashionable in the West. But science and practice refute the pessimistic statements of bourgeois philosophers and prove that mankind’s progressive advance is an objective and unbreakable law.

The question now arises: since it is not unknown for reactionary forces to triumph in human society and progressive forces to be compelled to retreat, what is the real meaning of the idea that progressive advance is a characteristic feature of social development? For while defending the idea of the progressive character of social development, Marxism-Leninism is far from claiming that historical advance always follows a direct line. Movements backward occur in history, too. There are certain times when the forces of reaction can gain the upper hand in this or that country, or even a number of countries, as happened in nazi Germany in 1933, or in Greece when the “black colonels” seized power. But these steps backward are unable to change the general line of historical advance, which follows, on the whole, a rising, forward direction. The victory of reactionary forces is always only temporary. The defeat of German nazism by the Soviet Army in World War II illustrates this. The steady advance to victory of the progressive forces in society is a law of social development determining the direction of social progress. It is impossible to suppress indefinitely what is new and progressive in history. *The triumphing of what is new is as law-governed, necessary and inevitable as day following night.*

Having examined the basic laws of Marxist dialectics, we shall now go on to consider some concepts, called categories, that are also an essential part of the science of dialectics.

The Basic Categories of Marxist Dialectics

What Are Philosophical Categories?

Man cannot do without general concepts. Biologists, for example, study living organisms, consisting of cells. They are inevitably faced with the question: what are the properties of *all* cells in general, what have they got in common? Biologists must, therefore, create a general scientific concept of a cell. The concept “cell” is a general one because it concentrates all the essential features characterising not only every cell in a given living organism, but the cells of all organisms. It is the same with physics. For example, physics studies the various kinds of energy and then supplies a general definition or concept of what energy is.

Such general concepts, which express the most general features and aspects of phenomena and things, are called categories. Each science creates its own scientific concepts or categories.

But are the categories established by particular sciences sufficient for us? Each science studies general concepts within its own framework. But we already know that there are also certain very general properties that all things and phenomena in the world have in common—motion, contradiction, matter, for example. What science formulates these *very general* concepts here? Physics is unable to do it: it confines itself to the framework of the branch of knowledge it deals with. And this is also the case with chemistry, biology and all other sciences.

The most general properties of things are reflected in *philosophical categories* such as “matter”, “motion”, “space”, “time”, “quality”, “quantity”, “contradiction” and others.

Philosophical categories are the most general concepts. We can see, therefore, that we cannot limit ourselves to the categories worked out by physics or chemistry, or even those of all the particular sciences taken together. Philosophical categories or concepts are only created in the course of learning to reflect the most general properties of phenomena. We shall now look at these.

Cause and Effect

We constantly need to ask ourselves what the cause of this or that phenomenon is in our daily life and work. It is one of those questions that help us to understand the inner nature

of the things going on around us, to get to their root. The ancient Greek philosopher Democritus wrote, not without good reason: "I would rather discover the real cause of at least one thing than become the King of Persia."

What, then, are "cause" and "effect" as philosophical categories? We know from experience that nothing can be got from nothing. Any phenomenon has its own source, something that generates it. This is what is called its "cause". *A cause is something that brings into being or makes happen another thing or phenomenon. And what a cause brings about is called its effect or action.*

One must know the difference between a *cause* and a mere *pretext*. What is a pretext? This is best illustrated by a historical example. About 130 years ago a certain French consul in Algeria behaved in such an insolent manner that the Bey of Algiers could stand it no longer and slapped the consul on the face with his fan. This was not in conformity with diplomatic etiquette, of course, but was not serious enough to be a cause for war. But the French colonisers were on the look out for any opportunity to provoke an incident that would enable them to send in troops to enslave Algeria. Thus an event that was insignificant in itself became an event of grave importance in the life of the Algerians. At the same time it is clear that it was a mere pretext. The real cause of French intervention was different: it was the fact that the French colonisers had long been coveting the wealth of Algeria and seized their chance to appropriate it by force. If the incident of the fan had never occurred they would have found another pretext for grabbing the "precious pearl", as Algeria used to be called in those days.

A pretext thus differs from a cause. A cause brings other things about, generates them, makes this or that phenomenon happen. *A pretext is an excuse only, a circumstance that is used as grounds for certain actions.* But a pretext may appear on the surface to be a real cause of events. Moreover, a pretext is frequently used as a screen to cover up the real causes of events. Those who stand to profit from concealing a real state of affairs present a mere pretext as a cause.

So the philosophical categories "cause" and "effect" reflect the connection between two things or phenomena where one, called a cause, unfailingly brings about the other, called an effect. Such a connection or relationship is termed a causal relationship.

Causality

Causal relationships exist between things that really exist. *The objective nature of relationships of cause and effect is their most important feature.* Idealists, of course, deny the objectivity of relations of cause and effect, asserting that the concept of causality is an invention of man designed to make his thinking more "economical" and "convenient" and to introduce order into "the chaos of natural phenomena". The subjective idealist Berkeley tried to refute the entire idea of causality, and Hume and Kant later made similar attempts, both rejecting the *objective* existence of causality.

Why do bourgeois philosophers attack the materialist principle of causality? Because it leads inexorably to atheistic, scientific conclusions. If everything in the world results from natural causes, then there is no place for a supreme, immaterial force in the system of nature.

Why are idealists wrong in rejecting the objective nature of causality? Let us examine their arguments in greater detail to see why. They reason as follows: A lighted candle burns one every time one touches it. But it does not follow from this that it will necessarily always burn one in the future, too. Even though it burns one a million times, it may yet not do so the million and first time; i.e., the fact that the candle has always been associated with one's burns before does not mean that the candle is the cause of the burns.

These two phenomena, the burning candle and the burns, are supposed merely to exist side by side, and one is not to conclude from this that there is any relationship of causality between them. Now this argument is false because we determine what is the cause of a thing not on the basis of a few simple observations alone, but on the basis of wide experience, of practice, which not only convinces us that fire always burns but also leads us to an understanding of why this is so.

The next thing to be said about causality is that it is a general feature of the world; the law of causality is a general law of the material world. There are no phenomena that do not follow this law, i.e., that are not caused and do not have a material origin. One's own personal experience suggests that there are no exceptions to the law of causality. When anything happens we always look for

its cause. Everyone believes that there is no smoke without fire!

The third thing to be noted about causal relationships is that they are *active* ones. A cause, clearly, *bringing about* an effect, is an active force. But an effect too takes more than a passive part in a given process of development. If the sun's rays fall on a line of wet clothes this can have only one effect—the clothes dry. If they fall on wax, this can only lead to one other result: the wax melts. If solar energy falls on a plant yet other results follow: vital processes essential to the life of the plant take place under its influence. It follows then that a cause only produces a certain effect in relationship with other things and phenomena. That is why we speak of relations of cause and effect.

To sum up: *causal connections are objective, general and active relationships.*

The Interaction of Cause and Effect

Cause and effect *interact*. For example, matter generates consciousness but the latter, in its

turn, influences matter by entering into an active relation with it. *The interaction of cause and effect consists in the mutual dependence of cause and effect and their influence one upon the other.*

But this does not mean that cause and effect influence one another to equal degrees, for clearly it is the cause that always plays the decisive role in any causal relationship, the effect playing a secondary though important part. It is very necessary to understand this. It makes a difference what should be regarded as the cause in any given cause-effect relationship, and what the effect—in the same way as it is not a matter of indifference to science whether matter determines consciousness or vice versa. Equally, however, the influence of effect on cause cannot be neglected.

No relation of cause and effect should be viewed in isolation, but rather in conjunction with the things or phenomena that brought it into being and the things it itself brings into being. That is, every causal relationship must be seen itself as both effect and cause. It is the cause of what it results in, but the effect of whatever brought it about. In this way we can see that cause and effect are not isolated at opposite poles. They are the links in a complex chain of mutually interacting things and phenomena. Schools are needed to make people literate and educated, and a literate, educated

person can teach others who are still illiterate. This clearly illustrates the interaction, the mutual dependence and mutual influence, of cause and effect.

The concept of interaction also has another meaning. The following example will make this clear. A field, after it has been ploughed, yields a larger crop than it would otherwise, and with a larger crop more food can be produced for consumption. It follows that a well-ploughed field is an effect in relation to the plough, and a cause in relation to the larger crop; while the latter, in its turn, is a cause of the people's greater welfare. Here we have a real chain of cause and effect relations, and in this connection we may say according to Engels that *in the world there is universal interaction which is reflected in the continuous interchanging of cause and effect; what here or now is cause, shall become there or then effect and vice versa.*

In complex chains of cause-effect relations it is very important to single out the major, basic links. For example, when we analyse the chains of cause and effect leading to the riots in the coloured ghettos of the USA, we must recognise that the deepest cause of the people's riots, the basic link in every chain, is the terrible conditions of life in the ghettos. Disgusting housing conditions, race discrimination, the trampling on human dignity, mass unemployment—these are the things that make people lose their temper. They find they can tolerate no longer a situation in which it is an easy matter for a racist to take away a man's life simply because he has a dark skin.

The Marxist-Leninist doctrine of causality is very important for demolishing many kinds of superstition. Only when a man understands the real causes of things, as against imagined ones, does his fear of them disappear and with it his superstitions. Here is an example. Some people who were once travelling in Africa claimed they had seen an enormous garden of paradise "in the sky". They also said they had sometimes seen a "ghost" ship appear in the sky, with ghost sailors. Then everything would vanish. What could it be? So long as the cause of these phenomena was unknown there was a great deal of speculation about them. But eventually scientists unravelled the mystery. It was discovered that the air in hot countries becomes more dense in calm weather and forms, as it were, a gigantic mirror. This "mirror" reflects distant things on land or water—gardens

and boats in this case. What had been seen were not gardens of paradise and a "ghost" ship but really existing gardens and a real ship reflected in the air. And of course it was sufficient to discover the cause of these phenomena to drive away all superstitious fear of them.

Thus, knowledge of causes frees man from superstition.

Necessity and Chance

What are necessity and chance?

Consider the following. There was a revolution in Germany in

November 1918. But it was defeated because of the treachery of the Social-Democrats. In this connection the newspaper *Rote Fahne* (*Red Banner*) printed on January 15, 1919 an article by the German working-class leader Karl Liebknecht. Addressing himself to those who took part in the revolution he wrote: "Be calm! We are still here, we are not defeated. And if they put us in chains again, still we are here to stay! And we will win. . . . Our programme will live whether or not we survive to see our goal reached; it will triumph in the world of liberated mankind—in spite of everything!!"

These passionate lines of the German working-class leader express wonderfully the idea of necessity, of the inevitability of the victory of socialism and communism—"in spite of everything!!" What is the source of this confidence which so terrifies the enemies of communism? Knowledge of laws. We have no doubt, have we, that each night will last but a few hours and be followed by sunrise and morning. We have no doubt either that no matter how long and severe the winter is, spring will follow. Our confidence in this is based on practice, on many centuries of experience, on knowledge of the laws of nature and society. It is the rotation of the Earth about its axis that causes the alternation of night and day, and its revolution around the Sun that causes the succession of the seasons. Communist victories result from the internal contradictions corroding capitalism, leading it to an inevitable death and its replacement by socialism. It is therefore quite certain that socialism will replace capitalism on a universal scale. This is an objective law of social progress, and imperialism is helpless to put a stop to the irresistible process of liberation.

Now the philosophical category of necessity denotes such constant interconnections between phenomena. The necessary is not what might or might not be, but that which

is bound to be because it is produced by deep causes arising from the internal nature of things.

But since everything in the world happens of necessity, is any room left for chance? Can accidents occur? A man gets involved in a car crash which puts an end to his life. What makes us say that such events are accidents? Compare a car crash with the kind of event we mentioned above and which we called necessary. While a necessary phenomenon is prepared for and caused by the entire course of preceding development and it therefore cannot help but happen (remember "in spite of everything!!"), we regard chance occurrences on the contrary as individual, passing events that are far from inevitable. A chance occurrence may or may not take place. Did the man's whole life lead inevitably to his death in a car crash? Obviously not. One cannot call such occurrences necessary events. They are accidents.

When the Soviet Union blazed the trail to space in October 1957 with the launching of the first sputnik, some Western bourgeois propagandists alleged that it was only a chance and isolated success. Was this so? Clearly not. This success had been made possible by all the achievements of socialism and the constant attention science receives from the Party and the Government. The flight of the sputnik was proof that we had an advanced engineering and had made considerable advances in mathematics, physics, chemistry and metallurgy. So what sort of chance was it?

In order, therefore, to know whether this or that thing or event is accidental or necessary it is first essential to establish whether it is a product of internal or of external causes. Is it necessary or accidental that a violent storm destroys a certain orchard, say? The storm will follow a course of its own, of course. But does this lead inevitably to the destruction of the orchard? No storm develops without a cause. But it is an *external*, passing cause relative to the *given* orchard, a cause that does not derive from anything to do with the orchard. Hence the destruction of the orchard is an accident, not in the least *necessary*.

One can see that chance and necessity are opposites. But can one conclude from this that chance and necessity have nothing in common?

**What Is There in Common
Between Necessity
and Chance?**

Metaphysicians argue that what is necessary cannot be accidental and what is accidental cannot be

necessary. Ordinary common sense seems to suggest this too. But is this true? The answer is: no, *there is much in common between chance and necessity. In fact, they are closely linked.* One cannot isolate one from the other. Take the following example: a few years ago the news flashed round the world that hydrogen bombs had fallen on Spanish soil from an American bomber that had caught fire. The "accident" brought total disaster to the farmers and fishermen of southern Spain. But when we look more deeply into this event we see that it was more than a simple accident. Round-the-clock flights of American bombers with nuclear weapons on board made it inevitable that such a disaster would occur at some time or other. And it is not by chance that these accidents happen repeatedly and frequently. It is in the essential nature of flying nuclear carriers of death to threaten the life of people.

One must look behind a seeming accident to see if there is not some law-governed necessity which provides the ground for it. There are in fact no accidental events either in nature or society that do not conceal some necessary, law-governed process, some cause that brought it about. That is why Engels said that *chance is a form of manifestation, and the complement of, necessity.* It is necessity that determines the general trend of development in things. But chance complements necessity by a number of original features and peculiarities that create the form in which necessity is manifested.

Science, because it is called upon to lay bare the main trends of development in phenomena, focuses its attention on disclosing necessity, on revealing law-governed regularity, and cannot therefore be satisfied with chance discoveries alone. A scientist must carry out his research in such a way as to avoid dependence on chance, so that he may work towards his desired goal with confidence and knowledge and avoid groping in the dark. Every geologist, for example, is aware that many of the discoveries of his science would not have been made if prospectors had prospected haphazardly. To make geological prospecting a success it is necessary to study the laws governing the structure of the Earth's crust and to make them serve as a guide to practical work. Their dependence on "luck" is eliminated and prospectors are led surely to success.

**The Struggle Against
Undesirable Chance Events**

Many chance events are favourable to man, but there are also those that lead to grief and suffering: droughts, floods and other natural disasters. Science, by basing itself on the study of necessity, of law-governed regularity, strives to restrict their effect. "But is this possible?" one may ask. "Chance is an objective category, isn't it? How can one restrict the effect of something that does not depend on man?" Of course, we cannot always succeed in eliminating chance but we can and must eliminate its undesirable effects where possible. It is as yet impossible to eliminate the freaks of weather that cause heavy damage. But it is possible to restrict the effect of undesirable chance insofar as it depends on the conditions in which it is manifested, i.e., we can help create conditions in which the harmful effects of chance are minimised or even ruled out.

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government in their practical work do their best not to let any accidents catch us unawares. This applies both to the nation's internal life and the international situation of our country. The Soviet Government has repeatedly warned that a world war might flare up from some ridiculous accident such as a fault in an H-bomber's controls or some disorder of the pilot's mind arising in flight. The issue of war or peace must not be submitted to blind chance. Conditions should be created which would necessarily rule out a thermonuclear war as well as any accident which might cause it. The non-proliferation treaty is an important step in this direction. That is why all nations the world over welcome it.

Thus, *man is not impotent in the face of undesirable accidents. He has the power to overcome or minimise their destructive force.*

Possibility and Reality

We often have to face the question in practical work of whether this or that plan, goal or ambition is realisable. Things that can be realised, that can be made reality, are said to be *possible.*

After the Soviet scientist Tsiolkovsky worked out the theory of space travel, and rockets had been built, there arose the possibility of flights to the Moon. Then when a Soviet rocket made a soft landing on the Moon this possibility became reality.

So the possible is that which is not yet real, but which has

every reason to become real. The real is that which has already been realised, brought into existence by objective laws, by natural necessity.

What is possible, and what real, are entirely determined by the actual conditions of life. What may or may not happen is not decided by human will, but by the laws, conditions and causes that obtain in actual life. Take this example: American bourgeois propaganda claims that America is the land of "equal opportunities". Everyone has "the same chance" to get rich. But how far from the truth this is! The experience of many generations shows that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. The laws of capitalist reality produce this result, and there can be no alternative. It is sufficient to look at what is happening in the Republic of South Africa, where a coloured person has no possibilities or rights even to an ordinary human existence, to see that bourgeois propaganda about "equal opportunities" in the capitalist "paradise" is phoney.

Consider another, different example. Is it possible to perform miracles? A miracle is something that contradicts natural laws and that cannot be explained by them. But we know that not a single phenomenon or event can take place against natural or social laws. Therefore to believe in the possibility of miracles is to believe in the impossible.

Only that which corresponds to the laws of nature and society is possible. That which is real also conforms to natural and social laws. Both the possible and the real are objective categories because they reflect the properties of things and phenomena that exist outside and independently of our consciousness.

But possibility must not be confused with reality. Something that is possible is considered a *possibility* precisely because *it is not yet a reality*. A medical student has the possibility of becoming a doctor. But if he thinks, for this reason, that he has no need to improve his knowledge and practical skill, he will never actually become a doctor. Wishful thinking, to take the possible for the real, is a serious mistake.

Turning Possibility into Reality

What is required to make the possible real? We know that the right conditions are needed for a possibility to arise. But when a possibility has matured, when the conditions are ripe, is this sufficient, of itself, to turn the

possibility into reality? No, it is not. As far as social life is concerned, people have still to put in a lot of work to turn possibilities into realities.

In order to make any possibility a reality in social life, it is necessary to have a) certain objective conditions, and b) sufficient human activity to generate corresponding subjective conditions. When the conditions mature for resolute action, then is the time to strain every muscle to turn a possibility into a reality.

Who does not know Lenin's fiery words on the eve of the October Revolution when he said that it was impossible to wait for a moment longer, that rapid and resolute action was imperative—"delay means death!" The objective conditions for the Russian working class to take power were there, and everything depended only on its ability to take advantage of them, i.e., on the organisation and combat readiness of the Bolsheviks and the people.

There are cases in history when irresoluteness and mistakes committed in the course of a revolution have led to its defeat. Such was the experience of the Paris Commune. Lenin wrote that it is not enough to advance the right slogans, to set tasks correctly; it is also necessary for the masses to be ready to fight for the realisation of these tasks and for them to be organised for the practical purpose of realising them. In short, not only the objective but also the subjective conditions are required to realise possibilities, to make them reality. It is, for example, thanks to the everyday work of the Soviet people and its vanguard, the Communist Party, that the possibility of building a communist society is being realised.

Form and Content

What Are Form and Content?

Every given thing, phenomenon or process has certain *specific, essential features which together go to make up its content*. The main content of the present age is the transition from capitalism to socialism, a process begun by the October Socialist Revolution. It is this that determines the essence and character of the present stage of world history. Or take any work of art: the content of the work is the essence of the social relations expressed in its subject.

Now is it possible for the content of anything to exist by itself? Let us think over this. Imagine that in front of us is a building site on which are all the parts, the "content", of a house. Can we really say that we have a house before us? Clearly not. The house will be there only when all its parts have been properly assembled and it assumes the shape and form of a house.

The content must, as it were, be moulded into a certain form. It cannot exist apart from the form corresponding to it. Every thing and phenomenon has both a content and a form.

The form of a thing is the internal organisation or structure of its content, of that which makes its existence possible.

Form and content exist in unity. They are always closely linked. The question now is: which plays the leading part in this unity?

It is not difficult to see that the form of a thing or phenomenon depends on its content. One can see this from the following example. The new tasks of agricultural development in many of the recently liberated countries are being solved by creating various forms of farmers' co-operatives and mutual aid associations for the growing and marketing of produce and for the supply of equipment, etc. But the particular form of co-operation must correspond to the objective conditions of a given country. If this requirement of materialist dialectics is ignored, then mistakes and failures result. When Mao Tse-tung's group, without considering the content, i.e., the level of development of agricultural production in China, introduced the Commune system as a form of organisation, despite all the opposition to it, this threatened not only national food supplies but socialism itself.

The decisive role of content follows from the fact that form is determined by the *unity*, or structure or arrangement of the parts of a thing, for this *unity* of the parts of a thing is its content. One may say that content gives birth to the form without which it is unthinkable. That is why *form is not something external in relation to content but is actually part of content insofar as it represents the latter's internal structure.*

The Contradiction Between Form and Content

Now if form depends on content and exists in unity with it, how can it happen, as it often does, that the form of a thing or process can begin to act as a

brake on its forward motion or development, i.e., on the development of its content? This is not so difficult to understand if we bear in mind the fact that because everything is in a state of motion or development, content never stands still, it is never exactly the same from one moment to another. Form develops along with content, too, but it is more rigid, less flexible, less mobile. It tends to lag behind content. Form and content are opposites, so eventually their opposition develops into a contradiction, requiring resolution.

New inventions are first cast in old forms. The first car was an exact copy of a horse-drawn carriage. The first sewing machine had "mechanical hands". But there comes a time when an old form holds back, or prevents altogether, the further development of new qualities, new content. The old design of cars limited their speed before they were streamlined.

We also meet the need to resolve growing contradictions between form and content in social life. For example, the tribal form of government came into conflict with the tasks of building a new life in some of the independent African countries. Its replacement by another form was required: representative government by political parties or local elected bodies.

How are conflicts between form and content resolved? In social life the solutions vary. They may be peaceful or non-peaceful, depending on conditions and time. Under socialism conflicts between form and content are settled by the gradual transformation of old form on Party and Government initiative. But it is only possible to do this when the mutual relationship between form and content is correctly understood. In particular, it is necessary to bear in mind that the part played by form is not always understood correctly. Overestimating its role can be especially harmful, an error known as *formalism*.

You may know the saying: "a court is a court". This reflects an incorrect view of the nature of the court procedure of bourgeois criminal law. According to this view, a court should be guided less by the facts of a case than by the need for strict formal observance of court procedure.

Formalism frequently manifests itself in art when an artist cannot distinguish content from form. Some artists paint pictures that have no content. They merely splash paint on a canvas at random and then declare the picture ready for

exhibition. This extreme formalism is so-called abstract art. Real art, however, calls for truly artistic forms that conform fully to their content.

Formalism manifests itself not only in the arts, but also in the attitude of some people to other people and to work. Formalism is always harmful wherever it arises. A formalist is incapable of seeing a living man, his needs and requirements. A formalist is, in practice, the same thing as a bureaucrat who nips in the bud and ruins every good and fruitful initiative. That is why we must fight formalism.

We have now looked at the basic laws and categories of materialist dialectics and it will be convenient at this point to go on to examine the categories of essence and appearance in connection with the theory of knowledge of dialectical materialism.

CHAPTER SIX

THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Essence and Appearance

Science and practice show that all things and processes have two sides: an *internal* one, hidden from us, and an *external* one, available to our perception. When we first become acquainted with things by means of the sense organs we perceive only certain of their immediately apparent features, only the external relations between them. We see only what meets the eye. In other words, we perceive only the world of appearances.

But neither science nor everyday practice can confine themselves to the mere perception and description of individual phenomena, facts and events as they appear on the surface, but must aim at the discovery of the essential, permanent laws of phenomena, their causal dependence, their *internal relations*. The laws of nature and society are not perceived directly because they do not coincide with the appearances of things. To reveal the laws governing the development of processes it is necessary to acquire a knowledge of their internal nature, i.e., to penetrate behind their appearance to what is essential and basic in them, to grasp what is most characteristic of a given class of phenomena.

The essence of any phenomenon reflects the internal connections of the objective world and this provides the basis for the infinite variety of phenomena. Appearance is the

manifestation of essence, its external form. Essence does not, however, come before appearance and cannot exist independently of it. Essence and appearance reflect different sides of but one and the same reality: essence is its internal and basic aspects, and appearance, its external and immediately apparent ones.

The task of science is to reveal essence through the study of appearance. Let us take, for instance, the exploitation of the working class under capitalism. It is hidden, camouflaged. On the surface the relations between worker and capitalist appear to be those of free commodity owners with equal rights. It may even seem that an ordinary bargain is struck between worker and capitalist, the worker doing the work and the capitalist paying him for it in full.

It took the genius of Marx to bring out the essence of exploitation and the true basis of the relationship between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Marx's *Capital* delves deeply into the essence of the capitalist mode of production.

Marx proved that the capitalist does not pay for the whole of the work done by the hired worker but only for a part of it. The unpaid part of the work is the surplus value which the capitalist appropriates. In short, the capitalist exploits the worker. That is why poverty, hunger and unemployment exist side by side with wealth and extravagance under capitalism.

The essence of events in the life of society is frequently deliberately distorted or camouflaged by reactionary forces that have outlived themselves. Imperialists offer "aid" to nations that have liberated themselves from colonial oppression. But in the guise of giving aid the imperialists are striving to enslave the developing nations once again by economic means. The essence of imperialism is deliberately distorted: it is made to appear as a "friend" of the developing nations.

The Criticism of Agnosticism

Scientific analysis always enables us to lay bare and study the real essence of things and events. But there are philosophers who deny that it is possible to cognise the real world. They claim that the world is, in principle, unknowable. They are called agnostics.¹ Hume and Kant

¹ Lenin defined this trend in philosophy as follows: "Agnostic is a Greek word: *a* in Greek means "no", *gnosis* "knowledge". The agnostic says: *I do not know* if there is an objective reality which is reflected,

were the most outstanding representatives of agnosticism. Kant said that all things are hidden from us; that they are, as it were, locked away in their shells and that it is impossible to know their internal content, their essence. One can never penetrate to "things-in-themselves". Only their external form is knowable. This philosophy of agnosticism is widely propagated in the capitalist world.

One may ask why such views exist. Knowledge, of course, sheds light, but light is not to the liking of everyone. When the world is lit up by the powerful torch of the human mind, many people can see and do many things they could not before, and this is precisely what all those who sow darkness, the oppressors of peoples, are afraid of. Because a man who has freed himself from social, political and other forms of slavery, can, guided by knowledge, build a life of his own. It is no accident that the people who have thrown off the colonial yoke, who have driven away the French, British, American and other oppressors, have always begun at once to abolish illiteracy. They crave for knowledge. And this craving frightens reactionaries, imperialists, oppressors—whose interests are served by agnostics, who reject the possibility of knowing the world, whether they are aware of it or not.

But science and practice refute the philosophy of agnosticism. Engels, in his work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, wrote that practice, experiment and industry provide the most complete possible refutation of agnosticism. We can prove the correctness of our understanding of nature's phenomena by reproducing, i.e., recreating, them. Kant's elusive "things-in-themselves" have been laid bare by science and life itself. Vitamins, for instance, which at one time could be obtained only from plants, used to be a kind of "thing-in-itself". But now, when the chemical industry produces them in abundance, this "thing-in-itself" has become a "thing-for-us", i.e., its nature has been revealed, we have cognised it. And when we remember that science has discovered many millions of such organic compounds, we realise that millions of "things-in-themselves" have been uncovered and cognised. Thus, agnosticism falls

imaged by our sensations: I declare there is no way of knowing this. . . ." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 128.)

to the ground. The question of whether or not the world is knowable is solved by practical experience.

In the course of work, of productive activity, man penetrates into the essence of the world around him and learns to understand it.

The Stages of Cognition

How, precisely, does man cognise the world? Imagine that you have been sent to study the work of a co-operative farm. What do you begin with? With collecting facts, the number of workers in the co-operative, the number of machines, how they are employed, the size of the harvest, etc. And then, later, you draw definite conclusions about the life and work of the co-operative. We go about any investigation in the same way. All those who work on the discovery and cognition of nature's laws *first accumulate facts*, either by experiment or by simple observation, but always by means of the sense organs. *This is the first stage of cognition—sense-perception or living perception.*

When a sufficient number of facts has been accumulated, the mind analyses them, compares them, contrasts them and comes to certain conclusions. *This is the second stage of cognition—logical cognition or abstract logical thought.* But both the first and the second stages are based on practical work. It is from practice that we take the facts we analyse. And, vice versa, it is in practical life that we need the knowledge we derive from these facts. We need them, say, to improve the work of the co-operative we studied and to increase the size of its crops.

So the acquisition of knowledge takes place in two stages, sensory and logical, both of which are based on practice. "From living perception to abstract thought, and from this to practice—such is the dialectical path of the cognition of truth, of the cognition of objective reality,"¹ Lenin wrote.

The annals of science contain the following incident. A sick woman was once brought to a clinic with all her main sense organs paralysed: she could not see or hear, and had no sense of smell or taste. She only retained the sense of touch in one hand. This was the only channel through which she could obtain knowledge of the outside world. But how inadequate it was. The patient was unconscious most of the time. What does this prove? It proves that our sense organs

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 171.

are the means, the channels, through which we obtain knowledge of the world about us. Sensation is produced by the external world affecting our sense organs. And we can know nothing of the world except through our sensations.

In the event of our losing one sense organ, the others can to some extent make up for it. But if we are deprived of all our sense organs, we become helpless. We can simply know nothing about the world. But what is sensation?

Everyone feels a sensation of warmth when warm water touches his hand. When we look at something red, we have a corresponding sensation of redness. An apple with all its properties exists objectively, independently of us. But when it affects our sense organs it evokes sensations—of colour, smell, taste, etc. *Sensations are the effect of things, of the external world, on our sense organs.* That is why they give us true, correct knowledge about the world around us.

But what is the proof that our sensations give us correct knowledge of the world? Practice proves this. If our sensations did not provide us with correct information we would be unable to make practical use of the things to be found in the external world. For example, substances which, according to our senses, are good for the body, would have turned out to be harmful to it, and vice versa.

The eye takes, as it were, a photographic picture of the things we look at. If an object moves, the image of a moving object appears on the retina. If an object is at rest then the image of an object at rest appears. The eye reflects and copies everything that happens in the world. The other sense organs work in this way, too. It follows that the agnostics are wrong in claiming that our sense organs are unreliable witnesses of the happenings of the world.

But great as the importance of sensations may be, it is impossible to know the world *only* by their means. Man goes beyond simple perception by *thinking*, penetrating to places that no perception can reach. *Man, with the aid of thought, can come to know the internal relations of things and phenomena, i.e., the laws of their development.* And while sensations link man directly with existing things, his mind reflects the external world *indirectly*. This means that the laws of logic are based on indirect information. In order to find out, for example, whether a man could make a journey in a space ship without endangering his life, experiments on animals had first to be carried out. From the data so obtained

Soviet scientists drew conclusions about the safety of space flight for man. The correctness of their conclusions was fully confirmed by the feats of the first spacemen.

We need facts in order to draw conclusions from them.

Facts are the air that the scientist breathes. Sensations provide facts. The mind then generalises them, and draws definite logical conclusions from them.

Without human reason there would only be scattered piles of particular, disconnected facts. But in a generalised or summarised form facts furnish us with deep knowledge of the causes and the law-governed regularities of the things and events happening around us—in short, they lead us to the *essence* of phenomena. The mind works by selecting only the *essential* features of perceived phenomena. That is why intense logical thought contains only what is essentially relevant.

The senses supply the mind with data, facts. The mind draws conclusions, generalises on their basis. The brain, the mind, cannot work without the senses. But neither can there be any sensual cognition without the brain's regulating activity. *Sensual and rational cognition are the two stages in the unified, indivisible process of cognition based on practice.* These two stages cannot be separated one from the other, although the history of philosophy has witnessed repeated attempts to do so. Some philosophers, called *rationalists*, have said that man can understand the world with the aid of the mind alone. Rationalists are opposed to the so-called *sensualists* or *empiricists* (from the Latin *sensus*—"sense" and the Greek *empiria*—"experience"), who think that people acquire all their knowledge with the aid of their sense organs, through sensual experience alone, and that the mind adds nothing new to the data provided by the senses.

But both rationalists and empiricists give a one-sided solution to the problem of the relative roles of the mind and the senses in cognition. For one should not overestimate the role of the one at the expense of the other.

Both sensual and rational knowledge is equally important and inseparable in the process of cognition.

The Role of Practice in Cognition

It was with *work, practical activity*, that human society began. Everyday practical experience taught man everything he needed to know in his struggle for survival. Our own experience of life confirms this.

Man is born without knowledge. He acquires it as he meets and comes to terms with the various phenomena of the world in the course of practical experience. When a child tries to touch fire he is not yet aware of its properties; but he quickly learns them by experience, and he then makes no further attempt to approach fire. He acquires a certain amount of knowledge.

But by practice is meant something more than the personal experience of each man. This was the error of pre-Marxist materialism, which meant by practice only the private practical experience of individual men. The world seemed to them to consist of so many "Robinson Crusoes", isolated, separated from one another, and hence compelled to cognise the world entirely by their own efforts. This is not how things really stand. In practice we make use not only of what we directly experience ourselves but of other people's experience, too, the experience of the whole of mankind. That is why Marxism speaks of *social practice*. *By this is meant all human practice in the course of which men influence the material world and transform it in production, in scientific experiment, in class struggle, etc.*

The importance of practice in the process of cognition consists in the fact that in the final analysis all knowledge derives from human social practical activity. The history of science provides good examples of this. How did geometry come into being? From times immemorial people who worked on the land or built dwellings had to measure plots of land of various sizes and shapes. Gradually they discovered that there was a method of measuring that was good for any plot if it had a definite shape: if it was a triangle or a trapezium, etc. This is how any science emerges, as the generalisation of practical experience. Certain phenomena and events take place. The practical study of them provides the basis for the generalisation that produces theory, science. *Scientific knowledge, theory, is based entirely on practice.*

You may now ask: does not all this mean that man is a passive, inert creature who blindly allows the external world to affect him one-sidedly? Pre-Marxian metaphysical materialists interpreted practical experience only as the external world affecting man. *But Marx interpreted practice much more deeply: as both the influence of the external world on man and the influence of man on the external world.*

Practice is not only the basis but also the motive force of knowledge. If life, say, sets agricultural scientists the task of discovering the best way to cultivate a certain soil, then this practical task greatly stimulates the development of agricultural science. In solving practical tasks science has to make ever more fresh generalisations, so enriching and advancing theory. This is what Lenin meant when he said that practice is above theoretical knowledge, and that the theory of knowledge must proceed from a correct practical approach to reality.

The question now arises: does this diminish the significance of theory, of science, in production and in the revolutionary activities of man? Revisionists, enemies of Marxism-Leninism, try to prove that Marxists-Leninists, in speaking of the primary significance of practice in cognition, reject theory. They say Marxists are "narrow practicalists" and "neglect" theory. But this is absolutely untrue. Marxist-Leninist Parties have always regarded theory as being of the utmost importance. Lenin himself constantly stressed that theory illumines the road of practice.

It is thus alien to dialectical materialism to treat either practice or theory alone as important. There is a dialectical unity between theory and practice. It is impossible to separate them. Theory is born of practice. But theory also serves and enriches practice. There can be no theory without practice. Neither can there be any revolutionary practice without a revolutionary theory. Theory is dead without practice. Worse, theory becomes a useless encumbrance in the absence of practice. But practice is blind without scientific theory because, of itself, it lacks perspective. Without theory it is impossible to run a factory or a co-operative, let alone a nation, in a skilled way.

The indissoluble unity of theory and practice is the cornerstone of the Marxist theory of knowledge.

What Is Truth?

How can we be certain that the knowledge we acquire in the course of cognition is true knowledge?

We know from everyday life that a statement is considered true only if it corresponds to what is actually the case. All statements that are in conformity with reality are true. Truth is the opposite of untruth, or mistaken belief. Our statements are untrue when they assert something that is not so in real life. Marxism-Leninism proceeds from the

idea that truth is that which correctly reflects reality. If our knowledge corresponds to the objective world, then it is true. This is what Marxist philosophy means by objective truth.

Lenin, in his work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, calls *objective truth that part of the content of human ideas which does not depend upon the subject, does not depend upon man and mankind.* What does this mean? It means that there can be no truth without man. Yet that which constitutes the content of truth does not depend on man. Truth is provided by the world around man. It is not human desires that determine the truthfulness of statements and opinions, but their conformity to objective reality, to something that exists in the world independently of man. That is why Lenin says that *objective truth is independent of man and mankind, in other words, it is independent of man's arbitrary will. Man does not create truth but reflects it in accordance with what exists in the objective world.*

What guarantee does man have that his knowledge is true, that it conforms to reality? In other words, what is the criterion, the yardstick, of the truth of our knowledge? *Social practice* is this criterion. Man's practical work is the only correct means of checking the truth or untruth of our beliefs, theories and hypotheses. Marx wrote: "Man must prove the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice."¹

When the knowledge we acquire from the study of reality is confirmed by practice, then we can be sure it is true, and need not doubt it. Vice versa, hypotheses and beliefs that cannot stand up to life, to practice, are false. For example, no matter how often or for how long Labourites and all other kinds of revisionists persist in maintaining the possibility of making a "gradual" transition from bourgeois society to socialist society without revolution, they will never succeed in doing this, just as they have not done so to date. Their theory is false, quite simply. And false theories do not stand the test of time. Practice is everywhere and always the touchstone of theory. Theory that is confirmed by practice corresponds to reality, and hence can always be put into practice.

It is necessary now to deal with the question of *how* we

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1968, p. 665.

cognise objective truth: can we learn the whole truth all at once, immediately, or only gradually, bit by bit? This question involves the problem of the relation between absolute truth and relative truth.

Every man studies nature by the means available to him, the means provided by human society. There was a time when scientists did not even have simple scales or thermometers at their disposal, let alone microscopes, telescopes and so on. This restricted the possibilities of knowing the world. But modern science is equipped with extremely complex instruments. And can we have any doubts that in the future scientific instruments will become yet more perfect and man will learn much more about nature than he knows now? We cannot therefore speak of "absolute", "complete" and "exhaustive" knowledge. All knowledge is, for the most part, relative, incomplete, and inexact. Every scientific theory, every truth, bears the marks of its historical limitations. That is why human knowledge at each stage of history must be regarded as relative to that stage.

The question now arises: is there no full and complete knowledge? If knowledge can only be relative knowledge, does this mean that there is no such thing as *absolute truth*, no truth that is complete, full and comprehensive?

Some philosophers answer this question as follows: since all the knowledge we acquire becomes obsolete with time, and is even refuted, it follows that there is no absolute truth, only relative truth. Our knowledge is always in a state of flux; finally, everything passes away, nothing remains. All knowledge is therefore relative. Philosophers who reason thus are called *relativists*.

Other philosophers argue that "truths" that become obsolete and need qualification are not truths at all. "Real" truths never become obsolete, they are eternal, given once and for all. Moreover, they say, we should concern ourselves only with absolute, complete, perfect and final truths. Such philosophers are dogmatists: truth is for them a set of dogmas, eternal, unchangeable and immutable. But the arguments of both relativists and dogmatists are one-sided and metaphysical. One cannot mean by absolute truth complete knowledge of the whole of nature. Indeed, can one believe that mankind will at any time have completed its study of the Universe and know *everything*—and, in this sense, know absolute truth? Man can never know everything about nature,

for nature has no end and it is perpetually changing. That is why it is ridiculous to set any future limits to human knowledge.

Is absolute truth, then, truth complete and eternal, out of man's reach? If one means by absolute knowledge the metaphysical idea of eternal truth, which, once obtained, leaves one with nothing more to learn—then such "complete" truth does not exist. But if one takes the dialectical materialist approach to this question, one can see that man can reach absolute truth by accumulating relative truths, thus gradually moving nearer to knowledge of all the phenomena and laws of nature. *Just as any whole is formed from its parts, so absolute truths are built up from relative truths in the endless advance of knowledge.*

This interpretation of absolute truth—as the sum of relative truths in the process of development—is directed against the metaphysical isolation of absolute truth from relative truth. It demonstrates that there is no unsurmountable barrier between relative and absolute truths. By reaching relative truths in the course of cognition, we *in this way* obtain precious grains of absolute truth. "Life emerged from inanimate matter", "the brain is the organ of thinking", "all bodies are made up of atoms"—these and countless other statements are absolutely true, proved by science and practical experience, and irrefutable. They are real grains of absolute truth. But this does not mean that they are also *final* truths, for it would be wrong to suppose that absolute truth is not dependent on historical conditions, does not require qualifying, supplementing and re-defining with time—that nothing can be added to or taken away from it, that it will not be affected by further scientific and technological progress. Such final, ultimate truths do not exist, so that it would be a waste of effort to search for them. This means *that any relative truth contains grains of absolute truth*. Every scientific discovery, every scientific truth, every scientific law, is a unity of relative and absolute truths.

It follows from all this that *we do not cognise objective truth at once, absolutely, but gradually, by cognising relative truths. The sum of relative truths in their development provides us with full, deep, absolute knowledge both of nature as a whole, and of this or that particular aspect of it.*

Dialectical materialism teaches that *truth is always concrete. A concrete truth is a truth which accurately reflects*

the essence of a definite class of phenomena and the conditions of their development. In contrast to this, an abstract "truth" ignores concrete conditions in which phenomena develop. This is characteristic of dogmatists. For example, one cannot give an abstract answer to such a question as: what are the correct methods of struggle for peace and democracy? One cannot answer this question correctly until mention is made of the concrete conditions in which this struggle must take place. One has to take into account the differences between conditions in countries that have liberated themselves from capitalist oppression and those in countries still struggling for their liberation, etc.

Creative Marxism enjoins us to keep in view concrete conditions and historical situations in all our work. This is, indeed, the essence of the concrete historical approach to the phenomena of reality.

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

CHAPTER SEVEN

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM— THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

**What Is
Historical Materialism,
Its Essence**

What thinking person has not asked himself: how are the threads that go to form the complex and many-coloured fabric of social life woven together?

Gigantic but blind material forces operate in nature. Everything in nature happens spontaneously, that is, unconsciously, whether we think of celestial bodies or plants and animals. But social life obviously differs from natural life, for it is made by men. And men are motivated by definite needs, pursue definite aims, are guided by ideas: in short, they act consciously. Moreover, the actions of individuals merge into streams of mass, class and party action.

In the course of social life, progressive and reactionary ideas, advanced and obsolete ones, right and wrong ones, collide. An infinite number of individual, class, national and international interests run up against one another. There is a stormy sea of human passions—good and bad, high and low, noble and ignoble. But is there any kind of order and direction to all this, or is social life a chaos that must remain forever beyond our understanding? Both science and the experience of the centuries of mankind's existence indicate that some Ariadna's thread, some law-governed regularity does indeed run through the labyrinth of history.

The questions of what human society is, what kind of laws govern its progress, and how they are cognised and used in human practice, have been answered by that part of Marxist-Leninist philosophy that is concerned with the general theory of, and method of acquiring, knowledge about society as a whole as it has emerged and developed in history. This part of Marxist philosophy is called *historical materialism*.

Just as nature, with its various phenomena, processes and relations, is studied by numerous branches of natural science, so human society is the subject of study of many social sciences: political economy, law, history, ethnography, linguistics, etc. Each social science studies some individual aspect or sphere of social life. And though the social sciences together cover all the aspects of social life, the simple sum total of this knowledge does not give us an idea of society as an integral whole, as a system of interacting processes. Alongside, and in unity with, the action of the specific laws of economic and state development, law, language, etc., more general laws of social advance operate. None of the particular social sciences studies these. And without knowing these general laws, which link up the parts of the whole social organism into a single living entity, it is impossible to understand the interrelations between the various sides of the life of society and to define the place of this or that phenomenon in the entire system.

One might say that society is like a massive tree with a large number of branches. Each social science studies some part of this tree: the roots, the branches, the leaves, the trunk. We should be unable to comprehend the laws governing the growth of the tree as a whole if we did not study its separate parts. But since the life of any part of the tree depends on the state of the whole tree, it is also extremely important to know the general laws governing the whole tree's development. It is the same with the study of society: we must always strive to see its unity in its multifarity.

There are both material and ideal phenomena in society, both social being and social consciousness, and there is a definite relation between them, the study of which plays a vital part in the explanation of the motive forces of social advance. But no particular social science makes a special study of the relation between social consciousness and social being. Neither the method of cognising any social phenomena can be worked out, nor the means to the revolutionary

transformation of social life in the interests of the people be discovered until the question of the relationship between social consciousness and social being has been correctly solved. Further, no particular social science studies the philosophical categories which reflect the general structure of social life and the way in which it emerges and develops, nor the specific features of the process by which social phenomena are cognised. These tasks are the tasks of historical materialism, which provides the necessary general theory.

To sum up: *Historical materialism is the philosophical science dealing with the relation of social consciousness to social being and with the most general laws and motive forces of human social development. It is concerned with the general theory, and method, of social science and social transformation.*

Scientific knowledge of social history shows that the replacement of capitalism by socialism is inevitable, and this gives working people confidence in the final victory of their great cause: it also makes it possible to examine social phenomena in their internal relationships and so to see beyond individual events to historical prospects far ahead, to know what the future holds in store. Historical materialism provides a method for the elaboration of scientifically substantiated policies, for working out the correct strategy and tactics of the working class and its party in the class struggle and revolutionary action, and for planning the building of socialism and communism.

Historical materialism was created by Marx and Engels. They created it in conjunction with dialectical materialism as part and parcel of an integrated scientific world outlook, as a method for cognising and effecting a revolutionary transformation of social reality. The creation of historical materialism had been prepared for by the entire previous development of social thought.

The great historical contribution of Marx and Engels consisted in the fact that they were the first to drive idealism out of social science and to give a materialist solution to the fundamental problem of philosophy as it applies to society. That is to say, they showed that labour, the production of material values, is the basis of human life and the source of progress in human society. Work created man from the ape. Work is the basic condition of social advance. Engels wrote, explaining the essence of the new materialist

interpretation of history: "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of *vice versa*, as had hitherto been the case."¹ Marxism made clear the senselessness of mere speculation about society and the history of its development outside and above man's actual activities in life, and demonstrated that people themselves make their own history, that no supernatural forces stand behind the historical process. "*History*," wrote the founders of Marxism, "does nothing, it possesses *no* immense wealth, 'it wages no battles'! It is *man*, real living man, that does all that, that possesses and fights; 'history' is not a person apart, using man as a means for *its own* particular aims; history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims."²

At the same time, it is impossible to understand the complex labyrinth of social life and the paths and motive forces of social development if one takes the individual man as one's starting point. The special features of individuals provide no clue to those of society as a whole. The latter is made up of individual people, of course. But why is there one set of social relations between people at one stage of history and a different set at another stage? What accounts for the changes of social systems—of political systems, forms of ownership and even forms of marriage? In order to understand why history takes the road it does one must proceed not from the activities of individuals, but from mass social action, from the actions of *social classes*. Moreover, it is the people, the masses, that have always done the work, and for

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 162.

² K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family*, Moscow, 1956, p. 125.

that reason it is they who are the real makers of history—not kings, military leaders, or legislators, let alone any mysterious forces from heaven.

Marxism demonstrated that scientific sociology cannot ignore the conscious human effort that constitutes the subjective aspect of the historical process. But the social consciousness and institutions of each given social system reflect that system's social being, and above all the prevailing mode of production. As each new human generation enters the stream of social life it discovers every time that the objective system of production and social relations it has inherited is independent of its will and is conditioned by the level attained by the forces of production before it appeared. Historically established relations determine the character and general living conditions of successive generations.

Marxism also showed, however, that new social ideas and political institutions, once they have arisen, become relatively independent and play a big role in social development. Ideas become a material force when they grip the masses and stimulate them to activity. By explaining the dependence of social consciousness upon social being and the nature of the interaction between the objective and subjective factors in social development, Marxism was the first to introduce the profoundly scientific methodological principle of studying history *comprehensively*, exhaustively. History was interpreted for the first time as an objective law-governed process of development, as a necessary succession of a number of social formations.

Lenin described the revolutionary upheaval in ideas about society which Marxism produced in the following words: "The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views on history and politics were replaced by a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social life another and higher system develops—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism."¹

By discovering the objective laws of social development Marx and Engels created the theory of scientific communism. They proved that socialism was not a mere utopia, but the natural upshot of the development of capitalism, which thus prepared its own death. They made clear the world-historic

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 25.

role of the proletariat and showed that the road to the new socialist system of society lay through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. The Marxist materialist interpretation of history made possible a scientific sociology. It raised political economy, history, law, ethics and all other social studies to the level of science.

As human society developed and new information about it accumulated historical materialism developed. The most outstanding example of the development of Marxist social science was the contribution made to it by Lenin. Marx and Engels created historical materialism when capitalism was in its prime. But Lenin summed up the new phenomena that appeared in social life as it entered its imperialist stage, and formulated the basic laws of capitalism in the new stage. He dealt with the question of the interaction of the forces of production and the relations of production in the modern epoch of imperialism and the period of socialist construction. He also developed further the theory of class struggle, particularly the theory of working-class hegemony, the theory concerning the party and strategy and tactics of the proletariat. Lenin elaborated the theory of socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, lighting up the path to socialism and communism and laying the foundations of the science of social management.

In the present age of transition from capitalism to socialism, Marxist-Leninist social science is constantly developing and improving under the guidance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist and Workers' Parties of other countries. The documents of their Congresses and Meetings deal scientifically with the most important features and laws of the advance of human society today.

The Laws of History

World history, as Engels observed, is a great poetess who creates not arbitrarily, but who, by means of necessity, creates both the beautiful and the tragic—and the comic, too. The life of human society, like that of nature, is not a random accretion of meaningless events, not “a confusion of activity”, but an orderly, organised system operating and advancing according to definite laws. “All history,” said Lenin, “is made up of the actions of individuals.” There is no more to history than this. Every man does his job, pursues his own aims, has his own joys and is tortured by his own sufferings, but society as a whole nevertheless moves forward in

a definite direction, for each individual's actions are motivated by something that derives from the whole of which he is a part. It does not follow that things can happen in history according to the desires and aspirations of individual men. History knows of cases of individual men and nations who, in seeking and reaching goals of their own, were, at the same time, the instruments of something higher and greater than themselves of which they were unaware.

The existence of historical laws was only fully and scientifically substantiated with the appearance of Marxist sociology. When the principles of materialism and dialectics were applied to the study of social history, the laws governing human society came to light. “Only the reduction of social relations to production relations and of the latter to the level of the productive forces, provided a firm basis for the conception that the development of formations of society is a process of natural history,”¹ wrote Lenin.

Natural-historical means objective, law-governed, causal, non-arbitrary. Lenin proceeds from the fact that one cannot, in the study of social history, dwell only on the ideal motives of human actions, on the conscious aspirations motivating them. It is necessary to bring out the objective necessity determining both the aspirations and the actions.

“The fact that you live and conduct your business, beget children, produce products and exchange them, gives rise to an objectively necessary chain of events, a chain of development, which is independent of your *social* consciousness, and is never grasped by the latter completely.”² This was Lenin's reply to Bogdanov, who identified social consciousness with social being.

Men make their own history themselves. But what determines their motives, especially those of the masses of the people? What are the objective conditions for the production of material things that form the basis of the entire spectrum of human activity throughout history, and what law determines the changes in these conditions as history progresses?

Historical materialism has provided answers to these questions by laying bare the objective and conditioned character of human ideas, aspirations, aims and interests, and by thus showing that human history, for all its contradictoriness and

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 140-41.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 325.

multifarity, represents but a single, law-governed process of human advance.

Lenin stressed that just as Darwin had put biology on a scientific footing by establishing the mutability of species and their evolution one from another, so Marx had "...put sociology on a scientific basis by establishing the concept of the economic formation of society as the sum-total of given production relations, by establishing the fact that the development of such formations is a process of natural history."¹

The Dialectics of the Objective and the Subjective in History

By analysing the role of the broad masses, of the various social classes and political parties, and of individuals in the historical process, Lenin brought out the

dialectics of the relation between the objective and subjective factors in social progress. In fact, this was one of Lenin's most important contributions to historical materialism. "Marxism differs from all other socialist theories in the remarkable way it combines complete scientific sobriety in the analysis of the objective state of affairs and the objective course of evolution with the most emphatic recognition of the importance of the revolutionary energy, revolutionary creative genius, and revolutionary initiative of the masses—and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organisations, and parties that are able to discover and achieve contact with one or another class."²

The basic objective factor in history is material production, since relations of production and all other social relations are determined from generation to generation by the level of the forces of production reached by human society at each stage of its development.

These relations are therefore independent of the will and consciousness of each fresh generation and determine the character and general conditions of its life. But the objective factor of material production is clearly not a blind mechanical force, since it consists of human conscious activity. And in all events in the life of human society, whether they be revolutions or scientific discoveries and inventions, men play the leading role. Human activity is guided by definite ideas, aims and aspirations. But the latter "follow necessarily from

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 142.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 36.

the given social environment, which serves as the material, the object of the individual's spiritual life, and is reflected in his 'thoughts and feelings'.¹ Men make history on the basis of what historical reality has made of them, of what tasks are set by the objective development of things, what means exist to solve these tasks, what the balance of opposing forces in society is and how their activities relate to the objective requirements of historical progress. In short, a subjective "mechanism" is required to bring social laws into play, and this is their great difference from laws of nature.

Lenin demonstrated in his refutation of the subjective-idealist views of the Narodniks that the historical inevitability of the emergence of, say, capitalism, does not mean that people act blindly in history. He wrote: "People in sound mind and judgement then erected extremely well-made sluices and dams, which forced the refractory peasant into the mainstream of capitalist exploitation; they created extremely artful by-pass channels of political and financial measures through which swept capitalist accumulation and capitalist expropriation that were not content with the action of economic laws alone."²

Thus, consciousness takes part in the objective process of history. When explaining how the dialectics of the relation between objective conditions and the subjective factors applied to the tasks of the working class in giving leadership to the labour movement (in order to expose the theory of "spontaneity"), Lenin again wrote: "In order truly to give 'consideration to the material elements of the movement', one must view them critically, one must be able to point out the dangers and defects of spontaneity and to *elevate* it to the level of consciousness. To say, however, that ideologists (i.e., politically conscious leaders) cannot divert the movement from the path determined by the interaction of environment and elements is to ignore the simple truth that the conscious element *participates* in this interaction and in the determination of the path."³

The subjective factor in history is people themselves, their revolutionary resoluteness, their will to fight, their organisation in struggle, their enthusiasm and political consciousness

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 405.

² *Ibid.*, p. 399.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 316.

ness, and their experience of struggle. All these things play an enormous part in the direction taken by, and the outcome of, historical events.

The ideological enemies of Marxism try to accuse Marxists of a contradiction here. They say that on the one hand Marxists admit the objective character of the laws of history, but on the other hand organise working people to fight for the revolutionary transformation of society. If, they ask, this or that historical change is objectively inevitable, why should it be necessary to rouse people to fight for it? Will not the change occur anyway, by itself? According to the concept of absolute predetermination, human will and knowledge play no part in history and mean nothing. Why intervene in the necessary course of events: everything has been preordained, action is of no avail!

Exposing the total inconsistency of these arguments of the critics of Marxism, which amount to a doctrine of the fatal development of human society, Lenin showed that they are based on the purely metaphysical fallacy of opposing the subjective aspect of the historical process to its objective aspect. They fail to take account of the fact that it is the people, their will and consciousness, that make history.

Marxism-Leninism does not seek merely to explain social reality but to transform it. The very heart of Marxism-Leninism lies in its recognition of the active and *decisive* role of subjective factors in the objective progress of history, especially at its turning points. The critics of Marxism-Leninism do not take into account the constant *interaction* between objective and subjective factors: *the objective factors in the historical process, which, in the final analysis, determine the subjective factors, undergo changes themselves under the powerful influence of these same subjective factors.*

All this follows from the general principles of Lenin's solution to the question of the relation between mind and matter: our consciousness not only reflects the world, but remakes it, i.e., man changes the world through his practical actions. The most notable proof of this was the victory of the October Socialist Revolution and the building of socialism that followed it, both of which were first carefully planned and prepared for in theory before any practical action was taken.

The whole of the practical transforming activities of the people, classes, parties and individuals together make up the

indissoluble unity of the objective and subjective in the historical process. It is well known that a great part was played by mass revolutionary initiative and enthusiasm during the October days and the Civil War, and in the years of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. That is why Lenin attached the greatest possible importance to the subjective factor—class consciousness, single-mindedness, enthusiasm, creative initiative and mass organisation—in historical action. Objective historical conditions do not of themselves bring about the victory of progressive forces. The mere understanding that this victory is inevitable is not enough. The subjective factor is essential.

But Lenin also came to the conclusion, in his analysis of the laws of social revolution, that *subjective factors become of decisive importance only when the necessary objective prerequisites are in evidence.* He pointed out the possibility of contradictions arising between objective conditions and subjective factors. Revolutionary classes do not always possess sufficient strength to carry through a revolution, even though economic conditions indicate that the time is ripe for revolution. The structure of society is not such as to suit the convenience of its most advanced sections. The time may be ripe for revolution, but the fighters for the revolution may have insufficient strength to carry it through. At such a time "society decays, and this process of decay sometimes drags on for decades".¹

The general trend of human history is in the direction of the strengthening of the subjective factor through changes in objective factors. Under socialist conditions the role of the subjective factor is especially important for planned progress, which takes place in conditions of "an extremely intricate and delicate system of new organisational relationships extending to the planned production and distribution of the goods required for the existence of tens of millions of people."²

The essential requirement for the rational employment of the subjective factor in historical change is the maximum concentration of people on the objective laws of social development.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 368.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, p. 241.

Necessity and Freedom

Lenin's teachings on the role of the subjective factor are directed against vulgar materialism in sociology, which underestimates the importance of ideas in human social development and preaches the doctrine of the "spontaneous", automatic pre-determination of social events. Lenin also rejected the concept of *voluntarism*, the idea that human actions are independent of objective laws: that there is such a thing as "free will". He showed that the idea of the absolute freedom of the individual is a myth: *one cannot live in society and be free from it*. At the same time he severely criticised the concept of *fatalism*, the idea that all human actions are fatally determined by forces beyond human control. If everything is predetermined then there can be neither right nor wrong in the world. Both voluntarism and fatalism are metaphysical concepts: they make absolute one of the sides of human behaviour and ignore the other. The truth is that we must recognise the dialectical *unity* of freedom and necessity. Man is not free when he is ignorant of laws, when he thinks and behaves according to traditional patterns in new circumstances. Man is only free when his actions are in harmony with the objective necessity of concrete circumstances. Necessity presents itself as freedom refracted through human consciousness when recognised necessity begins to play the part of a regulating factor in man's behaviour. "Far from assuming fatalism, determinism in fact provides a basis for reasonable action."¹

Freedom is knowledge of objective laws and the ability to use them. It is a product of historical development, the result of world historical human practice. We are constantly winning a little more freedom from necessity, while realising that we can never win the whole of it.

Fatalism leads to quietism, while historical materialism calls for action on the side of the progressive classes of society. Lenin pointed out that the practical activity of social classes—that of the working class, for example, in its struggle against the bourgeoisie—effects the creation of necessity itself within the framework of the objective laws operating in society. Lenin exposed the complete inconsistency of theories which underestimate "the materialist conception of history by ignoring the active, leading, and guiding part

which can and must be played in history by parties that have realised the material prerequisites of a revolution and have placed themselves at the head of the progressive classes."² Thus Marxist-Leninist sociology completely rules out both the fatalistic and the voluntaristic interpretations of history, demonstrating the stupidity of bourgeois sociologists' attempts to contrast Lenin to Marx as a voluntarist to a fatalist. Such attempts indicate either an inability or an unwillingness to approach the problem of the relation between social laws and human conscious activity dialectically. The solution to this problem can only be found in the materialist interpretation of history, which has shown that capitalism will perish sooner or later under the wheels of historical necessity. It is therefore as ridiculous to defend capitalism as it is to disagree with the passage of time.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 420.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 44.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MATERIAL PRODUCTION AS THE BASIS OF SOCIAL LIFE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Concept of Material Production

Material production is the process of interaction between society and nature through which man transforms nature and adapts it to his needs. This process is always social in character, for the production of an isolated individual would be as meaningless as the development of language apart from people living together. The production of material things is the source of human society, the basis of its continued existence and the most essential condition for its further advance.

Of all the things man does, or has ever done, material production is the most important. It takes up most of his social active time and involves the overwhelming majority of people.

Obviously, in order to live people must have means to exist, and in order to have these they must work. Social life is unthinkable without work. Man cannot be satisfied with what nature gives him ready-made. Even the air we breathe requires heating sometimes! But by working on what nature does provide and by putting the laws of nature to use, men can produce things that do not exist in nature.

The concept of production embraces both the processes of production themselves and the distribution, exchange and consumption of the things produced. Moreover, *the character*

of the processes of production determines the way in which things are distributed. Distribution means above all the distribution of products, but before this can take place the members of society and the means of production must themselves first be distributed among the various branches of production and subordinated to definite relations of production. And because production determines the distribution of both people and things it is the leading section of the economy.

There are many kinds of forces at work in society—material and ideal, direct and indirect, permanent and fluctuating—which taken together determine the life and development of society. But the roles which these forces play are not of equal importance or decisiveness. There is one force in society which in the final analysis determines all the others, even the most refined spiritual forces. This force is the production of material values, which is, as it were, the engine of the social machine.

It is the contradictions within production that cause transitions from one social system to another to take place. With changes in the tools people use in production, people themselves change—their working skills, and with them their consciousness—as indeed does the whole economic and social set-up. All the relations between people are altered, and all existing institutions and forms of organisation, all ideas and morals, are transformed.

The Unity of Nature and Society

Man lives within the limits set by the Earth's thin crust—his geographical environment, that part of nature with which society is in particularly close contact and which is in turn most affected by society. Man's geographical environment includes the rivers that are directly or indirectly connected with human activity and the canals man has built himself, the banks of rivers and the dams built along them, natural and man-planted forests, fields and pastureland, cities and all other human settlements, climatic and soil conditions, mineral resources, plants and animals.

Life emerged and developed in this geographical environment. Human history is thus but the continuation of the history of the Earth—they are, as Herzen, the well-known Russian writer, put it, two chapters of one book, two stages of one and the same process, very remote at their far ends but very near where they meet. We are tied to our geographical environment by "ties of blood" and human life is

impossible outside it. Spacemen who temporarily leave the Earth take with them a small part of it. There is no gap between nature and society. This does not mean to say, of course, that they do not have their own qualitatively different features. But despite everything that distinguishes society from nature, society remains part of nature. From the time human society came into existence there have been three kinds of processes taking place on Earth: those relating to nature proper, specifically social ones, and those that weld nature and society together by combining elements of both.

The dialectics of the interaction of nature and society is such that as society develops its direct dependence on nature diminishes and its indirect dependence on it increases. Man increases his power over nature by learning more and more of its laws and transforming nature on their basis; at the same time, as society develops, man gets into broader and deeper contact with nature, including in the sphere of his activity ever more of its objects and processes.

Having brought the entire planet within the orbit of his activities, man is now entering space. He is also reproducing many cosmic phenomena on Earth—superlow and superhigh temperatures, the near-vacuum characteristic of interstellar space, and transuranium and other artificial chemical elements (technetium, plutonium) found in the stars. He is also making artificial satellites, interplanetary stations and space ships. Science and technology are preparing the way for man's deeper penetration into space.

The history of the interaction of nature and society shows that they depend one on the other and in fact comprise a single moving entity. Here is an example. During both world wars there was a sharp decrease in fishing in the North Atlantic. As a result disease spread among the trade fish because of overcrowding, and there was a noticeable decrease in the size of the fish. This showed that society had had a regulating effect on the biological processes taking place in the sea and also that nature had "adjusted" itself to the peaceful life of society.

Mankind not only inhabits the world of nature, it transforms it. From its very beginning, human society has been changing the nature around it. An immeasurable amount of human effort has been "put into the ground as into a gigantic savings bank," as the Russian publicist D. I. Pisarev

expressed it. Man cut forests, drained swamps, built dams, villages and cities, wove a thick network of railways over the surface of the Earth, and did much else besides.

Mankind turns natural wealth to his own cultural and historical ends. For how many centuries did lightning, flashing in the night and often causing extensive destruction, terrify men and make them fall down to the ground when they heard a clap of thunder? But man has conquered and tamed electricity by compelling it to serve society's interests: now lightning obediently flashes in glass bulbs to light our houses and streets and set machine tools and locomotives in motion. Man has not only moved many kinds of plants and animals to different climatic conditions, he has completely transformed some of them and altered the look and climate of his habitat.

Society affects nature more and more as material production develops. With each significant advance in social production society's influence on nature changes in character. As production grows social needs undergo changes and the demands for natural resources change too. Not only the intensity of the influence of society over nature changes but the spheres of its influence also change. Man's immediate geographical environment obviously changes faster than that part of nature not directly affected by society. Changes in geographical environment depend not only on the level of production reached by society but also on its social system. Each new social system modifies man's environment by utilising the achievements of preceding ages and by preparing it, as it were, for future generations.

Some natural processes are speeded up by society's increasing influence on nature. The geographical environment in particular develops very rapidly, and quite substantial changes can be seen in it over only a few decades, let alone hundreds or thousands of years. For instance, by ploughing the soil, man shifts a tremendous quantity of it every year, three times as much as the volume of volcanic products ejected from the Earth. Again, in the last hundred years some 360 thousand million tons of carbon dioxide have been added to the atmosphere by factories, increasing its concentration by 13 per cent. This has increased the rate at which plants grow. It has also increased the extent to which carbon dioxide, by absorbing solar radiation, "heats" the Earth. It is estimated that the extra carbon dioxide that man has added

to the atmosphere may raise its average temperature by between one and two degrees Centigrade.

The new properties created by man accumulate as society advances, gradually removing the geographical environment further and further away from its virgin state, but making it possible for successive human generations to extend their means of labour and articles of consumption. If one were to take away from our present geographical environment all those of its properties that have been produced by the labour of preceding generations, and so return it to its condition at the outset of social history, modern society would not be able to survive.

Man's natural medium is historically very important. Nature never affects mankind in exactly the same way in all places and at all times. It allows mankind different quantities of light, heat, water, rain, plants and animals in the different parts of the globe. History provides a long list of examples of the way in which geographical conditions have either promoted or delayed human progress. In the extreme North man has, by strenuous effort, had to wrench means of existence from an inhospitably severe nature, while in the tropics, in the realm of bright flowers, evergreens and juicy fruits, nature is extravagance itself and lavishes help on man.

The influence of the natural environment upon society is a historical phenomenon. The further back through history we go the weaker the forces of society, the greater its dependence on nature.

The Population Question

The constant growth of the number of people living in a country and in the world as a whole is one of the natural conditions for the continued existence and development of human society. The economic and spiritual life of society presupposes a certain minimum density of population in a given area.

Population growth should not be considered, however, in the purely biological terms of human reproduction. Marx showed that every mode of production has its own historically determined laws of population. There is a close link between growth of production and growth of population. Under primitive communism population grew very slowly, and mortality was high. Under slavery population grew somewhat more quickly and under feudalism more quickly again.

Technological progress under capitalism brought with it a considerable growth of population. Scientific advances lowered the mortality rate, especially that of children. But the capitalist system of production proved unable to make full and efficient use of the growing population. The population law discovered by Marx refers to capitalist society and has its origin in the peculiar features of capitalist accumulation, which "constantly produces, and produces in the direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant population of labourers, i.e., a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self-expansion of capital, and therefore a surplus-population".¹

A considerable section of the labour force under capitalism does not find employment and goes to form a reserve labour army, i.e., the army of the unemployed plus ruined petty producers. Moreover, at the imperialist stage of capitalism there is a significant increase in this relative overpopulation.

The population law under socialism is characterised by the rational employment of socially organised labour, the planned distribution of the population, and a steady increase in its numbers.

World population has grown over the centuries as follows: in the first century it was about 200 million, and at the time of the Renaissance about 500 million. In the middle of the 19th century it numbered 1,000 million, and by 1930, 2,000 million. In 1963, 3,200 million people inhabited the Earth.

Many bourgeois scientists are frightened by this growth in population. Some busily propagate the theory of "diminishing returns", according to which crop yields do not increase in proportion to the amount of labour and capital invested in the soil. They also claim that the restricted amount of cultivable land is in any case an insurmountable obstacle to any big rise in food production. Hence their conclusion that famine and suffering are inevitable and serve to maintain a balance between size of population and supplies of means of existence. The English economist and clergyman Malthus (1766-1834) was one of the originators of this idea. He formulated what he called "the great law of nature", viz., that population rises in geometrical progression while means of existence may, at best, grow only in arithmetic pro-

¹ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1965, p. 630.

gression, resulting in "absolute overpopulation". Malthus considered that poverty was the result of unbridled reproduction. And he cynically declared that a man who arrived in the world already occupied by others had no right to demand anything to eat if his parents were unable to support him or if society was unable to employ his labour. Such a man was redundant and had no place at the world's great feast of life. Nature orders him to go away and is not slow to execute its irrevocable decree. Modern Malthusians (W. Foht, for instance) claim that there are now too many people on the globe because of its limited resources, and that society is in the position of a man who has boots two sizes too small for him. It is time we realised this, the Malthusians say, and stopped blaming the existing economic systems!

Such arguments lead to the encouragement by anti-humanists of such repulsive social phenomena as high infant mortality, epidemics, and, especially, wars. All these reduce the population and so "alleviate" the contradiction between a population that is growing "too rapidly" and the "insufficient" growth of production. The Malthusians were particularly pleased by the invention of the atomic bomb. They openly stated that it was necessary to summon the courage to use the new weapons of war to sweep away from the face of the Earth men, animals and plants over areas of hundreds of square miles. This was their solution to the population "problem".

Both scientific research and experience show that the Earth has a virtually infinite production potential, given the necessary technological and social conditions. The soil always returns to man whatever he invests in it in terms of labour and means of production. The use of chemical fertilisers and improved methods of cultivation are resulting in a steady increase in the size of crops.

The world is a table piled high with food and has more than enough room for all its inhabitants. Mankind is not threatened with the exhaustion of natural resources or with shortage of food. The development of agriculture holds out immense prospects for the future. And the progress of geology and certain other sciences indicates that the Earth conceals far greater mineral resources than was formerly supposed. Mankind has literally only scratched the surface of some sources of useful raw materials.

It is estimated that during the next hundred years the

world's population will rise to 8 or 10 thousand million people. But this is no reason to support the Malthusians. Hunger is the product of an exploitive social system. Nature is not the guilty party. Of course, the elimination of hunger and undernourishment, combined with the rapid growth of population, will undoubtedly result in a sharp intensification of the interaction between society and nature.

**Forces of Production
and
Relations of Production**

There are two sides to material production: the forces of production and the relations of production. Working people actually carry out the processes of production and they are therefore the principal and decisive element in the forces of production.

Before production can begin the materials for it must first be acquired—land, natural resources, wood, etc. But man cannot transform nature with his bare hands. The production of material goods as the basis of the life and development of society begins therefore with the production and utilisation of the instruments of labour, which are, as Marx put it, "the bone and muscles of production". Machines and tools, the instruments of labour, are essential for production, especially for modern production. *The instruments of labour are the things produced by man for the purpose of influencing and transforming the external world in his own interests.*

Even the first men, who still lived in herds, could not do without the simplest tools—stone axes, for example. Instruments of labour became of steadily increasing importance as mankind advanced. Now modern production is unthinkable without complex machine tools and machinery powered by steam, electricity and nuclear energy.

Besides the instruments of labour, production requires factory buildings, warehouses, power and the "blood system" of production, transport. These, together with the instruments of labour, comprise the *means of labour*. And the means of labour plus the objects of labour comprise the *means of production*.

The productive forces of society include production technology. In almost all the branches of modern production, the way in which technical problems are solved largely determines the character of the instruments of labour and that of the whole production process. The organisation of production,

and the forms and methods of organising labour, play a steadily increasing part in modern production. But the forms of organisation of labour develop more slowly than do the instruments of labour and technology in general, and for this reason tend to lag behind technological advance. Specialisation, concentration and co-operation in production as a whole and in its separate branches, the unification and standardisation of the design of products and the instruments of labour, and the introduction of continuous production methods at all enterprises are becoming more and more important trends in modern production. Production is also obviously very dependent on the way in which material and technical supplies are organised.

The scientific organisation of production thus involves the following: the organisation of labour, the rational utilisation of means of production, and production management and planning. The organisation of production and of material and technical supplies, and the application of engineering science, are the most essential features of the modern forces of production.

The efficiency of social production is in many respects determined by its structure—how rational is the balance between the various branches of the economy and how correct the location of enterprises.

The historically determined combination of the means of production—primarily the instruments of labour and all other technological devices—and the social organisation of labour, comprises the material and technical basis of society, that is, the material part of the forces of production—including labour already performed in the past, without which the daily renewed labour of living men and women is impossible.

The indissoluble unity of the material and technical basis of society and man himself, the producer of material values, is the essential condition of the former's normal working. It is not the instruments of labour that play the major role in production, but men. Means of production are dead without people. According to Marx, the real wealth of society is not measured by the quantity of material values it produces, but by the level of the general culture and labour skill of men, by the level of their knowledge and creativity. Man and his labour represent the true wealth of the Earth. In order for the means of labour to enter production it is

evidently necessary to employ labour, living human labour. It follows that *the forces of production consist of men who possess production experience and labour skill, and who produce material goods and means of production (above all, instruments of labour).*

The forces of production are to be judged primarily by their technological level, by the standards of engineering they display. Mankind has concentrated the whole of its practical experience over the ages in technology, in devices for changing nature, and in a definite level of scientific culture. *Technology embraces those things and processes which, having certain definite physical and chemical properties, have been given a relatively stable form and function by human society.*

The form and functions of instruments of labour embody historically evolved methods of human labour. Particular tools can only be used, can only be brought to bear on the object of labour, in certain definite ways: the hammer can only hammer, the fishnet catch fish, etc.

Labour expended in the production of means of production for the manufacture of a given product is termed *past* or *materialised labour*. Labour used directly in the making of a given product is termed *living labour*. At the early stages of history living labour was the predominant form of labour. But now, when man increasingly employs highly complex instruments of labour, materialised labour usually accounts for most of the total labour expended on each unit of production. The reduction in the share of living labour in production is a law-governed tendency of technological development which manifests itself in the changed content of labour. Man's direct influence on the object of labour is increasingly replaced by the operations of machines, including their regulating and adjusting activities. Calculations of all kinds take more and more time, reducing the time available for actually carrying out the direct processes of production. It is not so much production skill and personal "wit" that acquire increasing importance as systematic scientific knowledge. Another manifestation of technological development is the increasing replacement of collective action by individual action.

Materialised knowledge, applied technology, plays a tremendous role in the advance of science and is affected by it in turn. "We have known anything reasonable about

electricity only since its technical applicability was discovered."¹

The penetration of science into production is an extremely complicated matter. It sometimes took centuries for knowledge to be applied in technology. It was, for instance, known in ancient times that steam could do work. It was enough to see how it pushed the lid off a vessel of boiling water. But it was several thousand years before steam was made to move machines. Then the technological experience gained in the construction and operation of steam engines led, in its turn, to the appearance of the science of thermodynamics, i.e., to more, and much greater, knowledge.

Scientific discoveries and developments are employed in one way or another in every technological innovation. The application of science in production in the shape of new *materials*, new *tools*, new methods of *organisation*, new *engineering*—and in raising the level of the *scientific and technological culture* of the direct producers of material values—all prepares the ground for technological revolutions.

Science can now create materials with properties programmed in advance. Modern chemistry provides production with materials unknown in nature and surpassing everything that has been at man's disposal for thousands of years. Science has given engineering semi-conductors, unbreakable glass, resins that can glue together the sections of a bridge, and synthetic diamonds, and it is scientific progress that has now made possible automatic factories controlled by cybernetic machines.

Science is steadily being introduced into all branches of the economy. By penetrating the mysteries of the processes that take place in the soil and in plants and animals science is promoting the advance of agricultural technology. Great modern engineering innovations usually begin as simple research projects. Modern production based on the results of science thus takes on more and more the character of extended laboratory research.

Under socialist conditions the natural sciences (mathematics, mechanics, physics, chemistry, etc.) all become incor-

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 466 (Russ. ed.).

porated into the forces of production, and the social sciences—political economy and applied sociology—assist in determining the most rational employment of material resources and manpower and in choosing the most advantageous lines of development in production and the best ways to improve the organisation of labour and management. All this of course speeds up the rate of growth of the national economy, so that science becomes more and more a directly productive force and production the technological application of modern science. The direct links between science and production are maintained through the agency of people, too: science sums up the experience of workers and steadily enriches it with the technical standards of today. And workers can only improve their qualifications by mastering the necessary amount of scientific knowledge.

The level of the productive forces of society is measured by labour productivity, that is, the quantity of goods produced per unit of time. Labour productivity depends on technical standards, on science, on the links between science and production, on workers' skills, and on natural conditions. In the future, science will make it possible to bring the unlimited power of thermonuclear reactions under control so that they may be peacefully employed as unlimited sources of nuclear power to change weather conditions, conquer disease and lengthen the life span of man, control the processes of life, create an infinite variety of man-made substances with required properties, and to blaze a trail into the Universe. The new age of technological advance is associated with the achievements of electronics, cybernetics and computer science. And these will make possible the transition to higher forms of automation—of entire workshops and factories—providing the basis for massive increases in labour productivity.

Advances in technology have different social consequences under capitalism and under socialism. Automation leads, under capitalism, to mass unemployment and ever more severe economic crises. Technological progress under socialism leads to improved working conditions, the gradual erasing of the differences between physical and mental labour, and to the steady rise of the material, technological and cultural standards of the workers.

Technological progress provides the basis for the develop-

ment of the forces of production, but the latter involves more than technological progress alone. With the changes in the character of work as man has acquired deeper knowledge of nature changes have gone in the instruments of labour and with them changes in man himself, the principal element in the forces of production. Technology is both the product and the means of human labour—"the productive organs of man".¹ The greater the technological improvements introduced by man, the mightier are the powers of nature over which he has control, and the greater his abilities and knowledge.

The advance of technology demands ever higher abilities from man. Modern production is characterised by the increased indirectness of man's interaction with the object of labour. This is expressed in the enormous extension of the use of power-driven machinery in production, including information and control devices. The formal logical activities of automatons are co-ordinated with the conscious activities of human beings. Whereas the instruments of labour of the past extended and added strength to human hands, modern cybernetic machines continue and make more powerful the work of the human brain. Mental operations which once could be done only by man are now entrusted more and more to machines. Human labour is now turned more in the direction of creativity, regulation and control. This is resulting in human alienation not only from the object of labour, but also from the means of labour. A single "man-automaton" system is in process of formation. Man plays the part of the subject of labour, and the automaton is the instrument of labour. But the purpose of labour, its social meaning and its place in the general system of social life, still derive from man and society.

The automation of production is presenting man with new tasks and developing new abilities in him. The human mind is stimulated and developed in the course of production and man's steadily growing knowledge becomes more and more an active component part of the forces of production. Technological advance is made by man. Technological inventions embody human talents, genius and experience. The further material production advances, the greater is the part played in it by mental activity. This increasing role of intellectual

¹ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1965, p. 372.

work is accelerating technological progress and is therefore vitally important for the further development of the forces of production.

However, the objective process of technological advance is given a distorted interpretation in bourgeois philosophy and sociology, according to which the development of technology has become an end in itself. The bourgeois sociologist Elul, for example, claims that technology is acquiring a character independent of man and is beginning to follow autonomous laws of its own. It is undeniable, of course, that technology, like other spheres of social life, has a relative independence, but it would be quite wrong to suppose that it is becoming independent of man, and man its helpless servant—that technology has become so much an object of idolatry that man is being completely enslaved by the world of things and the technological forces of civilisation. According to some bourgeois philosophers, technology, like an evil pied piper, must inevitably lead the whole of humanity to disaster, for, they say, it is already getting beyond human control. There have been many cases in history, indeed, when technology has been used to harm people. But it is not technology that is to blame for this but the capitalist social system.

Some spokesmen of technocracy (Bernham, Elesko and others) think that because technology is a decisive factor in social progress, technological intellectuals, the men who invent machines and control them, should rule society, i.e., that a society of "managers" should in time replace capitalism. But Marxism-Leninism rejects this idea as inconsistent and reactionary. Capitalism will be eliminated not by technological intellectuals but by the working class in the course of social revolution.

To summarise; the forces of production express the material relations that exist between society and nature. Their level—which indicates the degree of human domination over the forces of nature—is determined by the instruments of labour, the power-generating capacity of production, the organisation and technology of production, and by the advance of science and the degree of success achieved by the direct producers of material values in implementing scientific development.

Production has from the start been the collective effort of men to change nature. In order to produce things men must enter into certain social relations, for it is only through these

that they can enter into relationship with nature and production can take place. Looked at another way, the means of production which men use determine their relations not only with nature, but with one another. All means of production are somebody's property, and it is around this property that the knot of human relationships is tied.

The relation that men bear to their means of production is the core of the entire system of relations of production and decides the position of this or that social group in the general system of social life. In an antagonistic class society, some groups have dominating positions and others subordinate ones. Some possess means of production and others are deprived of them. People living under exploitive systems are thus divided into a number of classes and groups having different outlooks and interests depending on their relation to the means of production. The most important aspect of the relations of production is, therefore, the economic relations between the various classes and social groups.

An essential element of all relations of production is those relations between the workers of all branches of production that have been formed historically and have become relatively independent on the basis of the social division of labour—which arose at a relatively early stage of the development of human society. The division of labour deepened as production grew and became differentiated into its various branches employing particular trades and professions. The antithesis between town and country and that between mental and physical labour are expressions of the division of labour. The division of labour was of tremendous importance for the development of society but it also had disastrous consequences. Few people were left with any chance to indulge in philosophy, write poetry, compose music, or pursue science, and the great mass of people had to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their own brow. The division of labour not only doomed individual men, but entire social classes, to a one-sided, limited development of their physical and spiritual talents. It generated what Marx called "professional cretinism". The cities became the centres of civilisation, but their prosperity rested on the enormous wealth produced by the ruthless exploitation of the mass of people living in the country. And this continues to be the case under capitalism today.

Relations of production cover both the relations between

antagonistic or different classes and those between members of one and the same class. A capitalist's relations with his class fellows are relations of production expressed as competition. The relations of workers to one another, relations of solidarity and mutual help, are also relations of production.

The relations of production also affect the distribution of products. In the natural economy of a tribal society the distribution of the products of labour was carried out according to egalitarian principles. But in class-divided society the lion's share of the social product goes to the exploiters and the oppressed get only an insignificant part of it.

There are two basic types of relations of production: non-antagonistic and antagonistic ones. Non-antagonistic relations of production are based on co-operation and mutual aid, antagonistic ones on domination and subordination. This follows from the property status of the means of production. Co-operation and mutual aid can only exist on the basis of social property. Private property splits society into hostile classes, introducing relations of domination and subordination.

There have been three types of private property in history: those of slave-owning, feudal and capitalist societies. There have also been two types of socialist property: primitive communal property and socialist property. There have, therefore, been five successive kinds of relations of production in history: those of the primitive communal, slave-owning, feudal, capitalist and socialist societies. In primitive communal society all members of the community consumed what means of survival they obtained together and supported one another in battle and in times of difficulty. The means of production belonged to the whole community and everybody in it occupied an equal position in social production.

Quite different relations existed between people under slavery, and under feudalism and capitalism. They were (and are) relations of domination and subordination. Such relations derive from the fact that exploiters own means of production and the oppressed members of society are deprived of them. Under socialism relations of co-operation and mutual aid obtain between the members of society because the means of production are owned by the whole people.

Alongside the two basic types of relations of production (antagonistic and non-antagonistic), so-called transitional

forms arise combining different kinds of economic relations within the framework of one social system. Each new social formation includes within it for some time the economic relations of the formation that preceded it.

Relations of production are material relations which exist independently of human consciousness and will and which are formed between men in the course of the production of material goods. Relations of production are the fundamental relations between people in society without which all other social relations are impossible. As Marx put it, the anatomy of society begins with its economy.

Summing up: there are two basic sides to production—the forces of production and the relations of production. Together they form an indissolubly united whole, a concrete historical form or mode of material production which preconditions spiritual production too. “If material production itself is not conceived in its *specific historical* form, it is impossible to understand what is specific in the spiritual production corresponding to it and the reciprocal influence of one on another.”¹

We must now consider how the two sides of the mode of production interact, and what part this interaction plays in social history.

The Interaction Between the Forces of Production and the Relations of Production

The forces and relations of production have always existed and developed in indissoluble unity, as content and form. As we have said before, the elements making up the forces of production (people, with their productional and technological skills, and means of production) are combined in the actual process of production in a definite way which characterises the nature of the relations of production. “Whatever the social form of production, labourers and means of production always remain factors of it. But in a state of separation from each other either of these factors can be such only potentially. For production to go on at all they must unite. The specific manner in which this union is accomplished distinguishes the different economic epochs of the structure of society from one another.”²

The development of production takes place first of all in

the field of the forces of production. They are the most flexible and changeable element in the material life of society. Why is this so? Because man must eat, drink and dress every day—these are his urgent needs, and a constant supply of new material goods is required to satisfy them. And since the needs of men are forever increasing and developing, society has not only to continue production but to effect extended reproduction. The development of the forces of production is a complicated process involving the mutual interaction and influence of a number of elements, but it is determined above all else by the development and improvement of the instruments of labour, which proceeds relatively independently—the development of one new instrument makes it necessary to develop another, and the introduction of a technological innovation into one branch of production may involve the reorganisation of other branches. Mechanised yarning led to mechanised weaving, etc.

Changes in the forces of production are followed by changes in the relations of production. “The productive forces are therefore the result of practical human energy; but this energy is itself conditioned by the circumstances in which men find themselves, by the productive forces already acquired by the social form which exists before they do...”¹

While the productive forces of society change rapidly, the forms of property are very stable: they can exist for centuries (as in feudal and capitalist society) or thousands of years (slavery), or even hundreds of thousands of years (primitive communism). But the forces of production undergo substantial changes within the framework of these periods, resulting in the *uneven* development of the forces of production on the one hand and the relations of production on the other. What accounts for this unevenness? The explanation is that all sections of society are in one way or another interested in developing the forces of production, but not all of them are so interested in developing the relations of production. Ruling classes do their best to retain existing production relations while exploited classes are interested in changing obsolete relations. Reactionary social forces actively defend old social systems and try to save relations of production that have outlived themselves. And the progressive forces of

¹ K. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part I, Moscow, 1969, p. 285.

² K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1967, pp. 36-37.

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol 1, Moscow, 1969, p. 518.

society can only break the resistance of the reactionary forces by means of revolution.

The uneven development of the forces and the relations of production has, of course, its limits. When the relations of production lag behind the forces of production, then a contradiction arises which sharpens with time and eventually turns into open conflict. The relations of production become a brake on the development of the forces of production. This happened at the end of the period of primitive communism, and later, of slavery, and later still, of feudalism. And today there is a sharp conflict between the extremely powerful forces of production of the capitalist system and the capitalist form of ownership of the means of production which has long since outlived itself.

The contradiction between obsolete relations of production and advanced forces of production is resolved by replacing the obsolete production relations by new ones which correspond to the level of the forces of production. The relations of production of antagonistic societies based on private property cannot for long correspond to their ever-developing forces of production. They can do so only at the initial stages of the existence of a new mode of production. But the new relations of production soon begin to lag behind the forces of production again, leading to the appearance, on a new level, of the contradiction between new productive forces and old production relations. This contradiction develops again into open conflict and history makes another leap forward.

So there is a law-governed connection between the forces and the relations of production. For instance, in order to advance from socialist relations of production to communist relations it will first be necessary to raise the forces of production to a very high level, i.e., to create the material and technical basis for communism and to rear a new kind of man with an all-round development. In short, *the development of the relations of production is determined by the level of the forces of production*. The development of the latter creates the historical need to replace obsolete relations of production by new ones. If production and the whole of society with it are to advance successfully, relations of production must correspond to the level of production. If this correspondence is in evidence then the relations of production promote the development of the forces of production, but wherever this correspondence ceases to exist the relations of

production begin to act as a brake on the development of the forces of production.

The correspondence of the character of the production relations to the level of the development of the productive forces is an objective law.

The question now arises: which determines the development of a particular mode of production, the correspondence or conformity of the relations of production to the forces of production, or the contradiction between them? Both. Their conformity leads to the development of society within the framework of a given mode of production so long as the relations of production remain progressive in character. But the contradiction between them eventually results in the transition from one mode of production to another.

Relations of production, while changing with the advance of the forces of production, also react back on this advance. The interaction between the one and the other represents a dialectical relation of form and content. What is the mechanism by which the relations of production influence the forces of production? This mechanism is none other than ordinary working people—who develop production and influence it in the course of pursuing their own particular interests. If a given social system stimulates men to work to improve technology, to organise production, and raises the skill of workers and their cultural and technical standards, this system promotes the development of the forces of production. But if it places workers in such a position that they are not interested in the development of production then this holds back the advance of the forces of production.

“In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. . . . At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.”¹

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol 1, Moscow, 1969, pp. 503-04.

Thus the dialectics of the interaction between the forces and the relations of production provide the objective basis of the revolutionary theory that is so necessary for the practical revolutionary transformation of society.

Production, Consumption, Needs and Interests

The Concepts of Need and Interest

Needs are the requirements of individuals, of social groups, and of society as a whole for the things and conditions essential for their normal functioning and development. Needs are both created by labour and satisfied through labour. The needs of individuals are formed during their upbringing as they are introduced to the cultural values that human society has so far created. They are therefore historically conditioned. Society has a complex and ever-growing system of needs. They may be divided into social or public, and personal or private needs. Social needs, the needs of society as a whole, cover needs for means of production, for accumulations and reserves of money, for the means to maintain armed forces, for an administrative apparatus, for the development of science, technology, education, the arts, the health service, etc., etc.

Personal needs cover whatever is necessary for a man's normal functioning and development as a rational social being. Both personal and social needs are of two kinds: material and spiritual. The former are historically primary, and the latter secondary. Man's spiritual needs arose on the basis of, and in the very process of satisfying, his material needs.

But all human needs can only be satisfied by social means. Human needs are objective facts. The discovery and precise scientific estimation of them, the study of what people really need and in what way best to satisfy them, are vitally necessary if correct choices are to be made in deciding which directions of advance the various branches of the economy, and science and culture, are to take.

Needs manifest themselves as the motives inspiring all forms of human activity. The need for food, warmth and a place to live in drives people to use their muscles and brains

in order to improve the instruments and methods of labour.

Everything that happens in the life of society takes place through the activities of people, social groups and classes guided by definite needs deriving from production—these needs serving, at the same time, as the subjective stimuli to the further advance of society. Needs assume the character of *interests* to the extent that they are recognised by particular social groups, classes, parties and individuals. "The economic relations of a given society present themselves in the first place as *interests*."¹ The necessity for seeking in the material interests of the different classes the explanation of the trends of development in socio-political thought and socio-political institutions was regarded by Lenin as fundamental to the Marxist method.²

Everything that has ever happened in social life, or is happening now, is a manifestation of this or that particular interest. Interests are, as it were, the coils of the spring that propels the social mechanism forward: interests determine the direction and content of the actions both of individuals and social classes, and of society as a whole.

The basic interests of all the social groups and classes of mankind are, above all, their material or economic interests, which, in the final analysis, determine their political, legal, moral, religious, aesthetic, scientific, philosophical and other interests. In their highest expression, all these interests are combined and concentrated in the form of the *social ideals* of a class. In order for a given class to become conscious of its historical mission, it must first become aware of its own basic needs and interests and give expression to them in the shape of ideological principles and the programmatic demands of a political party.

The importance of different interests in the historical process varies: the interests of social groups or classes stand above those of individuals, and the interests of mankind as a whole stand above those of individual classes. Lenin wrote: "...From the standpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism, the interests of social development are higher than the interests of the proletariat—the interests of the working-class

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol 2, Moscow, 1969, p. 363.

² See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 493.

movement as a whole are higher than the interests of a separate section of the workers or of separate phases of the movement."¹

Lenin stressed that the highest form of manifestation of any social interest is an interest in developing the forces of production, the level of development of which is the measure of mankind's historical progress.

The historical significance of the emergence and growth of production consists in the simple fact that it satisfies the social and personal requirements of human beings. From the time human society came into existence people have never ceased to produce material values. Since his first appearance on Earth, man has had to consume constantly. Human needs have not had a "day off" for a million years. Every satisfied requirement generated a new one. New needs demanded new products and, therefore, new instruments with which to produce them, and so on. Man is distinguished from the animals precisely by this capacity of his for the unlimited development of his needs. The advance of production gives rise to new requirements and modifies old ones, and developing requirements, in their turn, also stimulate the advance of production.

Production and consumption are thus two organically linked processes which cannot exist one without the other: production is itself the consumption of labour, raw materials and instruments of labour, while consumption is the reproduction of labour—the chief agent of production.

"Whatever the form of the process of production in a society, it must be a continuous process, must continue to go periodically through the same phases. A society can no more cease to produce than it can cease to consume. When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and as flowing on with incessant renewal, every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction."²

Reproduction presupposes the division of consumption into productive consumption, i.e., the consumption of means of production in the process of production, and the individual consumption by people of food, clothes, footwear, etc.

Production therefore plays the leading role in the interaction between production and consumption. Production sup-

plies articles of consumption, dictates the mode of consumption and generates human needs. The needs of a primeval savage were determined by the low level of production of his time: he was satisfied with a half-cooked piece of meat, an animal skin and a cave. As production advances, living standards rise. New needs appear. The ancient Greeks could not be satisfied with the food and clothes of a savage. Their dwellings, clothes and food were absolutely different—though they varied very much from one social class to another, as is the case in all class-divided societies. The differences in the levels of consumption of different social groups can reach monstrous proportions—as when, in one society, people are to be found starving and living in hovels while others are enjoying themselves in the lap of luxury and stuffing themselves like pigs.

The question of the interaction of production and consumption is of vital practical importance, since it is not possible to transform society by beginning with changes in the character of consumption: it is necessary first of all to change the character of production. One may express one's indignation as much as one likes about the unfair distribution of material goods under capitalism. But such moral indignation alone can lead to nothing, as was shown in the case of the utopian socialists, who only dreamt about the fair distribution of material things. Marxism approached the question from the other end: it showed the need to change the mode of production itself first. Proceeding from this principle the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has put the task before the people of creating the material and technical basis of communism, so that higher standards of consumption can be had by all.

Socio-Economic Formations The forces of production and the relations of production together go to form, as it were, the material carcass of society. This carcass is filled with the ideological relations of society and their corresponding institutions. And these, together with various other social relations, make up the living, self-moving body of society.

A society with definite qualities—all its aspects, mode of production, family and everyday relations of life, level of scientific development, its entire superstructure—taken together and considered as a single whole is called a *social formation*.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 236.

² K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 566.

Marx, unlike bourgeois sociologists before him, who had only reflected on society in general, was the first to approach society concretely, advancing the concept of a social formation, i.e., human society at "a definite stage of historical development, a society with a peculiar, distinctive character".¹

Of course, it was known before Marx that mankind had gone through a number of stages of development, but it was Marx who discovered the law governing the replacement of one social system by another. "The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views on history and politics were replaced by a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social life another and higher system develops—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism."²

Social formations represent enormous periods of social history, each characterised by a qualitatively definite aggregate of economic, social and ideological and spiritual relations, i.e., society as a whole at a definite stage of its historical development. The first social formation was primitive communism. This was replaced by slavery, which in turn gave place to feudalism, later replaced by capitalism. Communism is the highest social formation, the first stage of which is socialism.

Writing about Marx, Lenin observed that "while explaining the structure and development of the given formation of society exclusively through production relations, he nevertheless everywhere and incessantly scrutinised the superstructure corresponding to these production relations and clothed the skeleton in flesh and blood".³

Each social formation follows its own particular laws as it arises, endures and is finally transformed into a higher formation.

Historical epochs represent the main stages in the development of a social formation. An epoch covers the complex of social phenomena which characterise a definite stage in the development of each formation. We speak, for instance, of

"the epoch of rising capitalism" and "the epoch of imperialism, or moribund capitalism". The concept of an epoch is used in a broad temporal sense, so that a "cross-section" of any epoch takes in a number of coexisting social formations. "The modern epoch" is used to refer both to collapsing capitalism and to rising socialism, beginning with the October Revolution. The concept of a historical epoch is thus more concrete than that of a social formation. It is the next step in the ascension from the abstract to the concrete, i.e., society, formation, epoch.

In his exposure of the enemies of historical materialism, who claimed that it divided history cleanly and artificially into a number of completely separated "pure" parts, Lenin showed that elements of one formation are interwoven dialectically into the formation that succeeds it. "There are no 'pure' phenomena, nor can there be, either in Nature or in society—that is what Marxist dialectics teaches us, for dialectics shows that the very concept of purity indicates a certain narrowness, a one-sidedness of human cognition, which cannot embrace an object in all its totality and complexity. There is no 'pure' capitalism in the world, nor can there be; what we always find is *admixtures* either of feudalism, philistinism, or of something else."¹

The concrete historical approach to the study of society also demolishes the suggestions of bourgeois ideologists that social phenomena are unique and non-repeatable.

"The analysis of material social relations at once made it possible to observe recurrence and regularity and to generalise the systems of the various countries in the single fundamental concept: *social formation*."²

The concept of a social formation "made it possible to proceed from the description of social phenomena (and their evaluation from the standpoint of an ideal) to their strictly scientific analysis, which isolates, let us say by way of example, that which distinguishes one capitalist country from another and investigates that which is common to all of them".³

At the heart of the theory of social formations is its recognition of the objective law of the replacement of one form

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1969, p. 460.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 141.

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 236.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 140.

³ *Ibid.*

of social life by another on the basis of their material and corresponding social conditions of reproduction. "No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions for their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself,"¹ Marx wrote. This is the kernel of the dialectical materialist interpretation of world history.

The concept "social formation" is of great methodological importance for marking the *periods* in human history and indicating the *objective, law-governed general trend in social development during each period*—that from capitalism to communism, for example.

Each succeeding social formation is distinguished from the preceding one by a higher level of labour productivity. The theory of social formations thus enables us to understand the essence of historical progress and to expose reactionary bourgeois concepts which deny social progress and speak pessimistically of the degradation of man and the inevitable and speedy death of mankind.

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1969, p. 504.

CHAPTER NINE

CLASSES AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The Nature and Origin of Classes

From the time slavery first appeared society has been broken into large groups or classes which differ substantially from one another. The main classes—the slave owners and the slaves, the feudal barons and the peasants, the capitalists and the workers—differ in their way of life and living conditions, their interests and aims, their political views, their morals, their clothes and manners—in short, in their entire mentality and emotional make up. People who live in palaces think differently from people who live in huts!

Private ownership of the means of production is the economic basis of this division of society into antagonistic classes. It explains why some classes rule and others are ruled, why some are exploiters and others are exploited. The relation of a class to the means of production determines both the way in which it obtains its income and the latter's amount. The economic situation of a class is directly manifested in the sum total of qualities and features mentioned above—in its interests, views, morals, etc. The primary difference between classes is the difference in the relation they bear to the means of production. All other differences between them are secondary and derive from this primary or basic difference.

This understanding of the nature of the class divisions in society is incompatible with the unscientific bourgeois concept of social stratification. The term "stratification" has

been taken from geology, where it refers to the formation of layers in the earth's crust. The proponents of the theory of stratification declare that the concept of a social "class" is obsolete in the present day and suggest that it should be replaced by the concept "stratum". The criterion for determining which strata people belong to is very vague. It can be, say, their occupation. In this case, the president of the board of directors of a joint-stock company and a cleaner working for this same enterprise belong to one and the same strata—that of hired employees. Sometimes the criterion is said to be the psychology of people, i.e., they belong to that class to which they think and feel they must belong. Classes are thus defined quite arbitrarily, their economic basis being ignored or distorted.

According to Lenin's definition, classes "are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it".¹

Basing themselves on their common class interests and struggling against the interests of classes that oppose them, the representatives of a given class consolidate themselves as a class. The subjective factor plays a vital part in this: a class can only become aware of its interests and form its class organisations in the course of struggle.

A class which has come into being but which is not yet conscious of its fundamental interests is a class "in itself". When it becomes aware of its interests and organises itself, it is then a class "for itself". Its most class-conscious elements unite into class organisations, of which political parties have been of particular importance since the emergence of capitalism. Classes are not eternal: they arise for reasons of historical necessity connected with the appearance of exploitive modes of production. They change with law-governed regularity as modes of production change. Moreover, they are bound to disappear in the future communist society, when there will be but a single form of people's ownership.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 421.

The origin of classes is closely connected with the appearance and growth of the division of labour in society. The first great social division of labour occurred when specialised cattle-breeding tribes emerged from the general mass of primitive tribes. This led to exchange between cattle breeders and land tillers, which in turn promoted both the growth of social wealth and the differentiation of people into classes. The second big social division of labour occurred when the practice of particular crafts separated off from farming. This created better conditions for exchange but increased the economic inequality of people.

A further division of labour came about with the separation of mental labour from physical labour. Mental labour was monopolised by the ruling classes, who seized all positions in the management of production, the government of the state, religious worship, scientific study, the arts, philosophy, etc., while manual labour became the lot of the overwhelming majority of the exploited. This antithesis between mental and physical labour, also expressed in the differences between town and country, is the chief feature of all class societies.

The Class Structure of Society

The principal classes of society are those that are called into being by a given mode of production and are the bearers of it. Under slavery, the main classes were the slaves and the slave owners, under feudalism they were the feudal lords and the peasants, under capitalism the capitalists and the workers. In a class society there are two main classes—one owns the means of production and rules, and the other, consisting of the vast bulk of the exploited, has neither property nor power. The relations between these two classes always remain hostile expressing the principal forms of exploitation.

The first form of exploitation in history was slavery. Slavery was followed by feudal bondage, and then by hired labour under the bourgeois system. There are thus three historical forms of enslavement, each characterising an antagonistic social formation. They differ from each other only in the character of the exploitation and in the social position of the direct producers of material things.

Besides the principal classes of an exploitive society, there are others. For example, in the ancient world, alongside the slave owners and the slaves, there lived petty peasants and

craftsmen. Many of these, ousted by slave labour, were ruined and became lumpen-proletarians—the dregs of society: bandits, thieves, beggars, prostitutes, etc.

“Pure” capitalism does not exist anywhere. Alongside capitalists and workers, there are, for example, landowners. It is true that in some countries landownership has been eliminated altogether. In others, Germany for instance, landowners’ estates have been gradually converted into capitalist farms and the class of landowners has become an agrarian bourgeoisie. In less advanced countries (such as tsarist Russia was) where survivals of feudalism remain landowners continue to exist as a separate class. This class is a significant force in dependent countries at present.

The petty bourgeoisie, especially the peasantry, is another of the non-principal classes of capitalist society. The petty bourgeoisie, as a class of private owners, belongs to the bourgeoisie, but as a class of people who live by their own labour and are exploited by the big bourgeoisie, it belongs to the working class. This dual position of the petty bourgeoisie determines its hesitant and wavering attitude to the class struggle. The development of capitalism involved the differentiation of the peasantry, small craftsmen and other petty-bourgeois members of society into a number of different strata—a small upper crust of capitalists and large masses of proletarians, semi-proletarians and lumpen-proletarians.

In advanced capitalist countries monopolies and banks subject peasants to increasing exploitation. The growth of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism leads to the concentration of wealth into the hands of a small handful of people at the top of society.

The last few decades have seen a considerable reduction in the number of members of the bourgeoisie, but their wealth and power have increased enormously. The bourgeoisie has produced from its midst a monopolist upper crust whose interests oppose not only the interests of the working people but even sections of the middle and petty bourgeoisie. Farmers, craftsmen, artisans, small shopkeepers, etc., continue to go bankrupt. This is resulting in an increase in the number of hired hands and salaried workers. Bourgeois sociologists bracket engineers, technicians and salesmen in a special section and call them “the new middle class”. Meanwhile modern capitalist development is in fact making these sections more and more part of the working class. The percen-

tage of all hired labour taken up by office workers, engineers and technicians is also growing.

Social Classes and Political Parties

A political party is an advanced, vanguard section of a class. The relationship between a party and its class is that of a part to the whole. Every class defends its interests by striving to establish its power. For this purpose it forms a party to direct its class struggle for the leadership of the whole of society. But political parties only appear at an advanced stage of the class struggle: “In a society based upon class divisions, the struggle between the hostile classes is bound, at a certain stage of its development, to become a political struggle. The most purposeful, most comprehensive and specific expression of the political struggle of classes is the struggle of parties.”¹

The apologists of the bourgeoisie try to present bourgeois political parties as supra-class, national bodies called upon to reconcile the interests of the opposing classes of society. They say that allegiance to this or that party has nothing to do with class, that parties have a traditional, social, family or religious basis. To provide grounds for this view they point to the bourgeois multi-party system. But every one who is politically literate understands that the two principal parties in the United States, for example, the Democrats and the Republicans, do not differ in any essentials—not because they are based on the same religious, cultural, geographical, family or other traditions, but because both these parties in their ideology and policy defend the interests of one and the same class, the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, the interests of monopoly capital. The American two-party system is merely a disguise for the class character of the bourgeois state. As Marx very correctly put it, the bourgeoisie needs the two-party system so that it can let power out of one hand while snatching it with the other. It is not for nothing that some multi-millionaires make big financial donations to the coffers of both parties at once!

The names given to many bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties—democratic, republican, liberal, progressive, peasant, people’s party, etc.—are designed to conceal their class nature. The landowners’ and bourgeois parties of tsarist Russia used democratic names as camouflage: the Union of

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 79.

the Russian People, the Nationalist Party, the Octobrist Party, the Party of Constitutional Democrats (the Cadets), the Party of People's Freedom, etc. But the people, and history, do not judge parties by their names and the words they use but by their deeds. "As in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conception of themselves, from their reality."¹

Unlike bourgeois parties, Marxist parties openly declare their class character: they are the parties of the working class and represent the interests of all working people, their aims are those of social progress.

In the course of the class struggle the working class forms trade unions, co-operatives and various educational societies. These emerge with historical necessity as means of defence of working-class interests. But the political party is the highest form of working-class organisation and the growth of the working-class movement in the capitalist countries eventually issues in the formation of numerous working-class parties which express in different ways the economic, political and ideological interests of the working class. This is explained by the fact that in the course of capitalist development people constantly come from other classes, mainly the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, to join the working class. Besides, the bourgeoisie uses part of its monopoly profits, the spoils of colonial plunder in dependent countries, to buy off a section of the working class and create a labour "aristocracy" to serve as a basis for the growth of opportunism and other deviations in the working-class movement.

The social-democratic parties which were at the head of the labour movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries proved to be incapable of storming capitalism. The militant energy of these parties was paralysed by their opportunist leaders, who took the path of betrayal of the proletariat and co-operation with the bourgeoisie. History thus set the task of creating parties of a new type. Lenin was the first to form such a party in Russia. It acted as the vanguard of the working class and gave expression to its basic interests and rev-

² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1969, p. 421.

olutionary will. Lenin taught the working class that it could only succeed in its struggle if it was led by a Marxist party. He wrote in 1902, explaining that a truly working-class party was a historical necessity: "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia!"¹ The party of a new type created by Lenin replaced the former tsarist Russia, an economically and culturally backward country, by a powerful and prosperous socialist nation.

In their long and strenuous struggle against a wide variety of opportunists, Lenin and the Bolsheviks defended the proletarian character of the Party and did not allow it to degenerate into a number of petty-bourgeois groups and trends. The aims of the Bolshevik Party were those of all the oppressed and it was from the start the true party of the people. Led by this party the working class, allied to the peasantry, overthrew tsarism and carried through a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia. In the course of the further development of this revolution all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties became completely isolated from the people and politically bankrupt. The Bolshevik Party turned out to be the only party in Russia capable of uniting the working-class struggle for socialism with the peasants' struggle for land, the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples of Russia, and the nation-wide peace movement into a single revolutionary stream with a single aim—that of overthrowing the bourgeois Provisional Government and establishing Soviet power.

With the victory of the socialist revolution the Bolshevik Party became the ruling party. In the period of transition from capitalism to socialism the Party led the rebuilding along socialist lines of the whole national, economic, political and cultural life of the country, strengthening the social, political and ideological unity of Soviet society and consolidating and extending the social basis of the Soviet state. The building of communism, the historical mission of the working class, became the task of the whole Soviet people. The social basis of the CPSU also underwent changes: it was transformed from the party of the working class into a party of the whole people, and its home and foreign policies now meet the needs of the nation as a whole.

The CPSU is the militant, steeled vanguard of the Soviet

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 467.

people, uniting on a voluntary basis the most advanced and class-conscious workers, collective farmers and intellectuals in the Soviet Union.

The Party's immense creative force derives from the fact that it is guided by the people's vital interests, expresses the aspirations and strivings of the millions, and is based on the theory of scientific communism, on Marxism-Leninism.

Formed by the great Lenin, the Communist Party led the peoples of our country to socialist victory and is now leading the wide-scale construction of communism. This period of extensive communist construction is characterised by a steady, law-governed increase in the role and significance of the CPSU as the leading and directing force of Soviet society: the more grandiose are the tasks in the building of the new society, the higher is the significance of the organising role of the Party. The Communist Party also exerts a powerful influence on the whole course of world history through its revolutionary work and ideas, and is in fact the most important political force in the world today.

The CPSU does all that is necessary to strengthen the unity of the socialist countries and that of the entire world communist movement. Its relations with all fraternal Communist and Workers' Parties are of a truly Leninist character. Never before, since Lenin's death, has the CPSU been so strong and in a position to solve the most complex theoretical and practical tasks as now.

The CPSU, in conjunction with other fraternal parties, has made outstanding discoveries in theory and has advanced and elaborated new theoretical theses on the current issues of modern social development. It has, for the first time in the history of Marxism-Leninism, clarified and defined concretely the main stages in the world liberation struggle from the overthrow of feudal, colonial and capitalist oppression to the building of communist society. It has laid bare the content of the modern age, explored the various roads leading to the socialist revolution and the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, clarified the relationship between the general democratic and the socialist tasks of the working class, enriched the Leninist teaching relating to the alliance of the forces of socialism with those of the national liberation movement, and solved on a scientific basis the problem of war and peace in modern times. The new Party Programme unanimously approved by the whole Soviet people

and the world communist movement is the highest expression of the Party's theoretical work in the study of the laws and prospects of the development of human society.

Throughout its entire history the CPSU has carried on an irreconcilable struggle against Right and Left opportunism, Trotskyism, revisionism, dogmatism, sectarianism, nationalism and chauvinism in all their shapes and forms, both within the country and in the international arena. The Party has steeled and strengthened itself in this struggle for the great principles of Marxism-Leninism and it does not fear the intrigues of splitters and opportunists from wherever they come.

Class Struggle Is the Motive Force of Social Development

The struggle of the overwhelming majority of mankind against their oppressors began as soon as classes and class antagonisms appeared in society. The resistance of the world's toilers to oppression and exploitation has been the great motive and creative force of history. The peasants' revolts and wars undermined feudalism. The history of capitalist society is that of the bitter struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. And the ruthless imperialist exploitation of colonial and dependent nations produced the powerful national liberation movement.

Class struggle has assumed various forms and has had varying degrees of sharpness throughout history. People were conscious of this struggle even in the remote past. The facts of class struggle were vividly described even by the historians of antiquity and of the Renaissance, for it was impossible for them to depict social life without reflecting something of its essential content. But only Marx and Engels made clear the law-governed nature of class struggle. The entire history of the development of antagonistic societies is determined by this law: "...All historical struggles, whether they proceed in the political, religious, philosophical or some other ideological domain, are in fact only the more or less clear expression of struggles of social classes, and ... the existence and thereby the collisions, too, between these classes are in turn conditioned by the degree of development of their economic position, by the mode of their production and of their exchange determined by it."¹ This law, accord-

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1969, pp. 396-97.

ing to Engels, is as important for historical science as the law of the transformation of energy is for natural science.

Class struggle has its origin in the antagonistic contradictions that exist between exploiters and exploited. The very position of oppressed classes in society and the repressions they suffer from their oppressors compel them to resort to revolutionary struggle. Class struggle begins spontaneously, before a class is aware of its basic interests, but its struggle gradually becomes conscious as it acquires knowledge of these interests.

Class struggle always has certain special features deriving from the particular mode of production and class structure of the society in question. In ancient Rome, for instance, class struggle took place mainly among the privileged minority, that is, between the free wealthy and free poor. The main bulk of the working population, the slaves especially, were used by the contending parties as a passive force. But when slavery was in a state of decline and was no longer able to hold vast numbers of slaves in unquestioning subordination, the revolts of the slaves began. The greatest of these was that led by Spartacus. The poorest sections of the free citizens of Rome often joined forces with the slaves. But the slaves, a great mass of loosely organised people from numerous tribes, were unable to win because they were not the bearers of any new, higher mode of production. Their struggle was, in the main, a spontaneous one and pursued a very limited end—freedom from slavery. At the same time the slaves' struggle undermined the foundations of slavery and helped to destroy it.

Class struggle under feudalism rose to a higher level. The peasants represented a more homogeneous mass, united within a community. Stronger feudal exploitation aroused sharper class antagonism between the peasants and their feudal overlords. Spontaneous popular revolts under feudalism involved broad masses of peasants and were distinguished for their bitterness, often developing into prolonged peasant wars—the Jacquerie in France and the revolt led by Wat Tyler in England, the Hussite wars in Bohemia, the peasant wars in Germany and Russia, the Tai Ping rebellion in China and many others. Peasant revolts and wars assumed more and more the character of conscious, purposeful movements. Most revolts were crushed savagely and bloody revenge was

taken on the peasants. For example, after the peasant war in Germany had been defeated its leader Thomas Müntzer was executed and hundreds of peasants had their eyes put out. More than 100,000 peasants had been killed in battles and punitive operations in the course of a few weeks. The bitter words that were often repeated in those times: “The masters can't kill all the peasants, for who will work for them then?” were poor consolation. Those who survived had to pay a fine for the rest of their lives. Knights and abbots plundered villages shamelessly on the pretext of obtaining compensation for damage done. The countryside lay in ruins. Rows of the blind, holding hands, walked along its roads.

But the fact that the peasants were defeated—because the objective and subjective prerequisites for their liberation did not exist and the peasants were divided among themselves, and there was an inevitable lack of working-class leadership—does not mean that their revolts were in vain. On the contrary, they played a progressive role by undermining feudalism and contributing to its downfall.

It is the historical mission of the working class to eliminate capitalism and the exploitation of man by man and to build a classless, communist society. Of all the classes opposing the bourgeoisie the working class is the most class conscious. The working class is bound up with large-scale production—the most advanced form of social economy—and the working conditions in big factories, where very large numbers of workers are concentrated, promote the organisation, discipline and solidarity of workers and make them the most capable of active conscious action. By participation in strikes workers convince themselves by their own experience that unity and the ability to take organised action are their most powerful weapons in the struggle against their class enemy.

Compared to former oppressed classes, the working class is distinguished by its great ability to unite not only nationally but internationally, as a result of which its struggle has assumed world-wide proportions. The working class is the most organised class of all the toiling classes. The class interests of the working class coincide with those of all working people, all of whom are equally interested in securing their liberation from bourgeois oppression. This is what makes possible the lasting alliance of the working class with the broad masses.

As Lenin pointed out, the revolutionary alliance of the

workers and the peasants is their guarantee of victory over capitalism. The class consciousness and organisation of the working class make it the most revolutionary class. The peasantry is also subjected to ruthless exploitation, but a peasant possesses a plot of land of his own with the result that the outlook of the worker and that of the small proprietor are at war in his mind. Workers possess nothing but their hands. They, as Marx expressed it, have nothing to lose but their chains and a whole world to gain. The working class carries on its struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party, which arms it with scientific knowledge of its fundamental class interests and of how to go about defending them. It follows that in these conditions, created by capitalist development itself, only the working class, in alliance with the peasantry and all other working people, is capable of carrying through the historical task of burying capitalism and building a new, communist, society.

The Principal Forms of Working-Class Struggle

The class struggle takes a variety of forms: economic, political and ideological. The scale of the struggle depends primarily on the level that a given class has attained in its development. *Economic* struggle is historically the first form, still to a great extent a spontaneous form of working-class struggle in the day-to-day interests of workers: for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions and so on. Economic struggle is of the first importance for the working class, since it is the only way the immediate needs of workers can be met and action taken against the attacks of owners on their basic rights. Demands that arise directly from his working and living conditions are clear to every worker. Economic struggle therefore always involves broad sections of the working people and, by encouraging active involvement and class consciousness, serves as an elementary school of class struggle. It also prepares the workers for struggle for higher goals by furthering their revolutionary education.

The first workers' organisations, trade unions, emerged in the course of economic struggle. The unity and organisation of the working class is the most important condition for success in the class struggle, and the working class in some capitalist countries is winning serious economic gains through good organisation. But the economic struggle alone can never bring freedom to the working class: the struggle for

better conditions of sale of labour to capital cannot at any time eliminate exploitation itself.

The highest form of class struggle is the *political* struggle to satisfy the fundamental demands of the working class. "...The most essential, the 'decisive' interests of classes can be satisfied *only* by radical *political* changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied only by a political revolution that will replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat."¹ The political struggle, the struggle of the working class as a whole against the capitalist class as a whole, is determined by the economic relations of capitalism, in which the interests of the capitalists as a class are opposed to those of the workers as a class. The opposition of interests is even sharper in politics. In their battle for better conditions the workers run up against the bourgeois state—the "collective capitalist"—so that, strictly speaking, every class struggle is a political struggle, since entire classes are involved.

All attempts to compel individual capitalists at particular factories or in particular branches of industry to shorten working hours by taking strike action are examples of economic struggle. But a workers' movement to have, say, an 8-hour working day made law, is already a political struggle. A political movement, the movement of a class striving to realise its aims, thus grows out of isolated economic movements. The latter require a certain amount of organisation and are a means of developing this organisation further. The economic struggle brought into existence the first form of working-class organisation, the trade union, but the political struggle created the highest form of class organisation, the political party. The essential aim of the working-class struggle is to establish and consolidate workers' power. But this struggle can be successful only when guided by a Marxist party.

Alongside the economic and political struggles there is a third important form of working-class struggle, and that is the *ideological* struggle. This is a struggle to liberate the minds of workers from bourgeois ideology and to introduce socialist thinking to them so that they can understand for themselves what their own most basic interests are. Led by

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 390-91.

a revolutionary party, the working class comes out in defence of its class interests, that is, those interests involving it as a whole class. This promotes the workers' class consciousness, i.e., it helps them become aware of the similarity of the interests of all the workers of a given country, of the fact that all workers belong to one and the same class, and that the only way they can improve their position and win their freedom is to struggle against the class of capitalists.

The ideological struggle has become especially sharp and important in modern times. The more victories are won by the world socialist system, the deeper becomes the crisis of world capitalism, the more intense becomes the class struggle, and the more effective are the ideas of Marxism-Leninism in rallying and mobilising the masses in the battle for communism.

Modern capitalist ideologists and reformists often make use of the theory of "social mobility" in their efforts to gloss over class contradictions. According to this theory social strata under capitalism are exceedingly unstable, and it is therefore an easy matter for someone to move from one stratum to another—the capitalist goes bankrupt and becomes a worker, and the worker, by getting an education, becomes an intellectual. Moreover, say the supporters of this theory, such mobile strata can have no stable class interests. Thus it is demonstrated that class distinctions under capitalism have lost their distinctness! But life shows that only certain exceptional individuals rise to the "top", while for the masses "mobility" mostly means movement in a downward direction.

Bourgeois and social-democratic theoreticians are particularly fond of talking about the so-called middle class. The "middle class" is alleged to be growing to a gigantic size under capitalism, absorbing both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But there is no middle class as an economically and politically defined group occupying a particular place in production.

Social-democratic theoreticians, especially those in West Germany and Austria, put forward the idea of so-called social partnership, viz., that workers and industrialists under modern capitalism are no longer antagonists but partners who must co-operate in their "common" aims. The "social partnership" theory is close to the doctrine of "human industrial relations", according to which the main condition for

eliminating social conflicts is the creation of a "normal" psychological "climate" at places of work. To achieve this an atmosphere of "comfort" must be created at factories—with many external shows of goodwill toward workers on the part of owners and managers—handshakes, congratulations and greetings on holidays and family occasions, visits to workers' dwellings and the like—all this supposedly eliminating class struggle.

The inventions of the apologists of capitalism concerning the absence of classes and class struggle in modern bourgeois society are actively propagated by reformists and revisionists. The Programme of the CPSU describes the "evolution" of Right-wing socialists as follows: "Formerly the Right-wing Socialists refused to recognise the class struggle to the point of recognising the dictatorship of the proletariat. Today they deny not only the existence of class struggle in bourgeois society, but also the very existence of antagonistic classes."

The realities of life in the modern capitalist world are such that the class differentiation of society is becoming ever sharper and class struggle ever more bitter. The working class is extending its actions in defence of its economic and political interests. The class struggle in the various capitalist countries progresses unevenly, but it has become sharper in recent years in France, Italy, Japan and the USA, where there were 4,139 strikes between 1945 and 1960, 2,413,000 people taking part in them (the corresponding figures for the pre-war years were only half as great). The gigantic battles which took place in Belgium in late 1960 and early 1961 demonstrated that the disintegration of the imperialist colonial system inevitably sharpens the social contradictions in the metropolitan countries.

The development of monopoly capital into state-monopoly capital is followed by the intensifying attacks of the big monopolies on the interests of the working class and the broad masses. In its attempts to retain power the financial oligarchy employs, besides conventional repressive measures, various means of deception and corruption to split the working class and its organisations, including the trade union movement, both on a national and an international scale. It buys off the leadership of the trade unions and co-operative and other organisations and increases the number of workers' bureaucrats by giving them well-paid jobs in

industry, in municipal bodies and in the state apparatus. The anti-communist and anti-worker laws passed in the USA and Spain, the banning of the Communist Parties in Greece, Spain, Indonesia and other countries, the mass sacking and blacklisting of Communists and other advanced workers in some capitalist countries, the introduction of political "reliability" tests of employees, police repressions against the democratic press, the suppression of strikes by means of armed force—all these things have become the normal methods of imperialist bourgeois governments.

But a favourable situation for the advance of the labour movement on a world scale has now developed. Soviet achievements and the progress made by the world socialist system as a whole, the deepening crisis of world capitalism, the growing influence of the Communist Parties among the masses of the people, and the ideological collapse of reformism have all produced important changes in the conditions of the class struggle in favour of the working people.

The proletariat's economic struggle in modern conditions is distinguished not only by its particularly bitter character but also by its closer links with political struggles—for peace, against the arms race, against the fascistisation of countries, the struggle for democracy integral to the struggle for socialism. Political strikes have become an important weapon of the working class.

The working class is directing its main blows against the capitalist monopolies, in the liquidation of which all sections of society are interested. Working-class alliance with all other working people is forged in the course of this struggle: the working class unites the peasantry, its main ally, around itself in the fight against survivals of feudalism and monopoly domination, and broad sections of white collar workers and intellectuals reduced by capitalism to the position of proletarians also become allies of the working class.

The class struggle in the developing countries is combined with the national liberation struggle. Different classes may advance in a united front in the national liberation struggle against imperialism because this struggle is democratic in its social content. But the various classes taking part in the struggle do not all take the same stand in relation to it. The working class is the most consistent fighter for the complete solution of the tasks of the national, anti-imperialist, democratic revolution. The peasantry, which is closely interested

in the implementation of agrarian reforms and in getting rid of feudal survivals, is the ally of the working class, as are all other democratic forces.

The national bourgeoisie of colonial and dependent countries, where it is unconnected with imperialist circles, can also participate in a national-democratic alliance. In a number of countries the bourgeoisie has led the national liberation movement and now finds itself, after liberation, the ruling class. The national bourgeoisie in these countries has still retained its ability to fight imperialism and feudalism and, in this sense, is progressive. But the national bourgeoisie possesses a dual character and is inclined to show a conciliatory attitude to imperialism and feudalism.

Countries fighting for their national independence, as well as those that have already won it, have to face very urgent social tasks as soon as general national questions have, on the whole, been solved. But the fulfilment of these social tasks gives rise to clashes of class interests, and as a result the class struggle becomes very sharp. Then, as social conflicts become more acute, the national bourgeoisie more and more manifests its inclination to collaborate with internal reaction and with imperialism, while the masses become more and more convinced that the best way to do away with their age-long backwardness and to improve their living conditions is to take the path of non-capitalist development. "The aim of the working class and the Communist Parties in the national liberation movement," says an open letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, "is to *complete the tasks of the anti-imperialist democratic revolution*, to advance and strengthen the national front based on alliance with the peasantry and the patriotic national bourgeoisie, to prepare the ground for the formation of a national-democratic state and the transfer to the non-capitalist path of development."

The international revolutionary labour movement is today represented by the world socialist system, the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries and the national liberation movements of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties (June 1969) stressed that under the banner of Leninism the revolutionary movement in most countries has risen to new heights, new Communist Parties have been formed and consolidated, and the world communist movement has

become a truly world-wide, modern and extremely influential political force.

One of the main guarantees of further victories for the national liberation movement is its continued alliance and co-operation with the countries of the world socialist system—the main force in the anti-imperialist struggle—and its firm alliance with the labour movement in the capitalist countries. In modern conditions the struggle of the international working class against capital and foreign oppression can be successful only if peace is preserved. The main question of modern times is therefore the question of war and peace, and the general line of the international communist movement today is thus to struggle for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism.

The ever widening class struggle in the capitalist world is irrefutable evidence of the truth of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine that struggle between social classes is the motive force of history in all exploitive societies—and that class struggle comes to a climax and takes its sharpest forms in periods of social revolution.

CHAPTER TEN

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

The Nature of Revolution

History is made up of a succession of periods of gradual development divided off from one another by relatively short sharp periods of revolution in which whole social systems are broken up. *A social revolution involves the complete destruction of an old social system and the transition of society from one social formation to another.* Revolutions are preceded by more or less long periods of social development.

Before the bourgeois revolutions in Europe royal dynasties had, of course, replaced one another by means of wars and royal coups; and individual countries and feudal barons had quarrelled, made peace, quarrelled again and made it up again, while grabbing land from one another or robbing neighbouring castles, driving away cattle, or avenging insulted honour. But none of these things ever changed the essence of the feudal system. And even though peasants' revolts flared up from time to time, the ruling classes were able to take advantage of the peasants' insufficient organisation to crush them without mercy.

But an epoch of powerful social upheavals then began. The social system of the leading European countries underwent radical changes between the 16th and 18th centuries and feudalism was replaced by capitalism.

The philosophers of the rising bourgeoisie provided the theoretical justification of the people's right to make revolu-

tion, and Robespierre, Marat and Saint Juste, the tribunes of the French Revolution, which took place in the late 18th century, made impassioned speeches in defence of this right. Even before this time, the well-known revolutionary democrat and Utopian Communist Jean Meslier wrote, urging the people to engage in revolution: "... Try to unite ... in order to shake off once and for all the tyrannical yoke of your princes and your kings; overthrow everywhere all these thrones of injustice and infamy, smash all these crowned heads, puncture your tyrants' pride and conceit—and never let them reign over you again."¹

Thomas Jefferson declared that all men were born equal, that governments were instituted to secure the inalienable rights of men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. He wrote that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is not only the right of the people but its duty to institute new government to effect their safety and happiness". "The general spread of the light of science," Jefferson wrote, "has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favoured few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God."²

These remarkable words uttered by the greatest spokesman of the young American republic substantiate the inalienable right of people to make revolution. The ideologists of the rising bourgeoisie looked ahead, calling for revolution against the rotten feudal system. But once the bourgeoisie had come to power and the class struggle against it became intense, the views of bourgeois thinkers on the rights of the people to make revolution changed radically and acquired a reactionary character. The apologists of the dying bourgeoisie now turn their back on the future. They view revolution as an abnormal or accidental phenomenon, and deny the lawfulness of social revolutions, for the simple reason that revolution is now directed against the rule of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests they defend.

Social revolutions have their roots deep in the economic

¹ J. Meslier, *Testament*, Tome III, Amsterdam, 1864, pp. 377-78.

² *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson. Memoir, Correspondence, and Miscellanies from the Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, sec. ed., Vol. IV, Boston, 1830, p. 441.

life of society and are therefore historically necessary. All revolutions have their origin in conflicts between new forces of production and old relations of production which it has become necessary to eliminate. Thus a revolution is not a breach of the normal course of social advance as the enemies of Marxism-Leninism aver, but the necessary form of the further advance of class society.

Revolutions are not timed to suit the desires of individuals, groups or even classes, but only take place when the necessary objective conditions are ripe for revolution. The objective necessity for revolution in a class-divided society follows from the fact that the ruling classes can defend old relations of production with the help of their entire system of political, legal and other institutions, above all the state and law. In order to do away with these obstacles new social forces are needed to oppose the old ones, and because the reactionary classes retain the old relations of production by the exercise of state power, the progressive classes have first of all to win political power. The deep-lying processes that are at work in the development of the forces of production finally give rise to a storm during which the high waves of the people's anger sink the old ship of political power and throw up new social forces. This means that whether the new relations of production win or not depends, in the final analysis, on whether or not the revolutionary classes win state power. It follows that *the issue of state power is the main issue of any revolution*. The transfer of power from a reactionary class to a progressive class can only be effected through a sharp class struggle, the highest form of which is revolution, frequently developing into civil war (though it does not necessarily involve civil war in all conditions).

Revolutions are also of tremendous importance for the advance of social thought: they reflect the true state of affairs in relations between classes and project society forward. This in turn makes it possible for the people to ascertain what truth there is in the various theories of society and to come to an understanding of their place in historical reality. Only revolution can eliminate reactionary social systems and establish progressive ones. Only revolution can resolve the economic and class contradictions that arise in periods of peaceful social development. The battering ram of revolution removes the obstacles that lie in the path of economic, political and cultural progress. Social upheaval reveals the

unseemly underside of a social system that has outlived itself. At the sight of it people begin to think more deeply and to draw the necessary political conclusions from it. This is an important stimulus to the self-awareness of the people of a country, and over a comparatively short period of time they discover and resolve in practice the contradictions in social life that have been piling up gradually over, perhaps, centuries.

Periods of revolution produce an unprecedented upsurge in the creative energies of millions of people. In the course of a social revolution the people who make it are spiritually enriched—they become new men. Marx said that man changes his own nature by changing Nature, and this is clearly all the more applicable to men who change the nature of their own social relations. There can be no revolution without revolutionaries. But a revolution, in its turn, generates and perfects revolutionaries. People discover powers and abilities in themselves of which they had no suspicion. That is why Marx called revolution the locomotive of history. Revolutions are majestic phenomena, menacing for some, for others long-awaited. Their historic essence consists in what they achieve, in their positive results, but it follows from this that we must be careful not to seek revolution for revolution's sake.

A revolutionary situation is the sum total of the objective conditions (independent of the will of individual groups, parties and classes) that express the economic and political crisis of a given social system and make revolution possible. Lenin taught that a revolutionary situation is characterised by the following signs: "(1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn

both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the 'upper classes' themselves* into independent historical action.

"Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible."¹

Revolution is, of course, impossible without a revolutionary situation. But not every revolutionary situation leads to revolution. A revolution can result from what is objectively a revolutionary situation only when the subjective conditions for it are also ripe. In his analysis of the laws of revolution Lenin came to the conclusion that the subjective factor is the decisive force in any revolution, all essential objective preconditions being present. Lenin attached especial importance to such subjective elements as the moral force and influence of the revolutionary classes and their consciousness of the aims and tasks of the revolution. Thus, a revolution matures when the objective causes of it are complemented by the readiness and ability of the revolutionary class to take mass revolutionary action sufficient to smash the old rule—which, as Lenin pointed out, never "falls" if it is not pushed. The resoluteness of the working class, the unbending will of the workers to perish rather than surrender, are, said Lenin, the decisive factors in history.

The Character and Motive Forces of Revolution

The character of a revolution depends on what class comes to power and becomes the politically dominant force in society, and on what relations of production are established in the course of it.

The motive forces of a revolution are all those social classes that take part in it by struggling against reactionary classes that have outlived themselves, opening the way to new and more progressive relations of production. But the class that actually carries through the revolution is the leading force in it, taking all other classes and social groups along with it. The motive forces of a revolution and the leading class in it are determined primarily by the character of the revolution and by the concrete historical conditions in which it takes place, i.e., by the balance of social forces at the time.

The epoch of bourgeois revolutions covers the period in social development during which feudalism collapsed and

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 213-14.

capitalism established itself. The bourgeois revolutions involved the transfer of state power from feudal barons, landowners and members of the nobility to the bourgeoisie or a coalition of the bourgeoisie and landowners: "The bourgeois revolution faced only one task—to sweep away, to cast aside, to destroy all the fetters of the preceding social order. By fulfilling this task every bourgeois revolution fulfils all that is required of it; it accelerates the growth of capitalism."¹

The bourgeois revolutions broke out because there was a conflict between the new, more advanced forces of production then coming into being and the obsolete relations of production represented by feudal bondage, which had thus become a brake on further social advance. This economic conflict grew into a sharp social conflict between the nascent bourgeoisie and the moribund class of feudal barons and serfowners. As capitalist relations of production developed within the framework of feudalism, the principal object of the bourgeois revolution became the seizure of power by the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeois revolutions also involved the peasantry and the classes directly tied to the nascent capitalist economy—the urban petty bourgeoisie and the emerging proletariat. The bourgeoisie was of course the leading force in the bourgeois revolutions, uniting around itself the peasants, artisans and urban proletariat, and won political power with their help.

Among bourgeois revolutions, bourgeois-democratic revolutions have a special place. As Lenin said, the important feature of this kind of revolution is that in them "the mass of the people, their majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution the imprint of *their* own demands, *their* attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed."²

The bourgeois revolutions were historically an essential and progressive phenomenon. They made possible very great advances in the development of the forces of production. But having made these advances capitalism then became the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 416.

greatest obstacle to social progress. The contradiction that developed between the forces of production created by the people and capitalist relations of production faced humanity with the urgent task of breaking out of its capitalist shell for only in this way could production once again serve the common good unhindered.

**Socialist Revolution—
the Highest Type
of Revolution**

The only thing that can rid working people of exploitation, poverty, unemployment and national oppression is socialist revolution—and the transformation of the world in their common interests.

The motive force of socialist revolutions is the exploited working people, led by the working class—whose interests coincide with those of the overwhelming majority of society. The socialist revolution on the world scale covers the entire epoch of the elimination of capitalism and the consolidation of socialism in the fields of politics, economics and culture. "The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics."¹

In the narrow sense, a socialist revolution is the direct seizure of power by the proletariat, i.e., a strictly political revolution. This is, of course, of great importance, but it does not represent the end of a socialist revolution. On the contrary, it is only its starting point.

Socialist revolution differs entirely from all preceding kinds of revolution. It produces the most profound changes in the lives of people. Revolutions of the past confined themselves to changes in political power to bring this power into conformity with new economic relations that had already come into existence—whereas socialist revolutions have to solve the problem of setting up entirely new economic relations from scratch. That is why past revolutions were characterised mostly by their destructiveness. But a socialist revolution is characterised, above all, by its constructiveness, its highest goal being to create social forms of ownership and socialist relations of production.

All previous revolutions replaced one form of private ownership by another, one means of enslaving working peo-

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 144.

ple by another. It was not their aim to eliminate exploitation itself. In contrast, a socialist revolution is directed against all forms of the exploitation of man by man, and hence against all forms of private ownership of the means of production. Moreover, a socialist revolution, unlike previous revolutions, which carried the masses along with them only temporarily, unites the broadest sections of the working people and other democratic forces into a firm and lasting union in the struggle for socialism. The main issue of any socialist revolution is that of winning and retaining political power—state power—by the working class, for until it has done this it cannot proceed with the economic and social transformation of society.

Marx and Engels laid the foundations of the theory of socialist revolution. They brought out the contradictions that existed between the bourgeoisie and the working class and showed that the deepening of these contradictions would lead to socialist revolution. When Marx and Engels were working out the theory of socialist revolution capitalism was in its prime, developing and advancing more or less evenly. Marx and Engels therefore supposed that a socialist revolution “will take place in all civilised countries, that is, at least simultaneously in England, America, France and Germany”.¹

However, summing up economic and political changes during the imperialist stage of capitalist development Lenin demonstrated that capitalist countries were developing unevenly under imperialism: countries which at one time lagged behind economically now caught up with and outstripped more advanced countries. As a result the international balance of forces was constantly upset and conflicts and wars for the redivision of the world broke out—i.e., Lenin showed that the development of capitalism in different countries was extremely uneven and that socialism would not therefore win in all countries simultaneously, but, at first, in only one or a few countries at a time.

**Socialist Revolution
as a World Revolutionary
Process**

revolution in one country is a basis for the advance of the

Socialist revolution is not a narrowly national phenomenon: it is a world-wide, international process. The victory of a socialist

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1969, p. 92.

socialist revolution on a world scale. This does not by any means imply, of course, that a socialist revolution victorious in one country can then be exported to the other countries of the world. Revolutions are not imposed on nations: they ripen within a given country on the basis of its internal contradictions.

At one time the only factors tending to revolutionise the masses were the vices and contradictions of the bourgeois world. Now this factor is complemented by the economic and political example of the socialist countries. When the socialist revolution took place in Russia bourgeois ideologists assured everyone that it was an exception that would not be repeated. But within little more than thirty years socialist revolutions erupted in a large number of countries of Asia and Europe. Then of course it was said that such things could never happen in the Western hemisphere. But events in Cuba upset this prediction too.

Socialist revolution is the most important historical regularity of present times, the indispensable means of the birth of the new world.

Imperialism represents a kind of giant pyramid with the enslaved nations of the world at its base and a small handful of imperialist powers at the top. Pressed down by this multi-storied weight of exploitation, the nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania were for a long time politically divided and unarmed in all respects in the face of their enslavers. But the monstrous exploitation of colonial and dependent nations by the colonial powers eventually gave rise to the struggle for freedom and national independence of the oppressed peoples of the world.

The first victory of socialism marked the beginning of the era of the liberation of colonial and dependent countries. In the post-war period, the powerful waves of national liberation revolutions have virtually swept the colonial system completely away in the overwhelming majority of countries enslaved by imperialism. As a result, this period has seen great changes in the political map of the world, over 50 new national states emerging. The stream of the national liberation movement, which flows through three continents and carries along with it dozens of different peoples, is deciding the fate of nearly one half of mankind.

What are the social essence and the main tasks of national liberation revolutions? Their economic and political

essence covers not only the elimination of colonial oppression but also the introduction of radical agrarian reforms involving the whole peasantry and made in its interests, the building of a national industry, the democratisation of social life, the strengthening of political independence, and the adoption of a peaceful foreign policy. The national liberation revolutions of today do not end with the winning of formal political independence and the creation of a national state system. They go further and deeper, reaching the level of the struggle for economic freedom from imperialism, for it is only when the economic grip of imperialism has been broken that full and complete political independence is achieved.

An essential feature of modern national liberation revolutions is the growing unity of the enslaved peoples resulting from their consciousness of their common interests and their efforts to establish close links with one another. The Afro-Asian solidarity movement, the movement for African and Arab unity, the aid given by independent African countries to other African nations not yet liberated from the colonialist yoke, the desire of the liberated nations to co-ordinate their economic policies, etc., all indicate that the struggle of each individual people is but a link in the long chain of the national liberation revolution directed against the whole imperialist system.

The striving to attain socialist ideals is now typical of the national liberation movement. Socialist ideas are penetrating into the minds and hearts of the enslaved peoples and leaving their mark on the liberation struggle. It is therefore no accident that 10 of the 36 independent African countries have announced that socialism is their official state policy. This does not mean, however, that the national liberation movement is socialist or proletarian in character.

Colonial and dependent nations can wage a successful struggle for freedom only in unity with the world socialist system and the international labour movement. The character and content of the world revolutionary process in the present age is distinguished by the merging into one stream of the various struggles against imperialism waged by the nations now building socialism and communism, by the revolutionary working-class movement in the capitalist countries and by the oppressed peoples fighting for national liberation. The decisive role in this anti-imperialist alliance of revolutionary forces is played by the international working

class and its most important offspring, the world socialist system.

In modern conditions socialism is winning over the hearts and minds of people the world over not only by its ideas and principles but more than anything else by its great deeds and successes, by its living example—and the force of this example is in direct proportion to the achievements of socialism in economic and cultural construction.

So, the basic laws of the disintegration of the colonial system in its final stages are: the tendency for the formerly enslaved nations to increase their political and economic independence, to establish various forms of unity among themselves and to strengthen their ties with the world socialist system as the only realistic means of liquidating imperialist domination, and the tendency for the liberated nations to follow the non-capitalist path of development.

In the present day it is impossible to move forward without advancing towards socialism. The national liberation revolutions are thus called upon by history to clear the way for socialism in their battle against imperialism. Lenin affirmed that "in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect".¹

The Non-Capitalist Path of Development

Many of the newly liberated countries, on gaining their political independence, were faced with the problem of deciding what path they should follow in their future development, and naturally turned to see what experience the economically advanced nations of the world had to offer them. We must now ask the question: do all countries have to go through the capitalist stage of development before they can take the road to socialism?

What does capitalism give the people? Capitalism cannot provide for rapid economic growth in order to eliminate their poverty and thus only brings them continued suffering. It creates ever deepening social inequalities, it cannot even guarantee everyone a job, and its cultural benefits remain the privilege of the few.

But what does socialism give people? Socialism brings

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 482.

them freedom and happiness. As the Soviet Union's experience has shown, socialism means rapid economic growth—the formerly backward agrarian tsarist Russia has become in a few short decades a front-ranking industrial power. And nobody helped her to do it—on the contrary, many serious obstacles were deliberately placed in her way.

Socialism is sweeping the exploitation of man by man from the face of the earth and eliminating political injustice. It is opening up opportunities for everyone to do noble work for the good of the whole of society—and, in this way, to work for his own good, too.

The programmatic documents of the world communist movement advanced the very important thesis that it is possible for the socially and economically less advanced nations to take the non-capitalist road. This question is part of the more general question of how countries with progressive modes of social production can influence and help socio-economically underdeveloped nations.

The non-capitalist development of newly liberated countries is not only a possibility but a necessity dictated by the objective logic of world history. The existence of the socialist system, its material aid and moral support, make it relatively easy for economically backward nations to make a gigantic leap forward by omitting the painful capitalist stage. But this possibility cannot be realised without difficulty: it requires open struggle by the progressive social forces of a country against the forces of internal and external reaction. The non-capitalist road is possible only under appropriate political conditions requiring above all the formation of a national-democratic state. The Programme of the CPSU defines the national-democratic state as an independent sovereign state that comes out against imperialism, military blocs and all forms of neo-colonialism, protects the general democratic rights of the people and ensures the participation of all classes and sections of the population in determining state policy, thus making it possible to effect social changes in the interests of all working people.

The overwhelming majority of the people of economically backward countries are peasants who live for the most part in the conditions of communal agricultural economy. Many peasants still retain a natural economy. Foreign capital has confined the activities of the local bourgeoisie to small-scale production, handicrafts and petty trade. Though

slow, some development of production does take place in these countries, and this inevitably entails the growth of the working class—the latter growing faster than the national bourgeoisie, which is an extremely important factor in determining the balance of class forces in developing countries, a factor that does not obtain in the advanced capitalist countries. It is vitally important to take this special feature into account when elaborating the strategy and tactics of the world communist movement. The rapid development of the working class, with a relatively slow rate of increase of the national bourgeoisie, is bound to have a great effect not only on the fate of these countries but also on the prospects for the social development of the whole of mankind.

Peaceful and Non-Peaceful Roads of Revolution

There have been many great and bloody political battles in history. In them statesmen, governments and parties have been overthrown and others have taken their place. This history of violence has generated an illusion that political violence can act as a kind of Archimedes' lever to turn social events in any desired direction. Conditions have hitherto always been such that advanced classes of society have every time been compelled to resort to *revolutionary* violence to clear from the road of history forms of social life that have outlived themselves and to open the way for new, progressive forces. "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one."¹

Revolutionary classes have had to resort to violent means because of the fiercely violent resistance of the moribund classes of society. "The less chances a given social class has of defending its rule the more inclined it is to take terrorist measures."² If cruel acts are committed by a people these acts are caused by the far more cruel and age-long oppression to which it has been and is still subjected. Revolutionary violence is the only possible response to the violence of reaction. Violence in the form of armed uprising and civil war inevitably involves terrible bloodshed and death on a mass scale, and the widespread destruction of things of material and spiritual value. This is, in itself, incompatible with our great ideals, which are the most humane in the history

¹ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1965, p. 751.

² G. V. Plekhanov, *Collected Works*, 2nd edition, Vol. IV, p. 63 (Russ. ed.).

of mankind. Lenin stressed that "violence is, of course, alien to our ideals".¹ These ideals correspond to the objective direction of the historical process, for society progresses towards the "abolition of coercive domination of one part of society over another".² Accordingly, Marxism-Leninism has always advocated the humane idea of *peaceful revolution* as a possible and the most desirable means of changing society. In this connection Lenin wrote: "The working class would, of course, prefer to take power *peacefully*".³ This can happen if the revolutionary forces paralyse the resistance of the ruling classes and save the proletariat from the necessity of employing extreme forms of struggle.

Lenin was intolerant of all adventurous ideas of speeding up or "pushing" the revolution in other countries. Marxism, he wrote, "has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions".⁴

The favourite charge levelled against Marxism-Leninism by bourgeois ideologists is that it is attached to violence and that the humane ideals of communism are incompatible with the "low" means used to attain them. They strive to teach the Communists that the end justifies the means, except when this undermines the end itself. But how silent they keep about the fact that the entire life of bourgeois society is founded on violence, a fact which is manifested in its most vile form in fascism.

Depending on concrete historical circumstances, above all on the organisation and class consciousness of the working class and its allies and on the extent of the resistance of the reactionary classes, a socialist revolution can be either *peaceful* or *non-peaceful*. In modern conditions it is possible for the working class in a number of capitalist countries, led by their Communist Parties, to unite the majority of the people in workers' and national fronts—and other possible forms of alliance and political co-operation between different parties and public organisations—and so to win state power without civil war and secure the transfer of the commanding heights of the economy into the hands of the people.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 276.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, pp. 71-72.

The fact that a socialist revolution may follow a peaceful course does not mean that the working class and its allies should abandon non-peaceful means of revolution altogether. Lenin wrote that the ruling exploiting classes may always resort to violence in their attempts to resist the advance of the working people. In such cases, said Lenin, the working class is compelled to follow a non-peaceful road to power. The world communist movement must always be prepared to change its forms of struggle to match concrete historical conditions. But whatever form the transition from one social system to another takes, this transition always constitutes a *revolution*: and sooner or later the working people of every class-divided society are bound to reject private ownership and replace it with communism.

Revolution and War

War is the continuation of politics by violent means involving *armed struggle*. Alongside the armed struggle, which determines the actual course of a war, other factors operate: ideological, diplomatic and economic. But all means and forms of struggle in war are directed to the achievement of *political* ends.

Marxism-Leninism rejects the bourgeois idea that war is an inevitable consequence of an allegedly aggressive human nature and proceeds from the fact that war is not a biological but a socio-political phenomenon. Its roots are buried deep in the social and economic relations of exploiting social systems. War is a historical product of class society. There were armed clashes between tribes before classes emerged but war in the proper sense did not exist. Wars will therefore disappear with the disappearance of class society.

When analysing a war the main thing to be determined is its class character—which class is directing it and for what purpose. "War is a continuation of policy by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them. The policy which a given state, a given class within that state, pursued for a long time before the war is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed."¹

Are wars in general just or unjust? One cannot answer this question in the abstract. It is necessary to know what kind of war is in question. History has seen many unjust

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, p. 400.

wars of conquest which were the continuation of the policies of reactionary classes and strengthened both class and national oppression. But history has also seen wars that were just because they were progressive wars of liberation, releasing nations from foreign oppression and class enslavement. Such wars were the continuation of the policies of progressive classes forced to counter violence with violence.

Just and unjust wars play directly opposite roles in history. Just wars include those that are aimed at the liberation of oppressed classes from their oppressors (civil wars), those that free nations from national oppression by a foreign country, and those that are necessary to defend the gains of a revolution. Wars of liberation, revolutionary wars, will continue to take place so long as imperialism exists. Such wars are not only permissible but inevitable as colonisers never grant peoples their independence of their own free will.

The issue of war and peace has become the basic issue of modern times. Peace on earth is the common desire of thousands of millions of people. Wars have always been hated by the common people. But throughout the whole of history it has always seemed to them that there could be no end to wars and they could only dream of peace among nations. War, as Kant put it, is the animal state of existence of nations, and peace, peaceful existence, their human state. While in Kant's times peace was but a utopian ideal, in our times, when a powerful socialist system exists, a world without war has become the demand of history itself.

The founders of Marxism-Leninism, on the basis of their study of the objective laws of social development, were able to predict a period when socialist and capitalist states would exist side by side in peace because international working-class unity would in the long run make wars between nations impossible.

Lenin observed that the First World War represented such a massive perversion of the latest achievements of culture and civilisation that it threatened to undermine the foundations of human existence itself. Advanced and powerful technology was used on a scale never before seen in history—tremendous destructive forces were directed to the mass extermination of millions of human lives. Lenin foresaw that a time must come when war would become so destructive as to become impossible.

Lenin advanced the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems as the alternative to war. He declared to all the nations of the world on November 8, 1917: "We reject all clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and all economic agreements; we cannot reject these."¹ Lenin proceeded from his firm confidence in the inevitable victory of socialism the world over, but he was aware that the uneven development of capitalism meant that this victory could not be achieved in all countries simultaneously. He therefore concluded that the peaceful coexistence of capitalist and socialist countries is inevitable for a certain historical period.

Lenin's teachings on war, peace and revolution—summarising the vast experience of the working class—constitute the basis of the policy of the world communist movement and of the joint decisions of the fraternal Parties. Guided by the Documents of the International Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties of 1957, 1960 and 1969, the working class is raising high the banner of peace and marshalling the widest sections of the people under it.

Peaceful coexistence between the socialist and capitalist systems presupposes the renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes between states; mutual understanding and trust between nations; the recognition of equal rights and the consideration of mutual interests; non-interference in internal affairs and respect for the right of every nation to solve independently all the issues confronting it; strict respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, and the development of economic and cultural co-operation between them on the basis of full equality and mutual benefit.

General and complete disarmament under strict international control, which the Soviet Union has consistently demanded, is the only road to secure peaceful coexistence in the present day. The Soviet Union has repeatedly and unilaterally reduced its armed forces and cut arms expenditure. Peaceful coexistence, when it opens the way to internationally controlled universal and complete disarmament, will make it possible to release massive material and human resources to improve the lives of ordinary people.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 255.

The socialist system is the centre of attraction of all peace-loving forces the world over. Many non-socialist countries pursue a policy of peace, especially those that have liberated themselves from colonial oppression. The number of non-aligned neutral nations is growing, and there are more and more champions of peace throughout the world, coming from an ever wider variety of social groups. Aggressive circles, in their striving to unleash war, are compelled to take into account the fact that all progressive mankind is struggling against war and that the peace movement is becoming more and more extensive. The socialist nations possess advanced military equipment with which to repulse aggression, and this modern technology makes war dangerous not only for the nation under attack but for the attacking nation, too.

Nuclear weapons and missiles have in the last twenty years entirely changed former concepts of war. Atomic and hydrogen bombs have unprecedented destructive powers. Suffice it to say that the explosive power of only one thermonuclear bomb exceeds the explosive power of all the means of war used in all past wars taken together, including the First and Second World Wars.

War has become not only monstrously destructive but completely pointless: for who wants to take possession of a devastated land of dead men? The monstrous destruction that is now possible is a powerful stimulus to people everywhere to struggle for peace.

In view of all these facts the CPSU, basing itself on the humane principles of communism, has concluded that though the nature of imperialism has not changed, and the danger of a war being started has not been removed, the forces of peace, whose main stronghold is the powerful alliance of the socialist countries, can in present conditions, through joint effort, avert a new world war.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF SOCIETY

The State—an Instrument of Political Power

Political relations inevitably arise in any class-divided society, political bodies are formed and act, and various political ideas and theories come into being.

What is politics? Politics is, first of all, the particular relations that exist between classes and peoples within a given state (domestic politics) and those between states (foreign politics). "Politics is involvement in state affairs, in the direction of the state, in the determination of the forms, tasks and content of state activity."¹

Of course, not all relations between classes constitute politics. For example, when a worker is hired by a capitalist and exploited by him, these do not represent political relations but *economic* ones. But when workers come out against capitalism *as a system* they act politically. But, again, what does "political" mean? It means that the working class is unable to fight for its economic liberation without striving to influence the whole political system of state government and legislation, i.e., without struggling for political freedom.

Politics embraces the problems connected with the organisation of state power, with the ruling of a state, with class relations and relations with foreign nations, and with party struggle within a state, etc. The main issues of all political activities therefore concern the winning, maintaining and use of state power. Any question assumes a political charac-

¹ *Lenin Miscellany XXI*, Moscow, 1933, p. 14 (Russ. ed.).

ter if its solution involves in one way or another the sphere of state activity. Moreover, the policies of states, classes and parties are determined by the balance of class forces both within a given country and in the international arena.

The fundamental economic interests of the class ruling a given society are protected by the entire *political organisation* of that society. In other words, *politics covers all activities which pursue aims and tasks connected with the protection of class interests; ways and means of achieving these aims and tasks.*

And what is the political organisation of a society? It is the *entire machinery through which political power in a given society is given effect.* The state, the political parties, trade unions and other public organisations, the numerous societies which pursue political ends, etc.—all these are but component parts of a single, ramified but tightly knit organisation.

But at the heart of politics is the organisation of state power. The state is called upon to protect and defend the interests “of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class”.¹ The interests and activities of the state are the interests and activities of a definite class or classes—under capitalism, the bourgeoisie, and under socialism, the working class and the peasantry.

The deepest roots of both the internal and external politics of a country lie in the economic relations between the classes existing in it. Basic changes and developments in the country’s political life, and in the methods it uses to create political institutions and implement policies, all have their origin in changes in its economic system.

The fundamental economic interests of a certain class find their most clear-cut, complete and conscious expression in the policies of this class, notably in the policies of its leading party and, if it is in power, of its state. In this sense politics is, as Lenin defined it, the *concentrated expression of economics.* For this reason politics also has a tremendous *back influence* on economic development. While day-to-day economic changes usually result from the impact of developing forces of production, really basic changes in a

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 328.

society’s whole economic system—though they also have their origin in the development of the forces of production—only take place under the direct influence of politics, i.e., when political power is consciously used to make changes in economic relations. In a socialist revolution, for example, the political upheaval as a rule precedes the economic changes. Politics can, therefore, be instrumental in the creation of a new economy.

The state occupies the most important place in the political organisation of society. The state concentrates and brings into focus the most immediate interests of the ruling class as a lens focuses a beam of light. Many ideas have been advanced in the course of history as to the nature of the state. Some thinkers have said, as Lenin noted, that the state is something divine, a mystic force that bears down on its subjects, while others have said that, on the contrary, it is the source of all evil. Still others have seen the state as the embodiment of a nation’s “will”, or else as an agency of “law and order”—standing guard over the public peace. “When we walk the streets at night in safety, it does not strike us that this might be otherwise. This habit of feeling safe has become second nature, and we do not reflect on just how this is due solely to the working of special institutions. Commonplace thinking often has the impression that force holds the state together, but in fact its only bond is the fundamental sense of order which everybody possesses.”¹ Again, some thinkers have urged a strong state and strong government, while others have demanded “absolute” democracy. Yet others have wanted there to be as little government in social life as possible. But for all this variety of points of view on the state none dealt scientifically with the relationship between the economic system of society and its state system, nor with the class character of the state, its aims and functions, and the laws of its emergence and development.

The founders of scientific communism, Marx and Engels, laid the basis of the scientific theory of the state. Lenin developed the Marxist doctrine on the state further by applying it to the new historical conditions of imperialism, and provided a deep and comprehensive elaboration of the basic tenets of the theory of the state: its class essence, its origin and development, its types and forms, and the principles

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, Oxford, 1945, p. 282.

underlying its activities and its function. Lenin, following Marx and Engels, showed that political power is the organized violence of one class over another and the state is the apparatus of this violence. The state is the machine by which one class maintains its domination over another. The state is based on the economic system of society and at the same time has an enormous role in social development.

The state has not always existed. It is a product of historical development. The primitive communal system had no private property or classes. It had, therefore, no need for special institutions of power separated from the people. Social functions were carried out by all responsible adults. Elders elected by everybody were at the head of a community or clan. The authority of the elders and chiefs of tribes was based on their personal merits: their experience, courage and wisdom, etc. Then private ownership emerged. Economic inequality split society into opposite classes with opposing interests, and it became impossible to settle communal affairs collectively: the ruling minority with economic power began to feel the need for machinery of coercion. Institutions were wanted to fix the division of society into classes that was beginning and to make it a permanent feature, giving propertied classes the right to govern and exploit those who owned nothing. The state was invented. "It is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of order; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state."¹

The economic subjugation of working people is mainly effected by the simple circumstance of the ruling class owning the means of production. But this economic dependence of the working people alone is far from enough to ensure the smooth functioning of production based on exploitation.

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 327.

Oppressed people always comprised the majority of any exploitive society and their oppressors an insignificant minority. This minority therefore requires a powerful machinery of state to hold tens or hundreds of millions of people in submission. The state is thus the product and manifestation of the irreconcilability of class contradictions. States arose wherever and whenever class conflicts proved to be objectively insoluble. But for the punitive sword of the state exploiting classes could not have survived.

The state as an instrument of political power possesses a number of characteristic features. It is a system of institutions set up by a ruling class, peopled by an army of civil servants, officials, legislators, lawyers, ministers, judges, policemen, soldiers, etc., and designed to guard and defend the role of an exploiting minority. The whole enormous structure has a complex hierarchical arrangement, reflecting, as if in a mirror, the social structure of a given society. The bourgeoisie, for instance, under capitalism, is in the position of command both in production and in the state. Under feudalism landowners governed both production and the state. The tsar in pre-revolutionary Russia was also the biggest landowner.

The essential feature of any state is its isolation from the common people. The state "has always been a certain apparatus which stood outside society and consisted of a group of people engaged solely, or almost solely, or mainly, in ruling. People are divided into the ruled, and into specialists in ruling, those who rise above society and are called rulers, statesmen. This apparatus, this group of people who rule others, always possesses certain means of coercion, of physical force, irrespective of whether this violence over people is expressed in the primitive club, or in more perfected types of weapons in the epoch of slavery, or in the fire-arms which appeared in the Middle Ages, or, finally, in modern weapons, which in the twentieth century are technical marvels and are based entirely on the latest achievements of modern technology."¹

The essence of the state reveals itself in its principal functions—*internal* and *external*. Its main functions are internal and these determine the entire work of the state in the field of foreign policy. The internal functions of the state reflect

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 477-78.

the class nature of the state, and are embodied in its domestic policies. *The suppression of the working people* is the most important of these functions in exploitive societies. The state is, strictly speaking, a group of armed men who, standing apart from the people, rule over them. The state operates both by means of open violence and, through church and school, by means of spiritual or ideological persuasion. In modern bourgeois states an ideological grip is kept on the working people through a complex propaganda network: the press, radio, cinema, TV, theatre, literature.

The main task of the state is to strengthen and develop existing relations of production, as a result of which it plays a substantial role in the economic life of society. Even in antiquity the state supervised the building of irrigation works, roads, canals, public buildings, etc.

The various functions and spheres of state activity are not mechanically divided off from one another: there is an essential internal unity connecting them. But the many arms of state power are spread over a strictly defined geographical area which it is called upon to protect against foreign invasion. The *external* functions of a given state are expressed in its foreign policy and through the channels of diplomacy. Its external functions derive from and are the continuation of its internal ones.

There is an inseparable link between the state and the law. Human society is unthinkable without social compulsion and control. But the forms of compulsion vary: from a polite but firm request to a death sentence. The state's system of compulsion comprises the army, the police, prosecutors' offices, courts and prisons. The basic relations between people in the economic, social, political and other spheres of life are given legal form by the state and become established compulsory norms of behaviour. On pain of punishment people are forbidden to commit acts that militate against a given social system, while the state sanctions actions that conform to the interests of its ruling class.

The law is a means of regulating the norms of public behaviour established and sanctioned by the state, and is directed to preserving the economic, social and political order of a given society. In short, it is the will of the ruling class made legal.

The law is both state-sanctioned and state-protected as part of the political system and is an expression of state will:

"Otherwise the word 'will' is an empty sound,"¹ wrote Lenin and noted further: "... law is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the rules of law."² And, vice versa, the state, in carrying out its functions, relies on state-established, legal norms concerning the prevention and suppression of crime, i.e., actions specified in the law as publicly dangerous actions.

Like the state, the law has not always existed. The prevailing order of public life in the primitive communal society was maintained by force of habit, by custom and tradition, and by the moral authority of elders and tribe councils, who represented the common interests of all the members of a community. But as soon as society split into classes with opposing interests custom could no longer regulate human behaviour. The concepts of good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust, became different for different classes. The division of society into classes and the emergence of the state made compulsory (legal) rules of behaviour necessary.

Class society cannot exist without laws regulating property, family and other relations. The ruling class strives to give its will "a universal expression as the will of the State, as law..."³ The state, through its various organs—administrative, legal and others—compels the would-be violator of its laws to obey them, and when he does not do so imposes on him an administrative or property penalty, or detains him in prison, according to the nature of his breach of the law.

The Basic Types of State and Political Regime

There are, of course, many varied kinds of state. Even under slavery there were various forms of state in the most advanced, cultured and civilised nations, notably in ancient Greece and Rome. The distinction between a monarchy and a republic was first made in ancient times, as was that between a democracy and an aristocracy. A monarchy is the rule of one man, a republic, the rule by an elected council; an aristocracy is the rule of a comparatively small minority, a democracy, the rule of the mass of the people. But even though all these distinctions existed under

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 90.

² *Ibid.*, p. 471.

³ K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1968, p. 366.

slavery the state remained a slave-owning state whether it was a monarchy or a republic, an aristocracy or a democracy.

States are distinguished from one another by the social classes they serve and the economic systems on which they are based. There have been three basic types of exploitive state: the slave-owning, feudal, and bourgeois states.

Democratic rule existed in primitive communal society: by councils of elders, people's assemblies and councils, etc. The first division of society into classes was that into slave owners and slaves. Soon after, freemen became divided into rich and poor. To keep the slaves (to begin with) and later a considerable section of the free working population in submission, the slave-owning state was required. The states of the slave-owning period, though different in form, were identical in their class content. They were based on private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of slave labour. Every slave-owning state was a dictatorship of slave owners. Slaves took no part in political life and had no political or legal rights.

In slave society the law openly defended and sanctified the rule and privileges of the aristocracy, the exploitation of slaves and poor freemen, and denied slaves all civil rights. For example, Greek and Roman law did not punish slave owners for murder, so they were at perfect liberty to kill slaves. It was only after a bitter struggle against the slave owners, and only during the final stages of slavery, that clauses prohibiting the killing of slaves began to appear in legal documents. The law, like the state, was aimed mainly at protecting private property from those who had none. The most cruel of the laws of antiquity were concerned with the protection of private property.

The slave-owning state was replaced by the feudal state. The feudal state had more numerous and more complex ruling institutions, an increased number of prisons and a stronger army and police force because population had grown and socio-economic relations had become more complicated. In the early stages of feudalism the territory of a state consisted, as a rule, of a great number of virtually independent principalities, duchies and counties. But the powers of kings and tsars gradually became stronger and those of princes, dukes and counts weaker as economic development demanded.

The feudal states were all of a single type—all were *dictatorships of feudal barons*.

The feudal state bound peasants to their landlord's estate and ruthlessly punished those who refused to work. Feudal law allowed a landowner to buy and sell his labourers and to require them to work for him gratis. This was in line with the peasants' almost total lack of civil rights—they could not even marry or purchase property or land without the landowner's permission.

The emergence of the bourgeois state was a tremendous historical leap forward. The bourgeois state, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, was a new, infinitely more progressive type of state as compared to the feudal state. The bourgeois state did away with the division of the population into social estates. Moreover, the development of the capitalist mode of production demanded free competition and, hence, the equality of all people before the law.

Capitalism replaced hereditary rights in relation to state power by rights of election to leading state positions. The great restrictions on the political rights of the oppressed classes which had existed under feudalism were replaced under capitalism by the formal provision of legal rights and the participation of working people in elections to organs of state power. In its fight for power, the bourgeoisie had to struggle against feudal despotism and arbitrariness, and against violence to the individual. It proclaimed the bourgeois-democratic principles of freedom, equality and people's rule, people's sovereignty. Bourgeois political ideology defended the rights of the individual as man and citizen. Bourgeois declarations and constitutions at the same time invariably defended and protected capitalist private property and economic inequality. The bourgeois state, unlike the feudal state, was characterised by centralised rule, and thus formed a centre of national life which reflected all changes in it.

Bourgeois law was designed to protect capitalist property and to maintain the exploitation of hired labour through the suppression of workers' revolutionary movements. Capitalism proclaimed the equality of everyone before the law and announced universal freedom. But the declarations of "equal rights" and "universal freedom", etc., contained in the constitutions of bourgeois states were in fact of only a formal nature and served as a screen for the actual dictatorship of

the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois law was intended as a collection of regulations guaranteeing the bourgeoisie unlimited enrichment at the expense of the millions of the poor and propertyless.

On the other hand, as Lenin pointed out, mankind had inevitably to go through the capitalist stage and it was only capitalism—with its urban culture and civilisation—that enabled the oppressed class of proletarians to become aware of itself as a class and to create socialist parties and a world labour movement to give conscious leadership to the mass struggle. This advance of the working class could not have taken place other than through the mechanism of elections and parliamentarism in general.

The socialist state is in principle a historically new type of state. It is an instrument for the abolition of the exploitation of man by man and for building a classless communist society in which the rulers are the working people. Socialist law, accordingly, differs fundamentally from bourgeois law. It is permeated with a consistent humanism. Being the most democratic state in human society, it expresses the will of the whole people, regulates economic and other social relations, defends the socialist order, establishes the rights and duties of citizens and officials, and protects both public and personal property.

We have made a brief survey of the basic types of state, but there are also intermediate types which have complex class structures. Sometimes states have been based on an alliance of two classes: the bourgeoisie and the class of landowners in Germany, for instance, after the 1848 revolution. The socialist state is often preceded by the emergence of a *people's democracy* or a state of *national democracy*. Lenin admitted the possibility of a people's (but not yet socialist) state arising in countries with a low level of development of capitalism. Such states, he said, would consist of a dictatorship of two classes, the working class and the peasantry, the leading role played by the former, and subsequent history has proved him right.

With the advance of history, the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state is enriched in its content. Thus, as a result of the revolutions which developed in a number of European and Asian countries in the course of the Second World War and in the early post-war years, a new form of state—the people's democratic state—made its appearance. This represents rev-

olutionary-democratic rule of all revolutionary classes with the working class leading them. People's democratic states eliminated the rule of monopoly capital; democratised social life, carried out agrarian reforms according to the principle that the land belongs to those who till it, nationalised the commanding heights of industry, transport and finance, and set up a new apparatus of state.

Countries that have not gone through the capitalist stage but which have taken the road of independent development after their liberation are the most likely to set up states of national democracy. This point has been made repeatedly at international meetings of representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties and in the Programme of the CPSU.

In the present age many countries are in a position to create an independent state of national democracy, i.e., a state that consistently defends its political and economic independence, struggles against imperialism and military blocs, against the placing of war bases on its territory and against the new forms of colonialism and penetration of imperialist capital—a state which rejects despotic methods of rule and gives the people broad guaranteed democratic rights and liberties (freedom of speech, press, assembly and demonstration, and the freedom to form political parties and public organisations), a say in determining state policy, and the chance to work for agrarian reforms and the implementation of other democratic and social changes. Such states of national democracy can, as they gain in strength, advance rapidly along the road of social progress and can play an active part in the world struggle for peace and the complete liquidation of colonialism.

Having looked at the basic types of state we shall now consider the different *forms of state and political regime*, that is, the different *forms of rule*. There are two main forms of rule—*monarchic* and *republican*. A monarchy is the (limited or unlimited) rule, usually hereditary, of one person (king, emperor, tsar, etc.). For instance, tsarist Russia was an unlimited autocratic monarchy: the tsar himself decreed new laws, appointed officials and kept watch over them. A republic is government by elected bodies.

But the form of a state comprises more than its form of rule, for there have been many kinds of monarchies and republics. When one speaks of the form of a state one must

bear in mind not only the form of rule but its political regime too, which may be either democratic or anti-democratic in the methods it uses to govern society. One and the same form of rule may employ opposite methods: the bourgeoisie, for example, may rule by the *democratic* methods of parliamentarism, or by the *anti-democratic* methods of fascism, the terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary forces of monopoly capital. Fascism is totalitarianism in its most blatant form: the state apparatus of rule reaches enormous dimensions and is shaped like a pyramid with a single individual at the top.

Democracy, which has a long history, is a method of state rule which follows the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority, and requires that all decisions be taken by the majority while the rights of the minority are also to be respected.

Class dictatorships have thus been effected in many different ways within the framework of one and the same type of state. Lenin noted that even slave-owning states had various forms of rule: some were monarchies with autocratic rule, others were republics with elected government and still others democracies with majority rule. Nevertheless, all these were slave-owning states.

Feudal states were for the most part monarchies. But there were also feudal republics—self-governing cities of feudalism that had liberated themselves from the rule of feudal lords and were governed by elected bodies. The various types of exploitive state can therefore have similar forms of rule: republics under both slavery and capitalism, for example. As we know, there are bourgeois monarchies, too, with various political regimes.

The Essence of Bourgeois Democracy

When speaking about democracy bourgeois ideologists often claim that where there is democracy the state cannot have a class character but must express the interests of the whole of society. Is this true?

When the bourgeoisie was struggling for power in the era of bourgeois revolutions it advanced the noble slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity. And, indeed, the bourgeois state was originally progressive: it promoted the formation of advanced relations of production. But even at the very dawn of capitalism, when it was at its most democratic, the bourgeois state was really no democracy at all. Or rather, it

was only a democracy for the bourgeoisie, and a dictatorship in relation to the oppressed classes of society. Lenin observed that "dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises the dictatorship over other classes; but it does mean the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for the class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised."¹

Imperialism now makes very clear the restricted nature of bourgeois democracy. Lenin drew attention to the changes in the superstructure which accompanied the development of pre-monopoly capitalism into imperialism. He pointed out that the extreme concentration of economic power in the hands of monopolists made them seek political power so that they could subordinate the whole of the state apparatus to their interests and will. "There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a 'violation of public order', and actually in case the exploited class 'violates' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner."²

As the contradictions of capitalism became sharper as it entered its imperialist stage, and the revolutionary working class and national liberation movements began to grow, the bourgeois state made a sharp turn towards reaction. It was not accidental that Lenin noted: "Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly."³ Whereas in the past, for all the narrowness of bourgeois democracy, the bourgeois state nevertheless encouraged social advance, now it has become the chief obstacle to progress, for the aged bourgeoisie has long since renounced the democratic ideals of its youth.

Imperialism is pure reaction, said Lenin, especially in the sphere of politics. The evolution of bourgeois states since Lenin's death has fully confirmed the truth of this. The constitutions of bourgeois states list many liberties and rights they confer on their citizens: universal suffrage, free elections, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, etc. But

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 235.

² *Ibid.*, p. 244.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 43.

in reality they are so many beautiful words which camouflage the true content of life in bourgeois society.

Bourgeois democracy is exceedingly restricted from the purely formal point of view, too. Bourgeois constitutions openly or tacitly assume national and racial inequalities of rights and legalise them. Some bourgeois countries deprive women of the vote. Others require high age and property qualifications before granting the right to vote. In any case, what kind of popular rule is it when ordinary people can do no more than vote at elections and referendums while possessing no social wealth and having no direct and decisive part in the running of the economy? Lenin wrote: "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics."¹

What sort of freedom is the miserable existence of the unemployed? Or of the aged, entirely deprived of means of sustenance? What kind of equality can there be between the rich and the poor, between the over-fed and the hungry?

Bourgeois freedom is available only to the sufficiently well-to-do. It is therefore no more than a deception which presents dependence in the guise of freedom. "Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society."² These words of Lenin's ring as true today as ever.

Working people comprise the overwhelming majority of voters. But are they truly represented in parliament? There are more than 51 million industrial, office and farm workers in the USA. But there is not a single worker, not a single small farmer, in Congress. That is why Lenin wrote that "the power of capital is everything, the stock exchange is everything, while parliament and elections are marionettes, puppets..."³

Any state performs certain economic functions. These functions have become stronger in the epoch of imperialism as monopoly capitalism has grown into state-monopoly capi-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 422-23.

² *Ibid.*, p. 460.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 29, p. 487.

talism, which is characterised by the merging of the state apparatus with the economic apparatus of imperialism. The bourgeois state may own a large percentage of industrial enterprises (up to 30 per cent, as in the USA), railways, banks and means of communication. The bourgeois state even tries to look into the future and to plan economic development. As a result comparatively high rates of growth of production are occasionally reached in some leading capitalist countries.

According to Lenin, the essence of state-monopoly capitalism consists in the active use which monopoly capital makes of the bourgeois state apparatus in the interests of securing maximum profits for itself and strengthening its political and economic domination. This point of Lenin's is of particular relevance today when the ideologists of the bourgeoisie and of reformism are trying to present the merger of the monopolies with the state as a new supra-class state of "universal prosperity". But having concentrated the major part of social production in its hands monopoly capital is not sharing and is not going to share political power with anyone. It has established its dictatorship and is relying on the army and the police to uphold it. The apologists of capitalism try hard to prove that the bourgeois world represents a genuine triumph of democratic ideals, that it is the real "free world". But to what are they alluding? Spain and Portugal, with their fascist dictatorships?

There is also the story that the bourgeois state expresses and protects the interests of all citizens regardless of class. This false doctrine has been picked up and is being actively spread by some Right Social-Democrats. Lenin—when exposing the claims of reformists that the trend towards state monopoly confirmed the idea that capitalism was developing peacefully into socialism by courtesy of the state (which supposedly acted as a "peace maker" between classes)—described the path followed and the means used in the subordination of the bourgeois state apparatus by the monopolies, showing that it was a process that required the violation of bourgeois law.

In his description of bourgeois democracy Lenin also stressed that there were different levels and degrees of democracy in different countries, depending on the peculiarities of their political regimes. "He would be a fine Marxist indeed, who in a period of democratic revolution failed to see

this difference between the degrees of democratism and the difference between its forms.”¹

**The Struggle for Democracy
within the Framework
of the Bourgeois System**

Imperialism as a system is wholly incompatible with true democracy for working people. That does not mean, however, that the struggle for the implementation of democratic demands in this age of imperialism is a fruitless one. As we have said, under capitalism in general and under imperialism in particular, democracy is an illusion. But capitalism also generates democratic aspirations in the masses and this leads to the setting up of certain democratic institutions, this in turn further aggravating the contradiction between the striving of the masses for democracy and imperialism, which denies it them. We should therefore make a big mistake if we thought that the struggle for democracy could divert the attention of the working class from the socialist revolution or that it might somehow overshadow or even prevent it.

No amount of bourgeois democracy in the world could do away either with the class struggle or with the omnipotence of money under capitalism. That is not the meaning and aim of democracy. What matters is that democracy makes class struggle a wide, open and conscious one. Being in the forefront of the struggle for democracy, the working class must not for a moment forget that ever new contradictions lurk within the bourgeois system and ever new battles await it.

The bourgeois-democratic system is the most perfect of bourgeois systems, in which, alongside open, broad and sharp class struggle, the maximum cunning and ideological persuasion are used by the bourgeoisie to distract its hired hands from the struggle against wage slavery.

Socialist democracy, which implies popular control over the state apparatus, can be effective only if both political power and social wealth is vested in the hands of the people. At the very outset this democracy shifted emphasis from the formal proclamation of rights and freedoms to their practical implementation. That is why, when the working people have to choose between socialist and bourgeois democracy they have no doubts about which to choose: they are for socialism.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 52.

But when life compels them to make a choice between extreme forms of reaction (the “black colonels” dictatorship in Greece, for example) and bourgeois democracy they obviously find the latter more preferable. Why? Because bourgeois democracy creates the most favourable conditions possible in bourgeois society for the working-class struggle for freedom and socialism.

Lenin estimated the various possible forms of rule in a bourgeois state from the point of view of the proletariat. He believed that a democratic republic is the best possible form of government within the conditions of bourgeois democracy because it gives the working people incomparably greater opportunities to organise their forces in the battle for social change. At the same time, bourgeois democracy, by its very nature, is designed to prevent the working people from ever taking power. So bourgeois democracy can never meet to the full the most basic democratic demands of working people—guaranteed work, equal rights for women, agrarian reform, national equality, and a fair voting system.

Communists have always been and remain consistent, organised and purposeful political fighters in the struggle for democracy—for the restriction of the economic and political powers of monopolies, the satisfaction of workers’ demands and the extension of the rights of trade unions. Communists also come out in defence of national interests, and struggle to end imperialist aggression and secure general and complete disarmament. Communists strive to rally all workers, including the members of Social-Democratic and petty-bourgeois parties, members of trade unions, and non-party and unorganised working people. Communists are guided by their deep conviction that there is now a real possibility of curbing the forces of reaction and aggression, of preventing a third world war, and of achieving fresh successes in the battle for socialism and peace. The achievement of these aims requires the unity of all the forces of revolution and their active involvement in struggle on their own sections of the anti-imperialist front. The only correct strategic line for the international working-class movement is to fight for the unity of all social forces which come out for democracy, national freedom, peace and socialism.

In modern conditions the working people led by the Communist Parties are waging a stubborn struggle for the democratisation of the whole of social life. To struggle for

democracy is to struggle for an increased role for the working people in social and political life and for the creation of favourable conditions for the activities of all progressive forces. Besides, the struggle for democracy is today closely interwoven with the struggle for socialism. The working classes of many countries in the new historical conditions of today are able to force the introduction, even before capitalism is overthrown, of measures which are a step beyond ordinary reforms and are of vital importance for both the working class and most of the population of a country. The general democratic struggle against the monopolies, therefore, does not postpone the socialist revolution but brings it nearer. That is why we say that the struggle for democracy is a component part of the struggle for socialism. The isolation of monopoly groupings and the implementation of fundamental democratic reforms will facilitate the transition to the next, higher stage in the struggle for popular rule.

The development of state-monopoly capitalism, the increasing domination of monopolies in all economic, political and cultural spheres, has extended the objective basis on which all non-monopoly sections of the population may be united. Recent years have seen peasants, civil servants and intellectuals taking action against monopoly rule. The struggle for democracy is thus an essential means of rallying the broadest masses and leading them to socialist revolution.

Imperialism is doomed, its positions are already irretrievably undermined. It is opposed by a powerful community of the socialist countries, the national liberation movements that have come to power, the now numerically large working classes in the economically advanced capitalist countries, and the various broad democratic movements in the world. The development of the capitalist countries in the modern epoch thus confirms Lenin's characterisation of monopoly capitalism as the eve of the socialist revolution.

* * *

The world communist movement has dialectical and historical materialism as its philosophical basis. Loyalty to its principles is the essential condition of the unity of the communist movement, and any deviation from them, i.e., any

revision of them, can only lead to the destruction of this unity. The international duty of Communists is to defend and develop the principles of Marxism-Leninism in a constructive spirit.

Like a giant oak tree with thick roots that go deep into the ground Marxist philosophy is firmly rooted in science and social practice (both of which are constantly developing), and in the life of the working men and women whose interests and aspirations it expresses. Communist ideology is the most human there is. Its ultimate ideal is to establish truly human relations between all people and nations, i.e., peace and happiness on earth. That is why it is winning the battle for the minds and hearts of men and women throughout the world—a fact which is, incidentally, admitted even by many bourgeois ideologists, who are becoming more and more apprehensive as the superiority of socialism and the viability of its ideological and theoretical foundations become clear to them.

If human progress is to be secured it is of the utmost importance that a world without wars and arms is established. While the development of production is an end in itself under capitalism, and man merely a means to this end, the slogan of communism is "Everything for the sake of man, for his benefit". The historical mission of communism is to release all people from social inequalities, all forms of oppression and exploitation and the horrors of war, and to secure Peace, Labour, Freedom, Equality, Fraternity and Happiness throughout the world. Communism brings spiritual wealth to individual men and women, gives them the highest standards of moral and physical culture, and enables them to view work as the first need of man and a source of creative pleasure. These are the ultimate indicators of the higher level of civilisation represented by communism, towards the complete victory of which the development of mankind inevitably tends, whatever the obstacles that stand in its way.

Our difficult age, though full of conflict, is seeing the beginning of the realisation of man's most cherished dreams—in social life, in the conquest of nature and in science. Mankind has many things to be proud of and every reason to be optimistic about the future. Marxism-Leninism is therefore confident that further historical progress will produce radical social transformations, leading finally to freedom,

plenty and prosperity, and the harmonious development of all mankind.

The wide stream of history is not flowing to a *final* destination in some absolutely ideal condition. Mankind will never say: "That will do! So far and no further!" Each stage of history is more than a mere stepping stone to the future: it is essential and important in its own right and perfectly justified in its time and in the conditions that gave rise to it. But each stage of history loses its justification as higher and better conditions and needs become necessary and possible: and so history will go on ad infinitum as long as life itself is possible. And if man discovers favourable conditions for himself in space then humanity will indeed acquire true immortality and should be able to survive throughout eternity!

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