

The Environs and Ingredients for the Advent of Soviet Revisionism

This is a chapter from a book, “Economic Base of Revisionism in Socialist State” written and published by **Com. Parimal Das Gupta** in Bengali language in April 1985 and translated to English on 8th July, 1990. Com. Parimal Das Gupta is well known to the comrades in the camp of Communist revolutionaries in India for his opposition and struggle against the line of left adventurism advocated by Charu Mazumdar in the period of 1969-71 and for his support for a line oriented towards revolutionary mass line. The chapter that we are publishing here was a part of his struggle against Soviet modern revisionism. It helps to understand the sources of revisionism and the tactics employed by the revisionists to put the Soviet Union on the course of reversal and capitalist restoration. - **Editor**

The proposition of class struggle, after achievement of the State power by the proletariat, as advanced by Lenin and Stalin is a longdrawn process. The conflict of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, in this time, cannot be ended in a short-time span. It exists at different stages, in different forms, because the interest of the bourgeoisie-class does not get socially eliminated altogether only by their dislodgement from power. This class interest sticks to and remains active in social physique having based on different economic stay. It is for this reason, after establishment of the State power of the proletariat, the necessity arises for eliminating this class interest and its ingredients and uprooting all roots of exploitation from inside the economy, systematically, through socialistic process under the dictatorship of the proletariat. After dislodgement of the bourgeoisie from power, the remnant or residue of bourgeois and petty bourgeoisie’s interest which exists in Society, comes up with strength in State structure in different manner and under different political shelter and it continually endeavours and will endeavour to retain its last interest. In this matter the special help of the international bourgeoisie, who are always active against Socialist State also flows as a normality. Apart from this, it becomes the well planned tactics of the defeated bourgeois-class to pollute the proletarian party, which is in power and to get infiltration and establishment of the representatives of their class in the said party. Their main object is to create guarantee of the interest in the Socialist State in any possible manner. In this context, after the establishment of Soviet State, Lenin, explaining the Russian situation stated:

“The big landowners and capitalists in Russia, have not vanished, but they have been completely expropriated and utterly crushed politically, as a class remnants of which are hiding in the ranks of the Soviet Government employees. They have preserved their class

organisation abroad as 'emigres', numbering probably from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 passing over fifty daily newspapers of all bourgeois and 'Social' (i.e. petty bourgeois) parties, the remnants of an army, and numerous connections with international bourgeoisie. These 'emigres' are striving with all their might and means to destroy the Soviet regimes and restore capitalism in Russia" (Lenin: Selected Works, Vol. 2, Moscow 1947, page 732)

The matter as to remaining of the strength of the landowner and capitalist interest hidden inside the State bureaucracy and as to their international link is very important in this context.

The establishment of revisionism in Soviet is to be considered and its environs and ingredients are to be observed having kept in thought the aforesaid process and endeavor for protection of bourgeois and petty bourgeois interest in Socialist State. At first, the advent of revisionism is to be considered in the back ground of the debate of 1951-52 with respect to Soviet economy. It is to be mentioned in this respect that the propositions for solution of economic problems of Soviet, as given by Stalin, remained awaiting for implementation. The correct implementation of the same would not be possible only by correct analysis and influence of Stalin. The consciousness and initiative of the guide of the party and State machinery on the subject, was necessary for the purpose. Stalin did not get time to implement his thoughts. Stalin died in 1953. It was observed that revisionism, as arrived under the leadership of Khrushchev after the death of Stalin was completely against the thought of Stalin about world politics and Soviet economy. It is for this reason, they, in the tail of their attack organisationally on the old Bolshevik leaders, who were in support of the thought of Stalin, at first, came out with special condemnation to Stalin's booklet "ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF USSR", though they avoided the theoretical aspect of the subject. Hence, it will be correct to think that this revisionist leadership clique was in the debate of 1951-52, behind those whose views were severely criticised by Stalin. So this leadership was against the theory of Stalin with respect, to elimination of commodity circulation of collective farms' and rise of two market in world economy. Along with this, they, having made primary the thought of peaceful co-existence of capitalism and Socialism, because spokesman of discard of class struggle and of upliftment to socialism through peaceful market competition. As a supplement to this thought, they with idealistic mental make up because propagator of horror of war and pacifism. Their main object was to maintain status-quo in Soviet economy. They, in this respect, with a view to resist the advancing trend of socialism, were guided by the thought of old Menshevism viz. Social Democracy. It can be said that it is the revived Menshevism. viz. Social Democracy in new historical situation. They are the new political force to protect the capitalistic ingredients or arrangement of Soviet collective farms and the current thereto; And on the other side, the economy related to collective farms that is, the agricultural economy which retards further flow of Socialism, is the main basis of this revisionism. This revisionism at one stage of development of Socialism, is the protector of petty bourgeois interest. And at this stage, the social reaction is rallied behind it with new cover. The main endeavour of this reaction is to throw away Stalin's thought which is against their interest.

In this context an idea is necessary as to working process of reaction inside the collective farms since their creation.

In 1933, mentioning the internal situation of the Soviet collective farm Stalin said:

“The problem of planned leadership of collective farms should have led to an intensification of the Communist leadership in the collective farms. In fact, however, what has happened in a number of cases is that the Communists have been quiet out of it, and the collective farms have been run by former White officers, former Petlyuraists and enemies of the workers and peasants generally” [Stalin: Work in Countryside: Speech on January 11, 1933, at the joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU (B); Problems of Leninism, Moscow 1955, Collective Works, Vol-13, Page-230]

The going of collective farms out of control of the Communist and of their coming under the control of the reactionaries is a very significant even and a dangerous consequence of it is inevitable.

On the subject of collective farms Stalin further said that the collective farm was merely an organisational vessel. The main thing was : who would use this vessel - whether by communist force or by reactionary force. He said :

“Soviet without communists” - that was the slogan Milyukov, the leader of the Russian counter-revolution, advanced at that time. The counter revolutionaries understood that it is not merely a matter of the Soviets as such, but, primarily, a matter of who is to lead them”. [Stalin Collective Works, Vol-13, Page-232]

“The same must be said of the collective farms. Collective farms as a Socialist form of economic organisation may perform miracles of economic construction if they are headed by the real revolutionaries, Bolsheviks, Communists. On the other hand, collective farms may for a certain period become a shield for all sorts of counter revolutionary acts if these collective farms are run by Socialist, Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, Petlyura officers and other White-guards, former Denikiates and Kolchakites. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the collective farms as a form of organisation, are not only not guaranteed against the penetration of anti-Soviet elements, but, at first, even provide certain facilities which enable the counter-revolutionaries to take advantage of them temporarily” [Stalin Collective Works, Vol-13, Page-232]

“Collective farms without Communists” - this is the slogan that is now being put forward among the anti-Soviet elements. Hence it is not only a matter of collective farm themselves, as a Socialist form of organisation, it is primarily a matter of the contents that is put into this form; it is primarily a matter of who stands at the head of the collective farms and who leads them” [Stalin Collective Works, Vol-13, Page-233].

Explaining the conduct and attitude of the Kulaks inside the collective farms, at the relevant time, Stalin said :

“The present day kulaks and kulak agents, the present day anti-Soviet elements in the countryside are in the main “quite”, “smooth spoken”, almost “saintly” people. There is no need to look for them far from the collective farms; they are inside the collective farms, occupying posts as storekeepers, managers, accountants, secretaries etc. They will never say “Down with the collective farms”. They are ‘in favour’ of collective farms. But inside the collective farms they carry on sabotage and wrecking work that certainly does the collective farms no good. They will never say “Down with grain procurements!” They are “in favour” of grain procurements. They “only” resort to demagoguery and demand that the collective farm should set aside a fund for the needs of livestock raising three times as large as that actually required; that the collective farm should set aside an insurance fund three times as large as that actually required; that the collective farm should provide from six to ten pounds of the bread per worker per day for public catering etc. Of course, after such ‘funds’ have been formed and such grants for public catering made, after such rascally demagoguery, the economic power of the collective is bound to be undermined and there is little left for grain procurements”. [Stalin Collective Works, Vol-13, Page-235]

In this regard mentioning the attitude created amongst the Communists and criticising the same Stalin said:

“We all rejoice at the fact that the collective form of farming has become the predominant form in our grain growing districts. But not all of us realise that this circumstance, does not diminish, but increases our cares and responsibilities in regard to development of agriculture” “Letting things take their own course may now ruin everything”. [Stalin Collective Works, Vol-13, Page : 226-227]

He further said:

“Failing to notice the class enemy in his new mask and being unable to expose his rascally machinations, certain of our comrades not infrequently soothe themselves with the idea that the kulaks no longer exist; that the anti-Soviet elements in the countryside have already been destroyed as a result of the policy of eliminating the Kulaks as a class; and that in view of this we can now reconcile ourselves to the existence of “neutral” collective farms, which are neither Bolshevik nor anti-Soviet but which are bound come over to the side of the Soviet Government spontaneously, as it were. But this is a profound delusion, comrades! The Kulaks have been defeated, but they are far from having been crushed yet. More than that, they will not be crushed very soon if the communists go round gaping in smug contentment in the belief that the Kulaks will themselves walk into their graves in the process of their spontaneous development, so to speak. [Stalin Collective Works, Vol-13, Page-236]

As for ‘neutral’ collective farm, there is not and there cannot be any such thing. “Neutral” collective farms are a fantasy conjured up by people who have eyes but do not see. Where there is such an acute class struggle as is now going on in our Soviet country there is no room for ‘neutral’ collective farms; under these circumstances, collective farms can be either Bolshevik or anti-Soviet. And if it is not we who are leading certain collective

farms, that means that they are being led by anti-Soviet elements. There cannot be the slightest doubt about that". [Stalin Collective Works, Vol-13, Page : 236-237]

It is clear from the facts so revealed in aforesaid statements that since the creation of Soviet collective farms the Kulaks and other reactionary forces made entrance therein and they were guided with new tactics. The main endeavor of them was to protect their economic interest as far as possible. Due to retention of the market-price of the products of the collective farms a bit higher than that of the products of State farms and as to the result of commodity circulation of collective farm-products, a special benefit in earning viz. property for members and management-personnel of the collective farms, was created, consequently the collective farms, in the new situation, because new vessel of the defeated Kulaks and reactionary interest. The Soviet collective farms were carrying this interest in their womb. It was disclosed in the report of Stalin in the 18th Soviet Communist Party Congress in 1939 that in between 1933 and 1939 the instruments employed in the collective farms, became tripled and agricultural production also increased in abundant quantity. This actually strengthened the collective farms. But it is to be observed that in this period no new shake-up appeared through the party and State for qualitative change in the control of the collective farms. It is also found that, at that time, the Trotskyites, objectively with Kulak interest, raised left wing demands: Let the State agricultural farms be abolished, because they are not becoming profitable; let the most of the collective farms be abolished, because they are false; let the policy of eliminating Kulaks be abolished; let it be reverted to the policy of granting special advantage and let lease be granted to certain industrial establishments having granted special advantage, because they are not becoming profitable. (Report of the 17th Party Congress, January 19, 1934; Stalin's Works Vol. 13, Page-370),

In such time, it became the special responsibility of the party and the State to protect the collective farms. Apart from this, on the whole, during this period, various types of conspirators were intensely active and mobile inside the Soviet. In such a complex situation, it was not unnatural to slowdown, to some extent, the attack on the hidden enemy inside the economy, having given no scope to inflict any sort of wound on and to create rupture of the socialist economic structure and current. In the World politics of 1935-36, the main issue before the Soviet was : danger of Fascism. Thereafter in 1939, due to start of 2nd World War the Soviet economy was converted to war economy instead of handling internal conflict. On the whole, during the entire period a special interest and control became strong in the Soviet collective farms viz agricultural economy. The action and interaction of this economy was spread over in urban economic life as well in different manner and various types of small vested interest were involved and accumulated in it. It thus created the environs for the advent of revisionism as a guarantee for comfort-enjoying middle class-interest. The main ingredient was: Economy of collective forms.

Along with the aforesaid economic aspect for advent and establishment of Soviet revisionism a consideration on certain organisational matters is necessary: (a) The organisational tactics of Mensheviks viz. Social Democrats in the post-November Revolution

period; (b) The attitude of a section of the party cadres and State bureaucrats after formation of the Soviet State; and (c) The rise of revisionism inside the International Communist Camp in post-war period.

After November Revolution the Mensheviks, viz. Social Democratic force, having been defeated with attack of Lenin and Stalin on principle adopted an attitude of lying low inside the party. The main tactic of them was to give superficial loyalty to the policy of the party and to create opposition to it at the execution level with very cleverness.

In 1921, Lenin, giving caution to the party about the tactics of the Mensheviks inside the party, said:

“As one of the specific objects of the purging of the party I would point to combing out of ex-Mensheviks. In my opinion, of the Mensheviks who joined the party after the beginning of 1918, not more than about a hundredth part should be allowed to remain, and even then, every one of these who is allowed to remain must be tested over and over again. Why? Because, as a trend, the Mensheviks, in the period of 1918–21 have developed two qualities that characterise them: first ability skillfully to adapt to ‘attach’ themselves to the prevailing trend among the workers; and second, the ability even more skillfully to serve the white guards faithfully and well to serve them in deeds, while disassociating themselves from them in words. Both these qualities are the logical product of the whole history of Menshevism”. [Lenin: purging the party; Selected Works, Moscow 1947 Vol. 2, page 746]

Stalin, in the subsequent time, having defeated and routed the Social Democracy viz. Menshevik thought inside the party and having given new caution, said “The snake has gone beneath the grass from above”. Because this was the tactics of the Mensheviks to retain their existence.

Stalin, in 1939, mentioning the fact of infiltration of dishonest, opportunist and self seeking elements inside the party, said:

“The party knew that its ranks were being joined not only by honest and loyal people, but also by chance elements and careerists who were seeking to utilize the badge of the party for their own personal ends”. [Stalin Report to the 18th congress of the CPSU (B), March 10, 1939; Problems of Leninism, Moscow 1945, Stalin Collective Works, Vol-14, Page-400]

Explaining the social reason for deviations inside the party Stalin said:

“The social basis of the deviations is the fact that small scale production predominates in our country; the fact that small production gives rise to capitalist elements; the fact that our party is surrounded by the petty-bourgeois elemental forces and lastly, the fact that certain of our party organisations have been infected by these elemental forces”. [Stalin: Industrialisation and Right Deviation, Stalin Works Vol. 11, page-280]

He in this context, further said:

“These deviators, both Rights and “Lefts” are recruited from the most diverse elements of the non-proletarian Strata, elements who reflect the pressure of the petty-bourgeois elemental forces on the party and the degeneration of the certain sections of the party. Former members of the other parties; people in the party with Trotskyist trend; remnants of the former groups in the party; Party members in the State, economic, co-operative and trade union apparatuses who are becoming (or have become) bureaucratized and are linking themselves with the outright bourgeois elements in these apparatuses; well-to-do Party members in our rural organisations who are merging with the Kulaks and so on and so forth such is the nutritive medium for deviations from the Leninist Line. [Do page 297]

Stalin, mentioning as to how the influence of the capitalist countries also was creating environs for pollution of the mind of the party members, said:

“We are still surrounded by the capitalist countries which are trying to revive and sustain the survivals of capitalism in the economic life and in the minds of the people of the USSR, and against which we Bolsheviks must always keep our powder dry”.

“Naturally, these survivals cannot but be a favourable ground for a revival of the ideology of the defeated anti-Leninist groups in the minds of individual members of our Party.”. [Stalin: Report to the 17th Congress of the CPSU (B) 1934 Problems of Leninism Moscow 1945, Stalin Works, Vol. 13, page-356]

Stalin, mentioning the character of the bureaucrats in the Soviet State apparatus, said:

“The bureaucrats and red-tapists have been past masters in the art of demonstrating their loyalty to party and Govt. decisions in words; and pigeonholing them in deed” [Stalin Works Vol. 13, page-375]

In the circumstances stated above, it was natural for the Mensheviks and opportunist elements to make a place inside the party and state machinery. Its environs existed in economy as well. It would be unnatural to think that though in 1933 the undesirable persons were purged out of the party, fullpledged purification of the party happened by that. It was obvious that various opportunist forces would take shelter in different manner in the party which is in state power. Apart from this it was not even unnatural that new opportunist forces got entrance inside the party through inclusion of new members in the party in 1936. Over and above, it was also the tactics of the international bourgeoisie and internal conspirators to destroy the party from within or to break its ideological strength. Through all these circumstances a base of the various opportunist elements with ideology of Social Democracy viz Menshevism was created inside the party and State machinery. The State machinery was the main shelter of them. They would obviously be active to take advantage in different manner within the economic arrangements of the State. Inside the Party as well, a strong clique of the opportunist and special privilege enjoying forces would be created; because the controlling personnel of the party were associated with the functioning of the

State and they were, as well, a special privilege deriving group. In the situation prior to upliftment to Communism, this entire opportunist force, in relation to economy, was in shelter in the discrimination in salary and privilege and small production and process of commodity circulation of production. A fully privilege-enjoying middle class mental make up was oriented amongst them. The other intelligentsia, specially, the special-privilege and comfort enjoying technocrat force in industry were their part and parcel as well. The ideological weakness and conservative mentality for retaining presently enjoyed comfort, of the industrial workers were helpful for the situation. As a whole, the pillar of strength of revisionism lies in it. It can be said that the basis of the organisational strength of Soviet revisionism is: vested interest in agricultural co-operatives, special-privilege-enjoying petty-bourgeois forces in different establishments, opportunist & privilege-enjoying State bureaucrats, special-privilege-enjoying groups, existing inside the Party and special privilege and comfort-enjoying technocrat force in industrial establishments. The stay and establishment of revisionism are inside this combined vessel.

It was observed that, the Soviet revisionist clique, following the trend of tactics of the old Mensheviks moved completely with 'Lie-low' tactics till the time of death of Stalin. In the debate of 1951-52 with respect to Soviet economy they, without coming to direct fight against the thought of Stalin, took the attitude to remain at the back and to retain superficial allegiance to Stalin. As a result of their 'lie-low' tactics, the situation to unleash direct attack against revisionism in the party and State, did not exist before Stalin, though he was conscious about the existence of the thought of anti-socialist advancement and anti-Marxism-Leninism. But it was for him a subject of confusion in thought of the spokesmen of the oppositional views. As a consequence the non-scope of organisational attack on revisionism became helpful for retaining strength of revisionism. In view of this tactics of revisionism, the revisionist leadership, after the death of Stalin, having brought no matter of principle at the forefront, mainly brought personal attack on Stalin. They utilised the Party and State machinery for the purpose. Internationally also, they created confusion in this matter. The main political weapon of them was to throw slander against Stalin with a non political attitude and unprincipled manner. This was their organisational cleverness. But their main base was : no changer force, for whom the Stalin-policy for subsequent development of Socialism, was very alarming.

The incident, as to rise of revisionist thought inside the international communist camp in the post - 2nd World War period was significant in the context of advent of Soviet revisionism. It cannot be said that, that was the international environs and ingredient for the advent of Soviet revisionism; that is, the said thought was the international stay of Soviet revisionism. The start of revisionist thought was in swing in the attitude, developed amongst certain communist leaders in the post-war period to oppose Stalin - thought with respect to World situation and to deny the necessity of revolutionary trend of Marxism-Leninism. The primary expression of modern revisionism come out in the thought of 'New Democracy' of the American Communist Leader Earl Browder and of 'National Socialism' of Yugoslav Communist Leader Tito. The shape of the thought of "New Democracy" of Browder was :

“A joint British–American political line looking forward the stabilization of Asia must, therefore be founded upon an economic concord which will limit the play of free competition between them on the World market, within the framework of a certain guaranteed proportionate share to the economically weaker power”. “The old colonial administration would have to be superseded effectively by new type of organisation, international in character, designed to create and maintain the conditions for successful industrialization, and to hand over governmental functions to the rising democratic institutions of the people, step by step, finally disappearing from the scene entirely”. [Earl Browder: Teheran: Our Path in War and Peace: National Book Agency Ltd, Calcutta 1945 Page 48 and 51]

Browder, having been imbibed with the idea of changing the old Colonial-rule-arrangement on the basis of a joint Anglo–American Plan and of ‘handing over governmental functions to the rising democratic institutions of the people’, thought that, what would arrive in the world free from Hitlerism, would be ‘It is the tide of democracy, of humanity taking charge of its own affairs, setting aside the pretensions of little strutting egomaniacs and privileged classes’ [Do Page 9]. He in this manner with the thought of creating a ‘New World’ through a ‘new way’ considered that in the post–world war situation, the separate existence of the Communist Party would create “an obstacle to larger unity” with this thought–impulse, he announced the abolition of the American Communist Party.

The thought of Yugoslav Communist Leader Tito was :

“In the present age, the possibility of “abolition of State” on the basis of the thought of Marxism has arrived; And it is now unnecessary for Socialism to retain the State–system on the basis of Dictatorship of the proletariat; the old postulates of Marxism are no more applicable for establishment of Socialism. The thought of class struggle in the present age is a rushness. It is now unnecessary to retain any international organisation or centre for unity and cohesion of the communist forces. The establishment of Socialism on the basis of the Nationalism is the need of the present age and it is the characteristic of the present age”.

With these thoughts Tito took the attitude and decision of keeping the Yugoslav Communist Party separate from ‘Cominform’ the World link centre of the Communist Parties. Thus a break was fetched in the World Communist movement.

The thought of Browder for abolition of Communist Party was put to a halt due to intervention of French Communist Party. But no real discussion came up inside the Communist Camp on his entire thought. Only in a subsequent time Zedanzov the then Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in a speech, characterised America as the most dangerous force, as the leader of the World Imperialism. In the mouth organ of Cominform – the ‘Lasting Peace’ certain critical articles were published with respect to mistaken steps taken by Yugoslav Communist Leader Tito, in Yugoslavia in the name of Socialism. But no all–round discussion was organised inside the International Communist Camp on the entire analysis of Tito with respect to Socialism and post–war world situation. As a result an

opportunity remained for existence of a thought of revisionism inside the international communist camp. It is an indication of weakness as regards to cautiousness inside the International Communist Camp about the rise of revisionism in the post war period. It was observed that after the advent of the thought of Tito, the thought of Italian Communist leader Togliatti for establishment of socialism through structural reform of bourgeois-state, entered in. It was found that the Soviet revisionism appeared with a mixed form of the thoughts of Browder, Tito and Togliatti. For the revisionist Leadership clique Tito became a near-friend and Togliatti a specially dependable theoretician. In this context, what Earl Browder, in placing his thought of 'new democracy' before the World Communist movement stated in the preamble of his above-mentioned book 'Teheran - Our Path in War & Peace' deserves special observation, He said:

"While I must accept personal responsibility for the form and content of this book and especially for any errors it may be found to contain, it is in larger sense not a personal product, but that of an organised movement, of the Marxists, the Communists in the United States and the World. To many thousands of unnamed contributors to the hammering out of its idea, I must make acknowledgement".

It would be unnatural for Soviet revisionism not to be linked up with this trend. It was clear from their role for unifying revisionism after the death of Stalin. Historically, the Soviet revisionism has been established having taken the environs of international revisionism; and after the said establishment, the Soviet revisionism became the powerful organiser and leader of International revisionism. In this, the weakness of the revolutionary foundation of the International Communist movement, organisationally, is expressed; though at this time the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao-Tse-Tang became the protector of revolutionary Marxism and the international leader against revisionism'.