

Has Marxism failed

By M. J. Audi

With the nervous break-down of Russians under the leadership of Mr. Gorbachev, the world has fallen in the lap of Americans. Intellectual weathercocks are crowing that Marxism has failed and capitalist democracy of American variety has no alternative. Is that true? Truth can be known only by knowing basic tenets of Marxism and march of events in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1991.

Western thinker

Karl Marx is the last creative and original western thinker. We do not find even first-rate commentators, let alone first-rate thinkers, in the Western world which is supposed to be the pacesetter of intellectual movements in our times. Third-rate literature on social sciences flowing from England, Europe and United States of America proves the point. Contribution of Marx lies in his objective and rational analysis of facts of life, plain speaking and boundless humanism. As Engels pinpointed in his famous Funeral oration, Marx highlighted basic truth that "mankind must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing before it can pursue politics, religion, science and art". Marx found that History is nothing but a record of recurring Class War between the Exploiters and the Exploited or the Rulers and the Ruled. Hence, truly peaceful and democratic society simply cannot exist on the face of earth without total annihilation of the classes. Marx's programme of Action was as follows:

As the Exploiters will never stop exploitation voluntarily, the Exploited should seize the State by force and establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat which was to be purely transitional and period of transition was to be the shortest possible. The mission of Dictatorship of Proletariat was : (1) Abolition of Private Property. According to Marx "whole idea of Communism may be summed up in a single phrase - **the abolition of private property**"; (2) Abolition of all privileges, perquisites and preferential treatment based upon birth, wealth and office; (3) Complete elimination of all types of open and subtle exploitation; (4) Annihilation of classes; (5) Abolition of State and (6) Establishment of Classless society where governance of men would be replaced by administration of things and where free and full development of each person is a condition for free and full development of all.

Marx also found that of all Polit-

ical institutions, the State is the most dangerous. It is at once an instrument of oppression and engine of exploitation. Hence, mankind would never be truly free without its abolition. The State survives because of division of society into classes. Once the classless society appears on the social scene, the State must disappear, the State must "wither away". The Communists, said Marx, are merely selfless and devoted guides of the proletariat guiding it to accomplish its mission. According to Marx under no circumstances, the Communists should become the parasites living luxurious life at the expense of the society.

How sound is Marxian Thought? Economic exploitation is a global phenomenon. To-day wherever one may be, one lives in the world of exploitation. Different forms of government prevailing in different societies are only different forms of exploitation. From time to time exploitation changes its shape but never its nature. It is as difficult for the exploiters to change their hearts as it is for the leopard to change his spots! To believe that democracy, in true sense of term, exists in England, Europe and United States of America is to live in a fools' paradise.

Explanation

With all its defects, the "materialistic conception of history" is a cogent explanation of social dynamics. All social relations are "rooted in material conditions of life". Despite pedantic polemics, world continues to be divided neatly into two classes - the Exploiters and the Exploited. The Western Scholars condemn Marx for failing to recognise the existence of the third class namely the "Managerial class". Reality tells that the "Managerial Class" is nothing but the **Crumb-collecting** group from the Exploited class. It cannot take any vital decisions. It only does the dirty work ordered by the capitalists in return for the crumbs which it glorifies as perquisites. Capitalists apart, all top-income persons in capitalist democracies are only the crumb-collectors.

It is a matter of fact that all institutions of capitalist democracies are designed to disguise economic exploitation which is systematic, subtle are invisible.

This exploitation is backed and blessed by brute force possessed by the State. If the Exploited react, they are ruthlessly suppressed in the name of law and order. Thus the

violence of the Exploited becomes the **rule of mob** and the violence of Exploiters becomes the **rule of law**. Marx's assertion that the power of the State is always used to protect the interests of Exploiters is confirmed and endorsed by Adam Smith's confession that "it is only under the shelter of civil magistrates that the owner of property can sleep a single night in security". In the capitalist democracies, the roles of Priest and Police are complementary. White frock and Khaki uniform work hand in glove to keep the Exploited mentally and physically submissive. Hence, Marx concluded that "religion is the heart of a heartless world (and) the soul of soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people". Religion is still skilfully used by the vested interests to deceive the Exploited by promising celestial heaven for terrestrial hell.

Western democracies worship Market Economy. Market is the place where people go to cheat one another. The hand of Exploiters always controls the market. Adam Smith, the author of *Wealth of Nations*, Christened it as "Invisible Hand". It is an outright lie that Market Economy protects the interests of consumers and gives them chance to choose the best things at competitive prices. Reality tells that both production and prices are fixed much in advance and imposed on the Market. The consumer has no chance to choose between good and bad. He chooses between bad and worse at the price dictated by the producers. Engels pointed out that "naked greed has been the moving spirit of western civilisation from the first day of its existence to the present time". When incentive is identified with money, human beings become money-making machines. When making money becomes the goal of life, human beings become marketable commodities. Marx rightly stated that callous "cash-nexus" governs all social relationships. How wise Goldsmith was when he concluded that where wealth accumulates, men decay and where commerce prevails, honour sinks! That is why everywhere in the world trully cultured persons always abhor wealth.

In 1917, when the Soviets seized power in Russia, world was made to believe that first Marxist State was born. Dictatorship of Proletariat was established under the guidance of Lenin, the leader of Communist party of Soviet Union. Soon Lenin became a thorn in the flesh of the opportunists divided

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Has Marxism failed

(Contd. from Col. 5)

between Stalin and Trotsky. With Lenin's death, Dictatorship of Proletariat was converted into Dictatorship of Party Secretariat with Stalin as supremo. Thus emergence of Stalin marked discontinuation of the Marxist experiment in Russia. Interestingly, thereafter history of Communist church closely resembles history of the church of Rome. Khrushchev laid the foundation of corruption in Russia. Every dog has his day and that of Brezhnev was by far the longest. Brezhnev was like Pope Alexander VI who said "having won the papacy, let us enjoy it" Brezhnev himself owned several dachas and generously allowed entire ruling class to imitate him. Consequently, instead of withering away, the State became stronger in the Soviet Union. Instead of a classless society, a new class emerged in so-called Marxist States from Beijing to Belgrade. Party bosses, their families and their favourites amassed enormous wealth in cash and kind. It became virtually impossible to conceal that wealth from public knowledge. Chernenko and Andropov were the two shortlived popes between Brezhnev and Gorbachev.

Gorbachev's main task was to give that wealth a legal protection. The system that legitimises ill-gotten wealth and gives the best protection to corruption is known as the Market Economy. No wonder, the New Class has no other alternative than embracing Market Economy. Thus from pseudo-Marxism they moved to pseudo-democracy. Gorbachev's slogans of "Glassnost and Perestroika" were the first signals to the western capitalists which were well-received promptly and quickly. Western capitalists ordered the media to lionise Gorbachev. Honours and Prizes — feeders of vanity — were heaped upon the new Messiah of Russia. Nobel prize for peace was given to Gorbachev in 1990. Incidentally, original and creative thinkers and self-respecting statesmen never accept any prizes

and certainly not the Nobel Prizes. Nobel was a merchant of death. He made his millions by selling ammunition to fight wars and instituted the prizes. Present multinational corporations are only enlarged editions of Nobel. How right Mahatma Gandhi was when he pinpointed that "hypocrisy and corruption" are distinguishing marks of western democracies! The Vietnamese leader Le Du Tho quipped the Nobel Prize for peace in 1973.

What have "Glassnost and Perestroika" given to unfortunate people of the Soviet Union? Only "shortages of basic commodities and high prices" according to the western media. Once Lenin remarked that for the sake of money, the capitalist would not hesitate to sell even his mother. Ironically, his successors have sold their very motherland to the multinationals. Clearly, the October Revolution failed miserably in giving good things of life to man-in-the street. Mahatma Gandhi exposed the greatest weakness of every Revolution. Revolutions fail because "those who have outstayed the greedy have in their turn become a prey to the disease of the conquered". Interestingly, the final goals of Marx and Gandhi are exactly identical. Both aspired to make earth a happy place to live for the weakest of the weak. Both were committed to cultural enrichment of mankind. Both were betrayed by their disciples. Both were and are used as ladder by the "harvest of fleas" to capture power. Power. Power is grabbed to make "pelf" that is to grab wealth from public coffers.

Has Marxism failed? Can anything fail without being tried? Is there any State on the face of earth which has implemented basic tenets of Marxism? In the Soviet Union itself Marxism did not go beyond the first step that is Dictatorship of Proletariat. Are we, then, to laugh at the severity or weep at the dishonesty of the intellectuals or both, stating that Marxism has failed?