

Communism and Democracy : A Revisionist Agenda

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It was as late as in 1978 that Deng Xiaoping, the top leader of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) made the admission that CPC earlier had never practised political democracy in the party or the country. People know that this generic truth in politics of every communist party under the sun is a very ill-kept secret but Deng was perhaps the first to break the tradition of mendacity followed by all the parties and leaders and made the confession. Deng reiterated the platitudes like “good ideas can be produced only if democracy is practised fully within the ranks of the people”, or “without democracy there can be no socialism and no socialist modernization”.¹ Declaring that it was essential to ensure the democratic rights of the workers and peasants, including the rights of democratic election, management and supervision, Deng explained that the CPC had not been able to practise democracy because neither the party nor the country had ever been run by the rule of law, as there were neither such party rules nor state laws. As a result, “what leaders say is taken as the law and anyone who disagrees is called a law-breaker. That kind of law changes whenever a leader’s views change”. He proposed that “To ensure people’s democracy... Democracy has to be institutionalised and written into laws...we must concentrate on enacting criminal and civil codes, procedural laws and other necessary laws concerning factories, people’s communes, forests, grass-lands and environmental protection, as well as labour laws and a law on investment by foreigners. These laws should be discussed and adopted through democratic procedures. Meanwhile, procuratorial and judicial organs should be strengthened... Just as the country must have laws, the party must have rules and regulations”.² It is better to begin with Deng’s words because one may be reasonably sure that Deng, the utter revisionist and capitalist-roader in the eyes of fundamentalist communists, disclosed not only the truth about CPC but also what had been the common practice of the communist parties all over the world before Deng was elevated to the Chief of one. One may recall that before Deng, it was another similar prominent revisionist and capitalist-roader, Nikita Khrushchev, who disclosed a more horrific record of Stalin’s malpractice of democracy. Both Khrushchev and Deng were not driven by the urge to display their communist virtues and democratic credentials, but like all other top leaders in the communist world committed their exceptional acts to serve contemporary political expediency. Neither Khrushchev nor Deng themselves ever practised even a little bit of democracy when they were at the helm of affairs.

Marxism does not offer a theory of democracy. Frankly, in Marx’s times democracy was not a rage. He indiscriminately offered certificate of democracy to blatantly anti-democratic polities. The barbarian practice of Negro slavery, racial genocide of Native Americans including denial of minimum human rights, deprivation of franchise of white women in the US polity were totally ignored by Marx and he persistently certified the USA as the most modern democratic state.

Antidemocratic barbarities against the colonial subjects and deprivation of franchise to white women practised by the white Christian European countries were similarly ignored and earned from him a certificate of democracy for these countries. Even monarchies were blessed as democracies. A perusal of Marxian writings is likely to indicate that these preposterous decisions of Marx were apparently due to the fact that these barbarian imperialist countries were Marx's most favourite ones and he looked upon them as saviour of the entire world from the clutches of oppressive class rule. Further, whenever Marx used such word as 'to win the battle of democracy' or 'democratic republic' etc. he never offered any clue as to how democracy would be practised in socialism. He never considered the colonial subjects or even the white Christian women as deserving franchise rights. He nevertheless registered the most essential fundamental principle of a democratic polity when he wrote, 'We shall have an association, in which free development of each is the condition for the free development of all',³ and clearly implied an essential fundamental principle of a democratic polity in a socialist society. In his philosophical writings, however, Marx made a superb exposition of the emancipatory aspects of democracy in a communist society and an interpretation of democracy, often bordering on Utopia, is yet to be bettered. The basic problem in the way to emancipation is alienation of man from himself, from nature, from fellow humans, from his society. Man can lead a meaningful life with dignity only in his society as a social being. Society is divided into a political society i.e. the state and rulers, and a civil society, where man pursues his private and particular interests as distinct from the public and universal interest of body-politic. Sphere of civil life is civil society, the economic life, and the sphere of political life, the life of citizen, is the state. This is the situation of severe alienation that keeps the man under despotism and tyranny of the monarch, ruling by caprice in a state where man is despised and de-humanised. Freedom from this alienation will emancipate man, development of the feelings of man's dignity that will transform the society into a community of man, and that can happen only in a democratic state where private property is abolished and universal adult suffrage enables people to fully participate in determining and executing public affairs, the affair of the state, i.e., actually their own affairs as social beings. This is what eventually dissolves the dualism of the state and civil society. Finally in true democracy the political state disappears. With the unity of universal and political, democracy is human existence, while in other political forms man has only legal existence; democracy makes this fundamental difference. A classless society could be achieved only in true democracy. It is a state that realizes man's 'communist essence'. Marx initially deprecated representative democracy, the form of electing representatives of people to run the state but later he termed it as another form of slavery upon the people. In the light of experience of the Paris commune he said that based on universal suffrage and smashing of the old state apparatus, the commune approached the stage at which the distinctions between the state and civil society begin to disappear. Communism begins with the positive transcendence of private property, overcoming self-alienation, democracy leading to a return of man to himself, developing humanism by true resolution of the conflict between man and man

and between man and nature. It then becomes a truly human world.⁴ One should not, of course, forget the truth that at that historical stage democratic polity has not yet appeared on the scene and Marx's fault, if any, was that he didn't transcend the existing social values on this score. Communists throughout the world, however, followed Marx in their own fundamentalist way. They never cared for democracy and persistently made sure to keep democracy out of the party or the country when in power. In their belief democracy is antithetic to Marxism. The next icon Lenin's situation was, however, quite different. A few words on the definition and concept of democracy may be in order.

Democracy is people's self-rule. It is a long developing concept and is still developing. In common parlance democracy signifies right to live, freedom of speech, freedom of living with human dignity with rights and privileges equal to others, right to self-determination, right to live in the individual's own way circumscribed by limitation of others' rights, right to freely take part in politics and to have a say in the administration of the country etc. etc. Frankly, democracy could signify a wider and deeper meaning to many people, not only in politics but also in economy, culture, in every sphere of social values, in norms of conduct in individual and family lives. Universal adult franchise in polity is only fundamental element of democracy. In the Marxian narrative whenever universal adult franchise is mentioned, it actually meant limited adult white Christian male franchise. The champion and pioneer of democracy, England, earned adult franchise for women only in 1928, after Lenin's death. It does not mean, of course, England thereafter attained democracy, because a vast number of human beings in the colonies under the British rule were deprived of democratic rights. So is another pioneer and champion, USA. The USA earned women's adult franchise in 1920, but it took almost the century for the blacks and Native Americans to achieve the formal right to vote, though not always freely; the same for the US colonial subjects. Further, the USA is now practising direct colonialism by attacking, conquering and imposing its military rule over other countries just as the Europe did in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. So much, for Marx's champions of democracy.

Lenin was forced to take part in a bitter debate on democracy in order to reply to the Marxist critics led by Rosa Luxemburg and Kautsky. Lenin's theory of democracy was rather simple and direct. In a class-ridden society there cannot be any pure democracy, whatever may be there is class democracy. In a class society only the ruling class always enjoys democratic rights and privileges while the ruled classes are by law or by practice or by both deprived of democratic rights. The state is the instrument of coercion to deprive the ruled of democracy — so bourgeois democracy is actually in effect a bourgeois dictatorship. The existing mechanism is simple and apparently just. Everyone is entitled to freedom of speech but for the poor underprivileged this entitlement is illusory since the poor is unable to afford the cost of printing reading material or of arranging for a public meeting to propagate their views. They have the right to contest in the election but are unable to afford the cost of an election campaign. They have the right to education or litigation for justice but again poverty and social discrimination turn out to be insuperable barrier. Socialist democracy is likewise a class democracy. Here the ruling classes, workers and peasants enjoy full

democratic rights freely and take active part in the self-rule while the erstwhile ruling classes but now the ruled ones e.g. bourgeoisie and the land owning classes are at the receiving end being deprived of democratic rights and forcibly suppressed so that they cannot regain state power. Here Lenin equated the term Dictatorship of the proletariat with socialist democracy, as he did with bourgeois democracy with bourgeois dictatorship.⁵

Lenin's theory was, however, a polemical outburst contrary to truth. Kautsky argued that since the overwhelming majority of the population, workers and peasants, support the Government and the Bolshevik state power, there was no necessity of forcible suppression or of deprivation of voting rights. Communists could very well hold election, withdraw measures of suppression of democracy in the country and keep the state power with people's support. Lenin made no cogent reply to this argument. Rosa Luxemburg's attack, however, was more direct, specific, revealing and fundamental to which also Lenin had no answer. Showering heaps of superlative praise on Lenin and the Bolsheviks and criticising their land and nationalities policy she severely attacked Lenin's act of suppression of public life and deprivation of democracy of the entire people. Rosa said, "Freedom only for the supporters of the Government only, for the members of one party — however numerous they may be — is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of "justice" but because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic and its effectiveness vanishes when freedom becomes a special privilege. ... The public life of countries with limited freedom is so poverty stricken, so miserable, so rigid, so unfruitful, precisely because, through the exclusion of democracy, it cuts off the living sources of all spiritual riches and progress." Socialism in life, Rosa said, demands a complete spiritual transformation in the masses degraded by centuries of bourgeois class rule but the means Lenin employs to achieve this is completely erroneous. Decree, dictatorial force of the factory overseer, draconic penalties, rule by terror, etc. are only palliatives. The only way to a rebirth is school of public life itself, the most unlimited, the broadest democracy and public opinion. It is rule by terror which demoralises. Rosa continued, "But with the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the Soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an elite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously — at bottom, then, a clique affair — a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, that is a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense, in the sense of the rule of the Jacobins (the postponement of the Soviet Congress from three-month period to six-month period!). Yes, we can go even further; such conditions must inevitably cause a brutalisation of public life, attempted assassinations, shooting

of hostages, etc.” Asserting that every rule by terror leads inevitably to arbitrariness and every form of arbitrariness tends to deprive society, Rosa prescribed, “It should and must at once undertake socialist measures in the most energetic, unyielding and unhesitant fashion, in other words, exercise a dictatorship, but a dictatorship of the *class*, not of a party or of a clique—dictatorship of the class, that means in the broadest public form on the basis of the most active, unlimited participation of the mass of the people, of unlimited democracy. ...But socialist democracy is not something, which begins only in the promised land after the foundations of socialist economy are created; it does not come as some sort of Christmas present for the worthy people who, in the interim, have loyally supported a handful of socialist dictators. Socialist democracy begins simultaneously with the beginnings of the destruction of class rule and of the construction of socialism. It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power by the socialist party. It is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat. Yes dictatorship! But this dictatorship consists in the *manner of applying democracy*, not in the *elimination*; in energetic resolute attacks upon the well-entrenched rights and economic relationships of bourgeois society, without which a socialist transformation cannot be accomplished. But this dictatorship must be the work of the *class* and not of a little leading minority in the name of the class — that is, it must proceed step by step out of the active participation of the masses; it must be under their direct influence, subjected to the control of complete public activity; it must arise out of the growing political training of the mass of the people.” Reiterating with Lenin that adverse military situation and intensely hostile activities of the anti-socialists made the suppression of democracy inevitable and necessary, Rosa warned, “The danger begins only when they make a virtue of necessity and want to freeze into a complete theoretical system all the tactics forced upon them by these fatal circumstances, and want to recommend them to the international proletariat as a mode of socialist tactics...they want to place in its storehouse as new discoveries all the distortions prescribed in Russia by necessity and compulsion—in the last analysis only, by-products of bankruptcy of international socialism in the present world war.”⁶

Here Rosa not only exposed Lenin’s elaborate prevarications on the oppression of the workers and peasants and total deprivation of democratic rights of the working masses of the people prevailing in Lenin’s Russia, but also went into the heart of the Marxian theory of socialist transformation of people and society from capitalism. This socialist transformation, Rosa declared very clearly and unhesitatingly, can never be brought about by dictatorial coercion. The correct way is rather the opposite. Unlimited freedom for the labouring masses to take part in all spheres of the politics of the country and an open democratic atmosphere to prevail in the society so that the culture of democracy is established and takes root. The essence of transformation, Rosa implied, would take place in the realm of culture. That, it is easy to understand, will take time, patience and careful guidance. Meanwhile, the distortion of democracy and lack of freedom were inevitable result of the hostility of the anti-socialists and Rosa supported the temporary suppression of democracy unhesitatingly: But the signs she detected were ominous. The Bolsheviks didn’t conceal their tendency that

they considered this distortion normal. Arbitrary and indiscriminate state violence against workers, total deprivation of democracy of the working people, dictatorship of the party and individual party bureaucrats etc. were identified as the new found manual of socialist state practice and the tendency to establish these as routine were visible. This was the alarm signal to Rosa Luxemburg and she expressed her apprehension to all the communists. But as everybody known none paid any attention to Rosa's well-meaning criticism. Though Lenin promised that these anti-democratic measures of the war communism period were only temporary and soon to be withdrawn, he continued it. Stalin later reinforced this dictatorship over the proletariat and established a system of a special authoritarian regime that cannot be matched with precedence. Likewise, all other ruling communist parties including that of China followed suit and perpetuated Stalinist authoritarian rule, each in its own characteristic form.

Mao Zedong presented a detailed theory of socialist transformation of the people and society, a theory more elaborate and illuminatory than that of Rosa Luxemburg, particularly suited to the colonially exploited countries of Asia. He also took various measures including a cultural revolution lasting for a decade but all these were non-starters from the beginning since he never allowed democracy in the country. Once about 7 years after coming to power, he allowed a bit of freedom of expression in a limited manner experimentally to see what happened. The result was outpouring of an avalanche of criticism against the party and the cadre. Mao panicked and suppressed all of them. Since then the one party rule with an oligarchy at the top continues. In West Bengal, a province of India, a so-called communist party comes to power through parliamentary democracy. This party working within existing parliamentary democracy has committed such a variety of autocratic law-breaking acts to oppress the working people that have given a fair indication of what they might do if they are allowed one-party rule.

On paper, however, all communists starting from Lenin down to an inconsequential theoretician of a small group assert that socialism could only be built by the working people amidst a fully democratic polity. Socialism itself signifies the most extreme, broadest and deepest democracy. No democracy, no socialism. But in practice all communists are anti-democratic through and through. It is difficult to pinpoint the real cause of this paradoxical phenomenon except that Lenin and Stalin together set and established this tradition, as apprehended by Rosa Luxemburg, that socialism ought to be built by the dictatorship of the proletariat which is operated in material terms by the ruling communist party or its top leadership or its topmost leader wielding absolute monopoly military power, executing arbitrary coercive actions unmitigated by any law or counter power. After the spectacular fall of Soviet and the derailment of China, a few embarrassed communists in India are now conceding that there ought to be democracy in a socialist regime, though they hardly appear to have an idea about what democracy means. On being pressed they say — well, there should be more than one party but they cannot further explain what good that will do or how could that help in building socialism. People however, know that officially and legally China allows several political parties but that didn't help an iota of democracy to prevail in that country.

All these should not make one ignore the fact that the non-Marxist Euro-America were rather proud of their anti-democratic ideology and barbarian acts that were more reactionary and backward than the Leninist.

Take the example of so-called American revolution or freedom struggle. It is a carefully constructed story full of lies and untruth, turning later into a myth to which the entire colonial world succumbed. The question of revolution is preposterous and it is not at all a freedom struggle. It was actually a part of civil war between two groups of Barbarian people who conquered North America and occupied the land piece by piece by stages. The group loyal to the English crown wanted to operate slowly and steadily the task of killing and looting the peaceful civilized Native Americans and slower importation of Negro slaves. The rebel group wanted to perform this task with speed and extreme savagery. This was actually the dispute and in order to cover up this barbarian practice a story of freedom struggle was invented, decorated with such noble intentions as bringing in democracy and civil rights to the people. Not only Marx and Marxists but the entire world accepted this myth though it appears laughable if not ridiculous. A society vigorously practising slavery and genocide of innocent people could never be democratic even by wild imagination. This democratic society of USA had Negroes, Native Americans and white women who had no voting rights or citizenship.

Then again take the case of world famous French revolution. Marx and Marxists were extraordinarily eloquent in hailing the great French revolution, which brought about a fundamental change in the form of a bourgeois democratic revolution toppling monarchy to replace it by republic that was quite unprecedented in Europe as well as in the world. Marxists were well accustomed to worship French revolution, which they said actually ushered in democracy and that was a product of falsely celebrated European enlightenment. Marx never cared to mention that under this so-called revolutionary republican French government the Negro slaves of the French colony, naively believing in the false slogan of liberty and equality of so-called revolutionary France, rose up to declare the end of slavery. The Pseudo-republicans told them that these slogans are not for Negroes. Mira beau, one of great flag bearers of the revolution told of the slaves that they were not any different from horses and mules and so they couldn't be counted as citizens. The Haitian real revolutionaries then declared their independence from the French republican-imperial rule and the French revolutionary army crushed them with usual imperial brutality to re-impose colonial control and slavery.⁷ The false republic, however, after a short existence with its false slogan made way for the return of monarchy — so much for Marx's favourite French revolution and enlightenment. It is clear that the French revolution was a reactionary, anti-democratic, anti-human barbaric act of white Christian barbarians.

Before the Russian revolution in the early stage of the communist movement, democracy came up in a big way to confront the European communists. The German communists flushed with success in organizing the trade unions bigger and bigger and achieving steady success in electoral battles of existing parliamentary democracy were frequently talking about achieving parliamentary majority. Engels provided them with the much-coveted inspiration, shortly

before he died in 1895, writing in his Preface to a re-edition of Marx's *Class Struggle in France*, "We can count even today on two and a quarter million voters. If it continues in this fashion, by the end of the century we shall conquer the greater part of the middle strata of society, petty bourgeois and small peasants, and grow into the decisive power in the land, before which all other powers will have to bow, whether they like it or not. To keep this growing without interruption until it of itself gets beyond the control of the prevailing Governmental system, not to fritter away this daily increasing shock force in vanguard skirmishes, but to keep it intact until the decisive day, that is our main task. And there is only one means by which the steady rise of the socialist fighting forces in Germany could be temporarily halted and even thrown back for sometime: a clash on a big scale with the military, a blood-letting like that of 1871 in Paris. To shoot a party which numbers millions out of existence is too much even for all the magazine rifles of Europe and America. But the normal development will be impeded, the shock force would, perhaps, not be available at the critical moment, the decisive combat would be delayed, protracted and attended by heavier sacrifices!"⁸ It was Engels, one may recall, who declared that democratic republic is the specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a socialist state is a democratic republic.⁹

E Bernstein, the chief revisionist, only theorized this politics enunciated by Engels, though to an extremely undesirable extent. But then Bernstein, at heart, was a diehard imperialist, as people know from the record at the second international where he promoted resolution sanctioning a socialist colonial policy, which was narrowly voted down.

Engels's words appeared to cast doubt at the inevitability of armed revolution and seizure of power, and hoped that parliamentary majority and overwhelming political support of the people by allying with peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and middle class would achieve power, though at that time parliamentary democracy was a fractured one with non-existent universal franchise. Bernstein's revision was, however, deeper and fundamental. He rejected the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism and revolution, and suggested that more and more democracy, continuance of the prevailing trend of rising real wage, increasing welfare measures, participation of workers in administrative and economic institutions, right of trade unions to take part in the management of industry increasing socialization of production and property etc. will gradually transform the society from capitalism to socialism. It is what he called the evolutionary road to socialism. He showed by empirical evidence that concentration of capital, polarization of two classes, disappearance of peasantry and middle classes, pauperisation of workers etc. had not happened, and no sign of such eventuality was in the offing. Bernstein further challenged Marx's labour theory of value, doctrine of 'Dictatorship of the proletariat', of 'workers had no fatherland'. He showed that the character of capitalism had changed and was continuously changing and its transformation to socialism was quite possible by more collectivization, more democracy, equality and welfare etc. and sudden fundamental and radical change in the economy was neither desirable nor possible.

Bernstein's revisionism provoked an unprecedented flood of attack from orthodox Marxists of all shades particularly the leading theoreticians of the parties. Lenin's opposition was, however, misdirected. He said that revisionism came into being as an ideology reflecting the interests of the aristocracy of the working class, whom the bourgeoisie permitted to enjoy the 'left-over' of their feast of prosperity. Lenin's argument was both un-Marxist and untrue. The German, French and British trade unions in particular expressed overwhelming support for Bernstein's doctrine. Moreover, the aristocracy of the working class are wage-earners like their fellow workers and differ from them only in earning more and Lenin implied that higher standard of living turned workers from revolutionaries into reformists, but according to traditional Marxism, poverty is not the source of class struggle and revolutionary consciousness, and a short-term improvement in the workers' lot has no significant effect on their innate revolutionism.¹⁰

In any case Bernstein's doctrine, right or wrong, had firm footing on empirical facts and Lenin's had none. Though revisionism was a rejection of fundamental tenets of Marxism, Bernstein stuck to reality while orthodox Marxists adhered to predetermined dogma having only a basis in ideology. As it turned out, gradually the entire European working class turned their allegiance from Marxism to Bernstein's revisionism. It should not be lost sight of that Bernstein enjoyed a high prestige in the German party and was also seen, together with Kautsky, as the heir of Marx & Engels. Before he proposed his revisionist theory, the French and British socialists had already turned revisionist and the German party's politics was visibly revisionist though the revolutionary rhetoric was never missing from declarations and statements. In enjoying and hoping for more prosperity the European proletariat allied with the European imperialists and abandoned class struggle and revolutionism. The later doctrines of social democracy and Euro-communism owe their parentage to Bernstein's revisionism. All this, however, decisively centered round democracy, which stood in stark contrast to anti-democracy of Leninism and Stalinism. The European proletariat, once tasting democracy didn't want to lose it. A so-called left-wing leader of the British Labour Party said that his party and the people in general did not want to lose their democratic rights earned by hard struggle, specially the right to remove the undesirable ruler by vote. The communist countries would be able to earn people's consent if they look at their experience and apply it in their land. For an undemocratic state there was always the risk of armed insurrection. They are not desirable. Much credence should not, however, be accorded to such sermons, because Tony Benn had little idea about what democracy was and he was, after all, an imperialist. European people could only develop a very limited democratic society and that also in their own land only. It should further be explained that they received formal democracy in the polity, not real democracy in the Marxian sense. Above all, they were imperialist in politics meaning deeply dedicated to uphold the cult of violence in politics and social intercourse; also in the economy meaning an indiscriminate armed conquest of the more civilized nations in the name of teaching them democracy and in reality, exploiting them to fill their own coffers that rendered their own economy feudal, not capitalist; and racist and religious communalist in culture meaning they indulged in indiscriminate

violence, including genocide against whom they held as of inferior races that embrace all non-whites and non-Christians and indulged in violence to proselytize non-Christians in the name of the salvation of their souls, though they were careful never to accord them civilized treatment equal to that of their fellow white Christians. For all these, they are considered not only anti-democratic but barbarian too. The chief dictum here is: an imperialist can never be called democratic; it is preposterous even to think of it. Imperialism is a barbaric act inspired by barbaric ideology.

Talking about the present times, one sees that war mongering of the Euro-American barbaric society continues; they don't mind sending troops and dropping bombs in non-white countries at the drop of a hat. They have converted imperialism into neo-imperialism and that also is undemocratic. They control the world by guns. Pointing guns they carry on international commerce, which is an unequal exchange with the colourful people of Afro-Asia at the receiving end, as it was in the good old imperial times. All international bodies and intercourse, including UNO, dominated by Euro-America are undemocratic. As for Latin America it was crowded and dominated by people of European origin and they are as bad as the Euro-Americans.

To talk about Afro-Asia the first point is : they have nothing at all to learn from Euro-America. If they do they are doomed. The USA is now bent upon establishing American democracy in Iraq and it is easy to see that they will fail. The point is : if Iraq learns Euro-American democracy and practises it, they will have indulged in slavery, imperialism and racism, and they must engage in international violence and stage war against other nations on a non-stop basis. That, Iraq cannot and will not do and they will have to remain alienated from western democracy forever. To repeat, the colourful people of the world have nothing to learn from the colourless ones.

The Afro-Asian people, after earning freedom from the evil clutches of the imperialists, have experimented with political democracy mostly imitating the sahibs and that resulted in abject failure. Frankly, none of the countries were able to imitate the West and democracy in each country acquired its own characteristics as modified by neo-imperialism from outside and by its own culture, tradition and ethos from inside. That is, of course, as it should be. Today, most of them have abandoned democracy with connivance from neo-imperialism and its agent inside the country. It is rather not difficult to understand that non-democracy is the most favourable ground for neo-imperialism to operate. Today, only a few countries e.g. India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, South Africa etc. still operate under a framework derived from the western model and it is obvious that this model is incompatible with the ethos and culture of all Afro-Asian countries. Perhaps that is why everywhere it is full of holes and practised or malpractised by only a tiny minority of people who received some sort of western education.

So it appears that neither Marxists nor non-Marxists could teach people about democracy by means of demonstration. Hence people themselves have to innovate, construct and practise a model of democracy suited to the ethos and culture of the majority of the population. Unless and until it is done, freedom and ability ; for independent thought and action will remain elusive and people will continue to be oppressed and exploited by non-democracy. One must bear in

mind that communism without democracy is a ridiculous idea and Marx never meant that. In the endeavour to restore the ideology of communism, democracy must be put in its central situation and that is a primary and essential task.

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