Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
The theories of Soviet foreign policy are rooted mainly in classical Marxism and the various practical orientations of the Leninist revolutionary tradition that developed till the October Revolution. This spinal inheritance apart, the other factors which have influenced the theoretical formulations are Russian history and the physical attributes of the country — geography, climate, population and resources.

Marxism provided many of the fundamental principles of Soviet foreign policy. Lenin, by adapting Marx's basically economic approach to the international political developments to the conditions in which the Russian Bolshevik regime was born and survived during the subsequent critical years, developed new theories which became the bases of the future Soviet foreign policy.

To take the first things first, initially let us see those aspects of Marxism which helped the Bolsheviks in giving a practical and pragmatic shape to the theories of Soviet foreign policy.

Karl Marx, in his writings did not deal explicitly with the foreign policy of a socialist state, although he did adumbrate a general outline of the establishment of a socialist state. There are two probable reasons for his not formulating a specific foreign policy of a socialist state. Firstly, during Marx's lifetime a socialist state as he conceived of had not yet emerged. Secondly, according to Marx the existence
of a socialist state was a temporary phase between the capitalist and communist societies. Marx expressed this idea in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*:

Between capitalist and Communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

However, whatever in this connection was left out by Marx was substantially replenished by Friedrich Engels. As a matter of fact the conception of the socialist state was more fully developed by Engels who contended that the state would wither away, when the class antagonism in the society came to an end, and, that way, it would come to an end in the inevitable process of dialectics, as Engels explained in his *Anti-Dühring*.

Although any clear-cut theory of a socialist state, as such, is absent in classical Marxism, several aspects of Marx's drive of ideas in relation to state became the basis of the foreign policy of the first socialist state -- the Soviet Union. In view of this, a proper understanding of Marx's doctrinal and also interpretative light in regard to the international relations of his time is pertinent to be discussed. To Marx and Engels, the initiators of events in the international fields are neither state nor their leaders, but classes, because, the class which controls the means of production, controls the means of mental production which is the ruling intellectual force. Those who lack the means of mental

production are subject to it. Thus there comes the domination of material relationship. Hence the ruling ideas within any geo-political set-up are nothing but the expression of the dominant material relationships — the expression of dominant class. Marx and Engels clearly stated:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; ••••. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. 2

According to Marx the classes are the result of the division of labour. Hence, when the nature of division of labour changes, the relation between the classes also changes. It was this very proposition which he raised through his poser in a letter which he wrote to P.V. Annenkov. Marx's contention was that the crux of the problem was who controlled the productive forces and what was the pattern of the division of labour, the nature of which had the strongest bearing upon the pattern of state structure as well as on how the states carried themselves in international affairs. As Marx believed, the development of productive forces together with the internal and external intercourse of these forces determined not only the relation of one nation to the other nations, but also the entire internal structure of the nation itself. The Marxian theory of structure

2 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 47.
3 Ibid., p. 520.
and superstructure was based entirely on this logic. He stated in clear terms:

The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labour and internal intercourse. This statement is generally recognized. But not only the relation of one nation to others, but also the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. 4

In *The German Ideology* Marx traces the process of evolution of classes according to changing patterns of division of labour. The division of labour inside a nation, says Marx, leads first of all to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour which follows the increasing degree of separation of the town from the country and the conflict of their interests. Its further development leads to the separation of the commercial from the industrial labour. Subsequently as the economy expands and assumes a greater degree of complexity, among the individuals cooperating in definite kinds of labour, there also develops various divisions through the divisions of labour inside the various branches of the national economy. Essentially it is these very conditions of a nation, which are to be seen in the relations of different nations to one another. That means, the antagonism of town and country which comes up as a result of the division of labour, later becomes the antagonism between those states which represent the urban economic interests and those which represent the rural economic interests. That means the struggle within a state between

4 Ibid., p. 21.
5 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
differ eat classes expands to the field of international relations.

With the advent of industrialisation there took place the expansion of commerce, which took full advantage of and drew the maximal boost from the exploration of vast and virgin regions within the two Americas and the establishment of regular sea-routes to the East Indies and almost the entire Far East. This was followed by the colonisation and the extension of markets on a global scale which, in turn, aggravated the contradictions and conflicts among the nations. In short, the contradiction between the interests of the ruling classes of the nations, between the feudal agrarian interests and the industrial nouveau riche, for instance, ultimately led to the splitting-up of the world market into different parts. Each of these parts was exploited by a particular nation. Thus various nations entered into a competition relationship -- the struggle for trade leverage and monopoly -- which ended in wars. It is this concept viz., that it is the contradiction among nations which leads to wars, a condition inherent in the capitalist period of the human society, which is the second aspect of the Marxist theory of international relations. 6

Another aspect is that even if competition of the nations among themselves is inherent in the capitalist system, for the protection of their interests, for the sake of expediency, the nations would try to bring harmony among themselves through tariffs, prohibitions and treaties. But

6 Ibid., pp. 57-60.
their harmony, too weakly cemented to stand the ever-increasing strains, would not last long since wars would inevitably erupt again.

Both Marx and Engels saw in the recurring and sanguinary types of naval wars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the evidence of the ineffectuality of the international marriages of convenience and their being rudely broken up by acute trade rivalries which made showdown almost inevitable. This theory of war was further developed by Lenin as an aspect of the theoretical scaffolding of the Soviet foreign policy.

As a whole, the Marxist philosophy of history, developed on the dialectical frame of historical materialism, became the corner-stone of the theory of Soviet foreign policy. In *Manifesto*, Marx assumed that all history is the "history of class struggles". The international aspect of the class struggle, as Marx and Engels foresaw, was the rapid process of the division of society into two powerful contentious camps, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the two poised for the most decisive showdown. In their foreign policy formulation, following the classical Marxist light, the Soviet leaders believed that the foreign policy of a nation could not but be the projection of class struggle on the international level. They believed that the foreign policy of any nation primarily depends on its class structure and the concrete historical conditions of the socia-

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7 Ibid., p. 59.
8 Ibid., p. 108.
9 Ibid., p. 109.
economic reality. This was in the main an extension of the focus that the class structure of a nation is the product of its economic relations and their development. Consequently, the behaviour of governments in all countries and at all times seemed to the Marxists to be economically determined. According to the Marxist doctrine of basis and superstructure, economic relations form the groundwork for the nation's political, cultural and other relations. Marx himself stressed that both history and politics were shaped and conditioned by the inter-relationships forged by the economic developments.

The other aspect of Marxism, the international solidarity among the proletariat, especially the clarion call: "Workers of the World Unite!", became the starting point of the concept of proletarian internationalism of Soviet foreign policy. Marx was clear that only a fraternal international alliance of the proletariat of all countries could achieve the emancipation of the working class. He wrote:

Past experience has shown how disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts.

10 Marx said, "... in fact only the more or less clear expression of struggles of social classes and that 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". Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1969), vol. 1, p. 246.

11 K. Marx and F. Engels, Works (Moscow, n.d.), vol. 21, p. 220. (Russian ed.).

Both the international aspect of the class struggle and international solidarity among the proletariat were considerably modified and systematized by Lenin during his Swiss exile of 1913-16. He linked it up with his concept of the state and of society in his doctrine of party dictatorship. Lenin's formulations in this score represent a blueprint for organization and action in regard to the communist state, the formulations being of particular importance for the theory of foreign policy which Lenin, subsequently, developed for the first communist state in the world.

The cardinal point of the Marxist conception of a temporal and historical "ultimate society", and the inevitability of such a society through the various stages of class struggle, thus, became the goal of Soviet foreign policy. Since Marx, this has been known as the "classless society" and conceived as a condition of bliss, perfect justice, peace and stability. In it, there are to be neither organizations of political rule nor social groups and national individualities. A single, collective and cohesive unit of humanity is to replace the conglomeration of disparate states and nations and a system of uniform social standards free from all compulsions is to supersede inter-state and international law. In this way, in Marxist eyes, the ultimate purpose of history and hence of all political action is seen in the establishment of this ideal society. At this future stage when the ideal society has been achieved there will open up the optimal possibilities of human development, as there will be no question of struggle between nations because of freedom from all tensions consequenced by
the contrarieties and conflicts. Marxism pinned its maximum faith in the fact that "In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end". In short, Marx emphasized the class approach to the state in all its activities, which became the axle round which the Soviet foreign policy turned.

The idea of peace as an "international principle" when the whole world would be changed into communism, was forcefully expressed by Marx in the first address to the General Council of the International Working Men's Association, in the immediate background of the Franco-Prussian War. It was written by Marx and approved by the General Council of the First International at its meeting on July 23, 1870. It states:

The very fact that while official France and Germany are rushing into a fratricidal feud, the workmen of France and Germany send each other messages of peace and goodwill; this great fact, unparalleled in the history of the past, opens the vista of a brighter future. It proves that in contrast to old society, with its economical miseries and its political delirium, a new society will spring up, whose rule will be peace, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same: Labour!

This view of Marx about the way to durable peace, as an international principle, within the ambit of scientific socialism, can be considered as a guideline in elaborating the peace policy pursued by the young Soviet Union.


Further, in 1871 Marx stated that the universal proletarian revolution could be brought about by evolutionary means also in the liberal-democratic states like US, England, and Holland. And in 1881 Engels expressed the same idea that in France, America and England, a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism was possible. The future Soviet theory of "different roads to socialism" could thus be seen as an elaboration of this seminal Marxian concept.

Marxism proclaimed that the proletarian revolution, which was to do away with every kind of human disjointedness and alienation, would take place almost simultaneously in the advanced Western industrial countries, including the United States. The question of how events would develop outside the industrialized Western world was not considered important. However, it was posited that because of its universal nature, the proletarian revolution would also completely change and greatly accelerate development in the rest of the world. On their part, Marx and Engels, never formulated a systematic socialist "thesis" or theory of imperialism. Later, Lenin recognized the importance of the "national and colonial question", and he made it a part of his theory of foreign policy, linking it to the doctrine of the right of national self-determination. As a matter of fact, Lenin had begun to formulate this theory as early as 1913, and when he gave it a concrete and practical shape later on, making it an important plank of Soviet foreign policy, the theory was one of the many firsts to his credit as the formulation of the Marxist approach in the light of the living political issues of the world. But here again the
original stimulation came from Marx and Engels.

Marx and Engels' great sympathy for most of the revolutionary and national emancipation movements of their time was a fact which cannot be ignored since it shows their full awareness of these movements as establishing the relevance of their dialectics of class struggle. They supported most of the unsocialist as well as socialist revolutionary movements in the nineteenth century. Marx supported the Spanish revolution of 1868, the Polish nationalism of 19th century and the first Indian independence war of 1857. Although Polish nationalism was mostly limited to the Polish upper and middle classes and that the Polish proletariat was virtually non-existent, Marx supported the phenomenon as a part of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements which would eventually snowball into people's movements against all vested and monopolistic interests.

The Polish uprisings were directed against Prussia, Austria and, especially, Russia. To Marx, as he made it clear, the struggle against capitalism and the struggle against colonial oppression were quite significantly related to each other. He pointed out, "Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains". In a remarkable letter to Karl Kautsky on September 12, 1882, we find Engels prognosticating and interpreting the nature of the national movements of his time, against colonial rule:

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In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population - Canada, the Cape, Australia - will all become independent; on the other hand, the countries inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated - India, Algeria, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions - must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence. How this process will develop is difficult to say. India will perhaps, indeed very probably, make a revolution, and as proletariat in process of self-emancipation cannot conduct any colonial wars, it would have to be allowed to run its course; it would not pass off without all sorts of destruction, of course, but that sort of thing is inseparable from all revolutions. The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g., in Algeria and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing for us. We shall have enough to do at home. Once Europe is reorganised, and North America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example that the semi-civilised countries will of themselves follow in their wake: economic needs, if anything, will see to that. But as to what social and political phases these countries will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at Socialist organization, I think we today can advance only rather idle hypotheses. One thing alone is certain: the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing. Which of course by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds...

Thus it is obvious that the nucleus of the policy of "wars of national liberation" is as old as Marx and Engels.

Even if the ideology and strategy of the revolutionary movements were opposite to those of Marxism, Marx supported the movements simply because these would disrupt the traditional pattern of politics in the given country and shake up the vested interests. In fact, Marx and Engels, within their very comprehensive world-view of the struggles between the

have and have-nots, were watching the struggle of the Russian populists against Czarism with great admiration.

In addition, from the early years, especially from 1851 onwards, when Marx was working as a journalist, he always stretched his intellectual antennae to make observations on contemporary history. In fact both Marx and Engels wrote extensively on the contemporary political scene. Of course these writings, mostly with a journalistic bias, do not contain any exposition of their main theory. Still these writings have some relevance, insofar as many of these writings are the cocoon form of ideas elaborated later on at other hands.

Between 1851 and 1862, international politics was dominated by the Eastern Question, the Russo-Turkish War, the Crimean War of 1854-55, England's relations with Russia, England's Indian policy etc. Marx and Engels closely watched the situation and expressed their views about the part played by almost all the major European powers in the 19th century international politics. They considered Imperial Russia as the bulwark of reaction and the yardstick for measuring the politics of the powers of the day. Friederich Engels in his article of 1890 on "The Foreign Policy of Russian Czarism", stated that Russian foreign policy had been guided for centuries towards world domination by a "gray of adventures". He wrote:

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17 From 1861 to 1862, i.e., for a whole decade, Marx worked as a journalist and wrote articles for the New York Tribune for which he and some of his friends acted as the European correspondents during the ten years. Now and then he also worked for the New Order-Zeitung and some other journals.
The Russian diplomatic corps forms, so to speak, a modern order, powerful enough in case of necessity to overcome even the whims of the Tsar and to become master of the corruption within Russia. In order to disseminate it abroad the more plentifully, a Jesuit order recruited originally and preferably from foreigners... 18

Besides, in a series of articles on "The History of the Secret Diplomacy of the Eighteenth Century", which appeared in the newspaper Free Press, Marx indicated that he was aware of diplomatic activities of the bourgeois states even though he was not clear about the prospects of such activities in a socialist state. Engels' writings touched the question of disarmament also. He argued that disarmament was feasible despite tendencies to the contrary. In a series of articles under the title "Can Europe Disarm?" (1893), he wrote: "For 25 years now the whole of Europe has been arming on a scale hitherto unheard of ... Is it not foolish in such circumstances to talk about disarmament? ... I affirm that disarmament, and thereby also a guarantee of peace, is possible...." 19

Another Marxian legacy which influenced the Soviet foreign policy considerably was contained in the formulations of the First International, which had been given a shape by Marx himself. The driving ideas behind the organizational pattern and the basic policies of the Comintern were, in fact, taken over by Lenin from the guidelines provided by the First


Internationals to bring revolution all over the world.

Marx believed that there must prevail within the sinews of international relations the same vital principles as the simple but sustaining rules of honesty and justice that prevail in relations between individual human beings. This he pointed out, when he wrote about the day-to-day strategy of the working class movement in dealing with the bourgeois governments of the world. In the "Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association" he said:

To master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective Governments; to counteract them, if necessary by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations, and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations.

The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working class. 20

It will be seen that the foregoing aspects of classical Marxism went to provide the needed basis for the formulation of the foreign policy of the future socialist state. Lenin in fact made them the basis of the foreign policy of the first socialist state. Moreover, he believed that it is "... un-Marxist and unscientific to single out 'foreign policy' from policy in general". In his rational and pragmatic outlook Lenin was fully aware of the fact that the foreign policy formulations of


Leninist Revolutionary Tradition till the October Revolution

The second source of the theory of Soviet foreign policy is the Leninist revolutionary tradition till the October Revolution. Russian was the first language into which Marx's *Das Capital* was translated legally in 1872. The first Russian Marxist circle came to be founded in 1883 behind which Plekhanov was the leading spirit. This body could also be seen as an offshoot from the earlier group of Narodniki. Another landmark was the rise of the Russian Social Democratic Party which was founded in 1893 and from which two groups -- Bolsheviks and Mensheviks -- emerged in 1903. These two branches of Russian Marxism were more revolutionary compared to the other Socialist Parties of Europe.

Czarist Russia was an economically underdeveloped country with a sprawling and disorganized rural economy. Politically it was the most reactionary country in Europe. In the beginnings of the 20th century due to severe internal strains and tensions it was in an explosive situation. Russia presented the ripest situation for a people's revolution against the rampant and most corrupt vested interests in almost all walks of life. Within the circles of those who were in the driver's seat, corruption and crisis were so deepseated that they had totally lost the people's confidence, just as they had been denuded of any ability to stand up to any determined assault on their power bastions. The misery of the people was well past all spirit of endurance. Lenin, who
was an extraordinary revolutionary, found salvation of Russia in Marxism. Marxism appeared to Lenin not only as a vast scheme, a total explanation to everything, but, more particularly in the context of the Russian situation, as an indicator of how to grapple with the concrete situation. In other words, Lenin considered Marxism as a guide in the activities of the Bolsheviks. Pinpointing the particular relevance of Marxism to the Russian situation, Lenin stated:

We do not regard Marx's theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the science which socialists must develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an independent elaboration of Marx's theory is especially essential for Russian socialists; for this theory provides only general guiding principles which, in particular, are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than in Germany and in Germany differently than in Russia.

Thus, as evident from the above, Leninist movement, in its Marxist inheritance, was adding to classical Marxism its own store of revolutionary experience. The result was the modification of Marxism in its applicational shape in the revolutionary situation of Russia. That this was no deviation from the main lines of Marxist philosophy has been stressed by the Russian theoreticians. According to Mikhail Suslov, "In Lenin's writings and practical work we have the continuation, development and concretisation of all the component parts of Marxism -- philosophy, political economy, scientific communism, the strategy and tactics of the working-class revolutionary struggle".

22 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1964), vol. 4, pp. 211-22.
In short, Leninism is action explained in terms of Marxism and conditioned by the Russian environment. The impact of Russian heritage in Lenin's attempt to put into practice Marxism is not negligible especially in the field of foreign policy. As the physical factors like geography and climate are constant, their influence on the Czarist regime and the Bolsheviks was alike. It would be convenient to mention about it in connection with the formulation of Soviet foreign policy only wherever it is needed, because, in the ultimate analysis, the domestic aspects of nations are inseparably interlinked with the changing international system as far as the foreign policy is concerned.

Prior to 1914 the Bolsheviks did not have any opportunity or immediate cause to think about international affairs. Nevertheless, the modifications of Marxism made by Lenin, starting from the concept and strategy of the party which he evolved in his "What Is to Be Done" in 1902, came in very handy after the October Revolution and considerably helped in giving shape to the theory of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. That was the inspiration, for the type of revolutionary party of ardent activists, as advocated by Lenin, also carried forward a lot from the Russian tradition going back to the Russian anarchists. It may be recalled that Marx and Engels in their Manifesto of the Communist Party had also predicted that a number of workers' parties would be established in the course of the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie. The Communist Party would be only one among them, but would also be unique among them as most truly representing the interests of the proletariat. In the eyes of Marx and Engels "The
communists are distinguished from the other working class parties. This distinction lies broadly in the two respects which they state as follows:

1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationalities.

2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

Therefore, as Marx and Engels envisaged, the communists comprise the most stable and steady organization of the workers. In all countries they are at the forefront of the working-class movements, leading other militants and activists with them into the vortex of the workers' struggles. Theoretically too it is the communists who possess the full intellectual apparatus to delineate the strategy and carry forward the movement strictly according to the dialectics of class struggle.

Marx and Engels regarded the political organization of the working class and the central role of the Communist Party in it as a natural necessity. Lenin also realized that "In its struggle for power, the proletariat has no other weapon but organization". So he was determined to create a

25 Ibid.
revolutionary cadre-based party suited to the conditions existing in Russia. He criticised the Western Marxist socialists like Bernstein who believed that revolution could be achieved by the ballot. Bernstein had glorified in the main, the philosophy of spontaneity. He advocated a kind of an opportunistic "trade-unionism" and "economism" which, to him, would bring about the upgrading and amelioration of the workers' standard of living. Lenin strongly assailed this view and stated, "The Bernsteinian and 'critical' trend, to which the majority of the legal Marxists turned ... demoralised the socialist consciousness by vulgarising Marxism, by advocating the theory of the blunting of social contradictions, by declaring the idea of the social revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat to be assured by reducing the working-class movement and the class struggle to narrow trade unionism and to a 'realistic' struggle for petty gradual reforms." As contrasted to the above, Lenin stressed the need for a revolutionary theory and for an awakening of 'consciousness' among the working class in preference to mere spontaneity. Emphasising a bold dialectical approach he opined that "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement". He stressed that it is almost in the natural course that the workers have spontaneity but not the revolutionary consciousness, owing to the conditions under which they live, unless they get the boost and lead from the organized workers' party. Lenin wrote, "that

28 Ibid., p. 369.
the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness, but cannot build and pursue the steps that lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The trade-union consciousness must need be transformed into the socialist consciousness.

As the workers are, by themselves, incapable of developing the true socialist consciousness, there arises the need of external help for it -- i.e. the help of a vanguard. And in this regard Lenin clearly envisaged that this role of "The vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory".

Lenin warned that the spontaneity concept would only strengthen the adverse influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers and it would have a strongly deterrent effect on the class struggle. Hence arose the importance of the party. Lenin thus stated that "the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat will not become its genuine class struggle until this struggle is led by a strong organization of revolutionaries" and "in our time only a party that will organize really nation-wide exposures can become the vanguard of the revolutionary forces".

Who would constitute the party? Lenin answered the question almost categorically; this party he stated, "must

29 Ibid., p. 375.
30 Ibid., p. 370.
31 Ibid., p. 382.
32 Ibid., p. 475.
33 Ibid., p. 431.
consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity. Further it should be formed into a cadre with a single ideology in this case, the ideology of scientific socialism, tolerating no deviation. With conditions as these were in Russia, it was obvious to Lenin that such a tightly-knit organization must inevitably and essentially be conspiratorial and be held together by iron discipline, and should not be based on broad democratic principles. Lenin said:

The only serious organizational principle for the active workers of our movement should be the strictest secrecy, the strictest selection of members, and the training of professional revolutionaries. Given these qualities, something even more than 'democracy' would be guaranteed to us, namely, complete comradely mutual confidence among revolutionaries. This is absolutely essential for us, because there can be no question of replacing it by general democratic control in Russia. It would be a great mistake to believe that the impossibility of establishing real 'democratic' control renders the members of the revolutionary organisation beyond control altogether. They have not time to think about the toy forms of democracy but they have a lively sense of their responsibility, knowing as they do from experience that an organization of real revolutionaries will stop at nothing to rid itself of an unworthy member.

It may be observed that Lenin combined the Marxist conception of the destiny of the proletariat as the revolutionary class with the elitism of the Narodniki whose organization was based on conspiratorial techniques. Pestal, the Decembrist, also had

34 Ibid., p. 464.
36 Ibid., p. 479.
37 Ibid., p. 480.
advocated the formation of small underground groups united by a
common revolutionary purpose. In the seventies and eighties of
the nineteenth century Tkachev carried this further by calling
for a centralized and disciplined body of professional revolu-
tionaries. This kind of a body existed in the Land and Liberty
(Zemlya i Volya) group and its successor, the Party of People's
Will (Narodnaya Volya). These organizations had also adopted,
as far back as 1879, the principle of the organization of Secret
Societies.

In "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward", Lenin further
discussed the party of a new type. He thought, revolution could
be achieved only through the creative activity inspired by and
stemming from the organizational basis of the decision-making
process, which he termed as "democratic centralism"). Centralism
means unanimity of purpose which helps bring in the elements of
stability and unanimity in decision-making. For example, all the
party members support a party policy when the majority has
adopted that policy; the minority must support it even though
they have voted against it. This kind of unanimity is essential
for the task of firmly executing decisions. In other words,
the party's resolutions and decisions should have the force of
law over the members.

39 Christopher Hill, Lenin and the Russian Revolution

40 See "A Tactical Platform for the Unification Congress of
the RSDLP", in Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 10, p. 163.
He used the term here for the first time. And it was he
who formulated it and gave it a practical significance.

41 Ibid., pp. 442-43.

42 Ibid., p. 163 and p. 443.
The process is "democratic", because the party decisions are to be made through a process of free debate at least in the highest party circles and also because the party's leaders are elected and not selected. And according to the principle of centralism, if a decision is reached, it should be accepted by each member individually without any reserve, and any further criticism of the decision is tantamount to breach of party discipline. Dissent is possible only before a decision becomes party law. These are the terms, that going conjointly, are called 'democratic centralism'.

Lenin was under severe criticism from all sides for making modifications in Marxism. His concept of "Democratic Centralism" was denounced as non-Marxist by Rosa Luxemburg as early as 1904. In 1902 at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party, for the first time from an open platform, Lenin had already faced opposition to his ideas. He had also clashed with Plekhanov over 'Iskara' and over their party programme. These differences became wider and ultimately caused the split in the party in 1903. Lenin attempted to defend himself in "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward". Henceforth he began to develop his theory of strategy and tactics of revolution in order to effectively deal with his theoretical opponents and the workers' revolutions of 1905 and 1917. The tactics he adopted successfully in this period became the guidelines to the future policy-makers of the Soviet Union, inclusive of the parameters of Soviet policy in regard to its external affairs.
Regarding the temporal setting of the staging of revolution in Russia, there were different theories. To the Mensheviks, Socialist Russia was a matter of distant future. They thought that before the socialist revolution, Russia had to overcome its industrial backwardness. Therefore, the immediate task, as the Mensheviks thought, was to clear the way for a bourgeois middle-class revolution. Essentially, the Mensheviks believed more in the letter than in the spirit of the classical Marxist concept of two revolutions. On the other extreme there was the theory of "permanent revolution" developed by Parvus and adopted by Trotsky during and after the revolution. They viewed that as a result of economic backwardness and the large role played by state capitalism, the Russian middle class was weak and incapable of ushering in a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Therefore, unlike in Western Europe, in Russia the bourgeois revolution would be a non-starter until taken over by the proletariat. As this group thought, once the proletariat was in power, its responsibility was to maintain the power and keep the revolution going "in permanence" until socialism was established both at home and abroad.

Even Lenin initially agreed with the Mensheviks in this matter before the 1905 revolution. He had believed that under the given existing level of capitalist development in Russia only a bourgeois-democratic revolution was possible.

44 Ibid., p. 35.
Before the era of revolutions actually began in Russia, many of the Russian Marxists, Lenin, of course, excluded, by and large neglected the peasantry. They directed their propaganda to city workers. The Narodniki were, however, an exception. They thought that people meant peasantry. Narodniki were utopian abstractionists in the sense that they were against both the old order and the spread of modern industrial capitalism in Russia. They stood for a kind of peasant socialism based on the traditional Russian peasant commune. George V. Plekhanov, the orthodox Marxist, was totally hostile to the Narodnik ideas. Being inspired by the writings of Plekhanov, Lenin too developed ideas against the Narodniki. He expressed the view that basically Russia was not different from the more industrially advanced West and it had in a compulsive manner to pass through a stage of development of industrial capitalism as outlined by Marx. But after the abortive 1905 revolution Lenin realized that it was a peasant revolt which had been seething and spiralling up for more than a century in Russia. Therefore, he changed his attitude towards peasantry whose revolutionary potentialities he now came to recognize. After the unsuccessful 1905 revolution he

These ideas are expressed by Lenin in the following pamphlets:

i) "What the 'Friends of the people' are And How they Fight the Social Democrats", Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 1, pp. 129-326.

ii) "The Economic Content of Narodism And the Criticism of it in Mr. Struve's Book", ibid., pp. 333-500.


iv) "Germs of Narodnik Project-mongering", ibid., pp. 469-89.

v) "The Heritage We Are Renouncing", ibid., pp. 491-527.
corrected what was wrong before it and admitted that a Russian revolution could succeed only if the workers joined hands with the peasant revolutionaries. A joint front of the workers and peasantry would form the solid phalanx of the struggle, as he envisaged. In his "Two Tactics" Lenin said: "Those who really understand the role of the peasantry in a victorious Russian revolution would not dream of saying that the sweep of the revolution will be diminished if the bourgeoisie recoils from it. For, in actual fact, the Russian revolution will begin to assume its real sweep, ... only when the bourgeoisie recoils from it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat." Lenin further believed that after such a revolution "a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" would be established as the first decisive landmark of the establishment of a revolutionary socialist state.

In this rediscovery of the strategic significance of the peasantry as well as in the formation of a new type of party, Lenin showed the flexible nature of his tactics. He outlined two objectives: a long-range one and a short-range one. The latter was conceived as an intermediary objective from which the final goal, i.e., the long-range one, could be reached more easily. To achieve the long-range goal, the revolution, Lenin stressed the need for the short-range objective; the role of the organization or the party, to lead the working class in bringing

47 Lenin, n. 45, pp. 99-100.
48 Ibid., p. 84.
about the revolution. By making alliance of bourgeois peasantry, i.e., bourgeoisie in Marxist theory, and the working class, the short-range objective, Lenin could achieve his long-range objective, the revolution in Russia, where 80 per cent of the society were peasants. It should be recalled in this connection that, later down in history, this policy was reapplied with signal success in underdeveloped and predominantly agrarian countries like China and Vietnam. Regarding the tactics of the future foreign policy of the Soviet Union this double view, long-run and short-run both in their complementarity and supplementarity, also became the key to its world view.

The view of the peasants' key role in the revolution was inseparably related to Lenin's theory of world-wide class struggle against colonialism and imperialism. He elevated the peasants to the position of a semi-proletarian class. In doing so Lenin revived Marxism by interpreting the struggles of colonial and underdeveloped nations in communist terms. The future development of Soviet foreign policies both with the West and the developing nations has almost all along been rooted in Lenin's analysis of imperialism and nationalism. In this connection, the theory of war developed by Lenin before 1917 is also important inasmuch as the theory had upon it the impact of Lenin's rethinking on the nature of the revolution and further, as the theory exercised a seminal influence on the later developments of the Soviet Union in foreign policy formulations. The scope of all these theories was enlarged by Lenin's work on Imperialism written during World War I called
"Imperialism: the Highest stage of Capitalism".  

The War posed urgent and agonising problems before the infant Soviet state and these persuaded Lenin to elaborate his theory of international relations. Prior to 1914, he was only a Russian revolutionary. The Revolution made Lenin a world figure. After the successful October Revolution the Russian revolutionary experiences were directly to throw their impact upon the international situation. In short, the fate of Socialist Revolution in Russia was going to be subordinated to the task of world revolution. In the light of his perception of this changing context, Lenin proceeded to elaborate a whole network of theory and strategy for international Marxism. According to Lenin imperialism was the advanced capitalist stage in which advanced capitalist states dominated over backward areas and underdeveloped countries. Lenin listed the following five essential features of the imperialist stage of capitalism:

(1) The concentration of production and capital rises to such a high stage that from it monopolies are created, which play a decisive role in economic life.

(2) There is the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this, of "finance capital", i.e. a financial oligarchy.

(3) The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance.

(4) There is the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world's economic resources among themselves.

(5) The biggest capitalist powers acquire and divide the territories of the small and poorly developed nations among themselves with the aim of carrying on their imperialistic exploitation without any holds barred.

This imperialist epoch of capitalism foresaw a section of labour leaders playing into the hands of the capitalists, whose aim was thus to drive a wedge into the proletariat. The "labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy", Lenin stated from experience, were bribed with the extra profits obtained by the bourgeoisie through exploiting the colonies. This disintegrating game went on "to create privileged sections also among the workers and detach them from the broad masses of the proletariat". The result of it was the emergence of "Workers-turned-bourgeoisie, or the labour aristocracy". This gave an edge to unhealthy opportunism among workers. All this consequenced splits among the workers and their leaders and thus brought about a temporary recession and even decay in the working-class movement. Labour aristocracy gave rise to the

50 Ibid, p. 263.
51 Ibid., p. 194.
52 Ibid., p. 231.
53 Ibid., p. 283.
54 Ibid., p. 194.
55 Ibid., p. 283.
workers' bureaucracy with all its pettifoggery and arrogance. This delayed the tempo of the class struggle in capitalist countries and hence halted the process of proletarian revolution also. Taking this line of argument Lenin explained why the proletarian revolution had not taken place in the industrialised countries of the West till the World War I.

Another feature of the imperialist stage of capitalism was that it brought about a sinister system of economic strangulation of the colonised nations, comprising the majority of the world's population, by a handful of the colonising nations that accounted for a tiny minority of the total world population. The a priori reasoning behind this, as Lenin postulated, was that in the developed countries, i.e. those that colonised and economically exploited other nations, capitalism had outgrown its boundaries and spilled over through imperialistic conquest and hegemony over the poorer nations, and this had led these nations to pursue the policy of unabashed oppression of the colonised people and plunder of the latter's countries.

Thus came the Leninist concept of the national question, which he formulated prior to the October Revolution. With regard to the national question, Lenin conceived of a twofold task. Firstly, he sought to establish a strong link between nationalism and the coming revolution and, secondly, he tried to devise a rational platform of co-existence for the less proletarian followers and the strictly centralised party as the

57 Ibid., p. 143.
pivot round which the revolutionary programme would operate. Since the Russian proletariat was not sufficiently representative, Russia being an industrially backward nation, he had to seek wider support for the party’s activities. Hence he demanded that the party must also represent the interests of various oppressed classes. This proved to be a great success in future regarding the formation and representative ambit of the communist parties of the oppressed nations.

For establishing a connection between nationalism and the coming revolutionary movement, Lenin began by analysing the historical connection between the course of development of bourgeois capitalism and the rise of the national movements. He said:

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market; and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language. 58

Through the above stage of capitalism, as far as it concerned nationalism, Lenin noted two tendencies. He listed them thus: "The first is the awakening of national life and national movement, the struggle against all national oppression, and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form; the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of international unity of capital, of economic life, in general, of politics, science, etc." 59 Lenin believed that the first of

58 Ibid., vol. 20, p. 396.
59 Ibid., p. 27.
these tendencies had increased considerably in the form of colonial revolts. He stated, "Imperialism forces the masses into this struggle by sharpening class contradictions on a tremendous scale." Moreover, in this respect Lenin's thoughts were governed by the idea that imperialism was at the core of a system of vicious economic exploitation launched by powerful monopoly capitalism. He stated, "The political superstructure of this new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism) is the change from democracy to political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly". Hence the basis of the people's anti-colonial struggle was a movement for democratic rights. "Being a 'negation' of democracy in general, imperialism is also a 'negation' of democracy in the national question (i.e. national self-determination) ..." Lenin affirmed, "National self-determination means political independence". Thus, in political sense, the right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence. In other words, for the colonised people it was the struggle for the right of the nationalities for political independence against the oppressor nations who denied the right.

60 Ibid., vol. 22, p. 143.
61 Lenin, n. 21, p. 19.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 20.
65 See, Lenin, n. 49, p. 146.
These oppressed nationalities possessed great revolutionary potential. To Lenin, the question was to make full use of this revolutionary potential to serve the wider revolutionary cause. In his thesis published in the Swiss socialist newspaper Der Vorbote in April 1916, Lenin pointed out the way to achieve the end. In this he rebutted the views of Radek, Bukharin and Piatakov who had argued that self-determination was impracticable in capitalist society in which the oppression of nations was inevitable and that socialism would ultimately offer a blanket solution for the abolition of all national oppression, for which it was not necessary to galvanize the struggle of the nationalities for their own self-determination. Lenin's counter argument was that democracy was a stage in the transition to socialism and that self-determination was a perfectly democratic demand and hence fully in consonance with revolutionary socialism. It was the duty of the socialists, Lenin asserted, to struggle for democratic rights and to support the national revolutions by small nations even though these might be led by the nations' petite bourgeoisie. Lenin clinched the question with his categorical statement: "National self-determination is the same as the struggle for complete national liberation, for complete independence, against annexation, and socialists cannot — without ceasing to be socialists — reject such a struggle in whatever form, right down to an uprising or war." According to Lenin self-

66 Ibid., p. 143-66,
67 Lenin, n. 61, p. 35.
determination was not only a political goal but was possible in the economic sense also. That is, the economic determinism of the Marxist interpretation of history also operated through such political struggles. Lenin said, "It is fundamentally wrong, however, to maintain that self-determination is unachievable in the economic sense."  

In fitting nationalism into the strategy of revolution, Lenin also tried to find out the solution of the question — where was the world revolution going to begin? In his early formulations of his strategy Lenin had adopted the Marxist axiom that it would begin in one of the advanced countries of the West. But now with his greater and more extended analytical focus in the light of his views on the last stage of capitalism, he stated, "The social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a whole series of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the underdeveloped, backward and oppressed nations." The logic upon which he posited the above view may be stated as follows. Capitalism as a historical phenomenon develops unevenly, and objective reality, of which history is a record, gives us "highly developed capitalist nations side by side with a number of economically slightly developed, or totally underdeveloped, nations." Here Lenin by linking nationalism with socialism gave a Marxist

68 Ibid., p. 16.

69 Ibid., p. 35.
explanation, theoretical validity and extension of support to the phenomenon of modern nationalism.

To seize power Marx and Engels had relied almost exclusively on a large and mature working class. But in the colonies or underdeveloped countries there was no proletariat in the proper sense of the term. Then the question was, was the 'self-determination' slogan actually applied to? Was it to be the struggle by the colonial bourgeoisie or the peasants? According to Lenin, it was the struggle fought by the socialists or "the whole of the labouring population, for the entire people". As has been explained above, Lenin had already felt convinced to include the peasantry among the proletariat, within the contexture of the imperialistic epoch, because of his reassessment of the world situation in the light of the Marxist principles. "The old social relations become completely revolutionised", in the imperialistic epoch and "the age-long agrarian isolation of nations ... is destroyed and they are drawn into the capitalist whirlpool." Lenin thus justified the socialist revolutions of backward countries including Russia where there was not enough proletariat to make revolution and where there was a large quantum of agrarian representation in the national population.

Another corollary of Imperialism, as Lenin saw, was the inter-imperialist rivalries and wars caused by the inherent strains and conflicts within the system itself. Lenin believed

70 Ibid., p. 39.
71 Lenin, n. 49, p. 297.
that World War I was an imperialist struggle, a contention among
the imperialists themselves, which would lead to the downfall of
the capitalist system and end in the victory of the revolutionary
proletariat. He pointed out two basic factors that had driven
the imperialist forces to this state of war. The war actively
supported the vested interests in their struggle against the
revisionist elements among the German Social Democrats and the
same elements in the Russian labour movement. Further, the war
fully exposed the dangerous doctrines of chauvinism pursued by
the socialists of the belligerent countries and the totally
misguided support these elements gave to their governments
under the motto of the "defence of the fatherland". The war
fully exposed this divisive role. In the manifesto of the
Basle Congress of the Second International it was approved
that no socialist party of the world should support its
government in the pursuit of war efforts. Lenin in numerous
pamphlets, written by him during his period of exile, argued
against narrow and belligerent patriotism -- the so called
loyalty to the fatherland at the time of war. Such misdirected
patriotism was the enemy to the solidarity of the world
proletariat, he argued. In these pamphlets he pleaded for a
"holy war of all the oppressed, for the conquest of their own
fatherland", and thus he turned the tables against the
imperialists as well as their social-democrat supporters.
Lenin stressed, "The conversion of the present imperialist war
into a civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan". He

72 Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 21, p. 20.
73 Ibid., p. 34.
pictured the imperialist war as a war of the oppressors for the purpose of consolidating and extending their rule of oppression. In his pamphlet "Socialism and War" written in 1915, Lenin defined imperialism as an "epoch of the constantly increasing oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of 'great powers'". It was, therefore, "impossible to fight for the socialist international revolution against imperialism unless the right of nations of self-determination is recognized". Unless these 'great powers' were liquidated by the organized working class and the latter succeeded in gaining control over the entire political and economic machinery in each of the imperialist nations, there could not be durable peace, prosperity and equality in the world. Thus here Lenin's theory of war was closely connected with the demand for the right of national self-determination. He portrayed the struggle against imperialism as a struggle for the national liberation of all the oppressed peoples.

Lenin described 'war' itself — a global conflagration like World War I — as a continuation of the politics of exploitation, rapacity and plunder pursued by the few powerful upon the vast majority of the denied and oppressed people. War was waged by a particular class for the attainment of class goals. Therefore, he advocated what may be described as the use of hindsight, a close study of the politics that preceded

74 Ibid., pp. 285-333.
75 Ibid., p. 317.
76 Ibid., pp. 304-5.
the war, the forces that led to and brought about the war. If the politics were imperialist politics — politics in the interest of finance capital, then the war which would emerge from such politics would be surely an imperialist war. On the other hand, if war emerged from the national liberation movement, the character of the war would be radically different; it would then be a war of national liberation. The distinction so made became one of the most important aspects of the future foreign policy of Soviet Union. At any rate Lenin's proposition that war could be the main agency to bring down capitalism, was a new milestone in Marxist theory.

Soviet foreign policy stemmed from the very essence of all these typical features of pre-revolutionary Leninist strategy and operational code, in which emphases were relatively apportioned to the party, his shifting attitude towards the various classes, his attitude towards national movements, his demand for the transformation of international wars into civil wars and so on.

Lenin translated the strategy into reality as the head of the Bolshevik regime and at the same time paved the path of the Soviet foreign policy of the future. The changing international scenario, of necessity, brought about new orientations and postures. But some of the fundamental elements in the Soviet foreign policy, that have continued to serve as the sustaining force within it, have come from the Leninist formulations as explained above.

77 See ibid., pp. 390-305 and Lenin, n. 61, p. 9.