

## Proletariat Revolutionary Movement in Russia during 1905 as Revealed in Maxim Gorky's *Mother*

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### Abstract

*This writing aims to find out the depictions and principles of proletariat revolutionary movement in Russia during 1905 as seen in Maxim Gorky's Mother. Meanwhile, the scope of this writing is depictions of proletariat revolutionary movements in Russia during 1905 as revealed in Maxim Gorky's Mother, overview of Gorky world vision as part of proletariat revolutionary movement in Russia at that time. However, in this writing, writer hypothesizes that Maxim Gorky's Mother is absorbing Marxism-Leninism as implemented in Russian Proletariat Movement during 1905 and, later on, writer will exhibit that Marxism-Leninism which highlighted in Maxim Gorky's Mother is world view of socialist revolutionary movement where Gorky himself is involved directly to the faction. Library research is employed in this writing. Hence, the writer employs philosophical and sociological approach and genetic structuralism as a tool in analyzing. To support analysis, writer puts exposition on Marxism-Leninism, historical sketch of Russian during 1905, and biographical sketch of Maxim Gorky as well.*  
**Keyword:** movement, proletariat, Russia

### Introduction

In Indonesia communism is clearly forbidden to be discussed and taught after 1965 holocaust. General Soeharto. Soeharto, through his personnel's authority produces TAP MPR XXV 1966 about prohibition to spread and teach Marxism-Leninism, further, the implementation of Pancasila as principal ideology in Indonesia (Henuk, 2008).

The writer is fascinated in studying communism as a certain idea In order to reveal communism value, writer proposes to expound proletariat revolutionary movement as it is a ground step of communism to liberate human race from exploitation among human (*explotation homme par homme*), to demolish capitalistic society and establish non-classes society. However, communism is developed from various philosophers and thinkers but in this writing, writer will correlate it with Russian communism which applies Marxism and Leninism.

In Russia, one of author who succeeded in reflecting truthfully the historic role of the working class, of the Marxist-Leninist party, in their struggle for liberation from the class yoke, is Maxim Gorky. In his novel *Mother*, which appeared in 1906, he laid the foundations of the new proletarian literature, the literature of socialist realism. Maxim Gorky's *Mother* describes the earlier time of Russian proletariat revolutionary movement which later on won and established USSR, a prototype of communist country.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Philosophical Approach

In literary study, philosophy is used as approach to analyze certain thought and school of thought. Supandjar (2001: 45) states that philosophy in literature covers 16 themes including schools of philosophy, branches of philosophy, history of system of thought, classical western philosophy, etc. In this writing, writer will use philosophical approach in examining philosophical thought within Maxim Gorky's *Mother*.

Philosophical approach in literature deal with coherence and consistence of philosophical thought beneath literary work. Hence, in this regard, writer should find conceptual connotation that dwells within Maxim Gorky's *Mother*. Later on, all conceptual connotations that found will be analyzed and justified as absorption of certain philosophical thought.

#### Sociological Approach

Sociological approach is suitable approach used in this research. Ratna (2004:59) indicates that sociological approach is an approach that analyzes man in society completed by understanding process starting from society to individual in other words, it tells about phenomenon in a society which is represented by an

individual. At this point, sociological approach is close to Marxist point of view toward society which maintains class divisions and class struggle. In particular, writer craves employ sociological approach in analyzing Russian society during 1905 as seen in Maxim Gorky's *Mother*.

## Discussion

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#### 1. Genetic Structuralism

Opposing formalism in analyzing literary text, genetic structuralism reveals to conceal relationship between text and writer outlook as member of his/her community or society. Here, we find similarity among biographical approach and genetic structuralism. While biographical approach intervene author perspective about certain issue that revealed in literary work, genetic structuralism attempts to see how author invoice world view of group of people or particular society. In this regard, genetic structuralism does not separated author as independent atom in society but rather as a part of it as well.

Therefore, as Jabrohim (2001: 59) notes that using genetic structuralism, one ought to determine the genesis of literary work, who is the man behind the text, what are the circumstances precede the process of writing before finally pull alongside to deduce world view (*vision de monde*). Genetic structuralism is employed to guide analysis on relation between stipulation in Russia during 1905 and author background in spite of finding Gorky's world vision.

#### 2. Marxism-Leninism

Marxism-Leninism derives from two different philosophers and come from different time and place, Marx and Lenin. Marx (1818-1883) is a German philosophers and well known as avant-garde of scientific socialism. Marx and his colleague Friedrich Engels issued the *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei (Communist Manifesto)* (1848) in the explicit hope of precipitating social revolution. This work describes the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, distinguishes communism from other socialist movements, proposes a list of specific social reforms, and urges all workers to unite in revolution against existing regimes. This prophetic document has similar principles in Lenin's *State and Revolution*.

Meanwhile, Lenin Russian revolutionary who led the October Revolution of 1917 and became head of state. His *State and Revolution* (2000) discusses the practical application of Marx's principles to the success of the Bolshevik revolution. On Lenin's view, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a temporary expedient that will inevitably lead to the creation of a truly socialist government. In his *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism* (1909) and the *Philosophical Notebooks* (1929), Lenin sought to purge Marxism of any tendency toward subjective idealism by encouraging critical study of Hegel (Kusumandaru, (2004:54). Crucial points of Marxism-Leninism are about to be discussed in this writing are historical materialism and dialectical materialism.

#### 3. Dialectical Materialism

In modern thought, dialectic is quite familiar term in achieving truth of reality. There are three aspects of dialectic which are thesis, antithesis, and synthesis or new thesis (Kurniawan, 2006: 64). Thesis is affirmation or

first finding in observing something. The last is synthesis of new thesis, new affirmation and it has progress in finding the truth indeed. This kind of dialectical thinking may lead truth finding not only in philosophy but also in its practical way.

Based on Hegel, man history is developed from dialectic of idea (Magniz-Suseno, 1999: 98) and it surely goes through centuries. Young Marx opposes this idealism and turns it nose to Feuerbach and his materialistic point of view. Feuerbach himself is considered as naturalistic materialist in his life time as he argues that matter is the first thing and later idea comes next. Simple exemplification of this abstract explanation is idea derives from it concrete matter.

Marx, collaborating with his beloved friend Frederich Engels, uses both Feuerbach materialism and Hegel dialectic as their method of philosophy. In Marxism, philosophy is not only the way to understand the world but to change the world itself. This philosophy for its era is revolutionary thinking since it brings philosophy to its application in real life.

#### 4. *Historical Materialism*

Marx refuses to admit that idea comes first and later followed by matter. As Feuerbach influencing him enough, Marx believes that basically human life needs material fulfillment such as food, cloth, and shelter instead of idealization establishment. Indeed, in fulfilling human needs, one must create it, despite of there is no such thing falls from the sky as blessed by God-himself. So that, one must considers in dealing with nature and other human being. Relation between the first is so called as means of production while the second is called as mode of production. Both of its later on determines idea, or in Marxist terminology is described as superstructure, of each society member (Kusumandaru, 2002).

Similarly with contradiction between idea and matter, Marxism argues that base structure is material process of human kind related to socio economical aspect while superstructure is idea derives from material process of human kind such as art, politic, literature, etc. where relation among them is base structure is determining superstructure and it is not vice versa.

Generally, there are phases of society development in historical materialism nevertheless the most urgent issue related to this topic is feudalism phase transition toward capitalism phase in Russia during 1905. Feudalism phase is indicated by the existence of landlord, vassal, and peasants. Relation between them is focused by land possession where landlord and vassal own the land while peasants who does not own their possession, works for them. Increasing of development of science and technology through industrial revolution in some parts of Europe becomes one factor of turning points of feudalism to capitalism era besides contradiction among classes.

Industrialization grows within big city and it pries open new class that is proletariat, a huge massive working people. Landlord and vassal have to deal with such condition, in effect peasant rebels against them and some of them move to big city make an effort to seek better life. So that, landlord and vassal revolutionize their possession to factory and industry with the impact is peasants have their freedom and converted into factory worker while their old landowner turns into bourgeois class (Kusumandaru: 2004).

Having new order of society, bourgeois and proletariat arrange latest, as called in Marxist-Leninist term, means of production. Marx widely exposes contemporary exploitation toward working class that accordingly stealing surplus value from worker (Marx, 2004: 672).

However, proletariat revolutionary movement maintains some principles in order to achieve its goal, demolishing capitalistic society and established socialism society. Those are international solidarity of worker around the world, equality, justice, etc. Despite of its dialectic vision of proletariat revolutionary movement, those principles always change based on the circumstances and yet basic principles are still the same.

Therefore, realm above should be counted in performing principle of proletariat revolutionary movement since it may lead revolution whether great number peasants are joining the movement. Alliance between worker and peasant in a country that maintain feudalistic and capitalistic society is needed to win revolution instead.

Furthermore, struggle for liberty of working people would no succeed if each country fights in its inner contradiction. In spite of this provision, working people around the world ought to admit and support proletariat revolutionary movement in every part of the world as Marx and Engel cry in Communist Manifesto, working people all around the world: Unite!!

#### 5. *Socialist Realism*

Among the Communist revolutionary activities, one which played an important role was artistic activity, whose style of creation is called socialist realism. Lenin said that art should stand on the side of the proletariat (Lenin, 2000).

Theoretical ground that gives contribution to such socialist realism found in the Marxist theory of "basis and superstructure." Marx (2000) states in the Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy: "The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness [including art]." To synthesize and summarize, the above means that communist art must actively cooperate in eliminating the capitalist system and its superstructure, while in communist society, it must actively serve to maintain and strengthen its economic System, while educating the working people. Based upon this theory, socialist realism was established.

Gorky is been claimed as the founder of socialist realism in literature, he states the following about socialist realism: " For us writers, it is necessary in our life and in our creative work to stand on the high viewpoint-and only on that viewpoint that can see clearly all of the filthy crimes of capitalism, all of its mean and bloody intentions, and all of the greatness of the heroic activities of the proletariat." (Gorky, 2000)

Kurniawan (2006) exposes it as advocating the following:

- (1) To describe reality accurately with historic correctness in its revolutionary development.
- (2) To match one's artistic expression with the themes of ideological reform and the education of the workers in the socialist spirit.

### **Biographical Sketch of Maxim Gorky**

Aleksei Peshkov (Maksim Gorky, also written Maksim Gor'kii) was born in Nizhnii Novgorod as the son of a journeyman upholster (Kurniawan, 2006). In 1883 he was a worker in a biscuit factory, then a porter, baker's boy, fruit seller, railway employee, clerk to an advocate, and in 1891 an operative in a salt mill. In 1884 he failed to enter Kazan University, and in the late 1880s he was arrested for revolutionary activities.

Gorky was literary editor of *Zhizn* from 1899 and editor of *Znanie* publishing house in St. Petersburg from 1900. *Foma Gordeyev* (1899), his first novel, dealt with the new merchant class in Russia. Gorky became involved in a secret printing press and was temporarily exiled to Arzamas, central Russia in 1902. He joined the Social Democratic party's left wing, headed by Lenin. To raise money to Russian revolutionaries, Gorky went to the United States in 1906.

He returned in 1931 to Russia and founded a number of journals and became head of the Writers' Union. Gorky's speech at The First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1935 established the doctrine of socialist realism.

### **Historical Sketch of Russia During 1905**

Having attached with international war against Prussia and Japan in 1905, Russian aristocracies are fighting rebellions inside the state at the same time which comes from all side demanding for reform. By the time Russian troop are marching to the border across Siberia, Alexander III is preventing the growth of the Liberal, that demanding reform on state structure as they organized professional class, and Socialist Revolutionary (SR), that oppose feudal aristocracy by resembling domestic alliance between Zemstvo, and socialist left wing leads by Trotsky (Pares, 1956: 468).

Having big opportunity to take possible action, SR then declare Socialist Democratic Party (SDP) which is consisting alliance between workers and peasants which so called as soviet. Soviet here means that each level organization has structure and leadership in controlling political action which depend on highest level of SDP. This strategy, in fact, is proven to ensure mass struggle even more grow intensely within society and yet Liberal has already gathered Duma which SDP is delayed a step behind as their effort to consolidate people struggle.

In 1905 Russia is engage in national crisis that leads aristocracy fall from its throne. At that time, Russia is in the middle of transition from feudalistic to capitalistic society (Kusumandaru, 2004:237). There two big classes in society, bourgeois and proletariat. Bourgeois power is over controlling aristocrat; traders, employer, and landowner while huge numbers of proletariat are exploited by those are listed above.

SDP starts their campaign on basic demand for humanity such as eight hours working for a day and proper wage for the labor. Having popularized those issues, SDP attracts most of professional people and turn their attention from reformation to revolution indeed.

### Conclusion

The *Mother* depicts proletariat revolutionary movements as class struggle between bourgeois and proletariat in Russia during 1905. By emerging industrialization in the beginning, Gorky also reflects the emergence of labor force that retains crucial position in the revolution. The destination of the proletariat revolutionary movement is toward the winning of socialism as anti-thesis of capitalism that exploits and oppresses mass labors and workers.

Besides displaying heroic and militant movement by characters, the depiction of proletariat revolutionary movement in Russia during 1905 also exposes oppression conducted by Tsar Regime as bourgeois representatives. This exposition may turn common assumption that proletariat revolutionary movement struggling for socialism and communism is brutal and rough.

Gorky's technique in exhibiting characters as social representation. Pavel Vlassov represents leader of the movements, Pelagiya represents conservative Russian lady that joined in the revolution, Andrei represents outsider who would fight for proletariat liberty in Russia, and Rybin represents peasant as truthful alliance of labor in Marxism-Leninism point of view.

In philosophical discussion, Maxim Gorky's is well-absorbed Marxism-Leninism as Social Democrat Party's political line. This conclusion is not merely derived from Gorky's involvement in the faction but also because it is revealed the novel. Proletariat revolutionary movement, as it defends socialism as historical destiny, claims that socialism is antithesis of capitalism. Having been oppressed and exploited by capitalism, proletariat class gains it's consciousness into revolutionary level, and ready to lead alteration toward socialism by obtaining supports from peasantry. On the other philosophical principles, proletariat revolutionary movement also maintains international solidarity of worker around the world as the repercussion of Manifesto Communist Party as political compass of proletariat revolutionary movements in the world.

At last but not at least, Maxim Gorky's *Mother* provides simple, agitating, and extraordinary principles of Marxism-Leninism, with the intention that its political line can be well-understood by not only Russian proletariat but also for every proletariat class upon this earth that stand bravely to fight for their rights and liberties toward human liberation through socialism.

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