

Agrarian Revolution and Elections: Some Questions and Answers

From 1978, our Party has been participating in elections, both direct and indirect. Based on this experience, and coming Assembly elections, some questions are being raised both inside and outside the Party, on the relation between Agrarian Revolution and elections. Here we answer some of them.

1. Strategic aim of the Party

What is the strategic aim of the Party ?

It is to achieve People's Democratic Revolution and establish People's Democracy under the leadership of the working class. Only such a revolution can end the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in the country and liberate our people from all exploitation.

To achieve this strategic objective, our Party has rejected the path of individual annihilation of class enemies. That is nothing but individual terrorism.

Our Party has equally rejected the path of parliamentarism, peddled and practised by the revisionists and neo-revisionists of all hues and colours.

People's War based on Agrarian Revolution is the only path for achieving People's Democracy in the country. Agrarian Revolution is the main content of the New Democratic Revolution.

The Path of People's War means taking the Agrarian Revolutionary struggle as the principal form of struggle and combining it with all other forms of struggle.

Taking the present level of the people's movement and the people's consciousness, our Party has decided to create, develop and defend areas of sustained resistance to advance the Agrarian Revolutionary movement in the country. This is our main task.

So all our struggles, the immediate struggles of the people, economic and political, the partial struggles of the people, the struggle for the united

front and the struggle for civil liberties and democratic rights should be consciously directed towards building the areas of resistance in the rural areas.

2. "Boycott of elections"— Is it a strategic slogan ?

Certainly not. The question of boycott or participation in elections is always considered by the Marxist-Leninists as a question of tactics. The very fact that comrades Lenin and Stalin, in their struggle for revolution, have both boycotted and participated in the elections shows that this is a question of tactics and not a question of strategy at all.

As a principle, Marxist-Leninists boycott elections when the revolutionary movement is on the upsurge and the revolutionary people are surging forward for the final assault on the system of exploitation. At such a time, participation in elections diverts the people from the revolutionary struggle and hence we boycott the elections. When we boycott elections, the revolutionary struggle should advance. Otherwise the boycott has no meaning.

In other circumstances, when the revolutionary movement is not advancing, when the people have still illusions on the bourgeois parliamentary institutions, Marxist-Leninists have to participate in the elections to help the people, in practice, to overcome their illusions about the bourgeois parliamentary institutions and convince them about the necessity of People's War based on Agrarian Revolution as the only path for the complete liberation of our people.

We should remember one thing. Boycott or participation in elections on both occasions, one single aim remains—the aim of rousing and preparing the people for Agrarian Revolution.

That is why our Path document clearly says :

But participation in elections by the Communist Revolutionaries, and when the situation demands, depending on the level of the people's movement and the consciousness of the people, has nothing to do with the path of parliamentarism. Its aim should always be to dispel the illusions of the people and prepare (for People's War).

But some people question like this : Our Path document says that our path is the Path of People's War which carries with it the essential features of the Chinese revolution. Will not our participation in elections be at variance from the experience of the Chinese Revolution ?

Here we should remember the dissimilarities existing between India and China,

There was no parliamentary system and democratic rights to make use of in China. That was one of the factors why armed revolution in China faced armed counter-revolution from the very beginning. But in India, there is a bourgeois parliamentary system, no doubt imposed by British Imperialism on our people, and people still harbour illusions about these institutions. They are not yet prepared to directly participate in People's War based on Agrarian Revolution. We have yet to dispel the illusions of the people on these parliamentary institutions and prepare them for Agrarian Revolution.

Some others question like this: In India, the people are already dissatisfied with the present day conditions. Even during the elections, in various areas, 30 to 50 per cent of the people are not participating in elections. Is it not a sign to show that the people have begun to lose confidence in the present bourgeois parliamentary institutions ?

No doubt, in some areas sometimes 30 to 50 per cent of the people do not participate in elections. But this is due to many local reasons. It is wrong to assess this type of abstention in elections as their readiness to boycott elections and go for higher forms of struggle. While boycotting elections, alternatively people must be prepared for higher forms of struggle. Such a situation has not yet developed in our country.

Here we should also remember one thing. Participation in elections no doubt breeds some legal and parliamentary illusions among our people. Such tendencies have to be fought only by extensively propagating the revolutionary politics of the Party, through ideological and political education of our cadres and by intensifying the class struggles in the areas of participation after elections. If we do not do this, parliamentary illusions will get an ascendancy in our Party.

It is wrong to say that right thinking and right practice appear in our ranks only because of our participation in the elections. They are bound to be reflected even in class struggles from the formulation of demands and conducting class struggles on those [demands and leading them towards resistance struggle. As in other cases, we should fight parliamentary and legal illusions based on the correct ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and intensify the class struggles and lead them towards building areas of sustained resistance.

So we should always remember that participation in elections is not the primary point in our programme. Intensifying the class struggles of the people on their immediate issues combined with the propagation of revolutionary politics of our Party, consciously leading them towards mass resistance struggles and building the areas of sustained resistance—that is the main point in our Party Programme.

3. General Principles guiding our participation in Elections

It is to keep the Party steadfastly on the path of struggle and prevent the growth of parliamentary illusions growing inside our Party that our Political Resolution has clearly stated that where, when, and in what form we should participate in elections should be decided in each elections.

The political resolution *Our tasks in the present situation* has clearly laid down the general principles guiding our participation in elections. What are they ?

- To extensively propagate revolutionary politics of the Party and the political line of the Party among the people.
- To extend and consolidate the mass base among the people.
- To boldly tell the people that elections under the present big bourgeois—big landlord constitution will not lead to any basic changes in the present society and that only People's War can lead to such basic changes in our society.
- To dispel electoral illusions among the people.
- To prepare the people for further revolutionary struggles after the elections.
- We should participate in elections as a general principle, on the basis of our own strength.
- No election alliances or adjustment of seats with any ruling class party, national or regional, or the CPI and CPM.
- We can have alliance or seat adjustments with, or support only those who support our New Democratic Revolution.
- We should not have any illusions that our Party could share power with any section of the ruling classes and their parties under the present big bourgeois-big landlord constitution.

These are the general principles guiding our participation in elections.

What is the significance of these general principles ? These general principles at once demarcate our Party from those who want to boycott elections as a strategic slogan and from those who want to have election alliances with any section of the ruling classes, or with the CPI and CPM. They help us to maintain the independent line of the Party to extend and consolidate the mass base of the Party, to intensify the class struggles after the elections, and link these struggles with the resistance struggle of the Party.

For any exceptional cases, the guidelines of the Party provide that the Central Committee should take separate decisions in all exceptional cases.

Let us remember that there was a fierce ideological struggle inside our Party against the line of election alliances with opposition section of the ruling classes. The Special Congress and its political resolution were a victory over this wrong line

Why has the political resolution of the Party taken such an uncompromising stand against election alliances with opposition sections of the ruling classes, or the CPI and CPM ?

—During the period of struggle against semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism, the working class party cannot have any general political united front with any section of the ruling classes. Such occasions arise only when our country is subjected to foreign aggression by any one of the two super powers, or when our country becomes a neo-colonial country of any one of the two super powers. It can have united front with the opposition section of the ruling classes during the time of Emergency rule for civil liberties as it happened in the earlier period of Indira Gandhi rule

Conditions for a general political united front with opposition sections of the ruling classes do not exist in our country today, as explained in our Political Resolution.

Election alliances or seat adjustments with opposition section of the ruling classes can only be on the basis of a minimum political programme; and that can be nothing but having general political united front with them. It is this line that the political resolution has rejected theoretically and politically. Therefore our Party is against election alliances with opposition section of the ruling classes.

As with the CPI and CPM, this question does not arise at all. The Political Resolution of the Party has characterised that Soviet social imperialism is the greater danger to the Indian people, both nationally and internationally, that it dominates the economic, political and military affairs of our country, that for the Indian people today, Soviet social imperialism and its allies in India are the greater danger, that Indira Congress, other pro-Soviet elements in the ruling class parties and the CPI and CPM leaderships are the greater danger.

The Political Resolution has also said that the opposition of the CPI and CPM leadership to Indira govt. is fictitious, and that its aim is only to pressurise the Indira government to serve the interests of the Soviet Union better, both in India and abroad.

Since we consider the leadership of CPI and CPM to be the greater danger, the question of having general political united front, or election

alliances or seat adjustments does not arise at all. Such a course will go against the political line of the Party which says that in today's conditions Soviet Union and its allies constitute the greater danger to our people.

While rejecting the path of having a general political united front, or election alliances or seat adjustments with sections of the ruling classes, our political resolution has also said that the contradictions between the opposition section of the ruling classes, the CPI-CPM leadership with Indira government should be utilised to our advantage on the immediate issue of the people, economic and political, from issue to issue, to unleash anti-government struggles and consciously direct these struggles with our primary task of creating, developing and defending areas of sustained resistance and thus advance the Agrarian Revolutionary struggle in the country. Practice has proved that this is the only correct line.

Our Path document and our Programme have clearly stated that the present constitution is a big-bourgeois-big landlord constitution, meant to preserve the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in the country. These documents have said that the ruling classes always use various kinds of fascist repression to suppress the just struggles of the people. These documents have also said that People's War based on Agrarian Revolution is the only path for the complete liberation of our people from all kinds of exploitation.

Having election alliances or seat adjustments either with the opposition section of the ruling classes or the CPI-CPM, amounts to telling the people that some effective reforms could be achieved under the present constitution. That only breeds parliamentary illusions among the people, breeds illusions among the people about 'democratic' character of the opposition section of the ruling classes and the CPI and CPM. This goes against the basic line of the Party of dispelling illusions of the people on the bourgeois parliamentary institutions and preparing the people for Agrarian Revolution.

Experience has proved that all ruling class parties and the CPI and CPM do give populist slogans to deceive the people to get their votes and those who get elected, invariably forget and betray the people and take to all corrupt practices. Having election alliances or seat adjustments with these sections will only tarnish the image of our Party as a party working for Agrarian Revolution.

These are the reasons why our Political Resolution has taken an uncompromising stand on election alliances or seat adjustments with opposition section of the ruling classes and the CPI and CPM.

4. Indirect Elections

Some comrades ask: The general principles guiding our participation in elections are correct. But so far no such specific guiding principles for indirect elections or local elections have been given. Why?

At the time of the Party Congress, our Party had no representative in any Assembly in the country, and there were no elections to the Panchayats or Samithis. In these circumstances, it is true that the Political Resolution did not specify the guiding principles regarding indirect elections or local elections.

Now, with the experience gained so far, *the Central Committee, in its recent meeting, has decided that the general principles 'guiding our participation in the direct elections should apply to the indirect elections and local elections also.*

5. Attitude towards CPI and CPM

Specifically some people ask the question: Should we not make a distinction between the Indira Congress and the CPI, CPM in the indirect elections? Should we not support the CPI and CPM in indirect elections, taking them as the lesser danger in such indirect elections? Where our Party is the balancing force, should we not support the CPI and CPM in order to defeat the Congress? Otherwise wouldn't our Party be blamed for the victory of the Congress? Should we not support the [CPI—CPM in indirect elections, particularly in those areas where our movement has evolved out of the old common movement; where the common people are not yet able to distinguish the ideological and political differences between the CPI—CPM on the one hand and our Party—the CPI (ML) on the other ?

These questions raise the basic attitude of our Party towards the CPI and CPM.

As explained earlier, our Political Resolution has characterised the CPI and CPM as the greater danger today. So the question of having election alliances or seat adjustments or supporting them in any elections, either in indirect or direct elections, or local elections does not arise at all. Such a course will go against the political line of the Party which takes the CPI and CPM as faithfully serving the interests of Soviet social imperialism both in India and abroad, and thus constitute the greater danger today.

Even in our old areas where our movement has evolved out of the old common movements and the people are not yet able to distinguish our Party from the CPI and CPM, or even where we are the balancing force between Indira Congress and the CPI—CPM, we should pursue the policy of no election alliance or seat adjustments or supporting them either in direct or indirect elections or in any local elections. But in such cases, we should be extra vigilant. We should declare our readiness to support a common independent candidate, acceptable to us and the CPI—CPM in order to defeat the Congress inspite of our opposition to their politics. We should go directly to the people with our readiness to support an independent candidate. Either the CPI—CPM will be forced to accept our

proposal or if they refuse, their fictitious opposition to Indira Congress will be thoroughly exposed. In both the cases our Party will be in an advantageous position.

Today the CPI, CPM, while displaying a fictitious opposition to the Congress (I), while adopting a line of critical support to the Indira Congress, are accusing all other parties, particularly our Party, that by not supporting them, we are helping the victory of the Congress. This is nothing but a blackmail on their part towards other parties, particularly our Party. We should not submit to such blackmailing tactics of the CPI and CPM under any circumstances. On the other hand we should intensify our political campaign with correct tactics, to expose their fictitious opposition to the Indira Congress and their subservience to Soviet social imperialism.

While taking an irreconcilable opposition to their ideology and politics our Party should continue our efforts to draw their ranks and mass organisations into common struggles at the village, factory or at the educational institution level.

It is only such a course that will help their ranks to get themselves disillusioned about the revisionist ideologies and politics of their leaderships. On the other hand our support to CPI-CPM in any election, will only strengthen their illusions about their leadership.

Some people ask: Didn't our Party support CPM in election to the Council in 1978? Didn't we decide to support Janata also in 1978 in the Council elections? Were they correct?

They were wrong. These mistakes were committed under the influence of the right deviation line contained in the Central Committee resolution *New Situation and our tasks*. The recent *Basic lessons* document has criticised the right deviation line of that resolution and that means the above steps were also wrong.

6. The ensuing Assembly elections

Now the Assembly elections are again on the agenda in West Bengal, Kerala and also in other states

Do the general principles guiding our participation in the direct elections laid down in the political resolution *Our tasks in the present situation* apply to the present Assembly elections?

They do and should apply. That means we should contest where we have the mass base, on the basis of our own strength. We should have no election alliances or seat adjustments with the opposition section of the ruling classes or with the CPI-CPM. We will support only those who support our programme of *New Democratic Revolution*.

In those areas where we do not contest, we should not support any opposition section of the ruling classes or the CPI and CPM, but vigorously propagating the revolutionary politics of the Party, thoroughly exposing the politics of the ruling class parties and the CPI-CPM.

In all the areas, our main effort should be to dispel the illusions of the people about bourgeois parliamentary institutions, and prepare them for Agrarian Revolution, extend and consolidate our mass base and prepare the ground for intensifying the class struggles after the elections.

Comrades,

The political line of the Party, as laid down in "Our tasks in the present situation" has been proved to be basically correct. By following this line, our Party has been able to utilise the contradictions of the various ruling class parties, and the contradictions of the CPI and CPM with the ruling party to strengthen the immediate struggles of the people. Our Party has been able to intensify the struggles of various sections of the people—the workers, peasants, employees and students—and has been able to extend the mass base of the Party. This shows the correctness of the political line of the Party as laid down in our political resolution.

Our Party opposed the "line of annihilation" and adopted the present line of mass resistance. Now also various organisations of Communist Revolutionaries are giving various slogans like "anti-Soviet front" "anti-authoritarian front", "anti-hegemonist front", "patriotic and democratic front" or "anti-autocratic front"—which invariably lead to general political united front with sections of the ruling classes and the CPI-CPM. All these political slogans are in variance with the political line of the Party. We are opposed to general political united front with any section of the ruling classes or the CPI and CPM. We are opposed to any election alliance or seat adjustments with these parties or support them in elections.

For us the struggle to build the areas of resistance is primary and our participation in elections should be linked with this primary task.

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