

‘THE MAIN DANGER’

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What is class struggle? As Lenin said, class struggle comprises both economic struggle and political struggle by sections of people in a society organized as classes. “These two forms of agitation (economic and political)”, said Lenin, “are inseparably bound up with each other in the activities of the Social-Democrats like the two sides of a medal. Both economic and political agitation are equally necessary for the development of the class consciousness of the proletariat, and economic and political agitation are equally necessary in order to guide the class struggle of the Russian workers, for every class struggle is a political struggle”. (*Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1946, P. 135). In *What is to be Done?*, Lenin wrote: “The workers’ organisations for carrying on the economic struggle should be trade union organisations; every Social-Democrat should, as far as possible, support and actively work inside these organisations”. Instead of running away from mass organisations and mass movements, the Communist Party, according to Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, should send its cadres to participate in and lead

them, and should at the same time imbue workers and peasants with revolutionary politics and prepare them to seize power. One of the central questions in their teachings was the question of the relationship between the economic and political struggle. “The Communists”, to quote from the *Communist Manifesto*, “fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class, but in the movement of the present they also represent and take care of the future”. They taught that while the economic struggle has tremendous importance and must in no circumstances be avoided, politics must have primacy over economics.

Is the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of class struggle not valid in a semi-colony like India? Mao Tsetung did not think so. In *Problems of War and Strategy*, where he distinguished between the path of revolution followed in a capitalist country and that followed in a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country like China, he categorically said that, though “in China war is the main form of struggle and the army is the main form of organisations”, “other forms such as mass organisation and mass struggle are extremely important and indeed indispensable and in no circumstances to be overlooked”—both before and after the outbreak of war—and that their purpose should be to serve the war.

Why do mass organisations, like trade unions and peasant associations, often fail as they have so far failed in India? To quote Marx, “They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, *instead of simultaneously trying to change it*, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system”. (*Value, Price and Profit*; our italics)

What is our experience in India? The revisionist parties like the CPI and the CPI(M) limit the role of mass organisations to one of fighting for the immediate interests of the working people, i.e., to one of fighting against the effects of

the system instead of simultaneously trying to organise the people for the revolutionary overthrow of the system itself. On the other hand, the leadership of the CPI(ML) drew, at one phase, an artificial dividing line between the economic and the political struggle, withdrew from mass organisations and mass movements and gave a call for armed struggle for seizure of power. The two lines—the revisionist and the ‘left’ opportunist—ran parallel and did not meet and both led to disasters. But it is the organic connection and close interweaving of the economic and the political struggle that can arouse, unite and organise the people for the highest form of class struggle—the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling classes and seizure of power by the people led by the proletariat. History shows that those who refuse to link up the struggle for the working people’s immediate interests with the final goal, and vice versa, sabotage the struggle for liberation of the working people and play into the hands of the ruling classes—willingly or unwillingly.

What is guerilla warfare? It is a form of people’s war, which can be waged only by involving the people in the war. It presupposes the existence of people’s armed forces. As Mao Tsetung said, “It (guerilla warfare) is the indispensable and therefore the best form of struggle for the people’s armed forces to employ over a long period in a backward country, in order to inflict defeats on the armed enemy and build up their own bases” (*Introducing ‘The Communist’*). It is wrong to call secret annihilation of individual class enemies the starting point of guerilla warfare. According to the instructions of the Party leadership, an intellectual comrade “should go to the village and whisper into the ear of a poor peasant with [revolutionary] potentialities, ‘Is it not good to assassinate such and such jotedars?’ Thus the guerillas should be selected, one by one, secretly and organised in a group”. This group was to be formed ‘conspiratorially’, secretly from the people and secretly even from the Party units not accustomed to underground work (Charu Majumdar,

“A Few Words on Guerilla Action”). This tactic has nothing to do with guerilla warfare or people’s war as it does not rely on an aroused people for carrying on the struggle. It is actually anarchistic, terroristic and can be employed only for a short while. It is contrary to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to describe it as a higher form of class struggle and the beginning of guerilla war, for it is neither.

Who has said that democratic land reforms can be carried out in areas other than liberated ones? But it is necessary to mobilize the masses of the peasantry on the basis of an agrarian programme and give a call for a struggle for both land and liberty. The theory that militant struggles must be waged not for land but for State power is a symptom of an infantile disorder. It is preposterous to draw an artificial dividing line between the struggle for land and the struggle for State power and to theorize that the struggle for power must precede the struggle for land. It is an incredible lack of understanding to assert, as Baburaj does, “So it is evident that the peasants can be aroused en masse *only* in the ultimate struggle for power”. (Our italics). In 1905-06 and, again, in 1917, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party gave the call for a struggle for *both* land and liberty (the two inextricably woven together) and huge peasant movements swept Russia. In China also, the CPC issued the same call and they were successful. Has Baburaj not heard of the Hunan peasant movement? Liberation wars cannot be led to victory except in the background of such vast peasant movements. Listen, then, to Chairman Mao as he details out the reasons for the emergence and survival of Red political power in China. “Second, the regions where China’s Red political power has first emerged and is able to last for a long time have not been those unaffected by the democratic revolution, such as Szechuan, Kweichow, Yunnan and the northern provinces, but regions such as the provinces of Hunan, Kwantung, Hupeh and Kiangsi, where the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers rose in great numbers in the

course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1926 and 1927. In many parts of these provinces trade unions and peasant associations were formed on a wide scale, and many economic and political struggles were waged by the working class and the peasantry against the landlord class and the bourgeoisie". ("Why is it that Red Political Power can exist in China?")

Baburaj seems blissfully ignorant of the history of class struggle in his own country. Many big mass movements have swept India from time to time, though this country is yet to be liberated.

The only Marxist-Leninist way of arousing and mobilizing the people is class struggle, that is, both economic and political struggle of the oppressed workers and peasants organised as classes. Anything contrary to this is opposed to Marxism, Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought. "This kind of mobilization through armed struggle", says Baburaj, "has nothing to do with the open mass organizations and mass movements". It is granted that armed struggle can mobilize people, but can armed struggle be launched without some kind of political mobilization of the people? And can this mobilization take place through political propaganda alone or through class struggle? Armed struggle for seizure of power is one of the highest forms of class struggle. Can one conveniently skip the lower forms of class struggle and issue a call for one of the highest forms without mobilization, without making organised preparations? To do so means belittling the enemy not only strategically but also tactically and this is what 'left' opportunism amounts to. Marxism-Leninism as well as past experience has proved that secret assassination of class enemies by secret squads cannot successfully mobilize the masses. This 'theory of excitative terrorism', as Lenin called it, is no new modification of Marxist-Leninist theories—a modification which Baburaj's 'conceptual knowledge' seems to demand. The Russian Narodniks and their successors, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, had tried the same path and Lenin founded

and strengthened the Bolshevik Party by ruthlessly fighting this alien and dangerous trend. It was hostile to Marxism as it belittled the role of the working class and the role of the masses, severed links between revolutionaries and the people, and disorganised the forces not of the government but of the revolution. Only in those cases where it helps to raise their morale and where it serves the cause of people's war (after it has actually started), the use of individual terror is not only justified but necessary.

Some people fail to understand the meaning of the word 'annihilation,' as Chairman Mao used it. To allow no misunderstanding on this point, Mao Tsetung wrote in a parenthesis in his book *On Protracted War* : "...to destroy the enemy means to disarm him or 'deprive him of the power to resist' and does not mean to destroy every member of his forces physically."

Baburaj writes : "From the very beginning these two formulations [whether the struggle is for political power or for economic demands] were dividing the revolutionaries in India who revolted against the revisionist leadership of the CPI (M)....." etc. No, till 1969 all of them including Charu Majumdar were unanimous in stressing the necessity of linking the economic struggle with the political struggle and in emphasizing the importance of open mass movements. Reference to the writings in the Party journals, especially Charu Majumdar's articles, such as 'The Peasant Struggle must be carried forward by combating revisionism', 'To Comrades' and 'Build up the Peasants' class struggle through class analysis, investigation and practice' may conclusively prove that Baburaj is entirely wrong. It was in 1969 that Charu Majumdar came to the conclusion that mass organisations and mass movements bred economism and stood in the way of developing armed struggle.

In "One year after Naxalbari struggle", Charu Majumdar wrote : "It is the first time [sic !] that the peasant waged a movement *not only for his petty demands* but also for State

power” (our italics). Kanu Sanyal’s Terai Report describes how the peasants of Naxalbari were mobilized and the struggle was launched for the implementation of three main slogans : (1) Implement the decisions of the Peasant Committee in all affairs of the village, (2) Organise and arm yourselves to smash the resistance of jotedars and village reactionaries, and (3) Break the jotedars’ monopoly of landownership and start redistribution of land through the Peasant Committee.” Both Telengana and Naxalbari struggles were mass movements led by mass organisations (which, again, were led by communists) and developed as struggles for both land and liberty.

Naxalbari was destined to suffer a setback. Why? Because there was no Marxist-Leninist Party to spread the struggle to wider areas, no PLA and no United Front. A correct military line alone would not have helped. Yet, if the analogy is permitted, Naxalbari marked an advance for the people of India as the Paris Commune had marked an advance for the world proletariat. What was needed was to draw correct lessons from the Naxalbari experience. Though the All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries started on the right path, the class-enemy-annihilation line and the line of abandonment of mass organisations and mass struggles were afterwards imposed. Srikakulam and Mushahari, where the peasants had been mobilized through both economic and political struggles, were suppressed because of this wrong line. Instead of implementing the class-enemy-annihilation line in small areas, which soon snapped the links between the revolutionaries and the masses of those areas, painstaking class struggle should have been carried on in wider areas to mobilize the people, to unite them in various organisations and to build up self-defence and other forces of the people. To fight and defeat the enemy, who is militarily much stronger in the beginning, the people have one weapon—unity and organisation. Without rousing the dormant strength of the people and achieving their unity in an area large enough for the armed struggle to be sustained and for the new revolu-

tionary force, helped by the people in other parts of the country and the world, to grow from small to big, from weak to strong, any precipitate call for armed struggle is destructive not of the enemy but of the revolutionary force. In Sriakulam, Mushahari, Gopiballavpur, Birbhum etc., the new-born revolutionary forces were faced with disasters for two reasons among others : (1) the call for armed struggle was premature in the sense that these areas of struggle were small isolated pockets which the enemy could suppress without much difficulty ; and (2) the armed struggle took the form mostly of individual terror, which assigned a role to the militants but almost none to the masses. It was a case of 'active and passive people'. The empty theorizing about "dialectical development of annihilation into people's war" (!) —a nice string of high-sounding words signifying nothing— would be amusing, if the subject we are dealing with was not so serious.

To defend the indefensible, Baburaj felt it necessary to invest a myth—correct political line formulated by the leadership and incorrect practice of it by the cadres. He has blamed the cadres as impatient "petty bourgeois adventurers" who were responsible for the degeneration of "the battle of annihilation" "into mere manifestations of petty-bourgeois revolutionary impetuosity." Two questions arise : First, does the role of the leadership consist only in formulating correct policies and not in guiding their implementation ? If the practice proved wrong, why was it not corrected in the course of three years ? Second, if the policies were wrongly implemented, how is it inferred that the policies were correct ? What revolutionary practice proved them right during the last few years ?

One would have expected a noncombatant armed struggle-*wallah* to have more respect for truth and more respect for the combatants who feared neither hardship nor death to carry out the directives of the Party leadership. What were its directives ? One may refresh one's memory by reading

once again Charu Majumdar's 'A few words on Guerilla Action', 'Make the 70s the Decade of Liberation', several rousing appeals to avenge the brutal murders of comrades by the police, etc. If "in many areas the battle of annihilation degenerated into mere manifestations of petty-bourgeois revolutionary impetuosity", why did the Party journals systematically and ecstatically applaud them? Did not the Party leadership even hail every urban action of the petty-bourgeois militants? "What the students and youth are doing, is without any shadow of doubt just and proper." (Charu Majumdar, 'Forge closer unity with Peasant Armed Struggle', *Liberation*, August 1970). If the line was correct, why, in the course of the last few years, did not the workers and peasants rise in their millions, take up "the battle of annihilation" and push "the petty-bourgeois adventurers" to the background?

What then is the main danger? "Is it," Baburaj asks, "'Left-Opportunism', as has been charged by Kanu Sanyal and others in their alleged letter? Not at all. Right opportunism remains the main danger". What did that 'alleged' letter actually say? "We", it said, "must be very careful against revisionism, while fighting against Left deviations, which have become the main danger *inside the Party for the present.*" (Our italics). Why has Baburaj dropped out the words "inside the Party for the present"?

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