

In Lieu of an Introduction

The Indian communist movement has, over the course of its history, repeatedly fallen prey to the clutches of right-wing revisionism or been plunged into the depths of ultra-leftism. Only when the struggle has adopted a Marxist-Leninist line in both theory and practice has it actually met with success. Communist revolutionaries in India who have shown the way to extricate the communist movement from both types of malady and carry forward the struggle along the proper Marxist-Leninist principle and method are rare. The rarest among that rare kind of communist revolutionary was Amulya Sen. Over the course of a long struggling political life of 50-55 years, he was, to the proletariat, a genuine Marxist-Leninist leader, teacher and guide. Though he doesn't have nationwide recognition, he was, in the line of the people's democratic revolution, an exceptional Indian revolutionary, in whose works we find a sequential and continuous outline of the task of eliminating feudalism and imperialism.

In these two essays by Comrade Amulya Sen, we obtain an understanding of how, ever since the formation of a communist party on Indian soil in 1925 right till the present day, the communist movement has been plagued by failures in both theoretical and practical aspects.

The essay ***People's Democratic Revolution and the Peasant Question*** gives a clear exposition of the people's democratic revolution in India, and instructions on the path which must be adopted to complete it: how to make progress, which step comes first and which must inevitably follow. In it we find a definite roadmap of the theoretical and practical aspects of the people's democratic revolution and its primary step, the democratic or agrarian revolution.

The seizure of state power, establishment of a proletarian dictatorship, is the inevitable outcome of class struggle under the guidance of Marxist politics. The focal point of all revolutionary activities is class struggle of different forms. Revolutionary class struggle is the only way of achieving socialism and communism. In the people's democratic revolution, the principal form of class struggle is the agrarian revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the working class. Of course, this in no way means that the struggle of other classes related to the revolution should be ignored or diminished in importance.

Therefore, in India, the primary form of class struggle is the agrarian or democratic revolutionary struggle, followed by the seizure of state power as the highest form of class struggle – completing the people's democratic

revolution and establishing a people's democratic dictatorship. Therefore, as the basis of the people's democratic revolution, the democratic or agrarian revolution is the yardstick by which the correctness of the Indian communist movement is to be measured.

The guarantee of the victory of the people's democratic revolution lies in the democratic or agrarian revolution. Using agrarian revolution as the axis of development of class struggle, of destroying feudal hegemony in its way forward, of ingraining its politics firmly in the general psyche, of intensifying it, broadening it, of educating millions upon millions of the downtrodden, of gathering them around the struggle – on this depends the ascension of the movement to the stage of people's democratic revolution and the surety of its victory. This is what Amulya Sen, drawing on the theories and guidelines of Lenin, Stalin and Mao derived from historical experience, demonstrates in the first essay.

Those who have been long engulfed in the quagmire of parliamentary politics, or those who have newly begun down that road, will find the line of the agrarian revolution entirely alien to their work. But even those who, over the course of the past century, have spoken unequivocally of revolution, built up class struggle, selflessly sacrificed their entire selves for the cause, were mistaken precisely on the question of democratic or agrarian revolution. The deviations of those who ignored the agrarian revolution, or deemed it possible only "after the seizure of state power" and leapt into armed warfare against the state, have been mercilessly pointed out by Amulya Sen in this work.

Further, at the beginning of this century, when the agrarian struggle had matured to quite some extent, instead of promoting and progressing it, instead of deepening and broadening its mass base, instead of educating millions of the oppressed, democratic and patriotic masses and uniting them around their agrarian-revolutionary politics, the leadership chose to shun the entire programme, render all revolutionary peasant committees defunct, and leap into war for the seizure of state power with its party and militia. The inevitable sequel of this deviation was sadly predictable. The movements and organizations spiraled into severe crisis. This essay will demonstrate very clearly the reason behind this collapse – that is, where the errors and the deviations lie.

In the second essay, ***"Mass Line" in Promoting the Politics of Agrarian Revolution***, Sen writes of the proper path to be followed in the democratic or agrarian revolution. He reminds us: the leadership does not wage revolution, the communist party does not wage revolution; the communist party provides leadership. Revolution is waged by the revolutionary masses. The duty of the leadership is to stir the revolutionary masses, to split the revolutionary forces

from the counter-revolutionary ones, to organize them, to gather them in the field of battle. Here the old oppressing classes, with their philosophy, politics, and culture of class-compromise, are the obstacle to the way of developing class struggle. The subject and method of outreach to free the masses from these cobwebs is discussed in this essay.

Comrade Sen repeatedly stresses on the democratic method of outreach, that is, on the mass line. Bourgeois parties and even the leadership of most communist parties, to this day, follow a bureaucratic, bourgeois method of outreach, whereby leaders issue orders from on high to be followed by the masses mechanically. This mode of outreach fails to arouse the revolutionary masses. Revolutionary communists fail to build an intimate connection with the masses, do not gain the necessary respect from the masses and do not get the opportunity to learn from them. This leads to the deviation of economism in the movement –an outcome of viewing communist revolutionaries as missionaries, as the saviours of the masses. Instead of wholeheartedly endorsing the politics of people’s democratic and agrarian revolution as their own, the masses are led to adopt the mentality that incremental struggle for survival under the cosh of imperialism and feudalism is the only way forward. It is as a caution against such methods that Amulya Sen puts forward the mass line of outreach in this essay.

We hope that today’s youth and active political workers and organizers will be able to learn several valuable lessons from these two essays, on understanding the significance of people’s democratic or new-democratic revolution and adopting revolutionary techniques in their outreach.

We preface these works with a brief biography of Amulya Sen, so that the reader is aware of his political activities.

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Amulya Sen – A Short Biography

Amulya Sen was born at Sonarong village, Bikrampur in the Dhaka district of undivided Bengal, in 1908. After attaining a gold medal in B Sc from Dhaka University and First-Class in his BT Examination, he would call it quits on conventional education. Shunning the allures of personal ambitions, fame and glory, he jumped into the thick of revolutionary activities right from his student days to free his motherland from the clutches of British imperialism. As a devoted member of the Anusilan Samiti, he faced imprisonment a few times as well. It was there that he became schooled in the ethos of hard work, bravery and revolutionary resilience, the mentality of self-sacrifice, strict discipline and revolutionary secrecy.

An account of his revolutionary courage, resilience and self-sacrifice appears in Sailesh Dey's book, "Ami Subhas Bolchhi". Sailesh Dey writes, "No scattered attacks, no regional affairs. What is needed is a nation-wide revolution. What is needed is armed revolution, to translate planning into material reality and escape a life in prison... While in Alipore Jail, the tale of how, amid torrential rain, three colleagues Nirranjan, Haripada and Sitanath successfully scaled the sky-high wall by standing on each other's shoulders, jumped down, and concealed themselves, indeed beats any detective novel... Meanwhile a frenzy of bells is ringing... Prisoners escape! There they go, climbing up the wall! Immediately the guards, ever alert, dash out through the tiny gate. But who dares take even one step on the other side. Before them stands, defiantly, the party's dedicated activist Amulya Sen. Not while there is life in him will he give up the gate. Bruised and battered all over with blow after blow; still, he remained steadfast to his promise. His colleagues Purnanada, Nirranjan, Haripada and Sitanath needed to escape in the service of greater interests. No matter the amount of torture, they needed to be granted this chance for duty's sake."

While in jail in the '40s, Amulya Sen studied Marxism-Leninism. He understood that the way of socialism and communism is the only way to liberate mankind from exploitation and oppression. After being freed from prison, he became a member of the Communist Party of India. A study of

Marxism-Leninism and lessons drawn from the Russian revolution led him to the understanding that a handful of brave, idealistic and selfless revolutionaries, divorced from the masses, assassinating a few British officers and police personnel would not bring our country independence; would not liberate the people from the exploitation and oppression by the British imperialism. He realized that the basic force of revolution in our country derives fundamentally from the workers, peasants and oppressed nations, along with the vast toiling people. Without imparting them a revolutionary education, without uniting and arming them under the politics of seizure of state power and incorporating them in the revolutionary struggle, no revolution can achieve victory.

Analyzing the history of our country's past revolutionary struggles, Amulya Sen showed that in 1940-42, during the Second World War, "Instead of organizing the storm of people's movements directed against British imperialism, and giving it the character of a national democratic revolution, various left-wing parties and especially the Communist Party of India, just like the Indian National Congress, betrayed the revolution." CPI has always tailed the Congress, and itself adopted "Gandhism and Gandhian principles", instead of unmasking the ideology of Gandhism. "On 22 June 1941", he remarked, "when Hitler, i.e., Germany, attacked Soviet Union, the communist leadership of our country, just like in 1930, distanced itself from the anti-imperialist people's movement. That in order to defeat fascism, the people's natural enemy, it is imperative to arm the people – this thinking never seemed to cross their mind. By arming the workers, peasants and toiling masses, British imperialism can be eradicated, and a national government established, and this government under the leadership of the working class alone can halt fascism. Instead of contemplating this material reality, the communist leadership, in the name of supporting the British against fascism, became in truth nothing more than British agents."

In evaluating the role of Subhas Chandra Bose in the Indian national liberation movement, Comrade Amulya Sen writes, "Subhas Chandra could not become one with the worker-peasant struggle of this country. He organized the Azad Hind Fauj with the help of Japanese imperialism. Merely the help of an external army, especially one as aggressive and ultra-reactionary as the

then Japanese fascist force, who waged an imperialist war of aggression on China and all of South and South-East Asia – the help of such a savage force could never lead to the fulfilment of the national liberation movement or national democratic revolution.”

After joining the Communist Party, Amulya Sen was skilfully engaged in building struggle and organization. He supported the revolutionary struggle in Telangana and the document of the Andhra Secretariat. In fact, from September 1948 onwards till February 1950, under the leadership of the then General Secretary of the Communist Party, B T Ranadive, the Party's Politburo adopted policies hostile to the International Communist Movement, following a Trotskyite-Titoite line; they spread the Tito nexus' slander against the Cominform to each and every unit of the Party; all while pretending to obey Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party. Combined with that was constant attack on the Chinese Revolution and Mao Tsetung. At that time, with the support of Comrade Stalin, a struggle between two lines emerged within the Communist Party of India, as a result of which Ranadive was forced to conduct a self-criticism. In his self-critical report in 1950 ("I Will Unmask Myself"), Ranadive says, "I was producing documents to prove decolonization, ignoring existence of imperialism, forgetting feudalism in agriculture... I ignored the resolution of the Andhra secretariat... I have betrayed the Telangana revolution." It was after Ranadive's self-criticism that the Party concluded, the revolution in India would be accomplished following the path of Chinese Revolution shown by Comrade Mao Tsetung; moreover, based on this self-criticism, the Party adopted its programme for the Indian revolution in 1951. Amulya Sen strongly supported this Party programme of 1951. As a result, he rapidly gained popularity, and in 1951 he was elected the Hooghly district secretary of the undivided Communist Party.

In 1953, after the death of Comrade Stalin, the revisionist Khrushchev clique took control over the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet state power via a counter-revolution. In the 20th Party Congress in 1956, Khrushchev opened a secret document which vilified and slandered Stalin, and peddled the doctrine of peaceful transition to socialism. It was followed by the process of Destalinization. Under Comrade Mao Tsetung's leadership, the Communist

Party of China launched the International Great Debate against Khrushchevite revisionism.

The Communist Party of India also took part in the debate. At this historical juncture, in the ideological struggle of the Lenin-Stalin line against Khrushchevite revisionism on Indian soil, Amulya Sen assumed a leading role.

The Indian government was a partner of the conspiracy hatched by the Khrushchevite USSR and US imperialism against socialist China. The CPI declared China the aggressor in the Sino-India Border War in 1962. An anti-Dange section of the Party, now the CPI(M), refused to acknowledge India as the aggressor. Amulya Sen was among those who stood against revisionism and neo-revisionism, identifying India as aggressor and China defendant.

In the 7th Party Congress in 1964, the split in the CPI gave birth to the CPI(M). But that did not address the questions about the Indian revolution long under debate within the Party. The CPI(M) bureaucratically suppressed all debate. As Comrade Sen said, during the Telangana revolution we had to heed Party discipline. “To rebel against revisionism is justified” – only now do we realize the depth of this statement.

In 1964, from within the CPI(M), Amulya Sen circulated a handwritten document, '*China*' among the party workers. '*Chinta*' was published in print in March 1965. Through this magazine, he conducted the struggle against the Party's revisionist line. Between 1965-66, six issues of '*Chinta*' were published. '*Chinta*' was probably the first document in the struggle against CPI(M) type of revisionism. It gave exceeding importance to the peasant question and agrarian revolution, and upheld the question of armed struggle to make the agrarian revolution a success. Not a single problem in our country can be, as Amulya Sen claimed, addressed without solving the peasant question. Furthermore, no revolution without agrarian revolution can succeed in our country. He provides a lucid and simple exposition of this issue in his famous essay, 'People's Democratic Revolution and the Peasant Question'.

Around this time, at Siliguri in North Bengal, Comrade Charu Majumdar declared an ideological rebellion against the CPI(M)'s revisionist line and called for armed revolution. He published eight documents while Amulya Sen had published six documents of '*Chinta*'.

In August 1966, together with Chandrasekhar Das and Kanai Chatterjee, Amulya Sen published the over-ground fortnightly magazine 'Dakshindesh'.

The peasant uprisings occurred at Naxalbari in 1967 under Charu Majumdar's leadership. With the dictate of Jyoti Basu, the then Minister of Police in the United Front Government in West Bengal, 11 persons including 2 children and women of the peasant families were killed by the police firing. This sparked a split in the CPI(M) in various states. To unite the forces of revolutionary struggle and initiate the strategy and tactics of the Indian revolution, an All-India Coordination Committee was established. On 22 April 1969, the CPI (ML) was formed under the leadership of Charu Majumdar.

After the Russian October (November) Revolution, as we know, Communist Parties were formed in various countries throughout Asia (including India and China), Africa and Latin America on the basis of the 'Theses' related to the revolutions in colonies and dependent countries, which Lenin presented in the 2nd Congress of the Communist International in 1920. For revolution in such countries, the only way to assemble the vast majority of the peasantry around the proletariat is the agrarian revolution. In Moscow in 1927, while answering various questions on the Chinese revolution raised during a talk with students of the Sun Yat-sen University, Stalin said, "It would be foolish to think that feudalism and imperialism can be overthrown in China by armed strength alone. Without an agrarian revolution and without active support of the Wuhan troops by the vast masses of the peasants and workers, such forces cannot be overthrown." The importance of agrarian programme in the development of protracted people's war, gathered from the experience of the Chinese Revolution, was upheld by Mao Tsetung, as he remarked in 1930, "In semi-colonial China, the establishment and expansion of the Red Army, the guerrilla forces and the Red areas is the highest form of peasant struggle under the leadership of the proletariat, the inevitable outcome of the growth of the semi-colonial peasant struggle, and undoubtedly the most important factor in accelerating the revolutionary high tide throughout the country."

Indeed, after Telangana, it is Naxalbari in the '60s which was the first on Indian soil to raise the question of seizure of political power in the peasant struggle. The undivided CPI, and the CPI(M) born when it split at the beginning of that decade, also faced this debate – and in fact, in light of Mao Tsetung

Thought, the fruitful outcome of this debate was Naxalbari. Of those within the new Party who kept alive the debate regarding the class character of the Indian state and the direction and methods of the Indian revolution, 'Deshabrati' and a few other likeminded groups later formed the CPI(ML), while the 'Chinta' and 'Dakshindesh' groups gave rise to the MCC.

Amulya Sen held that only one revolutionary communist party can form in India. Therefore, communist revolutionaries must wait patiently; but in the existing scenario, a relationship of revolutionary friendship with the CPI(ML) must be maintained. On the other hand, a temporary revolutionary organization must be established to carry on their independent revolutionary work and ideological struggle. To fulfil this requirement he, along with Chandrasekhar Das and Kanai Chatterjee, formed the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) on 20 October 1969.

As far as we know, the 'Chinta' documents under Amulya Sen's leadership was the starting point of the MCC's revolutionary journey. His essay "People's Democratic Revolution and the Peasant Question" written in 1968 formed the basis of his well-known article "Strategic Perspective of Indian Revolution". To combat economism in theory and in practice, he wrote "All the Best Revolutionary Communists Must Immediately Head to the Villages" in the same year. This call was the inevitable consequence of his ideological and political struggle against economism.

The first stage of revolution in our country is an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist people's democratic one. And the contradiction between feudalism and the vast masses of Indian people is, at this moment, the principal contradiction. Therefore, the best revolutionaries must head to the villages to develop and organize the elements for building a Communist Party on the basis of the politics of people's democracy and socialism; and build up the agrarian-revolutionary struggle, directed against the feudalism. Thus, in contrast to the revisionists' urban-centric activism, the countryside shall be the centre of gravity of revolutionary activities. Instead of minimizing the revolutionary role of the peasantry and the importance of the agrarian revolution, it is the peasantry, under the leadership of the proletariat, which shall become the steadfast allies of the revolution, and form the basis of the worker-peasant alliance. This was the political significance of Amulya Sen's

appeal – “all the best revolutionary communists must immediately head to the villages”. Indicating the duties of communist revolutionaries in the stage of people’s democratic revolution in India, Amulya Sen said, “The Indian people must be armed and united. They must take the Indian revolution to victory. It is the revolution which assumes the principal course of modern history. Aligning themselves with this course, the Indian people will shatter the dictatorship of the reactionary classes, and establish, under the leadership of the working class and on the basis worker-peasant alliance, a people’s democratic dictatorship.”

The ideological obstacles to the Indian revolution lay, as Comrade Sen held, in reformism, revisionism and Gandhism. To fight against these barriers, he wrote an essay titled “Gandhism’s True Colours”. Amulya Sen said that without knowledge of the history of revolutionary struggle, without lessons of the positive and negative experiences of past struggles, it is impossible to successfully carry out a struggle of any large measure. To meet this aim, he wrote “A Brief History of Indian Liberation Movements” and “A Brief History of Communist Movements after the Second World War”. Comrade Sen accorded immense importance to the class-line and mass-line. He wrote, in this context, the famous essay, ***“Mass-Line” in Promoting the Politics of Agrarian Revolution.***

Besides his theoretical wisdom, Amulya Sen was an expert and astute organizer. He conducted various kinds of struggle and organizations in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh with a considerable skill. We know of his important contributions in building up revolutionary struggles in the jungles of Kanksa, Ausgram and Bud Bud in West Bengal, and in developing them to a very high level.

Regarding mass movements and mass organizations Comrade Sen wrote, in a letter to his comrades engaged in building revolutionary struggle and organizations in 24 Parganas, “You are developing revolutionary mass struggles and mass movements... You must, right from the beginning, develop a military line. I am certain you are doing .. Besides arming the people, you must as well develop a multitude of mass organizations (farmers’ organizations, women’s organizations, youth organizations, teenagers’ organizations, etc.)”

Realizing the importance of a materialist study of history and materialist philosophy in the Indian revolution, Comrade Sen engaged deeply with history and philosophy.

Amulya Sen passed away on 23 March 1981. To his last, he remained a genuine Marxist-Leninist, a dedicated revolutionary communist.

*“Comrade, you’ve made death honourable;
From the seed you have sown
Arises a tree of great grandeur.”*

People's Democratic Revolution and the Peasant Question

*Several essays about various theoretical and practical aspects of the revolution in India were published in the magazine Dakshindesh – naturally, under pseudonyms. This essay by Amulya Sen was published in Dakshindesh in 1968, under the pseudonym Anwar Hossain. The differences and interrelations in the themes of agrarian revolution, bourgeois-democratic revolution, democratic revolution, national revolution, and people's democratic or new-democratic revolution are the subject matter of this essay. The interrelation of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capital are dealt with, as are the stages of Indian revolution and the principal contradictions. The views expressed in this essay have been further elaborated upon in his later work, **The Perspective of Indian Revolution** (Dakshindesh, 1 May 1969).-- Publisher*

An essential demand of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought is that every social issue must be addressed within specific historical constraints, and if it concerns particular problems of a particular country, then the aspects which set it apart from other countries in the same historical epoch must be taken into account adequately. Here we will discuss one of the principal issues of Leninism, the people's democratic revolution and the peasant question.

The Peasant Question – A Part of the General Question of Proletarian Dictatorship

The central question of every revolution is the smashing of the existing state machinery and seizing state power. To smash the existing state machinery, we need a people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat in the stage of people's democratic or new-democratic revolution and a dictatorship of the proletariat in that of socialist revolution.

Our great teacher, Comrade Stalin, observed, "Some think that the fundamental thing in Leninism is the peasant question, that the point of departure of Leninism is the question of the peasantry, of its role, its relative importance. This is absolutely wrong. The fundamental question of Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant question, but the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the conditions under which it can be achieved, of the conditions under which it can be consolidated. The peasant question, as the question of the ally of the proletariat in its struggle for power, is a derivative one... In this sense the peasant question is part of the general question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and as such it is one of the most vital problems of Leninism." (J. V. Stalin, Foundations of Leninism).

Now the question might arise, in the present stage of revolution in India, is the peasant question part of the general question of proletarian dictatorship?

Absolutely. Then are we going to establish a proletarian dictatorship in this very stage of the revolution? Absolutely not. The reason being:

1. Under which conditions this dictatorship might be achieved, under which conditions it can be consolidated – from this question, in terms of one of the main problems of Leninism in this stage of revolution, the peasant question in India is part of the general question of the people's democratic dictatorship and of finding the peasantry as an ally of the proletariat.

2. In the people's democratic dictatorship lies the embryo of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Leadership of the proletariat is the fetal stage of the proletarian dictatorship, the transitory phase in reaching proletarian dictatorship. Hence, the peasant question in India in the present stage of revolution is, as a phase of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat, a part of the question of the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat, and of finding the peasantry as an ally of the proletariat.

The Peasant Question in the Stages of Socialist and People's Democratic Revolution

If we try to examine the peasant question in the stages of socialist revolution and people's democratic revolution as part of the general questions of proletarian dictatorship and people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat respectively, we get to see two varieties of the peasant question in the two stages of the revolution.

1. In those countries where the task of national revolution and democratic revolution is not yet finished, i.e., where the stage of revolution is people's democratic or new-democratic, the peasant question, as one of the main problems of Leninism, is part of the general question of the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat and of finding the peasantry as an ally. Thus it is, as the part of the question of dictatorship of the world proletariat and the general question of finding its ally, the part of peasant question all over the world.

2. In those countries where the task of bourgeois-democratic revolution has finished or in those which are economically advanced, i.e., where the revolution has entered the socialist stage, the peasant question, as one of the main problems of Leninism, is part of the general question of the proletarian dictatorship and of finding the peasantry as an ally. This is a part of the question of the dictatorship of world proletariat as well as that of the general question of finding its allies, and thus part of the overall peasant question in the world.

The Peasant Question in the Stages of Bourgeois-Democratic and People's Democratic Revolution

India, semi-colonial and semi-feudal in terms of social character, and neo-colonial in the form and level of exploitation, is a country where the task of

bourgeois-democratic revolution is unfinished. The revolution we are waging is primarily the bourgeois-democratic one. But we are no longer calling it bourgeois-democratic, rather it is people's democratic or new-democratic revolution.

The course of history has removed the bourgeoisie from the helm of this revolution – after the great October Revolution in Russia, after the entire world has been split into the imperialist camp and socialist camp, our great teacher, Comrade Mao Tsetung, observed, "In this era, any revolution in a colony or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism, i.e., against the international bourgeoisie or international capitalism, no longer comes within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within the new category. It is no longer part of the old bourgeois, or capitalist, world revolution, but is part of the new world revolution, the proletarian-socialist world revolution. Such revolutionary colonies and semi-colonies can no longer be regarded as allies of the counter-revolutionary front of world capitalism; they have become allies of the revolutionary front of world socialism. Although such a revolution in a colonial and semi-colonial country is still fundamentally bourgeois-democratic in its social character during its first stage or first step, and although its objective mission is to clear the path for the development of capitalism, it is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and a state under bourgeois dictatorship. It belongs to the new type of revolution led by the proletariat with the aim, in the first stage, of establishing a new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes. Thus this revolution actually serves the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism. In the course of its progress, there may be a number of further sub-stages, because of changes on the enemy's side and within the ranks of our allies, but the fundamental character of the revolution remains unchanged." (Mao Tsetung, *On New Democracy*)

From this analysis, we observe the following differences between the old bourgeois-democratic revolution and the people's democratic or new-democratic one.

1. The leadership of a bourgeois-democratic revolution lies in the hands of the bourgeois class, but in a people's democratic or new-democratic revolution, it lies in those of the proletariat.
2. In a bourgeois-democratic revolution, feudalism is abolished and bourgeois dictatorship is established, whereas the people's democratic or new-democratic revolution leads to the abolition of feudalism as well as imperialism under the people's democratic dictatorship with the leadership of the proletariat.
3. In a bourgeois-democratic revolution, the bourgeoisie takes alliance with the peasantry, whereas in a people's democratic or new-democratic revolution, it is the proletariat who unites with the peasantry as its friend and ally.
4. The aim of a bourgeois-democratic revolution is the abolition of feudalism under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and to serve their material interests, establishing a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to build a capitalist society or country. But the

people's democratic or new-democratic revolution, under the leadership of the proletariat, aims to destroy both feudalism and imperialism for the material interests of the people, constructing a people's democratic or new-democratic society or country. As Comrade Mao Tsetung says, "The new-democratic revolution is part of the world proletarian-socialist revolution, for it resolutely opposes imperialism, i.e., international capitalism. Politically, it strives for the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary classes over the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, and opposes the transformation of Chinese society into a society under bourgeois dictatorship. Economically, it aims at the nationalization of all the big enterprises and capital of the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, and the distribution among the peasants of the land held by the landlords..." (Mao Tsetung, *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*)

5. The peasant question in a bourgeois-democratic revolution is the question of bourgeois dictatorship and of finding the peasantry as an ally. In the people's democratic or new-democratic revolution, however, the peasant question, as part of the general question of the people's democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat, is that of finding the peasantry as an ally of the proletariat.

6. The old bourgeois-democratic revolution, as part of the world capitalist revolution, strives to establish a bourgeois dictatorship without dismantling the old state apparatus. Stalin said in *Problems of Leninism*, "The bourgeois revolution limits itself to substituting one group of exploiters for another in the seat of power, and therefore, it need not break up the old state machine." But the people's democratic revolution, as part of the world socialist revolution, smashes the old state machinery and establishes the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat. Instead of halting at this stage, it advances to the stage of socialist revolution.

People's Democratic Revolution: Two Principal Goals, Two Aspects

As India is semi-colonial and semi-feudal in terms of social character, and neo-colonial in the form and level of exploitation, the first step of India's present revolution, i.e., the first stage is people's democratic or new-democratic. Its goal is to smash the existing state machinery and establish a people's democratic or new-democratic state by people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat. The primary aim of the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat in the stage of people's democratic or new-democratic revolution is to finish off feudalism and imperialism; economically, its aim is the nationalization of big business enterprises and capital owned by imperialists, the traitors, and reactionaries, and distribution of the land controlled by landlords among the peasantry. Once the task of this stage is complete, the revolution will progress towards the second step, the establishment of a socialist state in India.

When our revolution enters the socialist stage, the principal aim will be to slowly eradicate private ownership of the means of production and establish social ownership under the dictatorship of the proletariat. One of the key tasks of the people's democratic revolution is the **agrarian revolution**. We must keep in mind, however, that just as the people's democratic revolution is not agrarian revolution, neither is agrarian revolution the people's democratic revolution. The democratic revolution is basically referred to as the agrarian revolution. The bourgeois-democratic revolution was not called agrarian revolution; the reason lies in its differences with the people's democratic revolution. There are two principal tasks at hand in the stage of people's democratic revolution – both of which hold immense importance.

1. Eradicate feudal exploitation and oppression, thus completing the task of the democratic or agrarian revolution.
2. Eradicate imperialist exploitation and oppression, thus completing the task of the national revolution.

But these two main tasks of people's democratic revolution are not disparate from each other, but closely intertwined. Each is the complement of the other, heightening the necessity of the other. Each influences, and completes, the other.

There are two reasons :

1. Without eradicating feudal exploitation and oppression, it is impossible to eliminate imperialism.
2. Without eradicating imperialist exploitation and oppression, it is likewise impossible to eliminate feudalism.

The task of the people's democratic revolution in India will be over only when we have completely eradicated imperialist and feudal exploitation and oppression from the soil of the country, and simultaneously and inseparably will proceed the task of this eradication.

National Revolution and Democratic Revolution: Two Ends of the Same Thread

Since India is a state with a multitude of nations and tribes, the present revolution is not only democratic or agrarian, but at the same time, the national revolution of the people of each of its nations and tribes. There is no single national revolution for all of India, but many national revolutions – those of each and every race and tribe. Through these national revolutions, each race and tribe will achieve the right to secede and establish independent nation-states, the right to self-determination. Now the question might arise, will this not cause a break in unity? We say it will – and we want this unity to be broken. We want it because the unity which will be broken is not the unity of the people of nations and tribes, but unity of imperialism, feudalism and of the comprador bureaucratic monopoly capitalism. This

unity must be broken; if not, then not a single nation in India can achieve liberation. Without breaking the unity of the exploiters, it is impossible to build up solidarity among the peoples of India, to make the camaraderie hard as steel. This unity will be forged under the leadership of the proletariat. To break the unity of the exploiters, a sense of the interests of each of its peoples, a sense of leadership, is essential – and their struggle for liberation against imperialism, feudalism and the comprador bureaucratic monopoly capitalism. As Comrade Lenin, our great teacher, says, "At a time when bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and Asia have begun, in this period of the awakening and intensification of national movements and of the formation of independent proletarian parties, the task of these parties with regard to national policy must be twofold: recognition of the right of all nations to self-determination, since bourgeois-democratic reform is not yet completed and since working-class democracy consistently, seriously and sincerely (and not in a liberal, Kokoshkin fashion) fights for equal rights for nations; then, a close, unbreakable alliance in the class struggle of the proletarians of all nations in a given state, throughout all the changes in its history, irrespective of any reshaping of the frontiers of the individual states by the bourgeoisie." (V I Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self-Determination) In the present age, when imperialism is heading for collapse and the power of socialist victory is blossoming, an age of progress, when the imperialist powers, at the moment of their death battle, have intensified their exploitation and oppression in the colonies, semi-colonies and semi-feudal nations, no national revolution can remain isolated. It is the democratic revolution wherein lies its completion, its liberation. Comrade Mao Tsetung says, "To think of national revolution and the democratic revolution as two independent stages is a mistake."

At present, in the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries of the world, an aged foreign monster has made its abode, which has slain tens of millions of people in the past few years; one which is gigantic, which possesses immense power, one which can regenerate even if shredded limb from limb. It is proving impossible to slay. Millions of people the world over are waging a life-and-death battle to kill it. But the vessel containing its life-force is securely hidden deep in an ocean, without destroying which the demon will never be killed. Even if shredded limb from limb, it will become whole once again. To liberate the mankind from its clutches, to bring peace to the world, this vessel in the depths of the ocean must be destroyed. This ocean is the countryside of the world's colonies, semi-colonies and semi-feudal nations; their peasantry, the ocean's inhabitants; the vessel, feudalism; and the monster, imperialism. The battle to destroy this vessel is the democratic revolution, it is the national revolution of the oppressed peoples, it is the people's democratic or new-democratic revolution. If we attempt to kill the demon without first eliminating the vessel holding its life-force, then we might succeed in tearing its body apart, resisting it for the time being, but we cannot kill it once and for all. The national revolutions of the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are not separate struggles – it is the fight for completion of the

democratic revolution, and through the democratic revolution shall come their emancipation.

In India, with its multi-national state, the democratic revolution will be completed through not one, but several national revolutions. Since peasantry is the backbone and the largest component of each of its nations, each national revolution will first take shape into an agrarian (or democratic) revolution. In the hands of the proletariat will lie its theoretical, political and organizational leadership. By engaging directly in each emancipatory democratic struggle shall the proletariat establish its class-leadership. It is the peasantry that constitutes the main force of the revolution. The struggle of the peasantry to attain people's democracy will be the special form of the revolution; its success will be the success of the revolution – the basic social force of the revolution. The agrarian or democratic revolution and the national revolution of oppressed peoples are intimately linked with each other; each is the complement of the other. To drive the people's democratic revolution to success, just as it is essential to strike at the roots of colonial and feudal exploitation and oppression, it is equally imperative to eliminate the comprador monopoly bureaucratic capitalism. If we wage any kind of revolution other than national revolution and agrarian or democratic revolution, it will be as stupid as swinging for the neck and only clipping the hairs on the head. The comprador monopoly bureaucratic capitalists have no economic independence, depending on imperialism on one hand and feudalism on the other. They have placed one foot securely on the shoulders of imperialist powers and the other on those of feudalism – they have no solid ground beneath their feet. The elimination of imperialist exploitation and oppression means that of this bourgeoisie. The elimination of feudal exploitation and oppression means that of this bourgeoisie. Only the people's democratic revolution can succeed in eradicating these imperialist lapdogs, the monopoly bureaucratic capitalists – because in India, there is a deep collaboration between feudal and imperialist forces in obstructing the progress of Indian capitalism. It is necessary to keep mainly the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation intact which constitute the social basis of imperialist exploitation of colonies. Imperialism "first forms an entente with the exploiting classes of previous social structures, the feudal landlords and the trader and moneylending bourgeoisie, against the vast majority of the masses. Throughout, it tries to sustain the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation (primarily in the countryside) which are the basis of its reactionary existence." (V I Lenin, *The National Liberation Movement in the East*). Imperialism, by destroying the natural self-sufficiency of pre-capitalist and feudal economies, not only maintains its own existence, but unites the exploitation and oppression of the comprador bourgeoisie with that of feudalism to exert dominance over the economic, political and social life of the people. The imperialist power which imposes its supremacy on the soil of neo-colonial India is the leader of all imperialist nations, US imperialism. The present USSR is a new imperialist ally to this US imperialism. Known as a socialist state all these years, it has now become an imperialist power under the leadership of the Soviet revisionist clique. In India, the Dange circle and the neo-revisionists are also the protagonists

for maintaining the exploitation by the ruling classes. Anti-imperialist struggle without the struggle against revisionism is, as Com. Lenin asserted, hypocrisy and false bragging. The Indian people have been made destitute under the joint exploitation of imperialism and feudalism – the major victim of which is the vast majority of Indian nations and peoples, the peasantry. The Indian masses can be emancipated from this poverty, this subservience, only by eliminating imperialism and feudalism. Thus, the fangs of exploitation of the comprador domestic bourgeoisie can be uprooted only by eradicating imperialist and feudal exploitation and oppression.

We, therefore, get to realize that the principal contradiction in the present stage of the Indian revolution is the contradiction between feudalism and the vast masses of Indian people. In this context, Comrade Mao Tsetung's words merit attention: "...in another situation (when imperialism does not wage a direct war of aggression against semi-feudal or semi-colonial countries – Lenin), the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means--political, economic and cultural--the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism, and the two form an alliance for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people, and thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp." (Mao Tsetung, *On Contradiction*)

Besides this, there are many other contradictions in the present stage of revolution. It is particularly noteworthy that all these contradictions, centered on the principal one, (on agrarian society) are concentrated in the countryside. The peasantry in the countryside is the bearer of all of these contradictions and problems. Within it lies India's present revolution. Only the peasantry can give birth to as well as nurture the revolution, and take it towards victory. Only the leadership of the proletariat can act as the midwife, and the people's democratic dictatorship the caretaker of the revolution. Within India's agrarian society lies the sun of life of the Indian nations and Indian people. The problem of this sunrise is nothing but the peasant question. Without solving this question, not a single problem of the Indian nations and Indian people can be addressed.

“Mass Line” in Promoting The Politics of Agrarian Revolution

When exploitation and oppression know no bounds, the revolution is ready to start; once started, it will automatically draw people – many adhere to such a thinking under this suffocative condition. Because it seems well. This line of thinking does, however, leads to the assertion, “Squad-based campaign of annihilation or guerrilla warfare alone will mobilize the masses of the peasantry.” But that has not happened, and never will. Rather, such a train of thinking brings great harm to the revolutionary camp. The mere call for revolution will neither bring the toiling masses to the forefront of battle nor does it complete the revolution overnight. But how does one arouse the consciousness of social change among the people? In the early 1970s, when the seeds of armed struggle, inspired by the politics of Naxalbari, began to take root in West Bengal and several other states, the question repeatedly arose of uniting armed struggle with the agrarian programme, of awakening the vast peasant masses to the politics of agrarian revolution, of enabling them to actively participate in a revolutionary agrarian programme.

*These vital questions have been taken up by Amulya Sen in this essay. As far as we know, it was first published as a booklet in 1974. Clearly, it was written as an answer to the “left” line cultivated by a part of the Indian revolutionary camp after Naxalbari. ---**Publisher.***

(One)

To spread the people’s democratic revolution which has begun in India, to drive it to success, the tactics of the country’s communist revolutionaries must be immediately and radically altered. The reason being, merely a correct programme and policies do not suffice; the wrong approach could cause even the right policies to fail. This explains the immense importance of correct tactics and their necessity in the prevailing revolutionary situation.

For the agrarian revolution to succeed, a revolution is needed in our method of work as well. The bourgeois methods must completely be discarded, and proletarian methods carefully mastered.

But what, then, is really the task of Marxist-Leninist communists?

Our real task is to lead the revolution.

Despite being fewer in number, the proletariat is the leader of the people’s democratic or new-democratic revolution. The workers and peasants, who are the overwhelming majority of the country’s population, are the fundamental

source of strength of the revolution. They will be the leading soldiers of this revolutionary war.

The basic duty of the communist leadership, which has been developed from the politically conscious vanguard of the proletariat, is to rouse the broad masses, including workers and peasants, with the revolutionary passion, to inspire them for the revolutionary struggle, to build revolutionary mass movements and guerrilla warfare, to establish Red Army and rural base areas depending upon the vast expanses of countryside and the peasantry.

Perhaps stating the converse will make things clearer.

Fact is, the leadership does not wage revolution, the communist party does not wage revolution; the communist party merely provides leadership. Revolution is waged by the revolutionary forces of the people.

The role of the leadership is to arouse this revolutionary forces of the people, to gather them in the field of battle.

(Two)

All things, all events in the world are the unity of opposites – two mutually opposing forces or things can temporarily become one, become amalgamated.

In the sphere of class struggle, too, the revolutionary classes remain temporarily entangled with the counter-revolutionary classes: the interests of labour and capital amalgamate (if only for the time being), hence the capitalist system survives. Tenant and land-owner are at one (but temporarily), hence the practice of sharecropping can be maintained. The agricultural labourer becomes at one with the landowner-landlord class (but temporarily), so the system of feudal exploitation does exist.

Why is their unity only temporary? Because, this unity comprises mutually contradictory elements.

The revolutionary force cannot be awakened without dismantling this state of being amalgamated, of unifying two opposing forces, without breaking this unity.

The role of the leadership is to rouse the masses. This means awakening the forces of resistance, the forces of rebellion, the forces of revolution.

What does awakening mean? It means to shake this unity of opposites from the ground up, to heighten friction, to break out the progressive forces, to separate the revolutionary force from the counter-revolutionary one. Until it is entirely separated from the counter-revolutionary forces, the potential energy of revolutionary forces, its ability to shatter the reactionary force into utter ruin, can never be completely expressed; and its capacity to build up a new world is also suppressed.

(Three)

But merely calling out to them to “arise” does not lead at once to the revolutionary forces shaking off their remnants of slumber and springing to action. There are numerous obstructions to the awakening of revolutionary forces. The old society itself places these barriers in the way of progress. The revolutionary masses often fail to identify these obstacles, to recognize them as such.

Why are they unable? While being forced, in the old society, to remain at one with the exploiting class, i.e., with counter-revolutionaries, numerous falsehoods penetrate their minds, even those of revolutionaries.

Therefore, the real obstruction is in the mind. In the minds of revolutionary people; in their trains of thinking, their various prejudices, their beliefs.

In the neo-colonial society that now exists in India, the counter-revolutionary elements are incessantly shoving into the minds of revolutionary people the idea that India is an independent country. They explain that the slip of ballot-paper they hand out every five years is perfect democracy. They explain that the state is a classless institution – it is not the government of the exploiters, but those who have won by popular vote.

They explain that in the eyes of their law, rich and poor, exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed, all are equal. Their courts dispense unbiased, even-handed justice.

A large section of revolutionary people still accepts these downright lies as truth.

Accepting these falsehoods is the biggest hindrance in the progress of revolutionary forces.

The role of the leadership is to remove these obstacles, shatter these illusions, otherwise revolutionary forces cannot be awakened.

(Four)

Only by transforming itself in a revolutionary style can the general strength of the masses turn itself into a revolutionary force, carry the revolution to success, build up a new society. Not otherwise.

Similarly, only if the leadership can transform itself in a revolutionary style can it become a truly revolutionary leadership, and help the masses make the revolution victorious. Not otherwise.

In order to become a truly revolutionary leadership, one false notion must be discarded first and foremost.

The notion being – communists go among the masses to help them from above, ameliorate their woes from above, bring them relief.

As if communists are aid-givers, and the poverty-stricken masses the grateful acceptors.

But no; the communist leadership is not a charity service. Revolutionary communists are not missionary monks.

“We must get something for the poor” – actually, this misconception is the source from which economism is imported into mass movement. Not out of malice, we do it from simplicity of mind. But the wrong thing done with honest intentions will still result in a negative outcome. (This, of course, does not mean that revolutionary communists must not provide leadership in economic struggles or agitating for economic reforms, of course they should. But how? This, on the other hand, is a topic worthy of discussion.) If we can discard this misconception, in our minds will arise an immense belief in the toiling masses; an infinite respect for their talent, their incredible organizational expertise.

As Mao Mao Tsetung has taught us, “For over twenty years our Party has carried on mass work every day, and for the past dozen years it has talked about the mass line every day. We have always maintained that the revolution must rely on the masses of the people, on everybody taking a hand, and have opposed relying merely on a few persons issuing orders. The mass line, however, is still not being thoroughly carried out in the work of some comrades; they still rely solely on a handful of people working in solitude. One reason is that, whatever they do, they are always reluctant to explain it to the people they lead and that they do not understand why or how to give play to the initiative and creative energy of those they lead. Subjectively, they too want everyone to take a hand in the work, but they do not let other people know what is to be done or how to do it.” (Mao Tsetung, A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily)

Without a deep trust and respect for the producing masses (masses engaged in social production – publisher), it is impossible to internalize these words of Mao Tsetung in their entirety. Trust and respect for the producing masses – this is the cornerstone of revolutionary communists’ method of work towards waging the revolution.

“The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history.” (Mao Tsetung, On Coalition Government)

“The masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge.” (Mao Tsetung, Preface and Postscript to Rural Surveys)

(Five)

Once we reach this realization, we can understand that until the masses accept the politics of agrarian revolution as their own, these politics will exist only on paper; it will have no existence in real life, no practical usefulness. Until the toiling masses actively engage with the politics agrarian-revolutionary people’s democracy, themselves become involved in promoting it, themselves form organizations, form armed people’s militias, the semi-colonial politics will not suffer a single scratch.

But the question remains, how exactly will the labouring masses develop their consciousness and mobilize themselves in the politics of agrarian revolution?

First, through outreach. The word of agrarian revolution must be spread to them.

But outreach too has two forms – bureaucratic and democratic, the methods of the two different classes in society. The bureaucratic method is that of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie: the leaders issue orders, followed mechanically by the masses without a word. This is the practice of the Congress and the bourgeoisie in general. And, while the leadership of the communist movement remains in the hands of the petty-bourgeoisie, this practice has subsisted there as well.

Not just in public outreach, commentary and outreach within the Party has also followed this trend. Those who have attended the Party's general body meetings have personal experience in this regard. The biggest failure of this kind of outreach – the distance between the leadership and Party workers, and between the leadership and the masses, cannot be bridged. Of course, those who see the masses as machines instead of the heroes of history do not regard this distance as a failure.

This bureaucratic style of outreach cannot resolve the tangles in the mind of the toiling people. Many of their questions remain unanswered. Hence, their revolutionary consciousness is unable to develop, their revolutionary activism cannot burst out. They are unable to bear out their exact role in the social revolution.

Those for whom such work is a matter of prolonged habit are trained to think – we are separate from the ordinary revolutionary worker and the common folk; we are a more advanced species. To earn their due respect, these “higher organisms” tend to cling to their office, issue decrees, and instead of heading to the field of work, complete their duties of leadership by commanding others over telephone.

What happens as a result is that a particular party unit or committee, or a particular front of the mass organization, comes under the overlordship of a faction led by one or a select few.

It is possible to deploy the masses in an agitation through this bureaucratic method of outreach as well. But then they agitate not out of revolutionary spirit, not by arousing their own revolutionary initiative, but for the possibility of temporary amelioration of their intolerable suffering. They engage in agitation with their consciousness chained within the confines of economism, engage even in militant struggle. Thus, they wage the battle of militant economism.

How far the revolutionary consciousness of the masses has progressed, how much their own initiative has found expression – if we evaluate such agitations with these questions in mind, then we see – it remains, after the struggle, the same as it was before. We see, the general masses are unable to mentally extricate themselves from the worldview of neo-colonialism, from the machinations of the neo-colonial state. It turns out – (irrespective of whether the immediate aim of the struggle has failed or succeeded) the masses still hold on to the belief that through such repeated agitation, bit-by-bit, an improvement in living conditions can be attained. That is, the matter of revolution is left to the gods (or to the leaders), the “struggle” must continue to survive within this neo-colonial society.

This kind of agitation does not draw out political educators or political organizers in droves from among the masses; it can never create an awakening of revolutionary forces.

(Six)

If we want to enable the masses to shrug off their burden of a neo-colonialist worldview and its state machinery, our political outreach must be in democratic forms. That is, in terms of outreach, we must follow the “mass line” or mass style of work.

The essence of democratic outreach is meeting the masses in person, increasing verbal discourse. Get them to speak up. Let them express and analyze their own problems. They can make mistakes. Discuss with great

patience, argue – point out their errors. It might well be the case that a seemingly jumbled-up assortment of several events obscures from them the natural progression of the specific historical situation. If their analysis is one-sided, open their eyes to other aspects of the situation.

But the gist of it is to make them think and to speak up; make them understand – a few thousand communist revolutionaries cannot carry out a successful revolution. That is the duty of millions of people, of each and every one of you. You have to engage with the work, reach out to more people, build up organizations, take up arms. For you are the ones who will wage the revolution.

Personal interaction, direct contact and face-to-face discussions, arguments – what is the point of emphasizing so heavily on these aspects?

The first point – the politics of people's democratic agrarian revolution is a new one, while the colonial politics is long-standing by comparison. In this condition, without personal interaction and discussion, it is impossible to get a clear picture of the various forms, the various stages in which the essence of these politics manifests among the working people; of the questions, the prejudices which might create mental blockage to accepting the new politics of agrarian-revolutionary people's democracy. Without a clear understanding of these subjects, these mental obstacles, the promotion of our new agrarian-revolutionary politics will remain superficial, stale, and dreary, like monotonically repeating the same old doctrines. This kind of lifeless propaganda can never help the labouring masses break the shackles of their old politics; their revolutionary awakening remains impossible.

Moreover, outreach through collective discussions in small circles, by its very nature, engenders an active role for the working people. Through their direct engagement in the work of production, the language, the expressions, the perspectives they provide to problems, the cues they provide with their innate common sense – even revolutionary communists stand to learn a lot from them. Their familiarity with material reality, simply through the lived experience of being an ordinary worker, is much more direct, much more vital than bookish knowledge.

Communist revolutionaries, by attempting to stir the revolutionary consciousness of the working masses, pick up valuable lessons from them. Their connection with the masses becomes like a fish in water.

Therefore, their capacity to provide leadership increases by leaps and bounds. Like the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Stalin, like the Chinese communists under Mao Tsetung, in this way shall the leadership of the Indian revolutionary communists become concrete.

(Seven)

So far, we have focused extremely on one mode of political outreach. But it would be wrong to glean from this that we advocate eliminating all other forms entirely. Squad campaigns, meetings at the factory gate or in the street, public rallies, general assemblies and all other such forms must be utilized. But we must be careful that the ordinary working masses engage in such congregations spontaneously and enthusiastically. For a rally to be really a mass procession, for the masses to really participate in it, for general assemblies to be general in the real sense of the term, for those who have worked tirelessly among the common people to become their natural leaders to be the primary speakers in such meetings – the small circles for discussion serve to lay the groundwork. Those who eagerly participate in these conversations, those who earnestly understand and accept the politics of agrarian revolution, are the ones who emerge from their shell to become tireless educators and hardworking organizers in the public assemblies.

For these reasons we accord such great importance to outreach through conducting verbal propagation, building direct connections, having personal interactions.

Well-composed short leaflets are an excellent way of written promotion. How effectively and expertly we could utilize this medium must constantly be in the minds of communists.

Two aspects must be considered here. First, that the leaflets do not monotonically repeat the same dreary old doctrines. The messages must be phrased to stir the people's mind. The reader must feel inspired enough to think, "I must contribute something for these politics." Secondly, new tactics

must constantly be unearthed to distribute these leaflets – in domestic households, localities, villages, factories, tea-stalls, offices, markets, clubs, libraries, train compartments – they must be spread in such a way to instantly spark a wave of political discussion in each place.

(Eight)

What is the current situation? The revolutionary struggle in Naxalbari has created an overwhelming urge among the working masses to learn about agrarian revolution.

Given these exceptionally favourable circumstances, it is the duty of communist revolutionaries to fulfil this urge. That is, to awaken the people to the politics of agrarian revolution. The people must be told now – not just in India, the waves of agrarian revolution have struck three whole continents. And, in today's world, imperialism and revisionism, the two main enemies of revolution, have come under attack from the working class of North America and Western Europe as well.

Encompassing five continents, shaking the earth by its roots, a fierce struggle is being waged for the freedom of all of humanity – and the people must be told, the leader of this worldwide liberation struggle is Mao Tsetung. The Thought of Mao Tsetung is the weapon for creating the new world in our time. Without this weapon, no one can fight for the new world.

Under these circumstances, this method of verbal outreach at the ground level – by going among the working masses, making them think, making them speak out; by anchoring their mind strongly to the politics of agrarian revolution; outreach with the objective of getting them deployed in revolutionary task – can such a mode of outreach be called conspiratorial, opposed to the “mass line”?

Some comrades do seem to think so. They seemingly want to say – work which is not reported in the news is not mass work. Some of them organize meetings, rallies, assemblies precisely in the style of revisionist and neo-revisionist leadership – and think, this is what it means to engage in mass work.

But since several other comrades have first-hand experience which suggests otherwise – based on their positive results – and on what they say about Mao Tsetung’s mass line – comrades of the former kind are urged to reconsider.

The mass line, as it is called, has two aspects. Only by combining them both do we get a complete notion of mass line. The first is “from the people”, and the second, “to the people”. So far, we have been completely ignoring the former – not only in interacting with the masses, but among ourselves as well.

In promoting the politics of agrarian-revolutionary people’s democracy, we have a lot to learn from the common people. Only by learning from them can we teach them more effectively. And the most elegant way of learning from them is to sit face-to-face with them, listen to them and tell them about ourselves.

Those comrades who think such methods go “against the mass-line” or call them conspiratorial, they are not correct. We urge them to think again. We implore them to try out our methods for a few days, to gather experience.

We have discussed some fundamentals of the “mass-line” in political outreach. It is essential to discuss the mass line in the practical field of struggles and organizations. In this context, the topic of mass line will arise even in building a Party. That discussion can be taken up another time.