

HOLD HIGH THE GENUINE LESSONS OF
NAXALBARI

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Politically, Naxalbari is the continuation of Telengana.

Its greatest significance lies in the fact that after a prolonged break of 16 years, it boldly confronted the communist revolutionaries with the basic question concerning the course of the Indian revolution and rejecting revisionist politics and launching a peasant struggle that shook all of India. It decisively showed the way towards armed agrarian revolution.

To draw correct lessons from Naxalbari, it is imperative to analyse the history of the development of Naxalbari struggle. Comrade Kanu Sanyal has presented this history in his valuable piece 'More about Naxalbari'. To study, discuss and assimilate this article is an objective necessity today. Among its many important lessons, some deserve special attention.

Firstly, the peasant struggle in Naxalbari developed by fighting both right and 'left' deviations. Had this fact and the relevant history of Naxalbari struggle been taken into account and given due importance, the temporary victory of 'left' deviation and subsequent terroristic activities would not have been possible. Immediately after Naxalbari uprising, political opportunists spread the word that Naxalbari uprising was the result of the struggle merely against right-wing deviation. Later, Lin Piao's 'New Era' thesis was used to establish that no 'Left' wing deviation was possible in this era. Many, including the present writer, forgot that both the deviations have identical ideological basis.

Secondly, it emphasises the importance of the agrarian question in the people's democratic stage of the Indian revolution. It is this question which demarcates the communist revolutionaries from revisionists of all brands. In the 'Spring

Thunder' editorial, the Chinese Communist Party said, Chairman Mao had already shown clearly long ago that the agrarian question was of very great importance in the people's democratic revolution.

Thirdly, Comrade Sanyal's article clearly demarcates the proletarian from the petit-bourgeois concept of armed agrarian revolution. As a Marxist-Leninist concept, armed struggle must be seen as a development of class struggle. The attempt to launch an armed struggle in a semi-feudal country while ignoring the land question is, in effect, to build an armed struggle without the class struggle. Chairman Mao has said, "Never forget class struggle". In the democratic phase of the revolution in our country, the agrarian programme must be a programme of land seizure. Thus, in the arena of struggle, the land question must remain both a goal and a process. So, it is not valid to say that we will redistribute land to the peasants only after the seizure of power; the process of seizure of power cannot operate in isolation from the land question. It is in the process of implementing the programme of land seizure that the peasantry realises in its totality the importance in the agrarian revolution of uprooting the feudal dominance and the power of the landlords by a political alliance of workers and peasants. Naxalbari brought out this lesson before the communist revolutionaries of India.

Fourthly, there is the question of mass line. The Chinese experience teaches us that the peasant struggle can never succeed without mass struggle and mass organisation. Comrade Sanyal has analysed the struggle between two lines on this question in the context of Naxalbari and has correctly concluded, "The mass organisation and mass struggle of workers and peasants are the progenitors of the peasant struggle in Naxalbari."

If we look closely at 'agrarian revolution' as attempted by Charu Majumdar we will find that he had, in fact, conceived of an 'agrarian revolution' minus the agrarian question.

Any comrade who takes the trouble to read carefully the

‘Spring Thunder Over India’ article will see that it first emphasises the importance of the agrarian question in the national democratic revolution in India ; it is only in that context that the questions of capture of power by armed force and settling of issues by war, establishment of base areas, etc., in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country, come up. It then argues that since India is a very large country and reactionary forces are weak in the countryside, the revolutionaries could carry out tactical warfare in the rural areas with comparative ease. The line of Charu Majumdar recognised only the latter part of this argument ; the former part, i.e., the agrarian question, was not even taken into consideration. There is no doubt that the ‘agrarian revolution’ of Charu Majumdar was a petit-bourgeois conception which negated the class struggle in the countryside.

Charu Majumdar then proposed the annihilation line in order to accomplish his so-called ‘agrarian revolution’. This was one of his ‘great’ contributions. In reality, this was nothing more than secret assassination by small armed groups. Such actions do not, in any way, raise the class consciousness of workers and peasants or enthuse them to organise on a class basis. Rather, they inhibit their natural feelings of class hatred within the bounds of individual revenge and retribution. The tremendous oppression of hundreds of years have created a natural class hatred in the minds of workers vis-a-vis their employers or of peasants vis-a-vis the landlords. All communists recognise that by merely fomenting such hatred and annihilating individual capitalists or individual landlords the capital or the system of feudal exploitation will not be eliminated, nor will a proletarian dictatorship or the rule of workers and peasants be created. It is natural for those at a low level of political consciousness to go for the apparently simple solution of annihilating the individual capitalist or the individual landlord. Such tendencies are all the more likely among those engaged in petty production and uninitiated into mature forms of political action. Communists

fight ideologically against such 'natural' tendencies and present before workers and peasants a class point of view, the idea of establishing a new class rule and the need to organise on a class basis. Patiently they explain the class nature of existing state formations and the need to destroy the existing state structure and create a new one in its stead.

It can now be seen that it was not by any means accidental that even the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" was almost never uttered in the CPI(ML) of Charu Majumdar. Indeed, this absence is particularly remarkable in the context of the great debate in the international communist movement. Thus, in fact, the whole idea of carrying forward the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat in the entire period of socialism is dismissed, and instead an anarchist conception limited solely to the destruction of state machinery is substituted.

The so-called "annihilation line" is a gross distortion of the class struggle, a terrorism of very low kind. It is fundamentally opposed to the class struggle, to the establishment of a new order of class rule, to political organisation on a class basis, and is opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

How far Charubabu's line differs from the concept of class struggle can be understood from two incidents. First, under the Coordination Committee, a programme was adopted to undertake class analysis in rural areas. As soon as Charubabu's line became dominant, the programme was dropped. No one felt the need for such work. In fact, in the political analysis of the CPI(ML), the terms "semi-feudal", "semi-colonial character of India" or "the four enemies of the Indian people", had become merely ornamental phrases. Secondly, where feudal exploitation was fierce, this line could never be effected, in spite of the best efforts of our comrades, without a programme of mass struggle. I can assert from personal experience that in the Jhargram subdivision, even in Gopiballavpur, where contradictions with the feudal elements were the sharpest, this line could not be implemented. The working class of Kharagpur, engaged in the large scale industrial sector, rejected this line.

Again, obviously, the idea of "the creation of a new man" through the annihilation campaign was yet another anarchist conception. Chairman Mao's "new man" is a Marxist-Leninist concept which grew out of a social practice in accordance with the stages of social development. On the other hand, Majumdar's ideas of individual heroism, bravery and sacrifice are, in fact, petit-bourgeois ideas.

All communist revolutionaries who, like the present author, had fallen prey to a spell of temporary infatuation and joined the CPI(ML), should now confess that they had unconsciously opposed the armed agrarian revolution and served neo-terrorism. It is, again, not surprising that not a single person remaining within the ambits of discipline of the CPI(ML) could establish the line of armed agrarian revolution in that party, and that everyone who did take this path had to leave the CPI(ML) and form a new group and a new discipline.

The question naturally arises : Why were we taken in by Charu Majumdar's line ?

There was, firstly, the question of a weakness inherent in the class composition of our leadership. In Comrade Sanyal's words : "At every level of the communist leadership there is a preponderance of elements drawn from the impatient petit-bourgeoisie, the petty peasant producer classes with narrow conservative outlook and the decadent feudal classes with anarchist leanings."

Secondly, there was a strong terrorist trend within the struggle of the Indian people against British imperialism ; yet the Indian communist movement has never contested that trend ideologically.

There has been confusion in the matter of clearly demarcating the communist movement from the reformists on the one hand and the terrorists on the other. The seeds of idealism have thus been sown within the Indian communist movement. The long practice of revisionism had created among a large section of revolutionary workers a genuine feeling of intense hatred of revisionism. The apparent mili-

tancy of terrorism thus seemed attractive ; its real nature as a rejection of the class struggle was missed and the understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought remained weak.

'More about Naxalbari' shows how the party was formed conspiratorially and the split among the communist revolutionaries was made permanent thereby.

Certain persons cling to the view that the CPI(ML) was founded on the basis of an agrarian programme adopted after a correct assessment of the Naxalbari movement ; Charu Majumdar had then pretended to agree with the so-called exponents of the agrarian programme, but later, in spite of their opposition, succeeded in carrying the party to a wrong line. This is a pure lie. Two documents, a political report and an organisational report were adopted unanimously at the last meeting of the AICCCR—the meeting from which the decision to form the party had been taken and the COC had been formed. In this organisational report it had been stated, "We must assimilate the teachings of Comrade Lin Piao, *which has also been confirmed in our recent Sonapet struggle*, that guerilla war is the *only way* to mobilise and apply the entire strength of the people against the enemy." What is the Sonapet struggle ? In Sonapet, a group of peasants beheaded a notorious landlord out of spontaneous anger. By linking this incident with the Lin Piao quotation, guerilla warfare and beheading of landlords had been equated, and this was un-animously accepted by one and all in that meeting. This formulation was the operative part of the whole document and naturally all the activities of the CPI(ML) had this formulation as its axis. It is an undeniable fact of history that the CPI(ML) was formed on the basis of the line of annihilation and none contested this formulation in the COC meeting on April 22, 1969, or even in the Party Congress of 1970. The organisational report unambiguously establishes this.

Hence, the thesis that the CPI(ML) was formed on the basis of an agrarian programme with the lessons of Naxalbari is a distortion of history, an obnoxious lie.

The formation of Naxalbari O'Krishak Sangram Sahayak Committee as well as AICCCR was correct and realistic. The AICCCR took some correct steps initially, but because of a wrong and subjective evaluation of Naxalbari struggle, subjectivism became increasingly stronger. Formation of CPI(ML) was the culmination of that process. As a result, the tremendous possibilities to which Naxalbari had given birth, were nipped in the bud and a petit-bourgeois, terrorist Party was born.

Seen in this light, Charu Majumdar was a petit-bourgeois revolutionary. Proud and vain, he held his own personal feelings much above Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. In the conflict between revolution and careerism, he gave precedence to the latter. The way he disrupted the proletarian movement in our country, the ruling classes in future will remember him as a hero, but the workers and peasants will offer him unmixed hatred.

Thus Naxalbari calls upon Indian revolutionaries to seek the truth from reality, to stand firmly implanted in real experience. The martyr Comrade Babulal Biswakarmakar was helped out of jail by resort to bourgeois legality, but soon after he gave his life in the revolutionary cause. If we perceive the true significance of this event, can we any longer oppose the correct line of combining legal with the illegal? In 1967, the Comrades of Naxalbari followed the correct tactic of using the elections, yet soon after we had the Naxalbari peasant uprising. If any significance is attached to this, can anyone oppose the correct line of remaining firm on strategy and flexible on tactics? Our experience of the past few years demand a fresh look into all these questions. Uniting on the basis of a correct programme and path is the most urgent task of the day. No single person or group in India has so far taken a correct position on every question. Honest and bold criticism and self-criticism having faith in and respect for one another, are the pre-conditions for unity among communist revolutionaries. The revolution of the Indian people is inevitable. Communists will have to unite to build a truly

proletarian party. This is what the national and international situation demands today.

But does all this mean that we propose to go back by eight years to where we were before the days of the Co-ordination Committee? Though the two situations have some similarities in appearance, they are very different in essence. We have advanced politically in all these years. The revolution is not like an arrow shot, nor like the hands of a clock; it travels neither in straight lines nor in circles—"History develops in spirals".

[*Abridged*]