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Both factions of the Communist party of India [CPI], right and left,\* have sought to install non-Congress party governments in the states in their bid to capture power through a united front with the "national bourgeoisie." This was the parliamentary road and its failure to solve any of the basic problems of the masses led to some disillusionment in the advanced sections of the Communist and revolutionary cadres. These elements are, however, seeking a solution within the framework of the traditional CPs, so that they are attracted to Maoism, which lays stress on a prolonged armed struggle in the villages leading to the capture of the cities and final seizure of power.

They claim that Maoism is the apex of the Marxism-Leninism of the present era. Their concepts of a revolution in stages, of a united front with the "national bourgeoisie" and of the character of the peasantry are common to all Stalinist parties. They appear to be Leninist in origin although they are not so. The tactic of prolonged armed struggle in the villages, from revolutionary bases established under the leadership of the working class, leading to capture of the cities and final seizure of power, is specifically Maoist. It is important to analyse both their strategy and tactics in order to assess the true nature of Maoism.

#### Lenin and the Russian Revolution

Lenin's concept of the stages of the Russian Revolution differs in an important way from the Stalinist concept. He was not interested either in a bourgeois government or the bourgeois development of Russia although he admitted that economically Russia was a backward country and that its economic development would help the working class to organise itself better.

He was principally interested in the working class as the only consistently revolutionary class, along with its

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\* Since 1964 India has had two Communist parties, the pro-Moscow CPI, and the CP (M) [Marxist], initially a pro-Peking split-off which has now been deserted by the "true" Maoists because of its parliamentary orientation, especially in West Bengal and Kerala. In both of these states the CP(M) heads the state government through its multiclass "United Front" coalitions. -- I.P.

allies at the different stages of the Russian Revolution. He insisted that the character of the Russian Revolution would be bourgeois-democratic because he knew that the peasant ally of the working class, without whom it would be impossible to make a revolution, was not socialist and it would stop at the stage when its land hunger was satisfied. This difference in approach reveals itself most clearly in the respective attitudes of Lenin and the Maoists towards the "national bourgeoisie," i.e., the section of the bourgeoisie whose interests the revolution is supposed to serve and who are therefore admittedly interested in the change.

The Maoist periodical Liberation analyses the character of the "People's Revolution" in India and the character of the Indian bourgeoisie in its December 1967 and June 1968 issues. It expresses full agreement with the distinction made by the CP(M) between the compradore, bureaucratic, monopolistic big bourgeoisie and the industrial or national bourgeoisie. The distinction is made as follows:

"The national bourgeoisie... [have] no links altogether with foreign monopolists...[and] are not by themselves monopolistic....[They] suffer at their hands in a number of ways, are objectively interested in the accomplishment of the principal tasks of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution....This section of the bourgeoisie will be compelled to come into opposition with the state power and can find a place in the People's Democratic Front."\*

Lenin also thought that the Russian bourgeoisie were interested in the fight for democracy in Russia, but instead of emphasising the identity of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, he emphasised the conflict in their interests, the instability and possible treachery of the bourgeoisie. Thus he writes in Two Tactics of Social Democracy as follows:

"It is of greater advantage to the bourgeoisie for the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy to take place more slowly, more gradually, more cautiously, less resolutely, by means of reforms and not by means of revolution; for these changes to spare the 'venerable' institutions of the serf-owning system (such as the monarchy) as much as possible; for these changes to develop as little as possible the independent revolutionary

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\* Paragraph 106 of the CP(M) programme, quoted in Liberation, December 1967, page 76.

activity, initiative and energy of the common people, i.e., the peasantry and especially the workers, for otherwise it will be easier for the workers, as the French say, 'to change the rifle from one shoulder to the other'...

"On the other hand, it is more advantageous to the working class for the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy to take place by way of revolution and not by way of reform...."\*

He also pointed to the basic limitations of the bourgeoisie as follows:

"We must be perfectly certain in our minds as to what real social forces are opposed to 'tsarism'...and are capable of gaining a 'decisive victory' over it. The big bourgeoisie, the landlords, the factory owners...cannot be such a force....We know that owing to their class position they are incapable of waging a decisive struggle against tsarism; they are too heavily fettered by private property, by capital and land to enter into a decisive struggle. They stand in too great need of tsarism, with its bureaucratic, police and military forces for use against the proletariat and the peasantry, to want it to be destroyed." (Ibid., p. 56.)

Thus what was involved was not a front with the bourgeoisie but a sharpening of the struggle for democracy so that it outgrows the limit of gradualism and reform and steps into the arena of revolutionary struggle; out of the hands of the bourgeoisie, into the hands of the proletariat. Lenin writes:

"The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush the autocracy's resistance by force and paralyse the bourgeoisie's instability." (Ibid., p. 100. Emphasis in original.)

He is not afraid of the bourgeoisie recoiling from the bourgeois democratic revolution. He says:

"...The Russian revolution...will really assume the widest revolutionary sweep possible in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution, only when the bourgeoisie recoils from it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat." (Ibid., p. 100.)

Lenin, therefore, has no use for a "minimum programme" on which a united front with the "national bourgeoisie"

could be built. In fact he would not rely on the bourgeoisie even if they accepted the whole programme of the revolution. He says:

"The bourgeoisie will always be inconsistent. There is nothing more naive and futile than attempts to set forth conditions and points which, if satisfied, would enable us to consider that the bourgeois democrat is a sincere friend of the people. Only the proletariat can be a consistent fighter for democracy. It can become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the peasant masses join its revolutionary struggle...." (Ibid., p. 60.) Compare this with paragraphs 106 and 107 of the CP(M) programme.\*

Substitute "imperialism and monopolist bureaucrat compradore bourgeoisie" for tsarism in the above citations and the "national bourgeoisie" for the bourgeoisie, and you have Lenin's view on the Stalinist and Maoist programme of revolution under the leadership of a united front that includes the national bourgeoisie on a minimum programme.

#### Lenin on the Stages of Revolution

Lenin did distinguish between a bourgeois-democratic revolution and a socialist revolution in Russia in 1905. However, he did so not because Russia had not been fully industrialised or was backward in economic development, but for another reason. He says in 1905 as follows:

"The degree of Russia's economic development (an objective condition), and the degree of class-consciousness and organisation of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably bound up with the objective condition) make the immediate and complete emancipation of the working class impossible....a socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class-conscious and organised, trained, and educated in an open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie." (Ibid., pp. 28-29.)

Lenin modified this view on the basis of the experience of the revolution of 1917. In a later preface to Two Tactics he said that before February 1917 he could not think of a socialist revolution because he considered that the forces of the proletariat were still incapable of making

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\* 106: "...[the national bourgeoisie] is unstable and exhibits extreme vacillations..."

107: "Every effort must be made to win them to the democratic front...[and] the working class...[should] support them in all their struggles against both the Indian monopolists and foreign imperialist competitors."

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\* Lenin, Collected Works, Moscow, 1962, Vol. 9, pp. 50-51.

this revolution. When the Russian Revolution did break out and he saw the workers actually leading the revolution, he gave up his earlier position and without waiting for a further organisation and education of the workers in anticapitalist struggles he gave the call for a socialist revolution. In the very first Letter from Afar, he says:

"Side by side with this government -- which as regards the present war is but the agent of the billion-dollar 'firm' 'England and France' -- there has arisen the chief, unofficial, as yet undeveloped and comparatively weak workers' government, which expresses the interests of the proletariat and of the entire poor section of the urban and rural population. This is the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in Petrograd....

"Ours is a bourgeois revolution, therefore, the workers must support the bourgeoisie, say the [opportunist politicians]....

"Ours is a bourgeois revolution, we Marxists say, therefore the workers must open the eyes of the people to the deception practised by the bourgeois politicians...." (Collected Works, Vol. 23, pp. 304-306. Emphasis in original.)

The letter ends with the words:

"With these two allies, the proletariat, utilising the peculiarities of the present transition situation, can and will proceed, first to the achievement of a democratic republic and complete victory of the peasantry over the landlords... and then to socialism...." (Ibid., p. 308. Emphasis in original.)

In 1919, he writes about this question again in his book, Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, as follows:

"First, with the 'whole' of the peasants against the monarchy, against the landowners, against medievalism (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). Then, with the poor peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, against capitalism, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one.

"To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second, separate them by anything else than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants means to distort Marxism dreadfully, to vulgarise it, to substitute liberalism in its place." (Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 300.)

In fact there was a mixing of the elements of the two revolutions. Lenin noted this fact and reported to the First Congress of the Communist International as follows:

"As far as the countryside was concerned, our revolution continued to be a bourgeois revolution, and only later, after a lapse of six months, were we compelled within the framework of the state organisation to start the class struggle in the countryside, to establish Committees of Poor Peasants, of semi-proletarians, in every village, and to carry on a methodical fight against the rural bourgeoisie." (Ibid., p. 473.)

This was what Trotsky had always been saying. He had stated in 1905 that the leadership in the revolution would be that of the working class, and that the government would be the government of the workers and the poor peasants. He had made it clear that the revolution would be bourgeois-democratic in the villages and anti-capitalist or socialist in the cities. Lenin did not accept this at that time, but he had not ruled out the possibility of such a mixing of the two revolutions. Even in 1905 he had written as follows:

"We all contrapose bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution...however, can it be denied that in the course of history individual, particular elements of the two revolutions become interwoven?" (Collected Works, Vol. 9, p. 85.)

Maoists and Stalinists speak of two revolutions on the basis that there has not been enough bourgeois development in India. They speak of a democratic revolution when the working class has already entered the stage of nationwide strikes, when socialism is the conscious goal of the workers, when class struggles are a daily occurrence even in villages; when organisations of poor peasants and agricultural proletarians are developing, i.e., when almost everything is in favour of a socialist revolution.

#### Industrialisation and the Bourgeoisie

Let us once again turn to the part of the CP(M) programme which is approved by the Maoists.

The CP(M) showed its awareness of the reality of the Indian situation when it stated:

"Disillusionment and discontentment with the policies and attempts at building a capitalist economy grows rapidly among our people....This awakening is seen in the growing attraction to ideas of socialism among the masses. Capitalism as a system is getting increasingly discredited in the eyes of the people." (CP(M) programme,

paragraph 83.)

Yet the CP(M) does not go ahead with an anticapitalist socialist revolution. It visualises that the working class will take the country "along the path of noncapitalist development and go over to socialism by skipping over the stage of capitalism." One wonders what this "noncapitalist" path is which is not yet a socialist revolution. The key is provided by paragraph 87, which says:

"Real and genuine socialism can be built only when all principal means of production in society are owned by the state...."

Compare it with paragraphs 88 (11) and 90 which tell us what will happen to the means of production in a "People's Democracy." Paragraph 88 (11) tells us that taxes on industry, agriculture and trade will be graded and profits controlled. Clearly the means of production remain in private hands. Paragraph 90 (1) talks of a "take over of all foreign capital" and nationalisation of all monopolistic industries, banks and credit institutions, "even of foreign trade."

Medium and small industries, however, are to be given credit, raw materials at reasonable prices and market facilities. No mention is made of the industries owned by the "national bourgeoisie" who are not monopolistic and yet own large-scale industries. Probably they are to survive with profits controlled.

Two questions arise here. Is it worthwhile to spare them when so much of capitalism, the summit of capitalism, is already abolished? Can they survive with the prop of foreign capital and international trade gone? Paragraph 87 tells us:

"While adhering to the aims of building a socialist society the Communist Party of India, taking into consideration the degree of economic development, the degree of political and ideological maturity of the working class and its organisation, place before the people as the immediate objective the establishment of people's democracy based on the coalition of all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces headed by the working class."

This is confusion worse confounded. If the working class is mature enough and sufficiently organised to lead a people's democratic revolution, what does it lack that it cannot lead a socialist revolution, especially at a stage when capitalism is discredited and socialism attracts the masses, when a major part of the means of production and foreign trade have already been marked for a take-over by the state?

The political ideas of the masses

are far in advance of the CP(M) because they have already accepted abolition of capitalism and establishment of socialism. What is in fact lacking is the political maturity of the CP(M) itself that it insists on retaining the national bourgeoisie when they cannot serve any useful purpose, and insists on refusing to go over to a socialist revolution when a major part of the means of production is in the hands of the state. The confusion of the CP(M), and Maoists, and all the like is thus marked by this chasing of the "national bourgeoisie" and the refusal to develop anticapitalist struggles, policies, and demands.

It is this confusion in the present leadership of the working class that prevents it from seizing power through a socialist revolution and from going over to socialism. The national bourgeoisie are not interested in making a revolution, for the reasons so clearly stated by Lenin some sixty-five years ago. They can not be interested in a regime in which inflation is prevented, profits are controlled, and international trade is not free.

The CP(M)'s policy, however, helps it to carry its own ranks on the parliamentary road through united fronts. Maoists may or may not take part in elections but they don't believe in the parliamentary road to socialism. Why should they, then, chase the mirage of a united front with the national bourgeoisie? For the sake of winning the rich peasants? Is it possible to win rich peasants with a policy of fixing a ceiling on landholdings, fixing the minimum wages of agricultural labourers, state trading of food grains, forcible collection of grain, etc.?

Economic development is not possible either on the capitalist road or through capitalists. They depend on foreign capital, technical know-how and collaboration in production and imperialist patronage and generosity in trade. They depend on taxes and inflation for the accumulation of capital at home. Even if the masses don't resist them, there is a limit to such measures. The only potential for real development is through state ownership of all means of production and internal trade and a state monopoly of foreign trade.

Is this how Stalinism or Maoism is a development of Marxism-Leninism?

#### Maoism and the Peasantry

The above discussion makes it clear that Lenin accepted peasants to be the allies of the revolutionary working class only as long as their hunger for the land was not satisfied. He visualised the outbreak of class struggle in villages between rich peasants on the one hand and the poor peasants and semiproletarians on the other. As far back as 1905, he wrote:

"The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution by allying to itself the mass of peasantry.... The proletariat must accomplish the Socialist revolution by allying to itself the mass of semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie."

When the Maoists characterise the coming revolution as a bourgeois or an agrarian revolution, they base themselves on the peasantry as a whole. When they enumerate the contradictions in present Indian society, they mention the contradiction between landlords or feudal remnants and the peasantry, but leave out the conflict of interests between the rich and the poor peasantry.

The CP(M) hopes: "By and large, they [rich peasants] can also be brought into the democratic front and retained as allies in the people's democratic revolution." Yes, say the Maoists.

They cannot ignore the realities. But they refuse to see any conflicts whatever with their schema. The CP(M) programme itself states in paragraph 103:

"The Congress agrarian reforms have undoubtedly benefited certain [only certain!] sections of them [the rich peasants]....They aspire to join the ranks of capitalist landlords and by virtue of their engaging agricultural labour on hire for work on their farms, they entertain hostility to them...." (Emphasis added.)

And yet the CP(M) programme hopes the rich peasants can also be brought into the democratic front. The only way to do it is to refuse to organise and sharpen the struggle of the poor peasants and agricultural labourers -- the firmest ally of the proletariat -- against the rich peasants. Lenin only waited for this class struggle in the villages to break out in order to "paralyse the instability of the peasantry." Stalinists and Maoists refuse to do anything with it because they must have the rich peasants in their front at all costs.

The land hunger of the rich peasants is largely satisfied in India. If they want more land, they can buy it from poor peasants. They are growing cash crops and hoarding food grains. They are the allies of the black marketeers in the cities. They do threaten not to sell their produce at a lower price than they have demanded, e.g., sugarcane, but they are not interested in a revolution which may take away their own land by fixing a ceiling and strengthening the agricultural labourers. The hatred of the poor peasants and semiproletarians is very strong

against them. This hatred has also got mixed up in India with social problems, the problems of caste differences. You cannot have both of them in the same front. The Naxalites\* are compelled to raid rich peasants' houses. Yet they do not want to develop this class struggle and organise the rural poor against rich peasants on specific demands.

Rich peasants are not interested in a revolution. At the same time, the rural poor will not join the revolution unless revolutionaries in the villages build movements on their demands and show preparedness to go against the rich peasants also. The Maoist bands in the villages, therefore, are threatened with isolation unless they link themselves up with the rural poor. If they do not, they will carry out raids on police stations, buses, rich peasants' (selected individuals) houses but cannot build a powerful base in the villages.

#### Revolutionary Bases in the Villages

The specific contribution of Mao is the concept of such bases in the villages. They are to be organised under the leadership of the proletariat. Obviously the workers movement in the cities cannot provide this leadership. More so, because the Maoists have no programme of developing workers movements.

In the absence of a well-organised working class in the cities, petty-bourgeois cadres of even a Marxist party are nothing but petty-bourgeois intellectuals or enthusiasts. They aspire to lead the masses, but refuse to bind themselves to the discipline of such movements. The only counterpart of the proletariat in the villages is the section of the population called the rural poor. The revolutionary base has to be under their leadership if it is to be under the leadership of the working class. If this condition is met, what you have is not an independent movement, but a movement linked with the demands of the rural poor, which has to adopt forms of struggle appropriate to the stage of the development of their class organisation and their struggle.

At a time when the semiproletariat of the countryside are not fully mobilised even for economic demands, there can be no question of an armed struggle against the

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\* Maoist dissidents from the CP(M) who split from the party in 1967 because of the CP(M)'s opposition to a peasant revolt in Naxalbari, West Bengal. The so-called Naxalites formed a third, Maoist, Communist party during 1968, presently called the All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries. See Intercontinental Press, February 3, 1969, p. 101. -- I.P.

state apparatus as if they were struggling for the seizure of power.

The tragedy of the Naxalbari movement lay in this artificial stretching of a peasant movement to fit a political theory.

Jangal Santhal, the peasant leader of the Naxalbari movement, described the movement as resistance to dispossession from the land that had been cultivated by tillers for decades. (See Darpan, June 1967.) But Charu Majumdar, the theoretician of the movement and of the Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (Maoists), described it as follows:

"The brave peasants of Naxalbari, inspired by the thought of Chairman Mao and Marxism-Leninism, rose to break their chains under the leadership of Communist Revolutionaries." (Declaration, June 1968.)

If the struggle of the rural poor under their own organisation and leadership and on their own demands has not reached a stage where such an armed struggle grows naturally out of it, the mass of the rural poor, who cannot hide themselves and escape the arms of a powerful state, will turn against the adventurists.

The only other circumstances under which guerrilla struggles may be successfully undertaken is when there is no possibility of ordinary movements, and guerrilla bands are organised to take reprisals against the rich peasants, landlords, and state officials. Here these bands are actively supported and helped by the entire population. Till such support is obtained from the rural poor, it is infantile leftism to launch armed struggles in the villages for the seizure of power.

#### Capture of the Cities

The Maoist armed struggle is supposed to end with the capture of the cities by the village revolutionaries. The question arises: what should the city working class and the city poor do till the prolonged armed struggle in the villages develops to the stage where the revolutionaries can capture cities? Should they confine themselves only to trade-union work if possible, read and reread Mao's thought, raise funds for the revolutionaries in the villages and join them on being dismissed from the mills?

Why can't the urban working class develop their class struggle against the capitalists and build resistance movements in the cities if political conditions do not permit open mass revolutionary work? Why can't they rise in the cities at an opportune moment and assume the national leadership of the armed

struggle? The reply is that the Maoists don't want this revolution to develop on anticapitalist lines, because they must have the national bourgeoisie in the democratic front.

When the Maoists talk of the leadership of the working class, they don't mean the actual working class through its class organisations and on its class demands; they mean the Communist party intellectuals drawn from the middle classes or, if from the working masses, individualised and separated from their class, made into petty-bourgeois idealists.

In fact, Maoism is a petty-bourgeois movement under the cover of a working-class ideology. It is a grouping of petty-bourgeois enthusiasts who are impatient with the slow pace of the development of class struggles, of the political development of the masses in India and with the hopeless division in their ranks on party lines. In their impatience, they want to see an armed struggle begin, irrespective of the actual conditions in the country. This perspective is indeed very attractive to them because they have a feeling of fighting without the necessity of subordinating themselves to the discipline and the leadership of the working and illiterate masses organised in their class organisations.

It should be remembered that a programme of revolution which does not insist on building class organisations of the workers and the peasants under their own control and on their class demands, which does not insist on sharpening class struggle -- which alone can lead to a greater mobilisation and radicalisation of the masses -- places the reins of leadership in a revolution in the hands of petty-bourgeois idealists styled as revolutionaries and communists. They will always retain leadership in the name of maintaining the leading role of the Communist party and will not allow proletarian democracy, which would permit criticism of the party, or freely elected workers committees, which would clash with the bureaucratic state and apparatuses.

The cultural revolution in China shows that the masses have to be called upon to overthrow those in authority. The same lesson may be learnt from the mass revolts in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. They will have to make a political revolution against the petty-bourgeois bureaucrats, to take power in their own hands.

Why can't Indian revolutionaries be wiser and build mass organisations of workers and poor peasants from the very beginning and keep the petty-bourgeois idealists under control?

### The Leninist Way

The Leninist way is still open to the Maoists, if they are willing to:

(1) Stop distinguishing between a democratic and a socialist revolution and get ready to accomplish a socialist revolution in the cities while the bourgeois revolution may still go on in the villages. (2) Give up attempts to win the national bourgeoisie for the democratic front. (3) Stop allying themselves with the rich peasants. (4) Develop the anti-capitalist struggles of the working class and the antirich-peasant struggles of the rural poor. (5) Develop the organisations of the rural semiproletarians and adopt only such forms of struggle as are called for by the stage of development of the struggle of the rural poor. (6) When the stage of armed struggle comes, link it with the struggle of the rural poor and

with their demands, by subordinating the armed struggle to the class organisation of the rural poor. And (7) prepare the masses politically and win their support before launching armed struggles.

It may be remarked here that capture of power by armed bands is possible in certain circumstances but it is not always possible to have a Castro, or even a Ben Bella. We may have a Boumédienne instead. It is therefore necessary not only to be clear about the aim but also to develop the class organisation of the workers and the peasants.

What is the use of revolutionary phrasemongering if the power is to go to the national bourgeoisie and only a bourgeois system is to be enforced? Such a movement is only a bourgeois movement in spite of its revolutionary phrasemongering.