

Carry Forward The Peasant Struggle By Thoroughly Combating Revisionism, Struggle Against Economism, Develop the Mass Movement

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Since the elections [1], the party leadership [2] has been diligently proving the correctness of our misgivings. The Political Bureau has directed that "struggles must be waged to save the non-Congress ministries from the clutches of reaction." In other words, the principal work of Marxists is not the intensification of class struggle but to hold a brief for these ministries.

For the purpose a convention of Party members was called to lay firm foundations for economism among the working class and after that an industrial peace was negotiated under the leadership of the Cabinet [3]. Furthermore, the workers were told not to use gherao as a weapon. Can class collaboration be more naked than this? The capitalists are given full freedom to exploit and at the same time the workers are told not to struggle. On joining a government established by a huge people's struggle, the Communist Party has chosen the way of class collaboration. The Chinese leaders predicted quite some time ago that those who were neutral on the international ideological differences would very quickly take the opportunist road. Now the leaders of China have stated that these neutralists are actually revisionists and that they will soon join the counterrevolutionary camp. We are witnessing this truth in our country today. Before our eyes there is the betrayal of the working class.

And now let us add to it the pronouncements of Communist Party leader Harekrishna Konar [4]. At first he promised that all land vested in the government would be distributed among the landless peasantry. Then the amount of land to be thus distributed was reduced. At last he announced that this year things would remain as before. The question of exemption from land revenue was left to the mercy of Junior Land Revenue Officers (JLRO). The peasant was shown the way of applications and petitions and he was ordered not to forcibly occupy any land. Harekrishna Babu is not only a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, but he is also the Secretary of the West Bengal Kisan Sabha (Peasant Association). It was his Kisan Sabha that in 1959 called for a movement to wrest vested lands and *benami* lands and it was against this movement and in the interests of the landowning classes that the government let loose a suppression campaign and ordered the peasants to vacate the lands. But in spite of that, the peasant in many instances refused to give up the land and maintained possession on the

strength of the village's unity. Has the Kisan Sabha leader supported their struggle after becoming a minister? No. He has said that vested lands will be redistributed. Who will get them? The J.L.R.O's will take the advice of the Kisan Sabha on that. But will that advice be accepted? Harekrishna Babu is silent on this point. But Harekrishna Babu is quite clear on the point that peasants must not forcibly occupy the lands if the J.L.R.O's disregard the advice of the Kisan Sabha.

What can one call this? Is it not simply being a lackey of the government and the landlords? Even the Congress did not dare to hold such a brief for the feudal classes. Thus, to abide by the directives of the party leaders amounts to unquestioning acceptance of the exploitation and rule of the feudal classes. It is therefore the responsibility of Communists to expose this leadership's anti-proletarian reactionary role before the Party members and the people and push forward on the policy of intensifying the class struggle.

Let us assume that the landless and poor peasants accept Harekrishna Babu's proposals and submit petitions. What will happen then? Vested lands contain some untilled land but most of the lands are cultivated lands. These latter already have cultivators who are either share-croppers (*bhag chasi*) or licensed by the government. The redistribution of these lands will inevitably generate conflicts among the poor and landless peasants and taking advantage of these conflicts, the rich peasant, who is a partner in feudal power and influence and who has great opportunities for bureaucratic manipulation, will install himself in the leadership of the peasant movement. So we see that Harekrishna Babu will not struggle now and has on top of that made arrangements so that the peasant struggle may not take a militant form in the future.

The Struggle Against Economism

We have, however, adopted the programme for a People's Democratic Revolution whose chief task is land reform in the interest of the peasantry. Land reform in the interest of the peasantry can take place only when we have smashed the power of the feudal classes in the countryside. To do this we must appropriate the lands of these classes and distribute them among the poor and landless peasants. We will never do this if our struggles are confined within the limits of economism.

In all areas where the struggle was only for the redistribution of vested lands, we have seen that the peasant who has been given the licensed possession of vested land drops out of active peasant struggles. Why? The reason is that within one year that peasant changes his class character and becomes a middle peasant. Thus the economic demands of the poor and landless peasants are no longer their demands. It is thus that economism breaks the unity of struggling peasants and plunges the poor and landless into the depths of despair.

Believers in economism judge every struggle according to the amount of paddy seized and the amount of land received by the peasant. They never judge a struggle according to whether the fighting consciousness of the peasants has increased or not. Naturally they do not try to enhance the class consciousness of the peasants.

Whereas we know that no struggle is possible without sacrifice, Chairman Mao has taught us that wherever there is struggle there must also be sacrifice. At the beginning of the struggle, the power of the people will always be less than the power of the reactionaries. That is why the struggle will be long. But the people being a progressive force will increase its strength every day and the reaction being a decaying force will decrease its strength every day. Thus, if the people are not inspired to make sacrifices, no revolutionary struggle can be successful. Economism drags us away from this principal revolutionary standpoint and leaves us stranded with a bourgeois standpoint. The party leaders have done precisely this through their various activities.

If we review various peasant struggles in the past we shall see that the leaders have always imposed from above compromises on the peasants, whereas the responsibility of the party leaders was to establish the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat in the peasant movement. This task was not undertaken in the past and is not being undertaken now. Now they are asking for dependence upon the law and the bureaucracy. Lenin has said that if a progressive law were passed but if the responsibility for its implementation rested on the bureaucracy then the peasant would not get anything. It is therefore quite clear that our leaders have strayed far from Lenin and the revolutionary way.

Agrarian revolution is the immediate task. This task cannot be postponed and without it the peasant cannot be benefited. But the agrarian revolution must await the smashing of state power. To attempt an agrarian revolution without first smashing the state machinery is straightforward revisionism. The first and principal task of the peasant movement today is, therefore, the smashing of the state machine. If this task cannot be carried out throughout the nation or all over the State, will the peasant mark time until that date? No. Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Tse-tung teaches us that if in any one area the peasantry can be imbued with political consciousness, then the work of smashing the state machine can be carried forward there. This is precisely the formation of a liberated zone.

A liberated zone is a peasant area from which all the class enemies have been ousted. To build such a zone we require peasant armed power. Just as arms made by the peasants are components of this armed power, so are guns. We will judge by whether the peasant is politically imbued or not, by whether he has proceeded towards collecting guns.

Where will the peasant get the guns from? The class enemies have guns and they live in the village. The guns must be snatched away from them. They will not part with the guns willingly, so force must be used to come into possession of guns. For this the peasant militants must be trained to set the class enemies' houses on fire and to use all other techniques. Apart from this, we will get guns by sudden attacks on the armed forces of the government. In whichever area we manage to organize this gun-snatching campaign, that area will soon be transformed into a liberated zone.

For this we require widespread propaganda among the area's peasants regarding the politics of armed struggle and also small clandestine groups of militants for conducting the gun-snatching campaigns. The members of these groups will propagate the politics of armed struggle and at the same time fulfill the given task of gun collection.

Collection of guns does not change the appearance of the struggle. The collected guns must be used and only then will there be an unfolding of the peasant's creative power and a qualitative change in the struggle. This task can be carried out only by the poor and landless peasant, the firmest ally of the working class. The middle peasant is also an ally but his consciousness of the struggle is not as intense as that of the poor and landless peasants. He requires a little more time. For this reason the Communist Party must thoroughly analyse class relations. That is why China's great leader Chairman Mao Tse-tung completed this task right at the beginning and thus unerringly pointed out the path of revolutionary struggle. In our organizational work the principal task is to establish the leadership of poor and landless peasants in the peasant struggle. To organize the peasant movement on the basis of the politics of armed struggle will ensure the leadership of the poor and landless peasants because they constitute the most revolutionary force among the peasants.

A separate organization for agricultural labourers will not help our task. In fact, it will foster tendencies of economistic trade unionism and intensify the conflicts among the peasantry. It will not strengthen the unity of the allied classes because in our agricultural system the exploitation by the feudal classes is primary.

In this context, there is the question of compromise with the small owners. What should be the Communist attitude to this problem? In all cases of compromise we must decide on whose side we are. We cannot support any other class against the interest of this class. In the peasant movement, the Communists have over and over again renounced the interests of the poor and landless for the interests of the middle classes. The poor and landless peasants lose their morale as a result. We must also have separate viewpoints toward the middle peasants and the rich peasants. If we consider the rich peasants the same way as the middle peasants, then the poor and landless peasants feel frustrated. On the other hand, if we consider the middle peasants the same way as we consider the rich peasants, then the middle peasants' enthusiasm for struggle will diminish. That is why Communists must learn to analyse the class relations among the peasantry of an area according to the teachings of Chairman Mao.

Over and over again the wrath of the Indian peasantry has burst forth, and every time the peasantry has sought the guidance from the Communist Party. We did not tell them that the politics of armed struggle and the campaign to collect guns were the *only* way, the way of the working class, the way to liberation and the founding of a world without exploitation. Throughout India, in every State, the peasant is restless. The Communists must show them the way and that way is through armed-struggle politics and the campaign for the collection of guns. We must firmly assert this to be the *only* way. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China has declared war on every type of selfishness, groupism, revisionism, tailism behind the bourgeoisie and singing the praises of bourgeois ideology. The flames of that revolution have reached India. That revolution beckons us to prepare ourselves resolutely for every kind of sacrifice, to remove the obstacles on the path one by one so that victory will certainly be ours. No matter how terrible does imperialism appear or how insidious the net that modern revisionism spreads in order to help it, the days of the reactionary forces are numbered. The bright sunlight of Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Tse-tung will banish all darkness forever.

Develop the Mass Movement

Naturally the problem arises whether there is any further need for mass movements based on partial demands. There is certainly such a need now and it will remain in the future. India is a vast land and the peasantry is divided into many classes. Thus in every area and among all classes the level of political consciousness cannot be the same. Thus an opportunity will always exist for peasant mass movements based on partial demands and Communists must make good use of this opportunity.

How should we conduct these movements for partial demands? Tactically, we should try for the largest peasant participation and our principal aim should be to see whether the peasants' class consciousness is raised and whether it moves forward towards armed struggle. Mass movements based on partial demands will intensify the class struggle and enhance the political consciousness of the overwhelming masses of the people. The overwhelming masses of peasants will be inspired to make sacrifices and the struggle will spread to new areas. These movements for partial demands can take many forms but Communists must always propagate the necessity for a higher form of struggle. Under no circumstances will it be proper to circulate as "best" whatever form the peasants adopt. In reality, Communists will always propagate revolutionary politics among the peasants, i.e., the politics of armed struggle and the campaign for gun collection. But in spite of this propaganda the peasants may decide on mass deputations and if they do so, it will be our duty to lead them. During the period of white terror the effectiveness of these mass deputations cannot be minimized because these will draw into the struggle large numbers of peasants.

Movements for economic demands are not wrong but to conduct these movements with the technique of economism is a crime. It is also a crime to proclaim that economic struggles will by themselves assume political forms because that would simply be the worshipping of spontaneity. None of these show the people the path to be travelled or bring clarity to their viewpoint; nor do they imbue the people with a spirit of sacrifice in the struggle. At one stage of the struggle there remains only one task. Without carrying it out, the struggle cannot attain a higher stage. In this epoch that special task is the politics of armed struggle and the campaign for the collection of guns. Without the performance of this task the struggle will not reach a higher stage; it will in fact disintegrate and organization will cease to grow.

In India the revolution can take only one road, the road pointed out by Lenin—the building of the people's armed forces and a republic. In 1905 Lenin wanted these two to be linked wherever possible, if not in the whole of Russia. Chairman Mao Tse-tung has enriched the Leninist way and taught us the tactics of People's War through which China has liberated herself. It is this road that has been taken in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaya, Philippines, Burma, Indonesia, Yemen, Leopoldville Congo and by various other nations of Africa and Latin America. In India, too, the Nagas, the Mizos and the people of Kashmir have taken this path of building the people's armed forces and the rule of the liberation front. That is why the working class must firmly declare that it must lead the democratic revolution by firmly allying itself with its principal ally, the peasantry. The responsibility for organizing the peasant movement and the duty of taking the struggle to the armed phase belong to the working class. The vanguard of the proletariat must go to the countryside to participate in armed struggle. This is the principal task of the proletariat.

"Collection of arms and preparing rural base areas"-this is proletarian politics, the politics of seizure of power. The working class must be inspired by this political ideology. The call to organize the workers into trade unions does not raise the workers' political consciousness. Of course this does not mean that we should not organize trade unions, but that the revolutionary Party cadres will not be confined to trade unionism. Their main task will be to spread within the working class the politics of armed struggle and the campaign to collect guns and also to build up the Party Organization. Political propaganda and the propagation of the significance of peasant struggles is also the task of the Party among the middle classes. In short, on all fronts the Party is responsible for explaining the importance of peasant struggles and inviting other forces to join that struggle. We shall arrive at the stage of conscious leadership of the democratic revolution to the extent that we carry out this task.

The Struggle Against Dogmatism

The opposition to this basic Marxist-Leninist path comes not only from the revisionists. The revisionists are quite simply taking the road of class collaboration; thus it is easy to remove their mask. The other opposition within the Party comes from the dogmatists. They grant the need for revolution and realize that revolution is only possible through armed struggle. But they imagine that armed struggle can only come about after the spreading of mass movements throughout India. Before that, small or large armed clashes may take place but the seizure of power is not possible. So far as they are concerned, they hope for another version of the October Revolution to occur in India. They apply their bookish knowledge about the success of that revolution to India's case without alterations. They forget that the February Revolution took place before the October Revolution and that, through it, the bourgeois parties and also the workers', peasants', and soldiers' Soviets came into power. Due to the existence of this dual power, working-class leadership became effective within the Soviets and when the petty bourgeois parties within the Soviets handed over power to the capitalists, the working class found it possible to carry out the October Revolution.

These dogmatists do not analyse the concrete reality of India and they do not learn from the struggles in India. The main cause for the success of the Russian revolution was the correct application of the tactics of the united front. The tactics of the united front are equally important in India, but the tactics of the democratic revolution in India will take another form. In India, the Nagas, the Mizos, and the Kashmiris are struggling under the leadership of the petty bourgeoisie. In the democratic revolution the proletariat must move forward by forming a united front with them and also with the bourgeois- and petty-bourgeois-led struggles that will break out elsewhere. The basis for these alliances will be the anti-imperialist struggle and the right to self-determination. This right is accepted by the proletariat along with the right to secede.

Those who dream of the Indian revolution being carried out in the same manner as the October Revolution are revolutionaries but their doctrinaire standpoint prevents them from giving firm leadership to the struggle. They do not understand the significance of the peasant struggle and, as a result, they unconsciously become propagandists for economism. They cannot appreciate the teachings of Chairman Mao or the lessons of the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples. One section of these people becomes the admirer of Che Guevara and does not stress the work of organizing the peasantry, the principal revolutionary force in the

Indian democratic revolution. As a result, they inevitably fall into left-wing deviations. We must pay special attention to those persons and slowly reeducate them through experience. Under no circumstances must we become intolerant of them.

Apart from these, there is another group of comrades who accept the Chinese Party and the great Thought of Mao Tse-tung as the only correct path. But they consider "How to be a Good Communist" as the only means of self-cultivation and thus become victims of serious deviations. The only road to self-cultivation is the road of class struggle as pointed out by Lenin and Chairman Mao. Class struggle is the only school for Communists. A Communist can emerge pure only by going through the flames of class struggle. We must evaluate our experience of the class struggle in the light of Marxism-Leninism, the Thought of Mao Tse-tung and derive our lessons. The central point about education in the Party is the application of Marxism-Leninism in the field of struggle to arrive at general principles from that experience, and then to take those principles, enriched by experience, back to the masses. This is what is known as the principle of **"from the people to the people"**. That is the main point of Party education. These revolutionary comrades do not realize this basic point of Party education and thus fall into idealist deviations. Chairman Mao Tse-tung has taught us that learning is impossible without practice. In his words, **"doing is itself learning."** Self-improvement is only possible through the transformation of the circumstances by revolutionary practice.

*Revolutionaries of the world unite!
Long live the revolutionary unity of peasants and workers!
Long live Chairman Mao Tse-tung!*

NOTES

1. The fourth general elections held in 1967.
2. The revisionist leadership of the CPI(M).
3. The reactionary United Front Cabinet formed in West Bengal after the 1967 elections.
4. Land and Land Revenue Minister in the UF Government of West Bengal.