

Charu Mazumdar

The Architect of Naxalbari Path

Charu Mazumdar and Naxalbari both names are inseparable from each other. As Naxalbari could not have been created without Charu Mazumdar, similarly without Naxalbari, Charu Mazumdar might not have been known to the world as he is today. Whoever tried to separate Charu Mazumdar from Naxalbari, had practically separate themselves from the path of Naxalbari.

Here we shall briefly narrate the life of the great leader of Indian revolution, particularly how he built up Naxalbari through a long process.

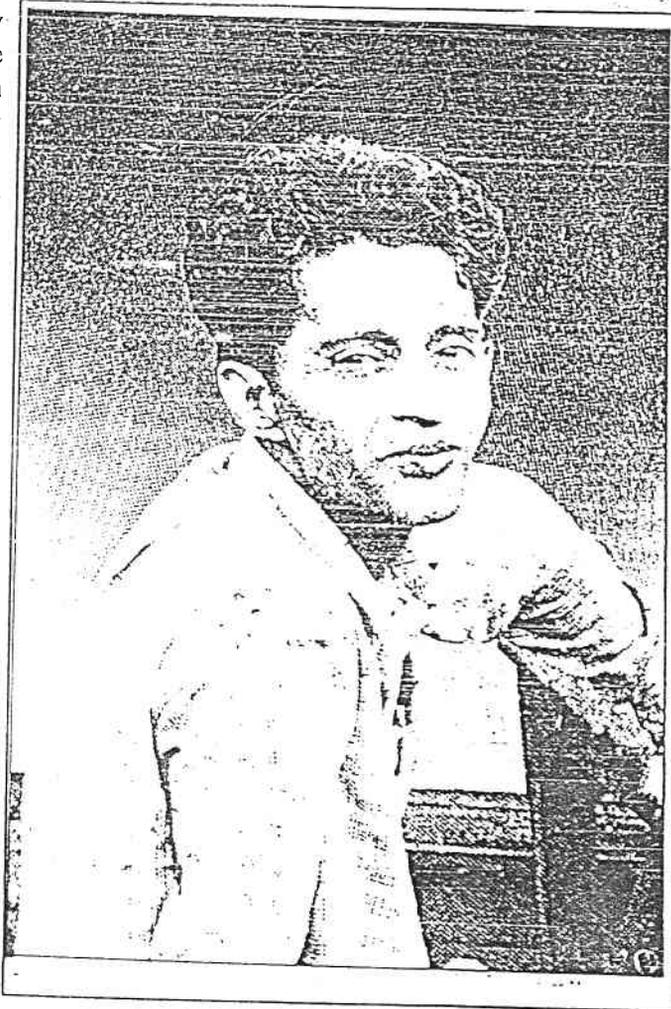
Comrade Charu Mazumdar was born in Baranasi in UP in 1917, the year that shook the world through the first storm of proletarian revolution as it broke out in Russia. In his childhood itself he came back to Siliguri, North Bengal. His father Bireswar was an advocate by profession. But he left the profession and joined the freedom struggle and was jailed many times subsequently. He was an inspiration to the young Charu Mazumdar and was instrumental in inculcating the dream of a really free India in him.

In 1936 Charu Mazumdar took admission to Pabna Edward College (now in Bangladesh) and joined Students' Federation, being attracted by their stand for full independence from British, by their anti-feudal and pro-peasant appeal and by their discipline and commitment to the cause. Thus he came into active politics.

At that time a big campaign was going on in North Bengal in support of the demands of share croppers and the Communist Party organised its district conference in Pabna. On this occasion he came in touch with some activists of peasant front and immediately took the decision to join the peasant organisation. So he left the studies even before

completing his second year in the college and joined the 'school of people' by coming to Pachagarh area of Debiganj PS (now in Bangladesh) of Jalpaiguri district. Here Charu Mazumdar learnt how to work being integrated with the peasants and how to integrate Marxism with practice. His organiser was a peasant leader, Madhav Dutta. Within a short period, he easily mixed with the youth and peasants of the area and even with women to become one with their family. Thus he started his life as a peasant organiser.

Gradually, the share croppers' movement in North Bengal picked up momentum and CM devoted himself in organising the movement. Police repression started and



Comrade Charu Mazumdar (1952)

he was arrested for six months. Then coming out of jail, he was kept in house-arrest from where he escaped in a stormy night. Then he was given the responsibility of organising the railway workers in North Bengal. While working among the railway workers, he came in touch with their advanced class consciousness and

could realise their vanguard role in the revolution. When he was 21 years only, he became a popular organiser of peasants and workers in Jalpaiguri district.

In 1942, though the Communist Party was opposed to the *Quit India* movement, he, along with many grassroot workers, joined the movement and was arrested also.

Then came the great *Tebhaga* movement. By September 1946, the Communist Party started a big propaganda campaign in favour of the demand of *Tebhaga* (i.e. the share croppers' right on 2/3rd of the produce). Madhav Dutta took a big role in organising this movement in North Bengal and CM was his close associate. *Tebhaga* movement created an upsurge among the peasants who began to put up resistance to the zamindar-goonda-police attacks in a revolutionary way. Gradually the movement for greater share of crops turned into the movement for seizure of political power. And Pachagarh became an active centre of this movement. The tea-garden workers of Jalpaiguri also came forward to support this movement and the movement took more and more militant forms. But, to divert the movement, the government passed a reformist 'Share Croppers' Bill' which the Communist Party's (CPI) state leadership accepted and withdrew the struggle. The total leadership of North Bengal including CM criticised this decision of the Provincial Committee. CM took particular lessons from direct experience of leading the *Tebhaga* movement and from the treachery of the party leadership. Both lessons helped him a lot to build up Naxalbari at a later stage. In fact, the summing up of *Tebhaga* done by him created the basis of Naxalbari struggle.

After 1947, when Pachagarh was included in the then East Pakistan, CM opted to work in West Bengal, among the workers of tea gardens and railways and among the adivasi peasants. Then in 1948 during the left line of BT Ranadive he was again arrested. After the failure of Ranadive line when the then Telangana leadership of Andhra Party produced a document in the name of 'China's Path is Our Path', CM supported the document. But the central leadership refused to follow the line and instead reverted to the parliamentary path in 1952.

By March 1952, CM was released from jail and became the secretary of Jalpaiguri District Committee. In that year he married Lila Sengupta and then shifted to Siliguri along with his wife. At that time the party in Siliguri was very weak due to severe state repression in the earlier period. CM began to reorganise the party

in the peasant belt of Siliguri sub-division and developed peasant leaders like Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal, Kadam Mallik etc. Besides, he gave much importance to develop work among students-youths-workers also. Soon the party was reorganised on a strong foundation in Siliguri.

While reorganising the party, CM introduced some new style of work in practice— while working among peasants to integrate with and depend on the peasant masses, to campaign on building up peasants' power in the villiages, i.e., seizure of political power, to build up militant organisation among tea garden workers and to resist all sorts of attacks on it, to build up women's and cultural organisations both in towns and villiages and to give importance to educate the cadres politically. He also took initiative to separate party work from the day to day work of the mass organisations.

In 1955, the tea garden workers' movement succeeded in a big way. By 1959, the peasant movement to seize *benami* land in Terai region took a militant turn. And in 1960 the railway workers' militant movement broke out in North Bengal. In all these struggles, CM was the chief organiser. Through all these struggles and the new style of work, the party was reorganised on a new basis in Darjeeling district, particularly in Siliguri subdivision.

By that time, the central leadership of the Communist Party had become a stooge of the Congress party and the revisionists took over power in Soviet Union. Indian Government attacked China in 1962 at the instigation of Soviet Union and American imperialism. A big anti-communist propaganda was organised and thousands were arrested. CM was also arrested. In 1963 while in jail he came to know about the ideological struggle, being launched by the Communist Party of China (CPC) under the leadership of Com. Mao, against revisionism spearheaded by the then Soviet leadership. He actively supported the *Great Debate* and began to think anew about the Indian situation, about peasant problem and about building a new revolutionary party.

In 1964, the party cadres came out of the jail and the division in the party was almost complete. CPI(M) was born and the 7th Party Congress was organised in November 1964. But the new party did not resolve the basic problems of Indian revolution, did not take the ideological struggles to their consummation and spoiled the chance of building a revolutionary party on a revolutionary basis. However, CM took a very active part in the internal struggle against revisionism inside the party and created such an anti-revisionist

atmosphere in Siliguri Sub-division that not a single party member working among workers and peasants in that area joined the CPI. During this period he campaigned widely about Mao-tse Tung thought and the role of CPC led by him. In August 1964 he suffered cardiac attack which compelled him to take bed for a long time in the rest of his life. Though he could not attend the process of conferences prior to the 7th Party Congress, the Darjeeling District Conference adopted a resolution congratulating CPC for conducting the anti-revisionist struggles and wishing a long long life for Com. Mao. When the representatives from Darjeeling in the State Conference echoed the same, they were quickly termed as pro-China and got the admiration from the revolutionaries inside the party.

In 1965, another round of upsurge in the mass movement began to unfold in the leadership of the new party and the government began arresting a large number of communist cadres, CM felt that to develop people's initiative and lead it to the correct path in the face of state repression, the urgent task is to build revolutionary party organisation of a new type for which no guidance was given by the 7th Party Congress, so immediately in the aftermath of the Congress, 28th January 1965, he wrote the first of his famous 'Eight Documents' where he analysed the present national and international situation, why communists are being arrested and how to build revolutionary party organisation.

Within September 1965, he wrote four such documents one after another. In the second document he summed up the experience of different peasant struggles led by the CPI, particularly the Tebhaga, identified the revolutionary stream and revisionist stream inside the party and analysed the politics of seizure of political power.

In the third document, he analysed the favourable situation for Indian revolution after Second World War, the failure of the Communist Party to utilise the situation and discussed the way to advance the agrarian revolution taking lessons from the past. In this document he hailed up the unfolding armed struggle in India.

In the fourth document, he explained as to what were the concrete manifestations of revisionism and what should be the forms of organisation and struggles against revisionism. In the fifth document, he showed how the programme of the CPI (M) was preaching the same Khrushchevite path of peaceful transition to socialism, that the leadership was preparing only for open mass movement, totally rejecting the path of armed struggle and hence branding as 'adventurist'

whoever was talking about armed struggle.

These five documents laid the basis for developing a new wave of struggles which culminated in Naxalbari. CM recruited new students and youths and sent them to Naxalari-Kharibari-Phansidewa region to propagate the new line of politics as preached in the five documents. Then CM was again arrested in September '65 and released on 7th May 1966. On 30th August 1966, he wrote the sixth document where he clearly declared that the party was trailing the ruling classes as it wanted to capture power by forming anti-Congress united front and hence, the party has become revisionist. He gave the call to organise anti-revisionist struggles taking the lessons from Mao's struggles against revisionists in China and prepare to form a new revolutionary party on the basis of a new programme.

By this time, many communist revolutionaries inside CPI (M) formed different small groups to conduct inner-party anti-revisionist struggles. In Calcutta, Comrades Saroj Dutta and Sushital Raychowdhury formed one such strong anti-revisionist committee. CM began to contact these groups and began to exchange views with them. In the Darjeeling District Committee 19 among the 26 members were supporters of the politics CM was preaching. So he set up one 'shadow committee' with these 19 members. Immediately afterwards, the movement in the district became more militant.

In 1966 September, the North Bengal tea garden workers began strike in support of their demand for wage hike. When the management of Gangaram tea garden mobilised hired beings to break the strike, both workers and peasants together put up the resistance. This line of joint armed resistance was accepted in the meeting of the shadow district committee and implemented in all the movements then after.

Then, in the seventh document, prior to the election in 1967, CM gave the call to workers, peasants and middle class youths to work actively to initiate armed struggle and seize political power through agrarian revolution in the semi-colonial, semi-feudal country like ours. He urged upon the cadres to take up work among trade union and peasant sabha in a new revolutionary way and build a revolutionary party with strong theoretical foundation and a clear vision in politics which could lead the current revolutionary upsurge.

During the election campaign in 1967, the party cadres propagated the politics of armed struggle as widely as possible and urged the peasantry to build

peasant raj just after the election. Then on 18th March in the Siliguri Sub-divisional Peasant Conference, a resolution was accepted to occupy the lands of jotedars-zamindars and establish the authority of Peasant Samiti by destroying the authority of the zamindars forcibly. Immediately after the conference, the peasants started a big movement to sieze the crops from the lands of the zamindars. When police came to suppress the peasants, the workers and peasants put united resistance. In all the areas, peasants organised armed rallies against the attacks of the zaminadars.

In April 1967, CM wrote his eighth document. He explained here how CPI(M) is preaching the line of class-collaboration through the United Front Government and completely left the politics of class-struggle and how this party was bound to become counter-revolutionary in no time. He specified that the immediate task was to inspire the peasants to form liberated areas in the countryside and asked others to be integrated with the peasants to develop armed struggles. On 7th May, again, the Siliguri Sub-divisional Peasant Conference was held which took the decision to abolish the zamindari system totally from that area and to distriubte land through the peasant committee.

From 8th May, started the great armed peasant upsurge throughout the PS areas of Naxalbari, Kharibari and Phansidewa. Peasants began to grab land, sieze the crops and burn the loan papers. On 16th May CPI(M) leader and minister Hare Krishna Konar came to Naxalbari and called on the people to suspend movement. On 17th May, the Sub-divisional Peasant Committee took the decision to continue the armed struggle. On 18th May Konar denounced the struggling peasants of Naxalbari as 'adventurists', and ordered administrative steps to crush the movement. Police began raids and tried to create terror. But the movement was advancing to new plane. Already the peasants siezed some 14 guns from the zotedars. Students form North Bengal University joined the struggle. CM was personally conducting the struggles keeping touch with all the areas. He termed the movement as "the festival of the people."

Then came the days of 24th and 25th May when large number of policemen attacked the peasants. In the peasants' resistance police daroga Sonam Wangdi was killed and the next day police took revenge by firing upon an unarmed women's procession killing 7 women and 2 children.

Rest is history. The whole country was shaken by these killings and thousands of communists and

struggling masses took their stand in support of Naxalbari peasant uprising. Immediately CM took the effort to unite the communist revolutionaries who were coming out of the CPI (M) and to build a revolutionary party. AICCCR was formed first and then the Party CPI(ML). He also personally initiated the struggle to spread the flame of Naxalbari to different parts of India and thus cleared all the confusions on the way of developing armed struggle in India and advancing the revolution. Till his death in the hands of the enemy, he fought with all sorts of opportunists both inside and outside the AICCCR and CPI(ML) and, at the same time, tried his utmost to develop the peasant struggles led by the communist revolutionaries all over India, to the level of guerrilla warfare to create guerrilla zones and liberated areas in the countryside. He took personal interest to guide and develop the Srikakulam peasant struggle to higher phase and visioned that "Srikakulam is going to be the Yenan of India."

CM had the tremendous power to inspire the commonest of the common people into struggles, inspire the students and youths of the new generation equally and create the confidence in them to dare to fight and dare to win. He created history by chesting the path of liberation for the Indian people, playing the main role in forming the party of the revolutionary proletariat in India and laying the theoretical foundations for the same. For this role alone, he will forever be remembered by the toiling masses of our country as the greatest revolutionary leader India has ever seen.

Today, the vision of this great revolutionary leader has become a reality in the form of Guerrilla Zones in Dandakaranya and North Telangana and is unfolding itself in East Region, South Telangana, Nallamala, Bihar and other parts of the country. It is our party, CPI(ML) (PW), which has been continuing the revolutionary legacy of Com. CM by adhering to the revolutionary line developed by him. Some of the erstwhile leaders of the CPI (ML) who had abandoned armed struggle and taken to parliamentary path, or those who swear by the 1970 Party Programme adopted by the 8th Congress of the Party, while actually giving it a burial go on chanting Com. CM's name like a *mantra* in order to dupe the revolutionary cadres. In the 25th anniversary of Comrade CM's martyrdom, it is our bounden duty to expose and isolate the fake revolutionaries who simply chant his name and to rededicate ourselves to the cause for which he had laid down his life.

Naxalbari and CPI(ML) Are Inseparable

A Reply to MCC

[Dear readers,

It is by now a well-known fact that within the revolutionary camp in India, there are some serious political ideological differences concerning the Indian revolution. It is the duty of genuine revolutionaries to conduct a principled struggle on these questions with fellow revolutionaries and to point out the defects in their understandings while at the same time carrying out united struggles against the class enemies. Such comradely criticism, we hope, will help in bringing out a better understanding among the genuine revolutionary forces in the country.

In the present article, we tried to point out the wrong understandings of MCC comrades regarding formation and path breaking role of CPI(ML)— an understanding which is reflected in an article written by Central Committee of MCC and published in the special issue of the Bengali magazine 'Muktikami' brought out on the occasion of 30 years of Naxalbari. A common understanding on this question, we hope, will help reducing the differences between genuine revolutionaries thereby making the prospects of unity brighter.]

The article in 'Muktikami' entitled, 'Three decades of Naxalbari : Intensify the struggle against parliamentary politics! Hold high the banner of agrarian revolution and protracted people's war!' analyses the political ideological and practice-related differences among the revolutionary groups; problems and obstacles for the unification of communist revolutionaries in India; the condition of the revolutionary struggles in different parts of the country; the need to overcome the wrong trends in order to advance the line of Naxalbari and so on. It lists ten issues which, it thinks, should be resolved in order to advance the revolutionary struggles and to achieve the unification of communist revolutionaries in India.

We don't want to go into the erroneous views expressed in the articles on some of the above questions. For the present, we would like to take up only one question, i.e., the formation of CPI(ML) and its historic significance in the Indian communist movement.

On the question of formation of CPI(ML), the leadership of MCC reiterated its old standpoint that refuses to recognise the historic significance of the formation of CPI(ML), the objective necessities that led to its formation and the role it played in summing up the Naxalbari and other armed peasant movements, thereby advancing further the revolutionary movement in various parts of the country. Moreover, it also tries to underplay the role of Comrade Charu Mazumder—the architect of the revolutionary line that led to the mass upsurge of late sixties. In this article, we wish

to set right the distortions and misrepresentation of historical facts related to the CPI(ML) in its formative years.

While correctly upholding the historic significance of Naxalbari, and explaining the meaning of 'Naxalbari Ek Hi Rasta,' the MCC's article tries to create the impression that the formation of CPI(ML) is not the logical culmination of Naxalbari, whereas, in fact, it was only based on Naxalbari struggle that the AICCCR and CPI(ML) took shape. So, 'Naxalbari Ek Hi Rasta' means also to continue struggle basing on path shown by Naxalbari and concretised by AICCCR and CPI(ML). In fact, CPI (ML) party manifesto first formulated correctly the class characters of Indian state, class analysis of Indian society, path and stage of Indian revolution and the importance of struggle against revisionism, both Indian and international, necessity of secret party—a line which our MCC comrades also accept without, of course, recognising the author of the line, CPI (ML).

While hailing the banner of 'agrarian revolution and protracted people's war', the article fails to appreciate the leading role played by the CPI(ML) in the great upsurge that swept the countryside in the wake of Naxalbari and the heroic battles of the peasantry to seize political power, consciously for the first time in Indian history, in Srikakulam, Birbhum, Gopiballavpur, Mushahari, Lakhimpur-Kheri and in many other centres from Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in the North to Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the South. Can we obliterate these glorious struggles of the seventies which wrote a golden chapter in the

annals of the Indian people's struggles for emancipation and can we deny the role of CPI(ML) in initiating and advancing the first ever conscious effort to build people's war, red army and base areas on the soil of our country notwithstanding its great limitations?

In fact, in Srikakulam hundreds of villages were liberated giving birth to 'red areas' as a result of this conscious effort under the leadership of CPI(ML). Can we deny this great heritage which was nothing but development and culmination of the agrarian revolution that started from Naxalbari? Can we deny the role of CPI(ML) and the great sacrifices of its central and state leaders in leading these struggles? Without CPI(ML), could these struggles reach the heights where they had reached creating history in Indian revolution?

Can we advance the agrarian revolution today if we fail to take positive and negative lessons from these glorious struggles? Can we deny the utmost necessity of summing up these struggles, that is, the experience of CPI(ML) in leading these struggles, just by negating CPI(ML) with a stroke of the pen?

So, this is not the question of some abstract 'M-L sentiment' which we are inclined to defend. But it is the question of upholding the great heritage of Naxalbari itself which cannot be separated from the formation of the revolutionary party CPI (ML) and the revolutionary struggles led by it which altogether changed the course of Indian history once for all. Now, we shall go into the history to see how CPI(ML) was formed, what were the historic necessities of that great hour and what were the historic limitations as well.

A dip into the history

The MCC article wrote, "Of course, the major responsibility to organise the sections who came forward in support of Naxalbari and to build a genuine communist party, fell upon the leaders of the Naxalbari struggle. With this aim, the AICCCR (All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries) was also formed. On behalf of AICCCR, it was announced very correctly in the first declaration that special importance would be given to prepare a draft strategy and tactical line to adhere to Marxism-Leninism-Mao-tse Tung thought ideologically, i.e., programme of Indian revolution and to organise more and more struggles of Naxalbari type".

So, it came out from the above lines itself that

formation of a genuine Communist Party was on the agenda of the communist revolutionaries of India right from the days of Naxalbari upsurge which for the first time demarcated revolutionary politics from revisionist politics and thus became the centre for consolidation of revolutionaries on a new revolutionary orientation.

On 12 and 13 November 1967, revolutionary comrades from seven states met in Calcutta to form an All-India Co-ordination Committee and issued declaration which concluded with the following lines—

"Naxalbari has shown us the way to the Indian people's democratic revolution as much as it has unmasked the true face of the neo-revisionists at present controlling the party. Now it is time to act and act we must here and now. It is time we start building a really revolutionary party. A great responsibility rests upon us and we must shoulder it as true revolutionaries and try to prove ourselves worthy disciples of Com. Mao-tse Tung.

"We call upon the revolutionary comrades still within Communist Party of India (Marxist) to repudiate openly the neo-revisionist leading clique and its politics and to openly join hands with us who are striving to build a genuine Communist Party in our country." (Emphasis original)

Then this All-India Co-ordination Committee of the Revolutionaries of the CPI (M) met on the eve of the first anniversary of the Naxalbari peasant uprising and reviewed the developments that had taken place since its formation. In view of the changed situation the committee decided to issue a new declaration and also to change its name to the All-India Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR). Our MCC comrades referred to this declaration in their article.

The declaration issued on 14th May 1968 did not limit itself only to mention the "special importance to prepare a draft strategy and tactical line" but gave the following call to all revolutionaries throughout India.

"In this historic hour we appeal again to all revolutionaries throughout India, who accept the thought of Chairman Mao, to unite their forces and co-ordinate their struggles so that the victory of Indian revolution may be nearer. Let us all rally under the red banner of Chairman Mao's thought, let us apply his thought to the concrete conditions in India and let us build up a true Communist Party of India

in the course of revolutionary struggles of the Naxalbari type, for revolution cannot be victorious without a revolutionary party. We take this opportunity to urge all revolutionaries who have firm faith in Chairman Mao's thought and have rebelled against the leadership of revisionists and neo-revisionists, but who are still maintaining separate groups, to liquidate their groups and consolidate themselves within AICCCR. They should realise that existence of separate groups at this time is quite harmful to the cause of Indian revolution." (Emphasis added)

These two declarations perfectly reflect the attitude of the communist revolutionaries of India at large at that time towards party formation. The second one, i.e., the first declaration of the AICCCR clearly took the decision to liquidate separate groups which was nothing but one step forward to party formation. If MCC comrades agree with this declaration then how they could say that CPI (ML) was formed hastily when the process of party formation started at least a year earlier, i.e., in May 1968 itself?

According to the MCC article, "denying the necessity of reviewing the process of implementing the declaration and its practical results, a new party in the name of CPI(M-L) was hastily formed."

Now, we shall see how this allegation is completely refuted by the facts of history. What are the developments after the first meeting of AICCCR? After the May '68 meeting, the AICCCR again met in October 1968 and reviewed the developments since their last meeting. "The committee noted that the revolutionary movement is surging forward in various countries including India. Armed peasant struggles have already broken out in different parts of the country besides Naxalbari." (Suniti Kumar Ghosh, 'A Liberation Anthology', page-35) The resolution adopted at the meeting noted that :

"Since our last meeting in May last, the Naxalbari peasant struggle has already entered its second stage, the stage of guerrilla war, and in various parts of India— Bihar, UP, M P, Andhra —armed peasant struggles have already broken out under the inspiration of Naxalbari Struggle and the thought of Mao-tse Tung. This has made panicky the reactionary ruling classes of India and their hirelings, revisionists and neo-revisionists, who are clamouring for the counter-revolutionary suppression of these struggles..."

"So the time has come for us, revolutionary

communists, to plunge ourselves more resolutely and more deeply into the peasant masses and to build up revolutionary bases in the countryside. This is our major task, basic task."

We could remember here that on September 1968, near Birsing jote village in Naxalbari, Comrade Babulal Biswakarmakar fell to the enemy bullets after a four-hour-long gun-battle with the armed police. That was the time when peasant struggles were picking up all over India. The spark of Naxalbari had already started a prairie fire.

The AICCCR again met on 8 February 1969 and took the decision that "A stage has now been reached when the formation of the communist party brooks no further delay. The Party should immediately be formed with those revolutionaries as the core who are building up and conducting revolutionary class struggles."

The resolution adopted at the meeting reviewed the developments since Naxalbari and particularly since the formation of AICCCR a year earlier in the following language :

"During this period, though brief, the co-ordination committee has, no doubt made significant achievements in dealing powerful blows at all reactionary ideology, including revisionsim and neo-revisionism and in spreading the flames of agrarian revolution. This period has witnessed the victorious march of Chairman Mao's thought. It is during this period that the flames of agrarian revolution have spread out from Naxalbari to Srikakulam in the South and to Musahari and Lakhimpur-Kheri in the north. It has been the period when the peasant revolutionaries of Kerala have staged a heroic revolt that has shaken the whole of India. It has also been the period of bursting forth of the revolutionary liberation struggles of the Adivasi people in Chotanagpur and its uninterrupted advance.... The resistance of the Indian people both in the countryside and in the cities— among the working class and the petty-bourgeois masses — is growing fast and is creating a new upsurge in the agrarian revolution which is the content of the Democratic Revolution in India today..."

"It is a heartening fact that within last one year revolutionaries from Assam to Maharashtra have united under the banner of the AICCCR and all the centres of revolutionary peasant struggles are linked with one another through this committee. The growing unity within the ranks of the revolutionaries

despite the obstacles created by the reactionaries of all sorts proves that we have overcome the main impediment to the formation of a revolutionary party in India. The Co-ordination Committee has thus served as the first indispensable link in the chain—the process of forming a Marxist-Leninist party in India.

However, the experiences of the last one year have also made it amply clear that the political organisational needs of the fast developing revolutionary struggles can no longer be adequately met by the Co-ordination Committee.... So for taking these struggles forward it is essential to form an all-India Party and a centre recognised by all revolutionaries. The All India Co-ordination Committee was set up to help this process of forming a revolutionary party and this was set down in the very first declaration.... At a time when Communist Revolutionaries all over the country have given priority to the task of building revolutionary bases in the countryside, at a time when the slogans of revolutionary class struggles are rending the sky, it is our immediate duty to form a revolutionary party without which the advance of revolution is sure to be impeded."

It should be noted that by this time State Co-ordination Committees were formed in Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, UP, Orissa, Karnataka, Punjab, Assam, Delhi, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura and in West Bengal ; district and lower level units were also formed. In most of these states revolutionary peasant struggles were surging forward. Workers in many industrial towns like Calcutta rallied under the banner of AICCCR. So did thousands of students and youths, many of them eager to integrate themselves with the peasants and workers.

"The armed peasant struggle that had developed in Srikakulam reached a higher stage — the stage of guerrilla struggle— in the early months of 1969. The time seemed ripe for the formation of the long-awaited party which could organise and lead numerous struggles of the peasants, workers and other toiling people and students and youths, many of which have already broken out. A decision was taken unanimously by the AICCCR at its meeting held early in February 1969 to form the party.

"The AICCCR again met for a few days in April 1969, and on 22nd April, Lenin's 100th birthday, the CPI (M-L) was founded on the basis of a Political and Organisational Resolution and a Central

Organising Committee (COC) was formed with Charu Mazumdar as secretary. After these decisions were taken unanimously, the AICCCR dissolved itself." ('A Liberation Anthology', page-19)

This is the history behind the formation of CPI(ML). More detailed account of the developing revolutionary movements of that time are also available in many books including the above one. However, it is amply clear that the AICCCR reviewed the developments from time to time which includes the process of implementing the first declaration of AICCCR and its practical results. It is amply clear that the formation of the Party was the historic necessity of that time not only to consolidate the CR forces all over India but also to lead, guide and develop the practical struggles in the vast countryside which were already then facing severe enemy repression. To face this enemy onslaught and develop the people's armed forces to counter it effectively also the formation of the party had become the need of the hour.

The MCC document stated that "Naturally as the party was formed without following the revolutionary process, method and style, some known degenerated elements could capture some posts in the leadership from the beginning. In such a condition existence of many undeclared groups in the organisation and group mentality and finally domination of bureaucratic method instead of democratic centralism were inevitable."

Firstly, what are the revolutionary process, methods and style that should have been followed before forming the party is not clear from the MCC article. What are their satisfaction limits is also not clear from the article. Before going to answer their other criticisms we would like to raise some questions to be answered by the MCC leadership. What they were doing actually at that historic turning point? Were they inside the AICCCR? When had they joined and when they left the same? What ideological and political struggle they had taken up against the formation of the party? Where are their documents, in this respect?

MCC claimed that they were in the AICCCR and now the article tells us that "On the question of the process of party building we decided that it would not be fair to join the CPI(M-L) and on 20th October 1969 we named our organisation (Which was known as 'Chinta' and 'Dakshin Desh' group from the beginning) "Marxist Communist Centre", that under these circumstances our decision of not joining the

party was correct has been proved without fail by the subsequent fragmentation of the CPI(M-L) and its condition today."

Now, if they were in the AICCCR, then how could AICCCR take unanimous decision to form the party in its February 1969 meeting? And if they were in the AICCCR, how they maintained their separate group existence despite its (AICCCR's) decision to the contrary? When 'Deshabrati' was published in Bengali as the organ of the West Bengal State Co-ordination Committee, then how they could publish 'Dakshin Desh' separately, if they had merged completely in AICCCR? Did not they violate the very declaration they uphold in this article under discussion which clearly asked those "Who are still maintaining separate groups, to liquidate their groups and consolidate themselves within AICCCR" by maintaining their own group and own organ? From the above-mentioned facts of history, anyone can see the sharp contrast between the process, method and style of AICCCR on the one hand and the MCC on the other from the very beginning on the question of party formation.

Neither they raised their questions and criticisms in the proper forum, i.e., AICCCR in a proper way (i.e., by written document) and debated it thoroughly before taking the decision of staying out from the CPI(ML) party. As Comrade Suniti Kumar Ghosh, the CC member elected in the first Party Congress (1970) of CPI(ML) and editor of Liberation, the organ of AICCCR and later of CPI(ML), wrote:

"It is wrong to say that the 'Dakshin Desh' group left AICCCR because of its differences on the issue of immediate formation of the party. The AICCCR has only state units which represented entire states. AICCCR did not recognise any group with a separate identity like the 'Dakshin Desh' group as its constituents. No representative of this group was a member of the West Bengal State Co-ordination Committee or of the AICCCR. ('Naxalbari is not Just the Name of a Village', 2nd edition, page-114.)

So, it becomes clear that whether the 'Dakshin Desh' group had joined AICCCR or not, they maintained separate group existence, went on publishing their separate magazine and was opposed to the formation of a genuine communist party from the very beginning contrary to the spirit of the overwhelming section of revolutionaries all around India and the needs of the revolutionary movement of that time. In fact, a large section of Dakshin Desh

group also joined the new party CPI(ML) despite their leaders' opposition and this may have created the initial bitterness between CPI(ML) and MCC. Anyway, there must have been some political difference behind this group's decision not to join CPI(ML) and promptly form MCC in October 1969 itself and the differences that are being mentioned now (no article explaining these differences could be found in their old literature) for their separation from CPI(ML) seem to be concocted rather than real.

It is indeed funny to see the ridiculous extent to which the MCC comrades had to go in order to cover up their mistake of not becoming part of the CPI(ML). They cite the fragmentation of the CPI(ML) and its 'condition today' to prove why their decision of not joining the party in 1969 was correct. How could they foresee the 'fragmentation of the CPI(M-L)' in 1969 itself, we are at a loss to understand. As regards the conditions of CPI(ML) forces, they know very well how the movement is advancing in AP, DK, and some other states under the leadership of CPI(ML) (PW) and in Bihar under CPI(ML) (PU).

Hence we must go into the actual differences which might have come in the way of unity at that time. About political difference, we could find one article of Comrade Kanai Chatterjee, one of the founders of MCC, published in the same Bengali magazine Mukitkami, under the title of "Intensify the Struggle against Economism" where he identified the 'most important task' as follows:

"So in our consideration, if we want to inculcate class-consciousness and class-duties among the workers-peasants and other toiling masses (who are more than 90% of our country's population), if we want to inspire them with the politics of socialism, people's democracy and armed people's dictatorship under the leadership of working class, if we want to create revolutionary activeness among them and above all, if we want to make them advance along the path of people's war as shown by Mao, we have to give utmost importance on organising extensive political campaign and political exposure campaign on a large scale. In view of the present semi-colonial semi-feudal society of India and the present stage of Indian revolution it is obvious that the exposure of the economy and politics of the present society and the propagation of the politics of agrarian revolution or the people's democratic revolution will take the centre-stage in the whole programme of political exposure and political campaign. And in our

consideration, in the context of the present revolutionary situation in India all the revolutionaries should give utmost importance to this task."

This article was published on the 17th May 1968 issue of Dakshin Desh. But in the first meeting of AICCCR on 12 & 13 November 1967 itself, the main tasks were declared as follows.

"On behalf of this committee, we declare that its main tasks will be:

(1) To develop and co-ordinate militant and revolutionary struggles at all levels, specially peasant struggles of the Naxalbari type under the leadership of the working class;

(2) To develop militant, revolutionary struggles of the working class and other toiling people, to combat economism and to orient these struggles towards agrarian revolution;

(3) To wage an uncompromising ideological struggle against revisionism and neo-revisionism and to popularise the thought of Com. Mao Tse-Tung and

(4) To undertake preparation of a revolutionary programme and tactical line based on concrete analysis of the Indian situation etc."

In the October 1968 meeting of AICCCR, a resolution was adopted stating that :

"So the time has come for us, communist revolutionaries, to plunge ourselves more resolutely and more deeply into the peasant masses and to build up revolutionary bases in the countryside. This is our major task, basic task." ('A Liberation Anthology', Vol-1, Page- 36)

So, when the Dakshin Desh group found utmost importance in 'political exposure' and 'political campaign' (which they quote from Com. Lenin's 'What is to be Done', and which is a correct tactics for the proletariat of a capitalist country to follow when there is no immediate revolutionary situation in that country) the AICCCR decided 'to develop and co-ordinate militant and revolutionary struggles at all levels specially peasant struggles of Naxalbari type' and to build up revolutionary bases in the countryside as their main, major and basic task. Here may lie the real difference in perception of the main tasks of the CR forces in India at that time. Actually, at that time itself one article under the title 'A Dangerous Line' was published in 'Deshabrati', the Bengali organ of AICCCR, countering the 'Dakshin Desh' article.

So we will come to the debate on party formation

once again.

Some International Experiences

Now about the criticism in MCC article that "as the party was formed without following the revolutionary process, methods and style, some known degenerated elements could capture some posts in the leadership from the very beginning", we would request the MCC comrades to go through the experience of forming revolutionary communist parties in other countries, particularly in Russia and China. Then it would not look strange to them that opportunist persons creep into the leadership committees not only at the very beginning stage, but also at a very later stage, even after completing the revolution in their own countries. Where they could get a communist party free from opportunists and degenerated elements?

In Russia, at the very beginning stage itself, Com. Lenin has to confront Axelrod, Martinov, Martov and Plekhanov, all leading figures of Russian Social Democracy, Plekhanov being 'the father of Russian Marxism' as Lenin himself described. Did not they betray revolution at the critical hours of 1905 revolution and became rank opportunists later on? Then, after the Bolsheviks separated themselves from Mensheviks, 'from the very beginning' itself in Bolshevik party were there not "known degenerated elements' like Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rykov etc. and later Trotsky in the leadership position?

Did not some of them even betray the great October Revolution by voting against the proposal of armed insurrection at the Central Committee meeting? Even a police agent could manage to hide in the Central Committee of Bolshevik Party for a long time. It took almost two decades after the 1917 revolution for the Bolshevik party to purge itself of these opportunist and 'known degenerated elements'. From where our MCC comrades got the idea of a pure Communist Party, they themselves should say.

In China, the party was formed without any experience of large-scale revolutionary struggles. So Chen-tu-siu, a reformist, became the first Party Secretary and neglected the leading role of the working class in the democratic revolution and ultimately led the communist party to a disaster in 1927 when lakhs of communists were massacred by the Kuomintang and the party was decimated to a small force. Then came the left opportunist deviation through Chu-chiu Pai and Li-li San and again later through Wang Ming and Chang kuo Tao. Comrade Mao's correct

leadership could be established only in the Tsunyi Conference in 1935 after going through several disasters and innumerable losses in the 14 long years.

Even after liberation, 'from the very beginning' challenge to Mao's line of advancing along the path of socialist revolution came from a host of CC members of the CPC under the leadership of Liu-Shao-Chi and Deng-Xiao-Ping. The battle between the capitalist roaders and the communists continued till the death of Comrade Mao and bourgeois infiltrators in CPC led by the 'known degenerated element' Deng-Xiao-Ping captured power almost immediately after Mao's death and turned the colour of China.

All these are known facts and now matter of a great history of communist revolution from which we must take proper lessons to fight against 'left' and 'right' opportunists whenever they raise their heads in the party. But how could you guarantee a pure communist party free from opportunist and degenerated elements? Is it not sheer idealism to talk of forming a communist party without these elements?

MCC's claim that they knew who were the degenerated elements, came only after the setback of the first revolutionary war of the seventies. How could they know them before hand is not clear from their article. They mentioned the names of two persons as degenerated. Among them Kanu Sanyal was the leader of Naxalbari struggle, next only to Comrade Charu Mazumdar.

How such a person was known to them before hand as 'degenerated element' is really a mystery. Ashim Chatterjee was also leading the great Gopiballavpur struggle as the secretary of Bengal-Bihar-Orissa Border Regional Committee when he was inducted into the Central Committee. We have already seen the resolution of AICCCR in February 1969 taking the decision to form the party where it was clearly written—

"The Party should immediately be formed with those revolutionaries as the core who are building up and conducting revolutionary class struggle."

And indeed, most of the Central Committee members came from the struggling zones only, those who themselves were leading armed struggles and were standing firmly in the face of the worst enemy repression. The degeneration and splits came only after the setback in the movements led by the party. So, how they could be identified beforehand, even before formation of the party? It is not a handy excuse, brought forward by the MCC comrades after the

setback, only to justify their continued group existence and their anti-CPI(ML) tirades?

About the setback in the Naxalbari movement and the subsequent splits in the party, detailed reviews and self-critical reports were prepared by the leaders and activists of the CPI(ML) and on the basis of these movements again picked up from the late seventies itself. Even in Bihar, Comrade Jawhar led a heroic peasant uprising in 1974 itself before he became martyr. It was not 'known degenerated elements' that built up the great Bhojpur struggle, but after the death of comrade Jawhar, Vinod Mishra degenerated from a Marxist-Leninist to a rank opportunist of CPI-CPM type. Nobody takes birth as a revolutionary or a counter revolutionary. And it is not unnatural that some revolutionaries turn into their opposites, i.e., non-revolutionaries or counter-revolutionaries, and vice-versa.

The views and criticisms in the MCC article on CPI(ML) is thus non-dialectical, one-sided and distorted. From this viewpoint, it sees only the degenerated elements, not the heroic struggles and great sacrifices of thousands of leaders and cadres of the party, including its General Secretary and at least five other CC members, writing a new chapter in history with their blood.

It finds only the splits in the CPI(ML) in the aftermath of setback and particularly after the death of Com. CM in 1972 (not within one year of party formation as the MCC article wants us to believe distorting the history), but not the reorganisation of the party and the movement from the ashes and its development to higher planes on a far larger area than the 70's despite the betrayal and degeneration of a considerable section of leadership after the setback.

In the history of the great Communist Parties like those of Russia and China, the initial leadership did not remain the same throughout the revolution and in fact a good section of the initial leadership changed their position and most of them became counter-revolutionary with the advancement of revolution. But there was some continuity in the leadership in both the parties with Comrade Lenin and Comrade Mao acting as a core to guide the parties in a correct orientation. In India we lost that continuity in leadership with the death of Com. CM and other revolutionary leaders with not a single CC member to lead the movement and unite the party afterwards. So different 'right' and 'left' opportunists could create a lot of confusion among the cadres and create their

own groups one after another. If Com. CM had remained alive for some more days to sum up the movement and draw proper lessons, the entire history of the movement would have been different. And, of course, due to some serious left sectarian trends in the revolutionary leadership and a wrong concept of revolutionary authority over and above the party, some bureaucratic method of functioning also developed inside the party, not because of some known degenerated elements capturing the leadership position as the MCC article wants us to believe. In fact, the right opportunists inside the party like SNS could exploit the wrong method of functioning to divert the attention of the cadres from the revolutionary politics.

Like every matter in this universe, the Communist Party is also filled with contradictions. If there is no contradiction in a Communist Party, then it is a dead party. Contradictions and inner party struggles are the life-blood of the party, as Comrade Mao teaches us. So it is no wonder that CPI(ML) too was characterised by inner contradictions ever since its formation and that inner party struggles developed in the course of development of the struggle particularly after the set-back!

But, what was unnatural and peculiar to the life of CPI(ML) was the loss of the revolutionary centre itself with the death of Com. Charu Majumdar. There remained no leader who can be the rallying point of the communist revolutionaries all over India after the great setback of the movement. Most of the remaining leaders failed to sum up the movement correctly and draw proper lessons for the advancement of the armed struggles once again. So different groups were formed all with their separate sum-ups, separate work styles and separate understandings.

But this does not mean that CPI(ML) party was liquidated with the demise of Comrade CM. Although the forces of liquidation were strong, they were defeated by the determined efforts of the genuine revolutionaries. The latter correctly summed-up the old movement, drew proper lessons, rectified the mistakes and developed the movement to new and higher planes. They resurrected CPI(ML) and its movement. Revolution spread once again like a wild-fire. And CPI(ML) remains as the pillar of revolutionary Marxism in India, a beacon-light in the eyes of the oppressed millions. Whether you call it mainstream or not, it does not matter. CPI(ML) has come to stay in the history of Indian politics and changed the course of it by creating and recreating Naxalbaris in hundreds of villages today and advancing to create them all over India tomorrow.

Dear Comrades,

We have good regard for the MCC as a genuine revolutionary organisation formed by revolutionary leaders like Comrade Anulya Sen and Comrade Kanai Chatterjee and for its role in starting armed peasant struggles in the seventies following lessons drawn from Naxalbari. Now they are in the process of building guerrilla zones in some parts of Bihar by waging war against Indian ruling classes basing on Naxalbari politics and hundreds of comrades became martyrs to develop this struggle.

Today it is the imperative duty of all genuine communist revolutionaries to wage united struggles against the Indian ruling classes. This polemics, we feel will be a part of the process of 'Unity-Struggle-Unity'.

"The All India Co-ordination Committee played an important role in uniting Communist Revolutionaries and in building up revolutionary struggles. But, if there is any vacillation to form the party after that stage is over, the source of it must be traced to idealist thinking. Under the influence of idealism, we want — consciously or unconsciously— to wage a struggle against opportunism and to form a party that is already rid itself of revisionism. This outlook is wholly idealist and has nothing to do with dialectical materialism. The party will develop through constant struggles— both against the enemy outside and against alien trends within. Through these struggles, the party will grow in strength, act as a vanguard of revolution in order to serve the people, transform itself and transform the whole society."

— Charu Mazumdar

When Maharashtra Burned for Four Days

On the night of July 10, 1997 'unknown' people placed a 'garland' of chappals around a statue of Ambedkar at Rambai Ambedkar Colony, Ghatkopar, East Mumbai. This affront to dalit self-respect and the unprovoked police firing that followed, ignited a veritable inferno that engulfed not only entire Maharashtra, but singed many parts of the country. Outbursts were particularly strong in neighbouring Gujarat and Karnataka. In the flames of dalit fury, not only was the fascist Shiv Sena and their partners burnt, but all who sought to play with their sentiments, including, not only the Congress opposition, but also their own corrupt leadership. The boot licking, servile politics of the dalit self-seeking leadership, got a slap in the face, and showed that self-respect can not be achieved by begging for crumbs, but, by fighting for one's rights.

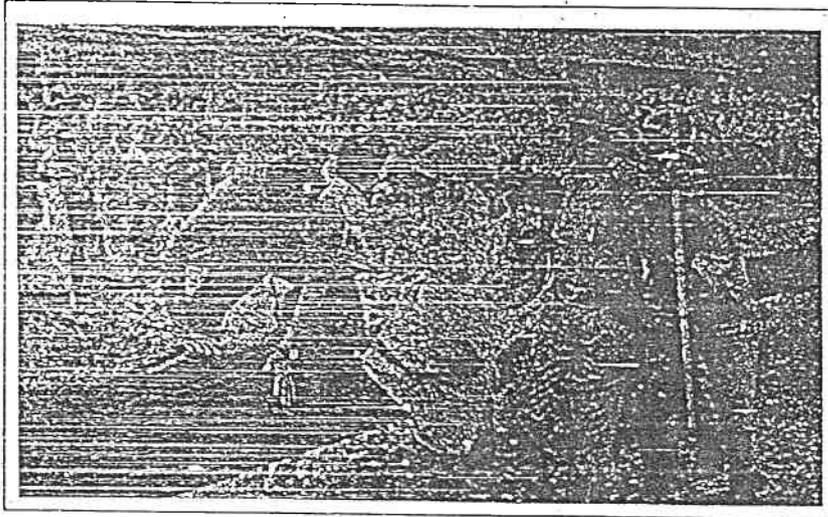
The events of July 11 that ignited the conflagration was only the last straw of pent up anger and frustration which has been simmering for the last couple of years.

The Police Firing

On the morning of July 11, the garland of chappals was first noticed at 6.45 a.m. By 7.50 a.m. inspector Kadam had given orders to fire. This swift action was in direct contrast to the inaction of the police two days earlier, when Shiv Sena leader, Mohan Ravle, and his gang of storm troopers, did a rail roko, obstructing a ravel of lakhs of commuters during peak hours.

Though the nearby Pantnagar police station was informed, no senior official bothered to come immediately to register a complaint. On the contrary, a few police present sought to remove the chappals with a stick, without even recording a *panchanama*. This police callousness infuriated the crowd, which

began gathering on the adjoining Eastern Express highway with a view to stop traffic. With this, the police immediately arrive, together with a van of SRP and began clearing the highway and removing the chappals off the statue. The people retaliated. But even before condition deteriorated a second SRP van arrived and began indiscriminate firing. Without any prior warning, without first using tear gas shells, without initially firing into the air, without using rubber bullets or water canons, police started firing—



A 'leader' being beaten by the people and rescued by the police

they fired above the waist, they fired to kill. Within 15 minutes, 10 people lay dead and 38 were injured, 15 of them seriously. This police action was not just to clear the roads, as most of those hit were in the bye-lanes of the slums. The bulk of the bodies were found around a small

playground. Of those killed was a boy of 14, most of those hit were bystanders, some received shots inside their houses and even some women received bullet injuries. It was clearly a vicious, brutal attack, nowhere commensurate with the needs of clearing a rasta roko.

The news of the massacre and desecration of the statue spread like wild-fire. Rasta rokes and stone-throwing erupted all over the city. Some railway lines were closed down. In Ramabi-nagar itself, instead of being cowed down by the firing, the retaliation became more intense and a police chowki was burnt down. By evening entire Bombay was aflame. Sensing the people's anger, the RPI gave a call for a Bombay bandh on July 12 and a Maharashtra bandh on July 14th. This call was supported by all the opposition parties, while the Shiv Sena-BJP Government was too terrified to oppose it.