

‘Adventurists’ Slogan of “Armed Struggle” Here and Now*

What Does it Really Mean?

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Just at a time when the people of West Bengal have been advancing with more unity and courage in the hard struggle for defence of democracy against the conspiracy to establish a Police Raj, when the demand for mid-term election has become a fighting demand of the masses, some posters have appeared on certain walls of Calcutta and some mofussil areas which read, “Not Mid-term Election, not Civil Disobedience, but Armed Revolution”.

To day, even the limited rights of parliamentary democracy, which itself is a form of bourgeois class rule, have become dangerous to the big bourgeois-landlord ruling classes because in the context of the deepening crisis the working class and the people are intensifying their class struggle by utilizing these very limited rights. For that reason attempts are being made to establish a Police Raj by butchering parliamentary democracy. In this situation, the struggle for defence of democracy has assumed particular significance.

Serves Reaction’s Game

It is a struggle which, by uniting the widest sections of the people and facing the attack of reaction, can defend the democratic rights of the people and take their struggle forward. Not to conduct such a struggle means to leave the path open for reaction’s attack. Under these circumstances,

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it is necessary to understand the harmful significance of the above mentioned posters.

It is evident that their purpose is to keep the people away and divert their attention from the struggle for democracy and from the demand of mid-term election. Whatever may be the subjective intention of the poster-writers, the objective result of their slogans fully coincides with the aims of the Congress and reactionary conspirators.

The Congress leadership, the traitor clique of Dr. P. C. Ghosh and all reactionary circles representing the vested interests, i.e., all those who are unleashing police terror in West Bengal in the interests of the big bourgeoisie and the jotdars in order to suppress the growing mass struggles—are, for obvious reasons, against this struggle for defence of democracy and the demand of mid-term election. For they know, and correctly know, that this struggle will enhance the fighting power of the workers, peasants and the toiling people.

There is no doubt that this will not bring revolution—the immediate aim of this struggle also is not that—but this struggle, though remaining within the confines of the present social system, will help the development of the revolutionary forces necessary for effecting changes in the social system. This struggle against police terror will, on the one hand, expose further the ruling classes and the conspirators, while on the other, it will enhance the courage and fighting power of the toiling people. As a result, the purpose for which terror is created will be defeated; the class struggles of workers and peasants against increasing exploitation and attacks will be intensified.

If the ruling classes fail to compel the people to surrender or to crush them and if they are compelled to accept the demand of mid-term election, then also there will be no fundamental transformation of society. But it is also understood by the ruling classes that as a result of such developments the strength of the democratic forces, among whom the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is the major force.

will increase and the working class and the people will get more democratic rights to build their organization and struggle. If the ruling classes, even then, go forward to butcher these rights with the help of the police and the army, the power of resistance of the people will also be greater. In one word, the class struggle will reach a higher stage.

For all these reasons, the ruling classes and their servitors are against this struggle for defence of democracy and the demand of mid-term election. But they cannot admit these reasons openly. To cover up their opposition to the struggle for democracy, they raise the question of law and order. Congress President Nijalingappa has gone a step further and has said that the aim of this struggle is not defence of democracy, but that it is a cover for armed revolution. He knows that he is telling an untruth but he does it in order to cover up their conspiracy to butcher democracy and justify beforehand their brutal repression against the mass struggle.

Who Really Harms Class Struggle?

It is not difficult to understand the meaning of the opposition of the representatives of the big bourgeois landlord rule—the Congress and their agents. But we find that the poster-writers are also similarly opposing the struggle for democracy; the only difference between them is that the poster-writers are doing it under cover of revolutionary phrase-mongering. According to them, this struggle in defence of democracy and this demand for mid-term election are harmful to the revolutionary struggle. This struggle is supposed to help the ruling classes, what is now needed is armed struggle.

Both sides are opposing the struggle for democracy by using the same words "armed revolution", but using them in different ways. One side, as for example, Sri Nijalingappa says that this struggle for defence of democracy is a cover for armed revolution, and the other side says that it is an obstacle in the path of armed revolution. What wonderful similarity!

The poster-writers will perhaps get angry and retort that

they are being slandered, because they really want armed revolution and that also here and now. But one cannot be ignorant of the fact that revolution is not made by a few leaders or cadres; it is the people who make revolution. The ruling class, by using the state machinery against the advance of the people, compels them to take to the path of revolution and the people take to that path by understanding, step by step, through their own experience, the need for it. Nobody can be ignorant of what revolution means and what kind of people's preparedness is necessary for it after the experience of the October Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, the Viet Nam liberation struggle and the counter-revolution in Indonesia.

Any sensible political worker who has got minimum contact with the people will have to admit that whatever may be in the brains of certain individuals, the objective situation in West Bengal at present is not this. In this situation, the real meaning of the above-mentioned posters can only be to keep the people passive by preventing them from joining the struggle in defence of democracy and at least to create some provocation. How correct Lenin was when he said that as the revisionists and opportunists help the ruling class by propagating about fundamental social changes through parliament, so also the ultra-revolutionaries help the ruling class in another way by harming the cause of revolutionary struggle under the cover of revolutionary phrase-mongering. All those who write the posters may not know it but the persons who are guiding them do know it.

Those who are writing these posters are mostly persons expelled from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and they constitute a small anti-Party phrase-mongering clique. When the United Front Ministry was in existence, they similarly opposed the U.F. and desired its overthrow. Here also their aim coincided with the aim of the Congress, but the grounds were different as they are at present.

The Congress and the reactionaries charged that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) had created Naxalbari.

and the ultra-revolutionaries charged that the Communist Party of India (Marxist), by becoming a party to sending police forces there, had attacked revolution. If for argument's sake, it is even conceded for a moment that the CPI(M) committed mistakes, then also it is necessary to seriously consider what kind of absurd understanding of revolution it is that revolution will not have to face the police and the military and a revolution melts in the air as soon as small police forces arrive. This is called playing with revolution.

In reality, a healthy peasant struggle for land was declared to be "an armed struggle for capture of political power" and moreover, this land struggle instead of being concentrated against big jotdars was directed against all owners—small and big. The ultra-revolutionary phrase-mongers have harmed the peasant struggle, have placed it against the United Front and have provided weapons to the Congress leadership and the vested interests. The Naxalbari conception is not a conception of militant mass struggle; it is a hotch-potch of extremely irresponsible adventurism and sectarianism. (The adventurist conception of Naxalbari should not be confused with the heroism and militancy of peasants.)

For all these reasons, the slogans and work of the ultra-revolutionaries, instead of helping the mass struggle to advance, are helping the objectives of the reactionary ruling circles.

Role of the U.F. Ministry

In order to understand why, it is necessary to analyse in brief the arguments of the ultra-revolutionaries. Their general argument is that the formation of the U.F. Ministry and the Communist Party of India (Marxist)'s participation in it *have spread parliamentary illusions among the people; that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has become a rank opportunist party by allegedly propagating about basic transformation of society through parliament; that there is no difference between the U.F. Ministry and Congress Ministries, rather the United Front, by bluffing the people, has*

harm the development of mass struggle; that the people are already prepared for revolution and only a call for revolution is necessary.

We shall take up this last argument later on in course of our discussion on mid-term election. It is necessary here to discuss the other arguments.

Each and every argument of theirs is wrong.

There can be no more vile slander than to say that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has spoken about basic transformations through parliament. A wrong path requires slander for its justification. Our Party has been declaring from the very beginning and every one of our leaders and our Ministers also have always propagated to the people that there will be not only no basic transformation in this way, but the U.F. Ministry will be unable even to check the deepening crisis. But the U.F. Ministry will be able to help the mass movement, and will extend the democratic rights for the same. The workers and peasants, by utilizing these opportunities will take their class struggle forward and through it will be able to gain even some partial demands. The Party has spoken about utilizing the U.F. Ministry as a weapon of struggle.

We do not claim that there were no mistakes or weaknesses in implementing this policy. We corrected some mistakes, still there were some mistakes and weaknesses. But this policy was generally pursued as a result of which the sweep and depth of class struggle have increased and just for that reason the big bourgeoisie and the jotedars have become so infuriated—particularly against our Party.

The adventurists ask: Has the police been completely prevented from being used against mass movements? Has it been possible to use the bureaucracy properly in the interests of the people? The answer is, no, they have not been possible. Had it been possible to do so, Marxism would have been proved to be incorrect. No Marxist can even conceive of such things being possible.

For that reason, our Party has constantly explained the

class character of these organs of the state and many times did that even by demarcating from the United Front and the Ministry. Not to do so would have been a mistake and that have would been revisionism. But the question is whether the big bourgeoisie and the jodars have been able to use the administrative machinery as something at their beck and call as at the time of the Congress regime. No, that was not possible.

The handful of adventurists may not understand it, but the workers and peasants engaged in mass struggles know that they got far more democratic rights and by using them they were able to advance their organizations and movement and to gain some partial demands. Not only that, during this period the people have learnt to some extent through their own experience the class character of the police, the bureaucracy and even of the judiciary.

Parliamentary Illusions

It is also necessary to understand whether the participation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the U.F. Ministry has strengthened parliamentary illusions of the people or it has helped to weaken such illusions.

Marxist theory is not a dogma divorced from the experience of objective life. So long as the people do not understand the correctness of a theory through their own experience, the theory does not become an objective force capable of changing society. Every Marxist knows that bourgeois democracy is one form of bourgeois class rule. But if Marxists just repeated this theory by rote and refused to join the United Front, that would have meant skipping over the present consciousness of the people; that would not have helped to weaken their parliamentary illusions to even a small extent, rather they would have sunk even deeper into the masses. Because, in that case, a Congress Ministry would have been formed and the people would have considered the Communist Party responsible for it. The revisionists and other parties would have got more opportunities to slander the Marxists.

The people would have continued to think that their basic problems could have been solved step by step through parliamentary means had there been a United Front Ministry, i.e., parliamentary illusions would have remained strong.

If, on the other hand, instead of constantly explaining the class character of the parliamentary system, it is simply propagated that the U.F. Ministry is a force helpful to the people—as is mainly propagated by the revisionists and bourgeois liberals—then, it does not help to dispel parliamentary illusions. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has analysed this question from the correct scientific point of view. Hence the formation of the U.F. Ministry has not increased parliamentary illusions among the people, rather during this period the people have gained a great experience.

They have understood to some extent the class limitations of parliamentary system. They will learn more of it in future through constant Marxist propaganda and their own experience of objective life. There can be no more foolish un-Marxian conception than that if only some leaders understand a truth, the working class and the people will automatically understand it by simply hearing sermons from the sacred lips of these leaders. The ultra-revolutionaries are suffering from just this disease.

They asserted that the existence of the U.F. Ministry would hamper the mass movement and class struggle. But objective life shows that the class struggle and people's fighting power have increased. The heroic struggle of the people after the dismissal of the U.F. Ministry in spite of brutal repression proves it. If the class struggle has not at all been intensified during the period of the U.F. Ministry, why have the big bourgeoisie and the jotdars become so infuriated? Why was the Ministry dismissed in the darkness of night? And why are the people fighting against this attack? The bankruptcy of the ultra-revolutionaries has been exposed. But they are unashamed and have manufactured a wonderful explanation that all these are artificial stage-managed affairs of the capitalist class. It seems there is no limit to madness.

Their slogan is "No civil disobedience, no mid-term election, but armed revolution." The theoretical basis of this slogan can only be one of the following two assumptions: (1) There is no difference between parliamentary democracy, Police Raj and fascism; at least it has no significance to the working class. The working class has no interest in bourgeois democracy. In all circumstances and for all time the only alternative before the working class is either revolution or any form of bourgeois rule; there is no necessity for the working class to be concerned about different forms of bourgeois rule. (2) The objective situation in India and West Bengal is ripe for revolution. From the point of view of consciousness and organization, the working class and the people are already prepared for revolution. In such a situation the struggle for democracy can only drag them backward. If the whole question is posed in this way, any person having a knowledge of the ABC of Marxism and with minimum common sense will understand that both these assumptions are totally wrong and nothing but sheer madness.

Class Character of Bourgeois Democracy

According to Marxism, parliamentary democracy—however democratic it may look—is, in the last analysis, bourgeois class rule, dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Adult franchise and equal rights of all for propaganda and organization, which are part of bourgeois democracy, are in reality formal rights, because the domination of property ownership by the capitalists and landlords keeps these formal equal rights restricted by a network of innumerable *real* restrictions. The working class and the people being utterly dependent on these exploiters for their living, cannot properly exercise these equal rights.

Moreover, the bureaucracy, the police and the army which are organs of the state are custodians of bourgeois interests. Whenever the people come forward in direct struggle against exploitation, the police and the army come forward as the

real power on behalf of the bourgeoisie. The great Marxist leaders clearly explained this class character of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and bequeathed the basic duty of educating the working class about it to all the Marxists.

The history of different countries of the world has again proved the correctness of this Marxist analysis. Hence Marxist leaders have attacked any attempt to create illusions about bourgeois democracy or any above-class concept about it as a great crime and service to the bourgeoisie. They have relentlessly fought against those revisionists who, by seeing the formal democratic rights, have, instead of developing the class struggle to the highest stage, preached about basic transformations of society step by step through parliamentary means. The modern revisionists under the signboard of "creative Marxism" in new conditions have attacked this basic concept of Marxism. (The Indian revisionists have gone a step further in their degeneration by announcing from their Patna Congress that bandhs and ballots will bring basic changes.) Hence the fight against this revisionist distortion is a regular unavoidable duty of Marxist-Leninists.

But simultaneous with the analysis of the class character of bourgeois democracy, the great Marxist leaders at the same time warned the working class against any attitude of disinterestedness about different forms of bourgeois rule. Fascism, Police Raj and autocracy—all these, at present, are forms of bourgeois class rule. Bourgeois democracy is also another form of this class rule. But the leaders did not confuse these two different forms.

In spite of the same basic class nature of the two, the difference between them is very important from the tactical angle of the working class. According to Marxism, adult franchise is a sign of working class maturity; bourgeois democratic rights like the right to vote, to organize meetings, to form organizations, to propagate, to strike etc., immensely help the working class and the people to fight their partial struggles and in general to intensify their class struggle. Hence the working class is not only not disinterested about these

rights, but is very much interested. Bourgeois democracy is an important school to the working class. The working class did not get even these limited rights as a gift from the bourgeoisie. They had to fight for it and fight with their own blood.

Only when the working class becomes so conscious and organized that it can break the limited confines of bourgeois democracy and establish widest democracy by establishing a new state under its leadership, the necessity of bourgeois democracy ends and it becomes a hindrance.

In answering the sceptics Lenin clearly said that the fight for democracy does not only not hinder the class struggle of the working class, but rather helps it to advance, and for that reason, the fight for securing democratic rights has been assigned to be a task of the working class.

In short, it becomes clear that just as, on the one hand, not to understand the class character of bourgeois democracy, not to educate the working class and the people about it and to create illusions among them by preaching about the possibility of transformations of society through it, is a naked revisionist deviation, so also, on the other hand, not to recognize the difference between bourgeois democracy and autocracy, and to refuse to struggle for limited bourgeois democratic rights or to oppose such struggle so long as class struggle does not reach the highest stage, are worst ultra-revolutionary infantile deviation. The Marxists in India have to advance by waging firm struggle against both these deviations.

So long as in the objective situation of the country, the alternatives are autocracy or bourgeois democracy, it is the duty of the working class to stand firm on the side of democracy against reaction and not only to stand for, but to be in the forefront of the struggle for democracy.

But when the objective condition of the country and the political-organizational preparedness reach a stage when the alternatives become limited bourgeois democracy or establishment of widest democracy of the people under working

class leadership through revolution, the working class undoubtedly stands for fight for the latter, breaking the narrow confines of bourgeois democracy. For this understanding, we take up the second question, what is the present objective situation in India and West Bengal.