

Mao's Hunan Report and its Lessons

The Indian Revolution can only advance in the form of People's War. Our Revolution is bound to have the characteristics of Chinese Revolution and its path in the main. This is the decision of our Party Special Congress.

The key task in People's War is building up revolutionary bases in the rural areas. For this, the most important thing is developing, defending and extending specific areas of sustained resistance. This is also the decision of the Party Special Congress. For this, in certain selected areas we must mobilise the exploited people for class struggles, anti-landlord struggles leading to resistance struggle.

Comrade Mao's Hunan Report—its message and lessons is the guide for us. The Hunan Report is based on the direct experience of the revolutionary struggle of the peasants. The Report reminds us of the necessity of determining the main enemies and main allies of the revolution in a particular phase. The Report tells us of the necessity of combining anti-feudal struggle with people's resistance struggle. It tells of the necessity of combining the economic struggle with the political struggle, the latter being the key struggle. It tells us as to how and when the people's enemies are to be punished during the course of the revolutionary struggle. It tells us that we should take all the economic, political and social issues of the people—issues affecting their life in order to mobilise and prepare the people for revolutionary struggle. It tells us as to how the revolutionary struggle is to be based on mass line. This is why Hunan Report still remains our guide.

Period

Hunan Report was prepared by comrade Mao in 1927. It was a report based on his investigation of the Hunan peasant struggle.

At that time the Chinese National Revolution was advancing under the leadership of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The Kuomintang Party and the Communist Party of China were united in that National struggle at that time. The National Revolutionary Army was advancing against the warlords in the North and the imperialist powers supporting them.

At such a time there was a big peasant revolutionary upsurge in Hunan province. It shook the very foundations of landlordism. The

reactionaries in the Kuomintang and the rightists of the CPC represented by Chen Tu Shi opposed the Human peasant struggle. It was then that comrade Mao published this Hunan Report. He toured the peasant areas for a month. He analysed the movement from all angles. He drew correct lessons from that struggle. That was a report that laid the basis for the Chinese Revolution. It is a great Marxist-Leninist document. It gives us the most urgently needed lessons for our revolution.

Main enemies and allies

The Hunan struggle was a big peasant revolution. Its main targets of attack were imperialism, warlords, corrupt bureaucrats and the local evil and lawless gentry. In essence it was a struggle against imperialism and their puppets —warlords. Mao declared:

The main targets of attack by the peasants are the local tyrants, the evil gentry and the lawless landlords. As a result, the privileges which the feudal landlords enjoyed for thousands of years are being shattered to pieces. Every bit of the dignity and prestige built up by the landlords is being swept into the dust. (Vol. I p. 25)

Comrade Mao further said :

The patriarchal feudal class of local tyrants, evil gentry, and lawless landlords has formed the basis of autocratic government for thousands of years and is the corner stone of imperialism, warlordism and corrupt officialdom. (Vol. 1 —p. 27)

From the above, it is clear that the Hunan peasant revolution (1927) took place in the midst of the anti-imperialist struggle aimed against imperialism and their puppets—feudal landlords. That means that this struggle took place when the principal contradiction is between imperialism, its puppets and the whole Chinese nation.

Naturally, during the Hunan peasant struggle the distribution of the lands of the feudal landlords was not yet the key issue. It fought against all other exploitations of the feudal landlords.

When we discuss the lessons of the Hunan Report, this fact should be kept in mind. Today ours is not a colonial country. With the transfer of power in 1947, our country has become a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. Today our country is in the stage of the Agrarian Revolution. Today, in our country, the contradiction between the alliance of imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and big-landlords on one side and the overwhelming majority of the people on the other is the principal contradiction,

We should keep in mind this important difference between China of 1927 and India of today. In the present stage of our revolution, Agrarian Revolution is the key struggle. Distribution of the landlords, property is the key struggle in this period.

An analysis of the 14 big achievements mentioned in the Hunan Report, brings out the fact that they are based on four kinds of people's problems.

—It was a struggle against the exploitation of the landlords, their illegal collections, land rent, land taxes, illegal transport of landlord's surplus grain, cancellation or postponement of landlord's debts, against landlord violence, corrupt officialdom etc.

—Along with this anti-feudal struggle, the question of organising co-operative societies, building roads, tanks and schools were also taken up by the revolutionary movement.

—The revolutionary peasant struggle also worked to abolish gambling, opium-smoking, banditry etc.

—It also fought against clan authority and religious authority— as symbols of feudalism, against feudal traditions and for the democratic rights of women.

So, along with anti-landlord and other class struggles, the struggle for certain economic and social reforms, in short, the struggle for anti-landlord and anti-imperialist culture was also fought.

Struggle for Political authority

Now we have seen on what problems the Hunan peasant struggle was conducted. Comrade Mao declared that the economic struggle should be linked with the political struggle. He gave more importance to the political struggle. He called upon the exploited people to fight for political power. He hailed the Hunan peasant struggle, because it was advancing on that path.

Comrade Mao declared :

Once the peasants have their organisation, the first thing they do is smash the political prestige and power of the landlord class and especially of the local tyrants and evil gentry. That is, to pull down landlord authority and build up peasant authority in rural society. This is a most serious and vital struggle. It is the pivotal struggle in the second period, the period of revolutionary action. Without victory in this struggle, no victory is possible in the economic struggle to reduce rent and interest, to secure land and other means of production and so on. (Vol. 1 p. 35)

How finely comrade Mao has explained the link between the economic struggle and the political struggle in the rural areas. How clearly he has said that the people cannot achieve victory in the economic struggle without destroying the political authority of the landlords in the villages and establishing the political authority of the peasants.

That is why comrade Mao has repeatedly declared in the Hunan Report that "the fact is that the great peasant masses have risen to fulfil their historic mission and that the forces of rural democracy have risen to overthrow the forces of rural feudalism", that "the privileges which the feudal landlords enjoyed for thousands of years are being shattered to pieces".

In short, comrade Mao declared that the peasant associations are the instruments of power for the people. He explained how, during the course of Hunan peasant struggle, Magistrates and other local officials were forced to take orders from the peasants.

Forms of Struggle

The Hunan Report has also explained the forms of struggle against the political authority of the landlords. To force the landlords to pay back all that he had forcibly taken from individuals, to impose and collect fines for their crimes in the village, to collect funds from the landlords for the people's organisations, protest demonstrations for small wrong-doings by the landlords, big demonstrations against serious crimes of the landlords, parading the landlords in the streets with caps on their heads for more serious crimes, putting them in the county jail if necessary, even if temporarily, driving them away from the villages—these are some of the forms of struggle to be employed against the political authority of the landlords in the villages.

Com. Mao even declared that some among the cruel gentry have to be executed. He declared :

The execution of one such big landlord reverberates through a whole county and is very effective in erradicating the remaining evils of feudalism. Every county has these major tyrants, some as many as several dozens and others at least a few and the only effective way of suppressing the reactionaries is to execute at least a few in each county who are guilty of the most heinous crimes. (Vol. I, p. 38).

Misinterpreting this teaching of comrade Mao, we have seen how some 'left' adventurists adopted "annihilation of class enemies". We have also seen how they said that this annihilation of individual landlords is the beginning stage of the guerilla struggle. Even now some say that they want to link mass line with annihilation of class enemies.

It is absurd to say that individual killings of these elements has anything to do with the lessons of the Hunan Report. What these elements are doing is nothing but individual terrorism. It is against the principles of Marxism-Leninism. That is why it brought such immense losses for the whole revolutionary movement in the country.

Comrade Mao's lessons are entirely different. He never said that it is a tactic of struggle. As a matter of fact, the whole Marxist-Leninist literature has nowhere recognised annihilation of class enemies as a form of revolutionary struggle.

When the revolutionary peasant movement advances to a higher level, some landlords have been killed by the peasants. As a matter of fact comrade Mao is bringing this fact to our notice. Landlords are killed at the hands of the peasants. This happens in all the phases of the peasant struggle—lower and higher.

In the Hunan Report also he had declared that people should participate in such executions. He said:

Execution. This is confined to the worst local tyrants and evil gentry and is carried out *by the peasants jointly with other sections of the people* (Vol. 1, p. 38).

Killing landlords individually is not the aim of Marxism-Leninism. Its struggle is against the system of exploitation. This basic teaching of comrade Mao, referred to many times in his writing, should not be forgotten.

Leadership of the Peasant Organisations Role of the various classes

In the Hunan Peasant struggle, Comrade Mao analysed the role of the different classes.

Imperialism, and its puppets—warlords, bureaucracy and evil gentry were the main enemies of the Chinese Revolution.

Along with the other people in the rural areas, rich peasants and the middle peasants had to be won over for the struggle. At the same time comrade Mao exposed the anti-people character of the rich peasants at certain times and the vacillating role of the middle peasants.

The peasant associations and the peasant movement developed through two different stages.

Beginning: In the absence of any Civil Liberties for the people, the peasant organisations developed secretly to organise the peasants in the peasant organisations (1926 January to September)

Even here, from 1926 January to June the peasant associations worked completely secretly. Between 1926 June-July, the National Revolutionaries were advancing against the Northern warlords through the Hunan Province. At this time, the peasant associations worked openly, and had a membership of about 3-4 lakhs. Their influence also covered upto 10 lakh people. Peasant associations were actively helping the National Revolutionary Army advancing towards the North.

Direct struggle : From 1926 October to 1927 January was the period of direct revolutionary action. The revolutionary peasants were directly storming the foundations of landlordism. They were directly attacking the houses of landlords. They were destroying the political authority of the landlords in the villages, and establishing the political authority of the peasants. Landlords, depending on their economic strength, were fleeing their villages and taking shelter in their Provincial, District or county towns. The remaining landlords in the villages were obeying the orders of the peasants.

During this period of revolutionary action, the movement of the peasant associations had grown by leaps and bounds. Their membership reached 20 lakhs and their influence to one crore people.

The attitude of the rich peasants and the Middle peasants was different in both the periods.

Rich Peasants

In the beginning of the formation of the peasants associations, the rich peasants did not care for the peasant associations. They not only refused to join but opposed them too.

But after the peasants took to active struggle against the landlords, when the people were parading the landlords in the streets for their crimes, that is, in the second period, the rich peasants were forced to change their attitude towards peasant associations. Only then they began to join the peasant associations. They paid more to get admissions in the peasant associations. They had to get the recommendations of others to join the peasant organisations.

Even then we have to see their anti-peoples character on certain issues. They were registering their names in the organisations in the name of the elders in the family. They were following this tactic to show that they have not joined them when the reactionaries return. We should also remember that some reactionaries among the rich peasants did not join the peasant associations. Even after their joining the associations, they did not do anything for them. Comrade Mao explained how the rich peasants did not do anything positive for the peasant associations during the whole period of revolutionary action.

Middle Peasants

Comrade Mao explained the vacillating role of the middle peasants in this struggle. In the beginning of the formation of the peasant associations, the middle peasants too did not come forward to join them. They took a 'wait and see' attitude.

But in the second period, when the peasant authority has been established, majority of the middle peasants joined these associations. In the organisation they played a more favourable role when compared with the rich peasants. But comrade Mao said that even then the middle peasants were not yet fully active in the struggle of the peasant associations. He said that one has to intensify the agitation among the peasants to the utmost to get the middle peasants to join the peasant associations.

Agricultural Labourers and Poor Peasants

Comrade Mao has explained that in the Hunan Peasant Struggle, the leadership was firmly in the hands of the poor peasants. He divided the poor peasants into two—the utterly destitute and the less destitute. That means the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants led the Hunan Peasant Struggle.

Comrade Mao said that in the Changsha county, 70% poor peasants, 20% middle peasants 10% landlords, and rich peasants—constituted the population in the villages.

It was the poor peasants—70% of the population—who were the backbone of the peasant struggle in both the periods. They were in the fore front of the struggle to overthrow the political authority of the landlords. The agricultural labourers and the poor peasants were the most revolutionary force in the villages. So they could lead the peasant associations. During both the periods, at the lower levels of the peasant associations, the poor peasants were a majority among the Presidents and committee members of the peasant associations. Mao said: "Leadership by the poor peasants is absolutely necessary. Without the poor peasants there would be no revolution". (Vol. 1, p.33)

Armed People

The Hunan Peasant Struggle destroyed the age-old landlordism. It established the political authority of the peasants in the villages. It was not a struggle confined to only certain economic problems. It was not a legal agitation.

It was a struggle for change of political authority. China was a country without any civil liberties from the very beginning. From the beginning the peasants had to wage a struggle against government violence and that of the bureaucratic landlords in the villages. In China, at that time

the warlords were having their private armies. So from the very beginning, the peasant struggle had to resist the violence and cruelty of the feudal landlords. That is why the peasants were armed from the very beginning and worked for it.

In the Hunan Peasant Struggle, the peasant associations procured arms from two sources.

First : At that time, in China, there were warlords, each one having a private army of his own. Seeing the great strength of the peasant struggle, a part of this army with the warlords of joined the peasant struggle with their arms. A section of it remained neutral. In a few centres, these armies of the warlords resisted the peasant struggle. The peasants defeated these armies in these struggle and seized their arms.

According to comrade Mao, during the Hunan Peasant Struggle, each county had about 600 rifles. 75 counties possessed about 45,000 rifles. Out of these armies that joined the peasant struggle, village volunteer squads were built up to defend the villages.

Second : Lakhs of people were armed with the locally available weapons. These armed peasants fought as volunteer force under the leadership of the peasant associations.

Arming of the people was the most important factor in the Hunan Peasant Struggle. That is why they could defeat the warlords, overthrow their political authority in the villages and establish the political authority of the peasants.

It is significant to note that in the Hunan Peasant Struggle, the three struggles—economic, political and resistance struggle—were combined. That is why it is a guide to us.

These are basic lessons of the Hunan Peasant Struggle for us. But here we should also remember certain differences between China of 1927 and India of today. As in China of 1927, today we do not have warlords with private armies. So our peasants in their struggle against the cruelties of the landlords and their government they have to depend entirely on their own strength. They have to depend on the locally available weapons.

China had no parliamentary institutions from the beginning. In our country, whatever be the limits, there are parliamentary institutions. Majority of our people still have illusions about these parliamentary institutions. Our Special Congress has decided to utilise these institutions to extensively propagate revolutionary politics among the people, to extend the people's movement. We should keep this difference in our mind.

To build the Agrarian Revolutionary movement in the villages—to build the resistance movement in the villages—this is the key task decided by the Special Congress of our Party.

To achieve this objective, the following are the tasks for the villages given by the Party Congress:

The main direction of the Party work should be consciously oriented towards building revolutionary peasant movement. Selection of strategic areas, concentration of cadres, formulation of fighting and agitational slogans after extensive discussions with the people of the areas, mobilising the peasants for struggle on those issues, building the peasant organisations, *arming the people with the locally available weapons in the anti-feudal struggles from the very beginning, organising of the village volunteer organisations, people's resistance to landlord-goonda-police violence and repression and thus, create develop and defend areas of sustained resistance, and thus advance to establish the base areas in the countryside.*

The Party Congress has given the following tasks for the towns :

In building the trade union movement *our main direction should be to build the revolutionary trade union movement, politicisation of the workers, ideological and political struggle against legalism and economism, worker-peasant unity, volunteer organisations to resist police-management goondaism and repression, and building of the secret party among workers. Only thus we can unite the workers and make it the conscious leader of the New Democratic Revolution. The main concentration should be in strategic areas and strategic industries.*

These are the most important decisions taken by the Party to build the resistance struggle among the peasants and the workers. The Party Congress has decided the tasks for the students and woman and other middle classes in line with this tactical struggle.

The main aim of the Political Line is to build the resistance struggle.

Our decision to build the Agrarian Revolutionary movement and to build the resistance struggle—these decisions of the Party Congress are based on the basic lessons of the Hunan Report. Today our comrades are implementing these tasks in various parts of the country. They are getting positive results in this struggle and the people's movement is advancing.

Today we are mobilising the people for various class struggles. Hunan Report should act as a guide for us in this task. Comrades should deeply study the Hunan Report based on Marxism-Leninism. Comrades should apply the lessons and the experiences of the Hunan to advancing the revolutionary struggle.

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