

are—prejudices. But at the same time you must *soberly* follow the *actual* state of the class-consciousness and preparedness of the entire class (not only of its Communist vanguard) and of all the *working people* (not only of their advanced elements)” (*Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 58). □

IV

Phrase-Mongering Replaces Building up of Struggles

LENIN, THAT STRICT AND RIGOROUS MARXIST, WHO ridiculed the parliamentary cretinism of the reformist Social-Democrats, laid down strict rules about the utilization of parliamentary institutions by the revolutionary proletariat for furthering the revolutionary struggle, for removing the constitutional illusions of the backward masses. He did not forget to participate in them even in the period of highest revolutionary activity of the masses to quicken the process of releasing them from faith in bourgeois parliamentarism.

Listen to the following: “Third, the ‘Left’ Communists have a great deal to say in praise of us Bolsheviks; one feels like telling them to praise us less and try to get a better knowledge of the Bolshevik ‘tactics’. We took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Russian bourgeois Parliament, in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct? . . . In September 1917, did we, the Russian Bolsheviks, not have more rights than any Western Communist to consider that parliamentarism was politically obsolete in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long time or a short time, but how far the masses of the working people are prepared (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to

dissolve the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or allow it to be dissolved). It is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact that, in September-November 1917, the urban working class and the soldiers and peasants of Russia were, because of a number of special conditions, exceptionally well-prepared to accept the Soviet system and to disband the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks *did not* boycott the Constituent Assembly, but took part in the elections both before and after the proletariat conquered political power. That these elections yielded exceedingly valuable (and to the proletariat, highly useful) political results has been proved” (*‘Left-Wing’ Communism, Collected Works*, vol. 31, pp. 59-60).

Then Lenin sums up: “The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible; it has been proved that, far from causing harm to the revolutionary proletariat, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet Republic and even *after* such a victory, actually helps the proletariat to *prove* to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with; it *facilitates* their successful dissolution and *helps* to make bourgeois-parliamentarism politically ‘obsolete’. To ignore this experience, while at the same time claiming affiliation to the Communist International which must work out its tactics internationally (not as narrow or exclusively national tactics), means committing a gross error and actually abandoning internationalism in deed, while respecting it in word” (*‘Left-Wing’ Communism, Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 60).

AUXILIARY FORM OF STRUGGLE

Lenin lashes out at parliamentary cretinism; he unmask the class character of bourgeois democracy and writes two great works—*Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* and *State and Revolution*—to unmask those who would make the working class forget the class character of the State, sing praises to bourgeois democracy and disorganize the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

At the same time he demands that bourgeois parliamentary

institutions should not be boycotted as a matter of principle ; that wherever possible they should be used to further the struggle of the proletariat, to unmask their class character ; that parliamentary activity should be used as an auxiliary form of struggle, subordinated to the main form ; not to do so will be a grave error, according to him.

He also lays down conditions when such institutions can be bypassed by the proletariat. And he lashes at those 'Lefts' who do not understand all this and shout only about boycotting the bourgeois parliamentary institutions and elections.

For our Left-doctrinarians, such flexible and revolutionary tactics as Lenin advocates are a closed book while they are sometimes forced to agree that parliamentary institutions can be utilized for revolutionary purposes (*Present Situation and Our Tasks*) ; they virtually state that in the correlations obtaining in Bengal (not in India) it was necessary to boycott the elections.

From this same document it is quite clear that in reality they see in parliamentary activity only opportunism, class collaboration and not an instrument of furthering the class struggle. Consider the following : "Besides, bourgeois democracy can no longer flourish as it did in the 19th century. So in connection with the elections we should pay special attention to this aspect, and it should also be marked that from their experience of the way Parliament and Assembly, etc. have functioned and have been run for the last twenty years under Congress rule, the illusion of the masses for the said institutions has worn off comparatively." Very cautiously put. Even our 'Lefts' dare not say that the illusions have been smashed. Oh no, they have been *worn off* comparatively. Even they dare not say that a considerable section has shed its illusions completely.

IGNORING MASS CONSCIOUSNESS

In face of this, what is the conclusion that they draw ? Not that parliamentary institutions can still be utilized to smash these illusions and further revolutionary struggles and consciousness. Oh, no ! Because the illusion of the people has only worn off comparatively—which means compared with the past—they

say class war should be there to complete the education. Read the following : "Class war is the best weapon to complete the disillusionment of the masses. So to remain bogged at the level of mass consciousness on the pretext that the masses are thinking on this line, instead of actively carrying forward the struggle, is nothing but opposition to Marxism."

It is, of course, very correct to state that the real education of the masses cannot be separated from their class struggle—from their mass experience in the course of revolutionary struggle. It is equally correct to state that it is the duty of the Communists to carry forward and develop the consciousness of the masses, and not to tail behind it. But this does not mean that Communists, in advocating their immediate tactical slogans, do not take into consideration the level of mass consciousness obtaining at a given time.

The concrete problem is, given the fact that parliamentary illusions are wearing off only comparatively, what should the Communist Party do ? Advocate boycott of elections—as suggested by these gentlemen ? They cannot imagine that a revolutionary use of the parliamentary forum is an adjunct to the class struggle and class war, and it should not be contrasted with it. So long as parliamentary activity is subordinated to the main struggle of the proletariat, this and nothing else is its role.

But these gentlemen, by slyly contrasting participation in parliament to class struggle, virtually negate the use of this form of activity of the working class, confuse participation in parliamentary struggle with the reformist opportunism in parliaments, with substituting the main class struggle by constitutional struggle. And that is how they discard this important form of struggle and dispossess the working class of an important weapon to free the people of their parliamentary illusions and train their consciousness.

In fact, in spite of tall talk about not getting bogged at the level of mass consciousness, these tactics precisely leave the masses to their own fate and consciousness, and facilitate the task of the bourgeoisie.

TYPICAL 'LEFT'-SECTARIAN OUT LOOK

This complete neglect of important auxiliary forms of struggle is typical of the Left-sectarian outlook. In the name of giving a perspective, they emphasize certain forms of struggle while in reality neglecting the organization of that class struggle—paying attention to the class that are coming into the arena and to the problems of how to organize them. In their document *Present Situation &c.*, these gentlemen show an amazing indifference, an amazing incapacity to understand the stage and condition of mass struggles, have absolutely nothing to say about the actual condition of organization, how to organize the struggle beyond saying that they should be organized. For the rest, they only concentrate on organization of force, on new forms of struggle.

Reading from their document, one would think that the main weakness of the situation is the failure of the Party to understand Marx's great saying that "force is the midwife of new society", the failure to realize Engels' great warning that a revolutionary party must know how to struggle, that every advantage should be taken of universal conscription by all to learn how to fight.

Having for the first time discovered that Marx had advocated force, our 'Lefts' use it as a toy, as a *mantram*, to avoid any painstaking analysis of the class struggle and problems of organization. About this, all that they say is: "We should organize mass struggles and campaigns on popular grievances and political issues and extend them further so that the revolutionary tide can be advanced."

But their main understanding and emphasis is on the following: "The Indian revolution will not be a brief affair; it will be a very severe protracted revolution. This perspective arises from the character of the revolution in the present age. In the present age, revolution will never assume the character of the Government and State power on the one hand versus the people on the other. Instead, they will assume the character of struggle between two sections (i.e. between progress and reaction) of the people, of civil war. For, in the course of the advance of revolution, the people belonging to the ruling classes and all kinds of reactionary elements will gather inevitably behind the Govern-

ment and the State machinery. Before the seizure of power there will occur big clashes at comparatively long intervals and in between the big clashes there will invariably occur numerous local clashes of comparatively small scale The Party should advance from defensive activities to determined offensive."

PHRASE-MONGERING IN PLACE OF STRUGGLES

And all this is based on the understanding that the new situation arising out of the desperate struggle waged by the masses precisely demands a solution on this basis.

In the first place, let it be noted that what they have produced is a vulgarized paraphrase from one of Lenin's writings—and torn out of its background and class moorings.

Secondly, by uttering a few sentences they try to prove that this and nothing else—this organization, as they call, is the sole shortcoming of the immediate present—that is how they completely distort Lenin's teachings and reduce it to pure reliance on this or that form of struggle, divorced from efforts to mobilize the fighting classes, the majority of the working class, to wield all forms of struggle.

The error arises not in saying that a Communist Party must prepare as a party of revolution, not in saying that the Indian revolution will not be a one-day or a few days' affair; that it will be a protracted affair. Nor does the error lie in noting, as the writers of the document note, that recent mass struggles are far more militant than past ones, that a new desperation is seizing the masses.

The ridiculousness of the whole thing arises from the fact that the concrete organization of the huge struggle of the desperate masses is replaced by phrase-mongering about force.

The ridiculousness of the whole thing arises from the fact that these gentlemen are teaching us with a serious face that Marx talked about force, while concealing from those whom they want to entrap the fact our Party has gone through a period of armed struggle also, that for two years in Telangana our Party combated fifty thousand troops and that the casualties on our side amounted to hundreds—the most consistent and sturdy revolutionaries that the Party has produced.

It is not accidental that they never mention Telangana—oh, no—how can they mention it? That, of course, was done before these gentlemen discovered what Marx had said about force.

They, of course, want to conceal from the ranks what the Programme says about this. It says that while the Communist Party strives to achieve its aims by peaceful means, i.e. by developing a revolutionary movement, by combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forms of struggle, "it needs to be borne in mind that the ruling classes never relinquish their power voluntarily. They seek to defy the will of the people and seek to reverse it by lawlessness and violence. It is, therefore, necessary for the revolutionary forces to be vigilant and so orientate their work that they can face up to all contingencies, to any twist and turn in the political life of the country." This is the clearest statement of the Party's outlook on this question.

If the 'Lefts' wanted a mere repetition of this, they were welcome to it. But under the guise of giving a general perspective, what they want is to belittle the role of the mass struggles that are taking place, pay no attention to the problems of their organization, the difficulties in the way of concretely guiding the masses into revolutionary channels.

PARTY'S APPROACH TO PRESENT TASK

How does our Party address itself to the task? The Party realizes that the economic crisis is deepening and that every effort must be made to link the Party with the masses when they are moving forward in their thousands. The pre-election struggles had shown that the participation of the masses in the struggles is total; that the masses are fighting with a new desperation.

The Party's new resolution on *New Situation and Party's Tasks* states :

The crisis and the consequent mass upsurge have thus opened a new inspiring chapter in the history of the post-independent revolutionary mass movement in India. An ever-increasing number of common people are being drawn

into the vortex of political life with a new class and mass awakening. It offers tremendous opportunities to the working class and its Communist Party to take big strides forward in building the class and mass organizations of the people, in forging and consolidating the united front of different democratic classes and in defeating the class policies of the big capitalists and landlords and opening the bright prospects of replacing the present Government by an alternative People's Democratic Government.

Noting the opportunities, the Party does not treat them lightly by saying—oh, let us now only devote ourselves to organization of force. It knows that it is the responsibility of the Party to organize the masses in their mighty struggles so that they reap revolutionary experiences and heighten their consciousness. The Party, taking note of the concrete realities, says :

However, the report takes serious account of the fact that considering the immense possibilities and opportunities that have been opened up before the working class, there exists a big lag between the requirements of the situation and the state of mass and class organizations of the people and the level of their political consciousness. Special note is taken of how the degree of class consciousness and the organization of the working class is at a pitifully low level, how its Communist Party is very weak and even non-existent in the greater part of the country, how the Communist movement in India is further faced with the onslaught of revisionism organized in the shape of the Right Communist Party.

Is it correct and necessary to take notice of these weaknesses and try to remedy them, or is it correct to ignore them totally, look for the main weakness in the failure to organize 'force' and leave the mass struggles to spontaneity, to the logic of spontaneous development, which also means leaving it in the hands of reformists, revisionists and other agent-parties of the big bourgeoisie?

The former approach alone is Marxist-Leninist and the latter has nothing in common with the Marxist-Leninist approach to class struggle, or Marxist-Leninist science of leadership. To

neglect the task and problems of building the class struggle as it is developing, and to emphasize one-sidedly the forms of struggle in isolation from the actual movement is just petty-bourgeois revolutionism.

What does Marxism-Leninism teach us in this respect? When, under the impact of the economic crisis and general breakdown of the capitalist order, lakhs of people begin to move into the arena of struggle, the Party cannot convert it into a conscious revolutionary movement, moving in a single direction, unless the masses act under the guidance of their class organizations led by the Party. Unless the Party has close ties with these organizations, unless these organizations themselves possess influence over the masses, the task of guiding the movement is rendered difficult, and the masses, in spite of their heroic sacrifices, reap very little benefit even in the matter of heightening consciousness.

V

'Left' Tactics will Delink Party from Mass Struggles

BESIDES, IN THIS STRUGGLE, THE INFLUENCE OF reformists and revisionists, of compromisers and adventurists—all has to be eliminated by the masses and to act growingly under the banner of the Marxist-Leninist Party.

That is why when we find today that the class organizations are very weak with the resultant strong pull of the masses; when we find that in the existing class organizations pull of the reformists and revisionists is also strong, and that the Party's strength is far from commensurate with that required for successful leadership—we set rectifying the weaknesses by adopting tactics to tie the Party more firmly to the masses, to dis-