

The Marxist

Volume XXI, No. 4
October-December 2005

Anil Biswas

'Maoism': An Exercise in Anarchism

In recent times, some areas of West Bengal have witnessed activities of the 'Maoist' group. The group has tried to draw attention to itself through committing several grisly murders and by triggering some explosions. They are engaged in setting up 'bases' in the remote and relatively inaccessible locales of West Bengal that border Bihar-Jharkhand. They seek a foothold in some other districts of the state as well. A section of the corporate media has also been encouraging them, by legitimising the Maoists' killing of CPI (M) leaders and workers in districts like Bankura, Purulia, and Midnapore west.

The CPI (M-L)-People's War and the Maoist Communist Centre, two groups of the Naxalite persuasion, came together on 21 September 2004 to form a new party, the CPI (Maoist). As with the two erstwhile constituents, the Maoists are active in selected areas of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Jharkhand. Because of the secretive style of their working, their political outlook and activities are largely unknown to the mass of the people. The name of the CPI (Maoist) has been associated with violent acts and spreading terror. Going by their programme and ideological stand, the party is a violent anarchist outfit. Anarchy can cause harm to the democratic struggle and Left movement. The CPI (M) will counter this party politically and ideologically.

The CPI (M) formed after a long ideological debate in 1964, and a new Party Programme was adopted. Sectarian and ultra-left adventurist trends arose in the ongoing struggle against revisionism and reformism. In those years, the entire country, especially Bengal, saw mass anger against the anti-people policies of the ruling party. In particular, Bengal witnessed a massive wave of mass movements.

Following the establishment of the United Front government in 1967, the land movement, along with the movements of the workers, employees, middle class, students, youth accelerated further. A peasants' movement was organised at Naxalbari based on the land movement and capture of state power through that movement. The CPI (M-L) formed in May 1969. In its attempts at creating 'liberated zones' and transforming the decade of the 1970s into the 'decade of liberation', the CPI (M-L) chose the CPI (M) as its target. The CPI (M) had to wage a tough political-ideological battle while under attack from the ruling Congress and the Naxalites.

The Naxalite movement splintered within the period of five years. The Naxalites split into innumerable small groups. The division and re-division went on for three decades thereafter. In the process of this disintegration, the People's War Group (PWG) was set up in Andhra Pradesh under the tutelage of Kondapally Seetaramaiah. The PWG looked to Naxalite leader Charu Majumdar as the 'pathfinder'. The Kanai Chatterjee-Amulya Sen-Chandrasekhar Das-led anti-Charu Majumdar group established the Maoist

Communist Centre (MCC). The newly-formed CPI (Maoist) chooses to salute both Chatterjee and Majumdar as 'great leaders'. Current imperatives have brought them together, but their documents show how from the 1980s until 2000, both the groups were at each other's throats and the battle of attrition saw casualties pile up on both sides.

The draft programme of the CPI (Maoist) denigrates the glorious tradition of the Communist movement in India. In this, they are at one with the *pracharaks* of the RSS. They forget how it was the Communists who first raised the slogan of complete independence in India. The Communist movement had called for the inclusion of the socio-economic content to the call for *swaraj*. The Communists had also been deeply involved in building up a mass base among the people. The Communist movement was severely repressed, and the colonial rulers brought a series of conspiracy cases—Meerut, Kanpur, and Peshawar—against Communists. The Communist Party had also been in the vanguard of building up an anti-imperialist movement in India. The Maoists would have us believe that the 'betrayal' by the communists in British India had prevented a revolution although the 'revolutionary content was present then'. We may only note that the Maoists have declared that they do not form part of the Communist movement in India; this is a bit of unexpected self-revelation that shows them up in proper light.

WHAT IS BEING TOUTED AS 'MAOISM'?

There is no doubt that Mao Zedong is one of greatest revolutionary leaders of the twentieth century. Under his leadership, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the mass of the people organised a democratic revolution in that backward country and started the work of socialist construction. New democracy or people's democracy meant a link between the democratic and the socialist revolutions, the basis of which was the leadership of the working class and a worker-peasant unity. In advancing the various stages of the Chinese revolution, Mao had implemented the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the specific conditions prevailing in China. In particular, Mao had explained analytically the dialectical materialism of Marx, helping the CPC to take the correct stand in the different phases of the Chinese revolution. Despite the admitted errors of the Great Leap Forward, Mao had led from the front the task of socialist construction in China.

What is 'Maoism'? It is a totally incorrect concept and reeks of motivation. It is an attempt to separate the theory and implementation of Mao from the classical and developing stream of Marxism-Leninism. The term 'Maoism' is utilised by those who stand opposed to the CPC as well as by the bourgeois 'Marxologists' who use the term 'Stalinism' in an equally jeering fashion.

In the so-called Lin Biao Congress, or the 9th Congress of the CPC (April 1969), a touchstone for the Maoists, it was declared that the CPC believes Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as the theoretical and directional basis. One should note that even by the adulating Lin, the word used was not 'Maoism' but Mao Zedong Thought. Mao Zedong Thought was defined at the CPC Congress as the theoretical coordination of the reality and practice of the Chinese Revolution with the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism. The

theoretical basis for this is erroneous. Characterising Mao Zedong Thought as the Marxism-Leninism of an era when imperialism has been 'destroyed' and when socialism 'has made worldwide progress', is not an objective evaluation. It was, among other things, an attempt to impose on the world situation the specific experience of socialist reconstruction in China. In fact, this kind of an attempt ends up negating the most notable features of Mao's own thinking and his mode of functioning. Mao certainly enriched Marxism-Leninism through his thought and practice, but it would not be correct to say that he brought up Marxism-Leninism to a 'completely new stage'. It was under Lin's tenure as General Secretary of the CPC that Mao's theorising was turned into philosophical precepts and adored. Notably though, it was the CPC central committee under Mao which later criticised Lin for his activities.

A wide attack on the precepts of the 9th CPC Congress is found in the address delivered at the 30th anniversary of the formation of the People's Republic of China by CPC vice-president Marshall Jianying. He said that the CPC and the people of China regarded the application and development of Marxism-Leninism in the Chinese revolution as Mao Zedong Thought. He went on to say that Mao Zedong Thought was not the product of Mao's personal wisdom; it represented the crystallisation of the experience of fifty years of the revolutionary struggle in China; it also represented the crystallisation of the common wisdom of the CPC. He pointed out that during the 'Cultural Revolution, they turned the relationship between the subjective and the objective, between the mind and the matter upside down'. Similarly, 'they passed off idealism and metaphysics as materialism and dialectics, historical idealism as historical materialism, and their utterly ridiculous pseudo-socialism as scientific socialism'.

The sixth plenary session of the eleventh central committee noted that Mao Zedong Thought which came into being through the collective struggle of the Party and the people, was the guiding ideology of the Party; 'Mao Zedong Thought is the integration of the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution'. The document militates against the attempt to universalise Mao Zedong Thought. The report mentions repeatedly the specificity of the Chinese situation and the Chinese experience.

Maoists, whether in Peru, Nepal, or India, never seem to get over this habit of gathering together sayings of Mao Zedong and treating them as universal principles. They also alienate the people with the slogan 'China's chairman is our chairman'. No Communist Party that recognises the term Mao Zedong Thought, and, like the CPI (M), recognises the need to draw the correct lessons from Mao's historic role, talks about 'Maoism'.

After 31 years of the formation of the MCC, the term 'Maoism' was adopted by the CPI (Maoist) 'amidst great debate and controversy', according to Kisan, a leader of the party (*People's March*, 7 November 2004). He believes Maoism to be the third and higher stage in the qualitative development of Marxism.

Let us now see what Pushpa Kumar Dahal (a k a Prachanda) has to say about 'Maoism' (*On Maoism*). According to him, Mao Zedong 'thought' is confusing: Maoism is 'scientific'. Inter alia, Prachanda talks about such inanities as Mao having identified (presumably as an original contribution)

class struggle, struggle for production, and scientific experimentation. According to Prachanda, Mao Zedong brought philosophy out of the reading room of philosophers and spoke of necessity of making it a massive and real power. Is Prachanda not familiar with Marx's eleventh thesis on Feurbach? Does he consider Lenin to be a philosopher confined to reading rooms? Then again, Prachanda accredits Mao Zedong with having uniquely contributed to history through his destruction of Chinese feudalism by giving land to the peasant, and of nationalising foreign and Chinese monopoly financial institutions, and for his control over private capital. Prachanda cites Mao's slogans—'barrel of the rifle is the source of power', 'imperialism is a paper tiger'—plus his concept of the people's war as original contributions to the growth of scientific socialism. These are clearly comments of a person who understands neither the practice nor the breadth of Mao's thinking.

Indeed, the Maoists seem to be obsessed with armed activities that inevitably result in individual terror and annihilation. The slogan of 'people's war' generates a lot of verbosity, but ignores socio-economic analysis and political activities. 'Maoism' has been created to allow the selective use of Mao's sayings on military science and guerrilla warfare out of context and without a logical analytical framework.

A CONFUSED VIEW OF THE WORLD SITUATION

One of the principal issues before a Communist Party is its outlook on the world situation towards formation of its strategy. The Maoists fare extremely poorly in this regard. In the draft document of February 2005, they devote only a few lines in their confused and confusing analysis of the world situation. They denigrate the Soviet Union for its 'deterioration into a capitalist country', and deal with what they call 'proxy war with the USA' in which 'millions lost their lives'.

The CPI (M) has identified throughout the 1960s the 1970s and specifically in at the 14th Party Congress the lacunae in the socialist construction in the erstwhile Soviet Union. The CPI (M), however, does not believe that in the 1960s the Soviet Union had turned into a capitalist country. In its role in the world situation, the Soviet Union stood by the newly independent nations; its nuclear capabilities were used for the cause of peace, not war. It is US imperialism that had carried on 'proxy wars' in the Third World to clamp down its hegemony; the US used the debacle of socialism in the Soviet Union to build a new world order. Do the Maoists seek to shield US imperialism by lambasting the Soviet Union out of context?

Interestingly enough, the Maoists do not consider the contra-diction between the forces of socialism and those of imperialism to be a core contradiction. By doing this, the Maoists ignore and deny the transition from capitalism to socialism. They also characterise, out of context, the People's Republic of China as a 'capitalist country after the death of Mao', and turn a blind eye to the process of socialist construction in Vietnam, Cuba, and Democratic Korea.

The puerile nature of the analysis of the world situation in the Maoists' document is glaringly apparent. Kisan writes simplistically that the world situation is replete with revolutionary possibilities in an unprecedented

manner, because imperialism is in deep crisis and revolution is the principal trend in the world. Imperialism is always shadowed by crisis, and it is true that anti-imperialist movements have grown around the world. However, to deny the need for conducting anti-imperialist struggles with greater fervour reeks of the anarchism of the 1970s, when the Naxalites used to speak in the same vein as do their Maoist successors today.

CHARACTER OF THE INDIAN STATE INCORRECTLY POSITED

The Maoists would characterise the Indian state, which it sees as having gained sham independence in 1947, as semi-colonial and semi-feudal, and controlled by the forces of imperialism. They characterise the big bourgeoisie as 'comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie' who have an understanding with the big landlord class who dominate the rural areas. According to the Maoists, the Indian revolution can be characterised as 'new democratic revolution' although they also talk of the Indian revolution as 'nationalist revolution'. Their aim is to make India independent, self-reliant, and democratic.

This is confusion of the worst order.

The 6th Congress of the Comintern defined comprador bourgeoisie those who subserve imperialism by exporting raw materials and importing finished products from imperialist countries. It is not possible to characterise the Indian big bourgeoisie as comprador as per this definition. The process of capitalist accumulation in India and the foundation of the industrial base of the country are conveniently ignored by the Maoists in their hurry to prove that India continues to be a dependent country.

Mao Zedong himself defined the Chinese comprador bourgeoisie as the class, which directly subserve imperialism and which is nurtured by imperialism. By this definition, the Indian big bourgeoisie cannot be defined as comprador. The CPI (M) believes that the big Indian bourgeoisie goes in for dual relationship of struggle and entente with imperialism as per the dictates of their class interests. The state sector, devoid of socialist content, has nevertheless been a factor in laying the technical-industrial base and helped in lessening dependence on imperialism. Later, especially from the 1980s, the big bourgeoisie took advantage of the commencement of liberalisation and started to eat into the state sector, even in core areas.

It is wrong to claim that the policy of liberalisation was put in place because the Indian big bourgeoisie were comprador. The big bourgeoisie have joined hands with imperialism and international finance capital based on their strength, not weakness. The big bourgeoisie, who lead the Indian ruling classes, form the principal target of the democratic revolution. The Maoists stand that seeks to weaken the position of the big bourgeoisie would *hinder* and not help the struggle against the big bourgeoisie.

The Maoists think that India is yet to gain independence and that we have a semi-colonial state in a neo-colonial set up. They carefully avoid the term 'Indian state' while indulging in their theorising. The CPI (M) does not believe that in practice, as of now, the forces of imperialism control the Indian economy and the administration. While such an attempt may be going on, the Indian big bourgeoisie is far from comprador. If the Maoists are to be

believed, however, everyone in India has turned into lackeys of imperialism—the only exception, as ever, are the Maoists themselves!

This is of a piece with the other erroneous understanding—that India is not independent. The forces of imperialism have continued with their efforts to interfere with the policy making of Third World countries. Nevertheless, it would be simplistic and downright incorrect to conclude that the post-Second World War newly independent countries remain devoid of independence. The political independence in these countries has not been transformed into comprehensive sovereignty of the people because of the domination of the bourgeoisie. However, it would not do to hold the simplistic view that the Third World countries remain devoid of independence. It is a wrong formulation on the part of the Maoists.

'THE CHINESE PATH': AN ARTIFICIAL CONSTRUCT

Ignoring Mao Zedong's postulate that the Chinese Revolution was a combination of the principle of Marxism-Leninism with the evolving reality of China, the Maoists talk of the Indian revolution following the Chinese path. They insist on aping the model followed in pre-Revolution China. The Maoists need to learn not just the history of pre-Revolution China but also the Indian reality. Revolution can hardly be cloned from country to country. Stalin had pointed out how theory becomes useless, devoid of practice.

Mao himself called such a deviation 'seeking to catch the sparrow with the eyes closed'. There are differences between the Chinese situation and the Indian reality. Apart from the differences existing in the unfolding of the colonial heritage of the two countries, differences exist in the realm of economy, political structure, and growth. The Maoists, by invoking pre-Revolution China as India's model patently ignore history. The Maoists would do worse than paying heed to the dictum of Mao Zedong during the height of the Sino-Soviet debate in 1960.

Mao had argued, in effect, that the party which was not able to analyse the situation evolving in its own country and would rather emulate experiences of another country without analysis was a hotchpotch of revisionism and sectarianism, and would never be regarded as a party driven by the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The CPI (M) believes that it would not do to mechanically follow the revolutionary experience of other countries without a scientific analysis, something that the Maoists revel in doing. One recalls that during the 1970s, the CPC had criticised the Naxalites for raising the slogan of 'China's Chairman in our Chairman', and thoughtlessly using such terms as 'liberated zones' in the Indian context. The Maoists do not learn from history, even from the party of Mao!

IGNORANCE ABOUT THE ELEMENT OF CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

Lenin had long ago characterised the parliamentary system as a scene of class struggle. Entangled in the web of what Lenin called 'left-wing communism', the Maoists deny India bourgeois democracy and dub as illusions institutions such as the parliament, assemblies, panchayats, and the entire electoral procedure. Their view is erroneous, lop-sided, and self-

contradictory. Marxists know that the character of class domination defines a State and its political character. The CPI (M) has the programmatic understanding that the Indian State represents a class rule of the big bourgeoisie and the big landlords, led by the former who indulge in cooperation with international finance capital.

In India, the bourgeois democratic revolution remains unfinished and the task is to establish real democracy. Yet, the fact can never be ignored that the parliamentary system has been a sign of progress for the masses in the sense that it has acted as a weapon for the extension of the democratic rights of the people. The democratic rights won have been the result of ceaseless struggle and do not represent gifts from above. Waves of popular struggles have overcome authoritarianism of the 1970s, the ousting of democratic governments, the clamping down of internal emergency, and the inroads of communal forces in government.

In countering the false claim of the Maoists that the parliamentary system is a complete illusion, one needs to point out that in a capitalist society, as Lenin had pointed, the parliamentary forum affords the communists opportunities to expose the system of capitalism. In addition, it would be downright foolhardy not to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the parliamentary structure and to further the struggle in and out of parliament. Elections are called electoral struggle because in the process, millions of people take part and the opportunity is created to expose the role played by the State, bourgeois politics, and the bourgeois parties. An opportunity is created to pull the people out of the fold of the bourgeois parties. However, as the CPI (M) has maintained consistently, the extra-parliamentary struggle cannot be supplanted by the parliamentary struggle, but has to be supplemented by it.

Why do the Maoists think, and on what objective basis, that the masses remain inert witnesses in the arena of parliamentary struggle? Why cannot the Maoists recall Lenin's saying that participation in the bourgeois democratic parliamentary system would go a long way in exposing the system before the masses and convincing them of the necessity for its removal. Will the Maoists learn from history?

STAYING AWAY FROM THE DAILY STRUGGLES OF THE PEOPLE

Declaring that there remained no alternative before a revolutionary party other than conduct of long-standing and armed people's war towards an armed peasant revolution, the Maoists talk only of guerrilla warfare, liberated zones, headquarters, capturing cities and identify these tasks as the only worthwhile revolutionary tasks. They aim, through performing these tasks, to capture state power.

The Maoists give great attention to military strategy and military tactics. They have, however, no time to spare for the task of enhancing the political consciousness of the people and of uniting them on the questions concerning politics, economy, and society. They ignore the importance of the trade union movement and the role the movement plays in enhancing the class-consciousness of the workers. Would they also turn their faces away from the land movement on the plea that without the completion of the democratic

revolution, such movements would not lead to comprehensive land reforms? How then do they propose to make the teeming million of India conscious, *sans* movements that stand opposed to the bourgeois-landlord policies, of the need for fundamental changes? Reliance on the armed might of a minuscule part of the people is Blanquism of the worst kind.

Mao Zedong wrote that the Communists must never be isolated from the majority of the people and must take cognisance of the total situation. The Maoists would fulminate against international finance capital but would not take part in the actual struggle taking place against it across the country, a struggle in which the CPI (M), other Left parties, and the TUs have played a stellar role. The Maoists have stayed away from the struggle—to what purpose? In *People's March*, Kisan has confessed that the Maoists have not been able to build up struggle against the forces of imperialism, neither in the rural areas nor in the cities and towns.

The confession reminds us of another confession by Charu Majumdar when he had lamented back in 1972 in a letter written to his wife that the involvement with the policy of annihilation, the anti-imperialist struggle had suffered. Kisan has also regretted the fact that the Maoists could not organise adequate response to the onslaught of the forces of communalism, in the struggle in which the CPI (M) and the Left parties play a commendable role.

DISTORTED EXPOSITION OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

In the worldview of the Maoists, democratic struggle and mass-political programmes have no place. They believe that the entire struggle of the new democratic revolution would be armed struggle with the guerrilla forces building up red bastions in the villages. They have devoted the bulk of the space in their document on the strategy and tactics of the Indian revolution to such guerrilla actions. It was the subsequently discredited CPC leader, Lin Biao, who had first propounded the theory that the Maoists have embraced. Lin had spoken of encircling the cities (i.e., the developed countries) by the villages (i.e., the developing world). Lin had also spoken of Mao's annihilation theory against the Japanese occupation army to mean that such action was necessary for the armed peasant revolution to succeed in the Third World. The Naxalites had lapped the theory up and were later being cautioned by the CPC about misinterpreting the annihilation theory and taking it out of context (and this was admitted by several Naxalite leaders of the 1970s in a published document).

The revolutionary path can never be one of conspiracy minus the objective and subjective conditions; there is no alchemy (as Marx noted in 1850) to bring about revolution. Making conspiracy the chief implement to bring about revolution is a sectarian and self-defeating notion. The Maoists are verily prey to this idea and in an obsessive manner.

It devolves on the Party of the working class to bring within its capabilities the entire range of complexities existing in the country where the revolutionary struggle is to be launched. It must also bring together as many allies as possible. The notions of united front and coalition rise out of this consideration. Lenin points out that there is need for a revolutionary party to bring into the fold mass allies out of the fold of the bourgeoisie even if such

allies are politically restless and are unfaithful, and offer only conditional support. To deny this is, according to Lenin, a form of crass failure to grasp the basic principles of scientific socialism. The Maoists are certainly victims to this folly. They are not able to understand the tiniest iota of the revolutionary path.

The Maoists appear obsessed with guerrilla warfare. We point out for their edification the conceptual framework on the same theme by Lenin. Lenin wrote that no party of the proletariat could consider guerrilla warfare the only path to adhere to. The guerrilla warfare must subserve the other modes of struggle and it must be enriched through a drive to advance the Socialist perception and organisation. The point to note is that Lenin had underlined this thesis in the case of every form of struggle, whether through strikes, through parliamentary form, or through newspapers.

Lenin explains that in a departure from the old forms of 'socialism', Marxism recognises the variegated forms of struggle, but the Maoists comprehensively reject this thesis. Their doings have inevitably created alienation from the mass of the people. The own initiative of the masses has suffered. This is the result of not attaching due importance to mass-political initiative.

Lenin is uncompromising in insisting that Marxism demands historical consideration while pondering the form of struggle. Any aberration here, Lenin pointed out, was a deviation from the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin said that 'to attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position'. This is something the Maoists are squarely guilty of all the way. Marxism does not approve of the 'thesis' that guerrilla warfare is the only viable path during the period of revolution, and that all other paths are unimportant and irrelevant.

Mao had identified the conditions and conditionalities in China for the unleashing of armed peasant revolution and of armed revolutionary zones. These are:

- In capitalist countries, the workers build up their strength through overt and 'legal' struggles while educating themselves; they advance through utilisation of such fora as legal struggles, parliament, and political and economic strike actions. In China, there was no parliament, and no scope for utilising a legal forum.
- The peasant economy of China was 'localised'.
- With a low degree of capitalist development, China did not experience a unified, countrywide capitalist economy.
- Warlords remained isolated and engaged in warfare with other warlords.
- With the imperialist forces slicing up China for control, there was frequent inter-imperialist clashes in China.
- There was lack of central political command in China and thus there was a lack of concomitant control in the administration and the army.

Considering the reality prevailing in India, the attempt to build up 'bases' in remote villages, to set up 'liberated zones', and to encircle cities is pure fantasy. How to deal with the central political authority and the powerful

army in the course of striving for a revolutionary social transformation does not concern the maoists. They do not see whether there are any circumstances which are compatible with the concept of armed struggle based on guerrilla warfare. None of the features like the capitalist development in India, the connectivity with the world economy, the experience of parliamentary democracy, socio-economic changes, the social position of the classes, the consciousness and lifestyle of the Indian people, the development of ideological instruments and media—are suited to guerrilla warfare on the basis of liberated zones.

Despite the weaknesses of mass struggles, advances have been registered in the case of both the urban and rural working classes and their organisations. Marxists regard momentum as the life force of matter. Considering the changes wrought in the Indian economy, society, politics, and politics, it would not be difficult to understand that the so-called 'guerrilla tactics' can create not permanent but transient flashes and can end up by harming the potential of greater mobilisation of forces and of greater struggles.

In his treatise *On Practice*, Mao Zedong wrote: 'We are opposed to die-hards in the revolutionary ranks whose thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances and has manifested itself historically as Right opportunism'. 'Their thinking is divorced from social practice, and they cannot march ahead to guide the chariot of society; they simply train behind, grumbling that it goes too fast and trying to drag it back or turn it in the opposite direction'.

The Maoist documents available with us describe the method of creating 'favourable circumstances'. They rely on the inner contradiction of the imperialist forces impacting the Indian ruling classes, creating political uncertainty and weakening administration. This will, according to the Maoists, lead to mass uprisings against the 'comprador ruling classes' and the police and the army will be affected. This, in turn, would lead to world war! If this is not day dreaming, what is?

CPI (M), in its Programme, has said:

The struggle to realise the aims of the people's democratic revolution through the revolutionary unity of all patriotic and democratic forces with the workers-peasants alliance at its core, is a complicated and a protracted one. It is to be waged in varying conditions in varying phases. Different classes, different strata within the same class, are bound to take different positions in these distinct phases of the development of the revolutionary movement. Only a strong Communist Party, which develops the mass movements and utilises appropriate united front tactics to achieve the strategic objective, can make use of these shifts and draw into its ranks these sections. Only such a party bringing within its fold the most sincere and sacrificing revolutionaries would be able to lead the mass of the people through the various twists and turns that are bound to take place in the course of the revolutionary movement. (Art 7.16)

The CPI (M) believes that the flourishing and development of mass-revolutionary struggle is the primary task at this stage. To a true Marxist, simply making loud proclamations of armed struggle can never become a pre-condition for establishing one's revolutionary credentials. Since neither

the working class nor the working masses would go in for violence on their own, what should be the stand of the Party of the working class? The CPI (M) Programme notes:

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) strives to achieve the establishment of people's democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means. By developing a powerful mass revolutionary movement, by combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle, the working class and its allies will try their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and to bring about these transformations through peaceful means. However, it needs always 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 orient their work that they can face up to all contingencies, to any twist and turn in the political life of the country. (Art 7.18)

THE REALITY

The Maoists guerrillas have stated that their task comprises providing encouragement to the masses for taking part in 'political and military programmes, including sabotage and annihilation of enemies'. The results are there for everybody to see.

Right from the earliest days of the Naxalite movement, the line of individual assassination has been adopted as a policy by the left sectarians. One has to pause and recall that on the eve of the arrest of Charu Majumdar, six Naxalite leaders, including Kanu Sanyal, Sourin Bose, C. Tejeswar Rao, and D. Nagabhusan Pattanayak, confessed that the CPC took great exception to the line of annihilation of the Naxalites. (This confession was later published in November 1972.) The CPC accused the Naxalites of mechanically following the people's war theory of Lin Biao, and pointed out that dipping the hand in the blood of a class enemy did not make a revolutionary Communist; on the other hand, it will ensure that the Party was no longer a Communist Party.

The left sectarians, including the PWG, the MCC and the CPI (Maoist), have indulged in mayhem over the years. Between 1991 and 2001, 2,077 people, mostly ordinary citizens, were killed in Naxalite-related violence. The method of killing is gruesome with people being burnt alive or smashed into smithereens by exploding crude or sophisticated devices.

In 2002, the Maoists killed 90 people, in 2003 the figure reads 136, in 2004 it was 70, and in 2005, 122. Despite the Maoists' penchant for identifying persons as 'police informers' before killing them, 80 per cent of those killed by them represented ordinary people who are not class enemies, even by Maoists criteria. Some of those killed were in fact members or supporters of rival Naxalite groups; this was internecine struggle, pure and simple.

In Bengal, the Maoists' forays include killing 12 CPI (M) workers and 17 police personnel. They have also exploded landmines, destroyed isolated buildings in remote areas, and have tried to spread terror among the village folk. Spreading thinly across the borders of Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, the Maoists have concentrated chiefly

if not solely on spreading terror and causing mayhem in the name of 'revolutionary ways'. They prefer if they can to build up contiguous areas as 'zones' in the areas where they operate.

Lately the rate of attrition among the left sectarian elements has been notable. In Andhra Pradesh, the rate of surrender by the PWG averaged over 550 per year. The decimation was also evident in Bihar and Jharkhand.

The Maoists utilise the increase of Maoist activities in neigh-bouring Nepal and the formation of a coordination committee of the South Asian Maoists to strengthen their terror tactics. They use the long and unguarded border between Bihar and Nepal to bring in illegal arms and to run training camps on both sides of the border. They keep in close touch with extremist outfits of Kashmir, the northeast India, and the LTTE from whom they get help with arms training. They may even have, as per reports published in the media in November 2004, links with the ISI of Pakistan.

However, the net political impact of the Maoists activities is very marginal and transient. For example, in Bihar and Jharkhand, ceiling surplus was neither taken away from the landlords nor redistributed among the landless and the rural poor. The chief source of income of the Maoists in the rural stretches is extracting levy from the landlords and the nouveaux rich of the villages. They appear far from interested in protecting the interests of the rural poor or in preserving natural resources.

On the other hand, the Maoists are linked to a large and widening network of dishonest traders and businessmen. In Chhattisgarh and in Orissa, the villagers have clashed repeatedly with the Maoists who are involved in racketeering of forest resources including *tendu* leaves and *babui* fibres. Using the power of the gun to establish sway over villages and villagers, the Maoists has effectively become a source not of inspiration but of fear for the rural people. The shotgun justice of the Maoists' mass courts is well documented.

The Maoists have also increasingly become the handmaiden of the bourgeois political parties. The Naxalite poet Varavara Rao has confessed before the advocates' committee about the links that the Maoists have with the Telugu Desam Party at the local level in particular. He has also said that both the Telugu Desam and the Congress have utilised the 'services' of the Maoists in exchange for lucre.

It was recently disclosed that a minister in the BJP-run Munda government in Jharkhand put to use the Maoists to win elections in exchange for a considerable sum of money. In Bihar, the adage goes that those who represent bourgeois parties during the daylight are Maoists by the night. The confession of a former state secretary of the PWG about the outfit being in hand-in-glove with the Trinamul Congress is another case in point in this regard.

DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

A running theme of the corporate media is that the Maoists could gain ground in Bengal because of lack of development. Each dastardly murder committed by the Maoists is being justified on the basis of 'lack of development'.

A look at the Maoist documents will make it amply clear that they remain in the villages not because they are determined to work for the interests of the tribal people and the rural masses. They have chosen the areas precisely because it suits their 'terrain theory' of guerrilla warfare. The calculation is to utilise the isolated nature of the terrain to carry out terroristic acts.

The Maoist documents spell out how they do not believe in development within the existing framework and they are also firm in their conviction that any slogan of 'partial development' for the poorer section of the rural masses is revisionist and a betrayal of the revolution. They also claim that to raise the slogan of development without armed might is to placate the ruling classes as their lackeys.

The principal aim of the corporate media in focussing attention on growth is to deny the rural growth and expansion under the Left Front government. To the bourgeois media, development means the widening of the scope for a luxurious lifestyle for the thin layer of the rich and the super rich. To the corporate media, then, the rise in the purchasing power of the capitalist, the top layer of the middle class, and the nouveaux rich of the rural belts represent development. The CPI (M) has a class outlook on development in the evolving socio-economic reality.

The struggle for development to us denotes the struggle waged by the mass of the people of the country for improvement in their standard of living. The question of development loses significance devoid of issues related to land reforms, redistribution of rural resources, wage, employment, education, and health. The CPI (M) has been carrying forward the struggle for development within the restrictions imposed by the bourgeois-landlord framework. Another countervailing factor has been the present stage of globalisation. Yet it is important to struggle for development because it is the Communist Party that can be the real ally of the masses in the struggle for a better life, and to increase the window of minimum opportunity.

The programme of the CPI (M) has made it clear that the 'Party will utilise the opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence governments pledged to carry out a programme of providing relief to the people and strive to project and implement alternative policies within the existing limitations'.

The developmental perspective of the Left Front government has resulted in 15 lakh rural landless getting land. Five lakh families who have received land and patta documents belong to the scheduled tribes. The right of the sharecropper is well established here. The role of the panchayats has seen the correlation of forces in the rural belts change. In the urban areas, the right of the workers, the bustee dwellers, and the employees-middle class has been extended to the extent it is possible to do so. The Left Front government has progressed while establishing the difference it has in the policy outlook vis-à-vis other state governments.

However, no one should labour under the illusion that in circumstances nationwide where the evil effects of the capitalist economic system and of liberalisation mount every day, this state will remain free of the adversities just because there is a Left Front government in office. The document entitled 'Left Front Government and Our Tasks' adopted at the 21st State Conference of the CPI (M) states that in the backdrop of the national scenario,

the generation of income in the districts has fallen behind that of Kolkata and its neighbourhood. 4,612 villages have been identified as very backward. 46 lakh people live in great poverty.

The document also notes how unemployment has become a serious and worrying issue. In the rural areas, thus, the number of the landless goes on increasing. The agricultural production has gone down compared to the 1980s and the 1990s. The scheduled tribes and scheduled castes belong to the poorest sections of the people in the rural areas. Malnutrition in the rural areas is a worry. In 18 per cent of the villages, supply of potable water could not be arranged.

To tackle the situation, the Left Front government has brought about changes in the priority of policy and implementation. The work of developing the backward areas is being given additional stress. The development of education, health, and self-reliance has been given the shape and character of mass drives. Industrialisation is viewed in the perspective of employment-generation. The CPI (M) never loses the perspective that development is an integral part of class struggle, and that it plays an active role in changing the correlation of class forces.

Involved in day-to-day activities of a developmental nature, the CPI (M) never shies away from identifying its points of weaknesses in order to enhance its class-conscious initiative. The Maoists are never willing to do this because of the nature of politics they cling fatuously to. They stand against developmental work, especially in the backward areas. They militate against the setting up of roads, water supply, health centres, and child education centres. They use explosives and guns to prevent development from happening. They swim against the tide, isolated and alienated from the masses. They want to encroach on forest resources from a purely commercially exploitative point of view. They fear that development will sweep away their pockets of isolated 'terrain'. The difference between the CPI (M) and the CPI (Maoist) is one of politics, and the question of development is a part of it.

The Maoists are a part of the social unrest generated by contemporary capitalism. The unrest is ideologically in favour of the status quo although in its outer exposition, it spreads anti-status quo thoughts and concepts. In these times, adventurism, extreme right reaction based on nationality and religion groups, terrorist activities, and anarchism can appear in various forms. Dialectically, and ideologically, all this emanates from contemporary capitalism. Each of these phenomena shares the same class basis. Rather than from the class-conscious struggles of working class, they emerge out of the petty bourgeois class compulsions. Thus Lenin:

A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms, and even a frenzied infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another—all this is common knowledge. However, a theoretical or abstract recognition of these truths does not at all rid revolutionary parties of old errors, which always crop up at unexpected occasions, in somewhat new forms, in a hitherto unfamiliar garb or surroundings, in an unusual—a more or less unusual—situation.

There is no mistake in identifying the Maoist as an anarchist force.