

VI

'Left'-Opportunist Line Means Liquidation of Party as Centralized Organization

IT IS THE MISFORTUNE OF SOME PEOPLE TO COMPLAIN that they are misrepresented and distorted when they are brought face to face with the logical conclusions of their line. The 'Lefts' fall in this category. We will deal with their complaints in this respect later on. Meanwhile, let us pursue what they offer to us.

Last time we had shown that they neglect the immediate task of organizing the movement as it develops so that it can be taken to a higher phase. They talk about a higher phase here and now without relation to mass experience.

It should be stated at the beginning that it is the bounden duty of every Communist to develop new forms of struggle, recognize them as they arise and study them. If the 'Lefts' had studied these forms and made a sober analysis for the Party, had initiated discussion on them inside Party units, they would have been perfectly right and contributed to the understanding of the new developments which undoubtedly are taking place. In that case they also would have learnt where their error came in and what is correct in their advocacy.

FORMS OF STRUGGLE

Lenin who mastered all forms of struggle gave a brilliant summing up of the Marxist position in relation to forms of struggle. He lashed out at those in Russia who did not understand the armed struggle, that was developing in the wake of the 1905 revolution, ridiculed all those who would impose only known forms of struggle on the movement and laid down the following basic propositions :

Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle. In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of Socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle and it does not 'concoct' them, but only generalizes, organizes, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognizing as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematizers' in the seclusion of their studies. . . .

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national, cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal form of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. 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 moment at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position (Lenin, "Guerrilla Warfare", *Collected Works*, vol. 11, pp.214-15).

Lenin then supports, on the basis of concrete developments and the situation, the guerrilla struggle waged in Russia at that time and attacks those who failed to understand its implications in the background of the given situation.

This is the Marxist-Leninist outlook. Reject no forms of struggle; study every form; apply that which at a given stage produces maximum results to take the movement to the next stage.

STATE OF MOVEMENT, MOOD OF MASSES

In his resolution on Fighting Guerrilla Operations, submitted to the Unity Congress of the RSDLP, Lenin, while stating that the guerrilla operation of the squads associated with it should be regarded in principle as permissible and "advisable in the present period", laying stress on several important aspects such as training leaders of the masses of workers at a time of insurrection; permitting seizing of funds belonging to the enemy, i.e., autocratic Government, to meet the needs of insurrection, laid down the fifth clause as follows: "that fighting guerrilla operations must be conducted under the control of the Party, and, furthermore, in such a way as to prevent the forces of the proletariat from being frittered away and to ensure that the state of the working class movement and the mood of the broad masses of the given locality are taken into account" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, p. 154).

Once more we find that even in a period when in the wake of the 1905 revolution and the reprisals following it, armed guerrilla warfare was widespread and was supported by Lenin, he cautioned that it should be conducted under the control of the Party and in such a way that the forces of the proletariat were not frittered away and that the state of the working class movement and the mood of the broad masses of the given locality is taken into account. This is the gist of the Leninist out-

look. Develop forms of struggle taking into account the state of the working class movement and the mood of the broad masses.

It is, therefore, correct to consider forms of struggle, new forms of struggle, militant forms of struggle. But to advocate them irrespective of the state of mass consciousness, irrespective of the fact whether the needs of the movement are throwing them up or not, whether they are the main weapon of mobilizing the masses at a given stage of the movement, and whether the other forms have exhausted their possibilities of attracting the masses at a given stage, leads to errors and tactics divorced from the actual struggle of the masses.

TRADE UNION STRUGGLES

In this respect our 'Lefts' may once more turn to Lenin with profit. In the same tactical platform for the Unity Congress in which Lenin supports guerrilla operations in the wake of the 1905 uprising, he does not forget to ask the Party to form trade unions.

The resolution drafted by Lenin reads :

Whereas (1) the Social-Democratic Party has always regarded the economic struggle as a component of the proletarian class struggle; (2) the experience of all capitalist countries shows that the most advisable form of organization of the working class for the economic struggle is that of broad trade unions; (3) at the present time a general striving is observed among the masses of the workers in Russia to associate in trade unions; (4) the economic struggle can bring about a lasting improvement in the conditions of the masses of the workers and a strengthening of their truly class organization only if this struggle is properly combined with the political struggle of the proletariat;

We are of the opinion, and propose that the Congress should agree: (1) that all Party organizations must promote the formation of non-Party trade unions and induce all Party members to join the trade unions in their respective

trades; (2) that the Party must exert every effort to educate the workers who belong to trade unions in the spirit of a broad understanding of the class struggle and the socialist aims of the proletariat; by its activities to win a virtually leading position in these unions; and lastly to ensure that these unions, under certain conditions, come into direct association with the Party—however, without at all expelling non-Party members from their ranks” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, pp. 160-61).

Suffice to prove that even in the years of revolution (Lenin describes 1905-7 as years of revolution), Lenin thought that the auxiliary form of trade union struggle had rich possibilities.

DOUBLE ERROR OF ‘LEFTS’

Thus the ‘Lefts’ here are committing a double error. In the first place, they are advocating forms of struggle in isolation from the needs of the movement, its consciousness, and secondly, they argue as if all other forms of struggle have exhausted their possibility and to use them is just revisionism.

To what idiotic length this ‘Left’-opportunism can go is seen in the following. A certain publication, writing on the lessons of the tram strike in Calcutta in 1965, solemnly declared: “Today, if no organized force counter to the force of the ruling class is built up, then a real mass movement cannot even be started, much less can it be carried forward, because at this stage of the national crisis, the question of power faces the movement even if the movement advances one or two steps. This has been clearly proved by our experience.”

Here, virtually all difference between a partial struggle and the struggle for power is being obliterated, every partial struggle is being equated with the struggle for power, and logically the remedy proposed is organization of force. The task of organizing the class, its trade unions, is being replaced by the task of organizing force to meet the force of the State. There is no doubt that the violence of the State in daily struggles is increasing. There are mass arrests, there are lathi-charges and shootings, there are police barbarities and atrocities, there are besides goonda-

gangs who stab the workers’ leaders, and attack in a mass the families of the working class.

All this has to be counteracted. Workers’ defence corps and other organizations have to be built. And yet they can be built successfully only to the extent that the class organizations of the working class are built, its class consciousness is roused and developed. Without this class struggle, this class consciousness, no organization for anything can be built. But that is precisely what is underestimated in the above statement.

An organization of force to counter the State is to be built even before the movement starts, apart and in isolation from the movement. Presumably an organization of a select band is to be built and this is to replace the direct class organization of the working class. No doubt, as the struggle deepens, the questions of State violence will occupy a more prominent place in daily struggles. But no organization can be built apart from the class struggle and class organizations. Evidently, when all legality disappears, a quite different situation about methods of mobilization, etc., comes into existence.

NEGLECT OF ACTUAL STRUGGLES

Thus, under the guise of fighting State violence under the excuse that in every struggle the question of State power arises—by which they really mean that the question of State violence arises—all that is being indirectly suggested is neglect of the actual mass struggle at the level at which it stands. It is virtually argued as if the partial struggles, the trade union struggles, have lost all possibilities in relation to the organization of the mass consciousness to a higher level and they must be replaced by organization of force.

This same outlook is evident in another document. How does this document tackle the question of guiding the mass struggles? What have they to offer to the Party in respect of this vital sector where the masses, even the most backward sections, are coming to consciousness? These gentlemen talk about a real democratic revolution to be brought about by intense mass struggles under the leadership of the working class. They say that the main condition for the establishment of a People’s

Democratic Revolution is the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry. So far so good.

Now listen : "To achieve this objective it is urgently necessary for us to win over as quickly as possible the masses in both urban and rural areas in support of revolution through a systematic revolutionary plan of action, not to stage all-India uprisings. But the key to victory in a revolution is the leadership of the proletariat. It is, therefore, our task to establish Party bases among workers and in working class organizations, in all the main industrial centres, in transport, and lay the Party's proletarian basis and character, founded on militant and tested worker cadres. We must also build powerful working class movements and organizations."

WORKING CLASS ORGANIZATION

This is their only reference to the class organizations of the working class: "We must also build powerful . . .", etc. Thank you, gentlemen. But that itself shows your complete bankrupt outlook, your failure to understand that in the coming months millions have to first pass through the experience of these organizations before they reach a higher form of struggle.

Now, understand the passage very clearly. They want to win over the masses in support of revolution. How? Not by leading the class struggles when they are breaking out; not by organizing class organizations. (These are mentioned later on—we should also build working class organization.) The support to revolution is to be secured "through a systematic revolutionary plan of action" which is contrasted to staging of all-India uprising. This revolutionary plan of action is not all-India uprising; nor is it building of powerful working class organizations which are mentioned later. Once more you come to the old mutton—organization, as they call it—of a select band.

This becomes further clear from the following: "The key to a victory in a revolution is the leadership of the working class." That, of course, is true. How is it to be achieved? "It is our task to establish Party bases among the workers, in all the main industrial centres and in working class organizations," etc. How does working class leadership of the movement arise by establi-

shing Party bases among the workers, etc.?

This is possible only when these Party bases are able to link themselves with the mass of workers through their mass organizations, through direct participation in the struggles, by leading and guiding that struggle, by ceaselessly struggling for working class unity. Only through this the mass of workers becomes conscious of its political responsibilities.

The struggle for working class hegemony goes on under the guidance of the Party, but the class as a whole is not brought to the position of hegemony unless the Party intervenes in every struggle giving it a political shape and direction. And in this struggle in which the Party must intervene, in which it must give its guidance, trade union struggle occupies an important position, and a very important position in the initial stages.

That is why the Marxist-Leninist Party must devote the most careful consideration to these initial forms of struggle and must guide it into revolutionary channels. That is why developing a correct tactic of the trade union struggle, of uniting the working class and isolating the reformists and other bourgeois variants of leadership is an essential part of the Party's struggle to develop the hegemony of the working class.

Lenin said: "The trade unions were a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, inasmuch as they marked a transition from the workers' disunity and helplessness to the rudiments of class organization. When the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the highest form of proletarian class organization, began to take shape (and the Party will not merit the name until it learns to weld the leaders into one indivisible whole with the class and the masses) the trade unions inevitably began to reveal certain reactionary features, a certain craft narrow-mindedness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc. However, the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the Party of the working class" (Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism, Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 50).

Lenin understood the limitations of the trade unions and yet he considered them important. Even when the trade union

movement is illegal, the Party of the working class cannot fail to assess its importance and shirk its responsibility to guide it.

This understanding is precisely what is lacking in the line of the 'Lefts'. A revolutionary plan of action as distinguished from an uprising is their main or only instrument to win over the majority of the people. For that they would set up Party groups among workers. Among the also-rans is building of working class organizations. There is not a word about guiding them, nor stress on their importance. There is no thought devoted to the present condition of the trade union movement and the struggle for unity. In one sentence they have disposed of the entire tasks and Party's role in the trade unions, the class organizations of the working class; and apart from them, in isolation from them, they seek to develop hegemony of the working class by means of a systematic plan of revolutionary action.

Here you have got the real physiognomy of the 'Left' phrasemonger who abandons the real struggle for this or that form. After all this talk about their new vision, about organization of force as the panacea for everything, our 'Left'-doctrinaires say: "What method should we adopt to facilitate and extend all over the country the revolutionary tide, the murmur of which can be undeniably heard? About this we can say in general that we should organize mass struggles and campaigns (oh, how revisionist!) on popular grievances and political issues and extend them further."

Of course, it is not their business to enlighten anyone how the struggles should be conducted, how they should be led. They think this blessing is enough. And they again come to their main doctrine: "What is further required in order to give support and extend movements is organization, more organization", and by organization we know what they mean. Turn wherever you will, whenever they are forced to mention mass struggles they hasten to add that their reliance is on the form of struggle and nothing else.

In regard to peasant struggles and organization, they show the same outlook. They are right, however, when they stress the importance and basic character of the struggle in rural areas as distinguished from urban areas; that the former can keep a protracted resistance alive and ensure safety of the latter.

They also mention the poor peasants, etc., and have no word to say as to how to break the grip of the wrong sections on the peasant movement, how to isolate the main enemies, neutralize the vacillators. The organization of force will take care of all that.

HYPOCRICY AND DOUBLE-TALK

Having thus successfully liquidated every auxiliary form of struggle—trade union, kisan, etc.—having paid only lip homage to it, and having advocated reliance only on the form of struggle they advocate, these gentlemen declare: "We want to make it clear again that we are discussing here the general perspective and direction of the Indian revolution; we are not giving a call for any special kind of action. Only workers and Party organizations having active connections with the popular movements in different parts of the country are fit to decide in a particular objective situation the plan and time for special action. The outlook referred to in the programme of action implies active efforts to initiate this action and along with this knowledge of the tactics of revolutionary people's war."

They are not giving any call; but they want local organizations to act according to it. They are not giving any call; but this outlook should imply active efforts to initiate the action—the special action, if you please. Can hypocrisy and double-talk go further?

And once more they demand that, without the Party having come to the conclusion that certain forms are immediately necessary or permissible, individual units should have the right to embark upon special action. This is their idea of the Party—a federation of autonomous groups, each of whom has the liberty to decide the character of the situation and form of struggle without central guidance and permission. This is not Communism but open anarchist disruption.

SABOTAGE OF THE PARTY

Their outlook demands liquidation of the Party as a centralized organization; liquidation of all auxiliary forms of struggle—all of which must sabotage the process of the development of the

revolutionary movement. Sabotage the Party from within first when it is necessary that the Party should move in a big way to take charge of the developing struggles ; denounce all auxiliary forms of struggle just when every new link of the Party with the masses is vital for the advance ; and achieve all this by pretending to advocate revolutionary forms of struggle—that is the line of these gentlemen.

The difference is not between militant and non-militant forms of struggle ; the difference is between those who want to take the masses from their present state to a higher phase of struggle and those who indulge in verbiage forgetting the basic task of class alignment and leading the class battles as they are developing.

At the same time it must be realized that the Party also is not free from weaknesses. The Polit Bureau has stated that revisionism is still the main danger inside the Party. If the weaknesses had been singled out for rectification, none would have objected. But instead of that, the 'Left' opportunists are developing a line which has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism. The Party's weaknesses are mentioned in the various documents and they are being corrected. We will see about them later. □

