



A criticism of the Indian Naxalite movement

Naxalites on the march



THE INDIAN and Ceylonese middle class are bewildered by the capitalist crisis and are seeking to direct the working class to commit suicide according to an article by Charu Mashumdar, a leader of the Naxalbari movement.

The article was published by a Ceylonese political group called 'Peradiga Sulanga'—East Wind. The pamphlet urged workers to give up their class struggle and to join the rural peasants in an armed fight.

The Indian Naxalbari movement and their Ceylonese sympathizers do not belong to the working-class movement founded by Marx and Engels.

They belong to the petty bourgeoisie who broke away from the working class because of the defeats faced by the working class due to Stalinism's treachery.

The task of these petty-bourgeois movements is to adapt themselves empirically to the so-called radical forces.

They reject the revolutionary tasks of the working class and evade the struggle to break it from the political grip of the Stalinists and the Social Democrats and to lead it to achieve political power.

These revisionists now accept theories which were claimed to be the experiences of the Chinese Stalinists.

Synthesized

These theories have been synthesized from the so-called Chinese experiences of isolated guerrilla struggles based on the peasantry.

These guerrilla struggles occurred after 1927, because of the defeats of the Chinese proletariat brought about by the betrayal of the revolution by the Stalinists.

Following the capture of state power in the late 1940s by the Chinese Stalinist party under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, these revisionists try to develop a new theory for the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Lenin, Menshevism and the revolutionary party

by Keerthi Balasuriya

THE FIGHT of the Naxalbaris against the Indian capitalist government and the pro-Moscow Communist Party pinpoints the danger to the working class of the Utopian, adventurist and petty-bourgeois policies and methods of such terrorist groups.

We reproduce a criticism of the main ideas of the Naxalbari movement—the pro-Chinese agrarian movement—in India by a leader of the Revolutionary Communist League of Ceylon, part of the International Section of the Fourth International.

The theory 'from the villages to the towns', which is called the rule of the Chinese revolution, was not an outcome of a struggle for Marxism, but a result of an empirical reaction to a specific class situation in China by the Mao leadership.

The Chinese CP was forced to adopt this position because of the defeats the working class had to face as a result of the policies of Stalin and the Comintern in 1927 and because of the Japanese occupation of the cities.

Comintern betrayals

It was not where the Chinese revolutions of 1927 and 1949 were started which were decisive, but the policies according to

which they were brought about. The important political question evaded by those who are interested in whether the struggle was started in villages or towns, is the policy of the Chinese CP.

It had to withdraw to the rural areas because of the defeats it faced as a result of their merging with the Kuomintang of the national bourgeoisie. Even in the late 1940s their effort was to join hands with the Kuomintang.

That the CP was pushed to a position to lead a struggle independent of the capitalist class was due to the rejection of a coalition with the Kuomintang. This made the 1949 victory possible.

The Chinese working class which was defeated in 1927 was not a disarmed class. The Spanish directly against the struggle of Civil War of 1936-1939 not because it was without arms.

The major cause for the defeats was that the working class was not independent from the capitalist class.

Evaded

This is the question to which Marxists must give attention in building revolutionary movements within these countries.

This question is evaded by Mashumdar and his sympathizers. Instead of facing the question of breaking the working class from the ideological, political and organizational ties it has with the

capitalist class, they show the working class a way to liquidate itself among the peasantry.

The task of building socialist consciousness and leadership among workers by defeating capitalist trade union consciousness is shown by them to be useless!

They say: 'Our task is not to organize trade unions. Not to bother about the appointments of trade union officials'. This is directly against the struggle of Marxists to defeat trade union consciousness among workers.

What Lenin stressed in his thesis to the Second Conference of the Communist International was the need to take the trade unions under a communist leadership. (Lenin, 'Collected Works', Vol. 31, p. 191.)

Back turned on workers

Lenin stressed this point because it is impossible even to talk about a dictatorship of the proletariat without separating the working class from the capitalist class.

Mashumdar says:

'We should not prevent the workers who try to organize a trade union where they do not have one. Trade union struggles must be launched by ordinary workers. But our party cadres must not intervene in those struggles.' (Our emphasis.)

The complete opposite of Mashumdar's policy was that which Lenin outlined and practised in 1898 in preparing the foundation for the Bolshevik Party which led the Russian working class to power in 1917.

He based himself on Marxism and fought to lead the working class, which is the revolutionary class in modern society, to achieve power.

Mashumdar has turned his back on the working class and has replaced a Marxist class analysis of the present situation with petty-bourgeois illusions.

He says: 'Accordingly he [the worker] is inclined to stay in the towns instead of sacrificing everything and going to the rural areas to merge with the peasants to take part in rural revolutionary struggles.'

Eliminate

The task of their party is to eliminate this inclination and somehow send the workers to villages. Mashumdar puts it forward in this way:

'There is another thing which we did not do: we did not kindle the pride of the workers.'

Then he explains what will happen when the pride of the workers is kindled.

'If he (the worker) loses his job through pride he would become a good party organizer in the town or he would go to the villages to join the armed struggles.'!!

This perspective to create unemployment among the working class in a situation where the employment, wages and conditions of labour of the workers are threatened by capitalism will only succeed in demoralizing and atomizing the working class.

Mashumdar says that expulsion from jobs favours revolution because it helps to send workers to the villages.

But Lenin stressed the dire necessity to intervene in the day-to-day struggles of the working class and fought vehemently against middle-class theories to send the workers to their villages.

Lenin showed the importance of including the 14 demands of the peasantry in the programme of the revolutionary party and to agitate for it.

At the same time he was strongly against the idea of merging the working class with the peasantry, which is a petty-bourgeois formation.

Episodic

All gains of the Naxalbari movement in India during the past period are temporary and episodic. These gains will be destroyed if the Indian working class does not take power.

The Naxalbari movement in India does not fight to establish the leadership of the working class over the peasantry of India to achieve state power, but to contain the working class within the reformist petty-bourgeois needs of the peasantry.

This will inevitably lead the Indian working class and peasant movements to defeat and to the perpetuation of capitalism.



Lenin

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China, 1927: Workers storm a shop in Hankow



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# FILMS

## 'Start the Revolution Without Me'

REVIEWED BY HUGH SPENCER

AS THE titles come up on the screen at the beginning of the film they are accompanied by a background of old movie clips showing dashing young heroes of the Douglas Fairbanks Jr, Errol Flynn variety rescuing innocent damsels in distress, from dastardly villains of the Basil Rathbone ilk.

There are sword fights on balconies, swinging on chandeliers, leaping from trees onto the passing galloping horse, in fact all those feats of extraordinary courage that period-drama films of the 1930s and 1940s were crammed full of—feats that would cripple the 'ordinary' man or put a swift end to his sex life in any one of those heroic leaps.

These titles give us our first hint of what we can expect from the film itself.

When Orson Welles then appears to introduce the extraordinary tale of the events that took place at the palace of Louis XVI on the eve of the French Revolution 1789 he does so in a way that is almost certainly a send-up of Alfred Hitchcock introducing one of his own films.

### Precarious

What I think is significant is that Hitchcock's ability to tell a thrilling story through his films relies on stepping a very precarious path between the dramatic and the melodramatic; this he does with superb effect.

But what if the line is overstepped?

The result is usually absurd and hysterically funny, as is demonstrated in many of the late-night movies of the 'Scarlet Pimpernel' variety.

It would seem that this is what the film sets out to do consciously, to parody all the old tricks and situations exploited in these old films.

To execute this Bud Yorkin has lined up a formidable cast of comic actors and comedians led by Donald Sutherland, of 'M\*A\*S\*H' fame.

### Identity

The film takes the classic theatrical situation of mistaken identity.

An aristocrat and peasant both arrive at a doctor's house with very pregnant wives who both give birth to identical sets of twins. Inevitably the doctor, with the aid



Donald Sutherland

Gene Wilder

SHOWING AT THE WARNER LEICESTER SQUARE



# Knocking the old tricks

of his inevitably dim-witted assistants, mix the children up so that the fathers each receive one of each pair.

This first meeting between arrogant aristocrat and gruff swearing peasant sets up a good cliché relationship between these two classes that is repeated throughout the film.

The 'aristo' demands that his wife is tended first. So the peasant threatens him (in peasant language, of course) with nine pounds of lead cosh. The 'aristo' rejoins with a threat of three feet of cold steel. The unperturbed peasant comes back a threat of ten inches of raw blade, this is met by the eloquent aristo with one pound of lead shot.

But the cunning peasant returns with four foot of clean

carpet which he whips away tripping his opponent who discharges his pistol into the air.

### Rolling

So the situation is set rolling with the children growing into Charles Couper (a reluctant revolutionary, whose real brother is Jacques de Cisy, perverted aristocrat, but fine swordsman) and Claude Couper (likewise downtrodden peasant, whose sympathetic character is matched by the paranoia of his real brother, Count Philippe de Cisy, a man infatuated with his dead, stuffed falcon, his wife and a flock of sheep).

As is to be expected, a situation is evolved to allow the sword playing aristocrats to be taken for the reluctant

revolution peasants.

It is out of this confusion and contradiction that all the old cinema tricks are turned into extremely funny, high camp gags.

A good example of this is when, at the court ball, all the 'conspiratorial aristocrats' pass notes to each other asking friends to kill enemies.

### Fever pitch

This reaches fever pitch, and out of the chaos a note is passed to Jacques de Cisy, who is really Charles Couper, which, when opened says 'Hello, handsome'.

The reason behind the complexity of the plot and situations is to take all the melodramatic clichés that we are familiar with in old films over

into the absurd where they can be dealt with and yet at the same time fully enjoyed by the audience.

In this, the film is highly successful.

But, at the same time, whilst redundant ideas about film-making and film content were getting a severe lampooning, the techniques of high camp, professional 'in' jokes and the form of self parody are themselves rapidly becoming hack-nied.

This was suggested by the choice of title which really had little to do with the film itself, but was there merely to draw box-office.

The same, I think, can be said for the whole choice of period.

While it is specifically noted

as being France on the verge of the 1789 revolution, the choice is really quite arbitrary and does not in any way assist or divert from the intention of the director to 'have a go' at the old forms of cinema.

### 'Knocking'

One of the most enjoyable pieces of 'knocking' is the way it deals with the problem that old films have in successfully resolving complicated plots and tying up loose ends.

When the film finally returns to modern day, for Orson Welles to give an explanatory epilogue, he starts by saying: 'Here started one of the most extraordinary pages of history . . .', but is allowed to get no further because somebody off-set shoots him!

## IMPORTANT READING

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## behind THE NEWS

# Under the shadow of John Davies' hammer

ABOUT 900 companies could be sold to private enterprise when the Tories start hiving-off parts of the nationalized industries later this year.

So far only the 'ancillary activities' of coal, gas, electricity, steel, railways and the Post Office have fallen under the shadow of John Davies' hammer.

### Hiving off

These have total assets of £400m, or about 4 per cent of the total assets employed throughout the nationalized sector.

Hiving off could be taken beyond ancillaries, though economists argue that this would have disastrous consequences because the basic units of plant in all six key industries could not be chopped up and run separately without drastic efficiency losses.

Of the 31 general categories of ancillary activities likely to go, only seven are not showing a net profit.

### Handover

The Post Office could lose Giro and the National Data Processing Service, both of which have made money since they were set up in 1967 and 1968 respectively.

By far the largest jackpot of services belongs to the National Coal Board which employs in them net fixed assets of £116m.

The sacking of Lord Hall from the Post Office and the demise of 'King Coal' Robens from the NCB have removed the key obstacles to the profiteers' rape of these industries.

Lord Melchett of the British Steel Corporation is almost certainly next for the chopping



The Gas Board: Next for the chopping block?

block to pave the way for the Tory handover of the Corporation's special steels division with assets of £150m and an annual turnover of £230m.

BSC has other profitable ancillary activities, including chemicals and plastics, wire and wire products, pipework engineering, concrete pipes and bricks.

The Gas and Electricity Councils and Boards administer rich pickings through the sale of appliances and through contracting.

### Profitable

Even British Rail has something to offer the capitalist shopping around for profitable businesses.

Shipping is relatively booming and hotels, harbours and engineering workshops are keeping in the black.

The fact that almost all these activities are profitable gives the lie to the deliberately fostered Tory myth that nationalized industries are inefficient.

On the whole they have a better record of productivity increases than in the private sector where, in any case, as Heath is fond of saying, even firms with household names are in trouble.

Nor it is likely that the proposed sales will stimulate competition.

### Exchange

On the contrary if a nationalized concern sells a subsidiary to a firm already in the field this will limit competition and if it is not involved it will be a case of simply exchanging masters.

There is only one reason for the Tory decision to hive off, confirmed by Sir John Eden a week ago.

That is to hand over profits to private capitalists. With the diversification of the nationalized industries into growth areas such as North Sea Gas they have ceased to be the white elephants they were when the state took them over.

### Maximize

The alternative to hiving off—selling shares in state companies along the lines of BP—would continue to leave all the crucial investment and sales decisions out of the hands of the capitalists who must control the whole process of command if they are to maximize their profits through judicious planning.



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