

Peking and the Indian Communist Movement

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When in October 1949 the Communists seized power in Peking, they believed that their victory was the signal for a series of revolutions in underdeveloped regions of the world. Two weeks after, Mao Tse-tung in a message to Ranadive, General secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI), expressed the hope that under the leadership of the "brave" CPI a "free (i.e. Communist) India will one day emerge in the socialist and people's democratic family"¹.

Already in the summer of 1949 a section of the CPI turned toward Peking for advice. A group of Andhra leaders advocated Mao's New Democracy as a "guidance" for the CPI because "our revolution in many respects differs from the classical Russian revolution and to a great extent similar to that of the Chinese revolution"². What the Andhra leaders meant was that, while the Chinese revolution had special significance for the CPI, the Russian revolution was principally an urban one so that the Communists in India could not draw any lessons from it. Nevertheless, this view was strongly rejected by Ranadive because, in his words, Mao's New Democracy was "anti-Marxist", "reactionary" and "counter-revolutionary"³. But a year later, in 1950, the CPI apologized for Ranadive's insult to Mao and upheld the Chinese revolution as the "model for colonial world"⁴. Fourteen years later under the Soviet pressure, the pro-Moscow CPI reversed its previous views about the Chinese revolution and upheld Ranadive's attack on Mao in 1949⁵.

Emboldened by CPI's approval of the Chinese model for India, the Chinese Communists extended their moral support to the Communist insurrection in Telengana. The Jen-min Jih-pao claimed that the Telengana uprising was the result of the "triumph of Mao Tse-tung's thought"⁶. At the trade union conference of Asian and Australasian countries in Peking in November 1949, Liu Shao-chi referred to the "armed struggle" in Telengana for the "emancipation" of India. But the manifesto of the conference did not include India as a country engaged in armed struggle⁷. At that time the Soviet Union also urged the Indian Communists to follow Peking's lead in "liberating India"⁸.

¹ Jen-min Jih-pao, November 20, 1949.

² Communist II, Bombay, June-July 1949, p. 83.

³ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

⁴ Ibid., III, July-August 1950, pp. 1-26.

⁵ New Age (Weekly), New Delhi, August 30, 1965, p. 8.

⁶ Jen-min Jih-pao, December 2, 1949.

⁷ New China News Agency, November 23, 1949.

⁸ For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy, Bucharest, January 27, 1950.

By the fall of 1951 the Soviet Union, however, began to play down the importance of the Chinese revolution to the CPI. The CPI leadership was reorganized; Rao was replaced by Ajoy Ghosh, who was generally considered as pro-Soviet. The Chinese Communists did not make any attempt to influence the CPI openly and played their hand with circumspection. The Chinese Communists realized that they could not entrench themselves in the CPI as long as the Soviet Union was in a position to maintain a tight control of the Indian Communist movement. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union failed to eradicate the Chinese influence among CPI members.

In early 1956, when Khrushchev denounced Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the CPI promptly looked to the Chinese Communists for guidance. Ajoy Ghosh advised the Indian Communists to study the Chinese statement "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" dealing with the question of Stalin as a "guide" for the solution of "troubles and doubts" that CPSU's action had brought them. He, however, asked the party members not to give way to "cynicism" regarding the Soviet Union and the CPSU and insisted that the CPSU "remains the leading party of the international movement"⁹. His efforts to persuade the Indian Communists to continue to regard the CPSU as the fountainhead of the world Communist movement were unsuccessful. Many CPI leaders began to look to the Chinese for guidance. Namboodiripad, a leading Indian Communist, promptly repudiated the Soviet Union as the "center" of world Communism, saying that "there is no centralized international Communist leadership. No Communist party in the world looks upon itself or is looked upon by others as all-wise leadership which guides other parties; every party desires to hear from other parties as to how they are carrying on their struggle; every party tries to learn from the experiences of others."¹⁰ Namboodiripad's statement made clear the entire policy of the CPI toward the CPSU. What he wanted to explain was that the CPI now regarded the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as the co-leader of the world Communist movement. They were determined to learn from the Chinese experiences no matter what the CPSU leadership thought about it. This view was further confirmed by Ghosh who hailed Mao's statement "On the Correct Handling of Contradiction Among the People" as a "document of extreme importance". He even urged the East European and Soviet leaders to study Mao's statement because it was a "weapon to strengthen the solidarity of the world Communist movement"¹¹. Thereafter, the CPI began to give its support to the CCP.

In the spring of 1959 when the Tibetan revolt broke out, the CPI took an open pro-Peking attitude. It defended Communist China for suppressing the Tibetan uprising and supported the Chinese charges that "the commanding center of the rebellion" was in India's Kalimpong. The CPI also took Nehru to task for his sympathy with the Tibetan people and assailed him for his "heavily biased statements"¹².

⁹ V. B. Karnik, ed., *Indian Communist Party Documents 1930–1956*, The Democratic Research Service, Bombay, 1957, pp. 337–344.

¹⁰ *New Age (Weekly)*, New Delhi, October 21, 1956, pp. 8–9 and 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, June 30, 1957, p. 1. Also see *New Age (Weekly)*, May 18 and June 1, 1958, pp. 12 and 15 respectively for further CPI's support to the CCP.

¹² *Ibid.*, May 17, 1959, pp. 8–9.

Sino-Indian Border Dispute

In August 1959 when Nehru revealed that Chinese Communist troops had occupied some 15,000 square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh and North East Frontier Agency, the CPI not only tried to play down the entire affair but even supported the Chinese position on the border issue. A CPI spokesman asserted that the McMahon Line, which India claims as the legal frontier, had never been "demarcated on the ground. It was selected arbitrarily."¹³

The Sino-Indian border dispute created considerable difficulties for the CPI and the party was split into pro-Peking and pro-Moscow groups. In September 1959 when the Central Executive Committee met in Calcutta to discuss the border issue, it faced dissident groups. Emboldened by the Soviet neutrality in the border dispute, the Moscow-oriented group led by Dange criticized the Chinese leaders and demanded the CPI to declare its support of Nehru's policy on the border issue, including the recognition of the McMahon Line as the border between India and Communist China. The pro-Chinese group led by Joyti Basu regarded this as a "deviation" of the CPI's international duty and maintained that the Nehru government had raised the "bogy of Chinese aggression" in order to stem the "rising tide of the people's offensive"¹⁴. Ghosh, who was then in Moscow to discuss the border dispute with the Soviet leaders, hurriedly returned home to mediate between the rival groups.

After the Calcutta meeting, Ghosh and four other Communist leaders left for Peking to persuade the Chinese leaders to change their policy toward the border issue. But Mao refused and described the Sino-Indian border dispute as a "temporary phenomenon" and an "episode in the long, long years unmarked by any conflict"¹⁵. Despite Mao's rebuff, the CPI continued its pro-Peking line. In October 1959 when the Chinese army massacred nine members of the Indian border patrol in the Ladakh area, the CPI refused to join the nation-wide condemnation of the Chinese action¹⁶. This attitude of the CPI leadership intensified the struggle between the Moscow and Peking groups. While the pro-Soviet leader, Dange, described the Ladakh incident as "shocking" and supported Nehru, the pro-Peking leader, Basavapunniah, accused India of committing "aggression" in the Himalayas¹⁷.

By this time the Soviet Union appeared on the scene. In June 1960 at the Rumanian party congress, the Sino-Indian border dispute took a prominent place in discussions between Khrushchev and delegations from Communist China and India. According to reports, Khrushchev took the Chinese delegation to task for "stabbing the Communist movement in Afro-Asian world in the back for a few hundred square miles of Indian territory"¹⁸. Encouraged by Khrushchev's stand the National Council of the CPI passed a resolution in September 1960 saying that "China has lost the sympathy of millions of Indians in return for a claim for a few square miles of worthless terri-

¹³ New Age (Weekly), New Delhi, September 13, 1959, p. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid., October 4, 1959, p. 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., October 25, 1959, p. 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., November 1, 1959, pp. 1 and 4.

¹⁷ Ibid., November 29, 1959, p. 1; The Statesman, New Delhi, February 15, 1960.

¹⁸ Link, New Delhi, October 16, 1960, p. 16.

tory"¹⁹. Thereupon, pro-Peking leaders of West Bengal and the Punjab challenged the resolution and accused the Moscow-oriented leadership of "immaturity in Marxist understanding"²⁰.

When on October 20, 1962, the Chinese troops launched their massive armed attack in the North East Frontier Agency and Ladakh area, the CPI did not respond immediately. For eleven days the CPI leaders debated the Chinese aggression on India before breaking their silence. On October 25 Pravda called upon the CPI to restrain itself and the Indian government on the border conflict. It rejected the McMahon Line as the boundary between India and China and asked Nehru to accept the Chinese proposals as the basis of negotiations. Encouraged by the Soviet support on October 27 the Chinese called upon the Indian Communists to rise in revolt to overthrow the Nehru government and to set up a people's democratic regime²¹. Never before was there a more open call to the Indian Communists for the overthrow of the government of the country by force and violence. But there was no response from the CPI to the Chinese call. Instead, the CPI denounced the Chinese Communists for their "perverse understanding" of the Indian situation and stated that "it is too much for the Chinese to seek to deflect the CPI from its chosen path"²². Nevertheless, a part of the CPI continued to sympathize with Peking.

Peking versus Dange

Meanwhile Dange, Chairman of the CPI, denounced the Chinese aggression as a "mad adventure" and described India's war against China as a "just war". He defended the Defence of India Law introduced by the Indian government and pledged CPI's unqualified support to Nehru against Communist China²³. The Chinese were infuriated by this. In an editorial, the Jen-min Jih-pao furnished its own comment on the attitude of the Chinese leaders toward Dange. "How low Dange and company has sunk?" it asked and answered:

Dange sides with Indian reactionaries and violently opposes socialist China; Dange pledges the CPI's support to the Nehru government's policy of national defence and national unity which are directed against China . . .

It said that it was only "too clear that cloaked as Communist, the Dange clique has played the role which the Nehru government cannot play in deceiving the people, stirring up reactionary nationalist sentiment and undermining the friendship between China and India"²⁴. Dange also denounced the Chinese leadership, particularly Mao Tse-tung, for his "chauvinism" and "Bonapartism"²⁵. The National Council of the CPI also charged the Chinese leaders of violating the principles of Marxism-Leninism by invading India and criticized them for encouraging a "split" in the CPI

¹⁹ Ibid., September 11 and 18, 1960, pp. 14 and 9 respectively.

²⁰ Hindustan Times, New Delhi, October 14 and 25, 1960.

²¹ Jen-min Jih-pao, October 27, 1962.

²² New Age (Weekly), November 11, 1962, p. 5.

²³ Ibid., November 18, 1962, p. 1.

²⁴ Jen-min Jih-pao, March 3, 1963.

²⁵ New Age (Weekly), December 2, 1962, p. 3.

by playing one group against the other²⁶. The Chinese, of course, rejected the CPI's charges that they were encouraging a split in the Indian Communist movement and blamed "Dange and Company" for the growing division in the CPI. The Hung Ch'i, theoretical journal of the CCP, pointed out:

The Dange group, far from exposing the Nehru clique's shameless attempt to represent the narrow class interests of India's big bourgeoisie and big landlords, keep on telling the Indian people that policies of the Nehru clique represent the interests of the whole Indian nation, that they must rally around Nehru without any reservation. They want the Indian Communists and the people to believe that Nehru is actually pursuing "socialist" policies to which unconditional support must be given. These revisionists have done this to help the bourgeoisie to corrupt the proletariat in an attempt to replace proletarian socialism with bourgeois "socialism" inside the working class movement²⁷.

Faced with the growing Chinese attack on his leadership as well as their support to the pro-Peking elements in the CPI to form a new Communist Party, Dange launched a vociferous campaign against the Chinese Communist Party. He called Communist China an "inimical force" threatening the security of India and attempted to isolate the pro-Chinese group within the CPI. In a circular letter, the Central Executive Committee dominated by pro-Moscow leaders called upon the CPI members and sympathizers to be "vigilant" against all disruptive attempts by individuals or groups of Communists to split the party in response to "open directives of Chinese leaders"²⁸. Thereafter, evidently with Chinese support, a group of pro-Chinese leaders held secret talks for the formation of a rival Communist Party. It was promptly welcomed by the CCP.

Peking's call to form a rival CPI

In a public appeal to the pro-Chinese leaders of the CPI to form a rival Communist Party the CCP declared:

Now everybody can see that the Dange clique is still travelling on the road of betrayal. It is still advocating class collaboration and the realization of socialism in India through the Nehru government. It actively supported the Nehru government's huge budget providing for arms expansion and war preparations and its measures for fleecing the people . . . It is continuing its frenzied anti-China activities and support to the Nehru government's expansionist policy. It is following Nehru's policy of hiring itself out to U.S. imperialism. As the renegade features are revealed, Dange and Company meet increasing opposition and resistance from the broad rank and file of the Indian Communist Party. More and more Indian Communists have come to see clearly that Dange and company are the bane of the Indian Communist party and the Indian nation. They are now struggling to rehabilitate the party's glorious and militant revolutionary tradition. They are the genuine representatives and the hopes of the Indian proletariat and the Indian people²⁹.

Thereupon the CPI launched a vociferous campaign against the CCP leadership. The Central Secretariat of the CPI accused the CCP leaders of "splitting activities"

²⁶ Ibid., February 24 and March 10, 1963, pp. 5 and 6 respectively.

²⁷ Hung Ch'i, May 3, 1963.

²⁸ Times of India, New Delhi, January 16, 1964.

²⁹ Jen-min Jih-pao/Hung Ch'i joint editorial, February 4, 1964.

and a "filthy campaign of abuse and slander" against the CPI³⁰. The Soviet magazine, *Party Life*, assailed the "Peking splitters" for carrying on "real sabotage" against the CPI and for contributing to a "considerable degree to the aggravation of the difficulties within the CPI"³¹. Nevertheless, on July 4, 1964, the pro-Peking leaders formed the rival Communist Party, known as the CPI (Marxist).

The formation of the pro-Chinese CPI was followed by a series of furious denunciations of the CCP leaders. The Chairman of the Moscow-oriented CPI, Dange, denounced Mao as a "well-developed war monger" and assailed the Chinese policy of "expansionism and aggression". He also taunted Mao Tse-tung, saying that under his command "Communism in China will take 10,000 years to negate capitalism"³². The Chinese Communists logically responded to Dange's attack by predicting that he would "finally be dumped in the rubbish heap of history"³³.

In the summer of 1965 the gulf between the CCP and the Moscow-oriented CPI was further widened as a result of Peking's support to Pakistan in its armed conflict with India over Kashmir. A member of the Central Secretariat of the CPI denounced the Chinese leaders as "crooks", "opportunists", "imperialists" and "saboteurs"³⁴.

After the Indian general elections in 1967, the Chinese leaders found the Indian situation ripe for a Maoist-type revolution. The "storm" of the Indian mass struggle they asserted, was now "making a violent assault on the rule of the Indian reactionaries"; workers had emerged as its "main force" and the struggle was spreading to the villages, which was "highly significant". The "biggest gain" was that the "broad masses" had realized that the "root cause of their impoverishment" was the "reactionary rule of the Congress government". The Chinese then asked the Indian Communists to refuse to form united front governments in West Bengal and Kerala along with other left parties. The Indian revolutionaries, the Chinese warned, must not "listen to traitorous Dange" who had been "chanting the charms of peaceful revolution". His advocacy to form united front governments in West Bengal and Kerala as a "guarantee to a better and happier life" for the people was an "outright hypocrisy" and a "dastardly lie". The "traitorous Dange group" was spreading such "fallacies" only to serve the "reactionary Congress government" and to prevent the Indian people from continuing their "revolutionary struggle"³⁵. The Chinese expected the pro-Peking Communists to follow their advice and refuse to join the united front governments in West Bengal and Kerala. But the CPI (Marxist) entered the West Bengal and Kerala governments as the dominant partner. This dismayed the Chinese leaders and they described the united front governments as "component parts of the state apparatus of India's big bourgeoisie". Under the direct control of the central government "they are completely unable to either introduce any reforms or shake the foundation of the capitalist and feudal relations of production". The election had left India "littered with dry faggots" but there were dangerous possibilities for the rising revolution being betrayed and the greatest danger came not only from the "Dange clique — the running dog of the Soviet

³⁰ *New Age (Weekly)*, April 5 and 12, 1964, pp. 4 and 1 respectively.

³¹ *Partiinaja Zhizn*, No. 11, 1964, pp. 8–20.

³² *The Statesman*, September 17, 1964.

³³ *Jen-min Jih-pao*, January 17, 1965.

³⁴ *Patriot*, New Delhi, September 18, 1965.

³⁵ *New China News Agency*, February 12, 1967; *Jen-min Jih-pao*, May 19, 1967.

revisionist clique" but also from other "revisionists"³⁶. On the next day the Chinese branded the united front government of West Bengal as the "oppressor of the people"³⁷.

Simultaneously, the Chinese Communists called upon the Indian masses to realize that the "only way" for them to change the situation was to "rise in rebellion". The peaceful transition to socialism as advocated by the "Dange renegade clique" and "the revisionists" was "opium" for them. The Indian people must rise in "rebellion" and "struggle under the guidance of Mao Tse-tung thought" and "use the gun to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes" and seize control of the political power³⁸. As this clarion call came from Peking, peasants at Naxalbari and two adjoining villages in the Darjeeling district of north Bengal, led by extremists of the CPI (Marxist) rose in revolt, furnishing the Chinese leaders with the signal they had long been waiting for.

Peking and Naxalbari Movement

The Chinese Communists promptly depicted Naxalbari as a "red district" encircled by a "white regime". Naxalbari, they claimed, was the "prelude" to "violent revolution by hundreds of millions of people throughout India". Naxalbari was the result of the militant action of the "revolutionaries" of the CPI (Marxist) who had "deserted the united front government" in West Bengal because "it served as a tool of the Indian reactionaries"³⁹. The Chinese then laid down the Maoist line for India in unmistakable terms. In order to liberate themselves, the Chinese advocated, the Indian people "must proceed along the path pointed out by Mao Tse-tung in overthrowing the reactionary rule and winning the victory of the revolution". The Indian revolution "must take the road of relying on the peasants, establishing base areas in the countryside, persisting in protracted armed struggle and using the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities". The Indian "revolutionaries" were advised to abandon their city-orientation and to make the peasants the "invincible force of the Indian revolution". The Chinese Communists demanded that the proletariat must be integrated with the peasants. The armed struggle must begin in the countryside where the "reactionary rule is weak" and where the "revolutionaries can manoeuvre freely". It mattered little if the beginning was small and if the peasants had to fight at first with "bows and arrows". As long as the Communists adhered to Mao Tse-tung's thought and relied on the peasants "it is entirely possible for them to establish one advanced revolutionary base after another in the huge backward rural areas and build a people's army of a new type". There will, of course, be "difficulties" and "twists and turns" at the beginning, but eventually the Indian Communists would be able to develop "isolated areas" into a "vast expanse". The Chinese revolution grew and developed in this pattern, they reasoned. "The armed struggle is the only correct path for the Indian people to win

³⁶ New China News Agency, May 7, 1967.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, May 8, 1967.

³⁸ *Jen-min Jih-pao*, June 2, 1967.

³⁹ New China News Agency, June 27, 1967.

the liberation. The Indian reactionaries are paper tigers and can certainly be defeated.”⁴⁰

The leaders of the CPI (Marxist) disapproved Peking's support to the Naxalbari uprising. Basavapunniah, a member of the Politbureau, said that his party totally disagreed with the Chinese Communists on the Indian situation. The CPI (Marxist) viewed the Naxalbari event as an expression of a specific “economic problem” and “it should be settled as such”⁴¹. Communist China, however, did not put an end to its campaign in support of the “Naxalbari revolutionaries”. In order to help them to continue their struggle, the Chinese advised the Naxalites to adhere to “mobile and flexible guerilla tactics”.

As long as the revolutionary forces are good at using the basic tactics — enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue — they will be able to build up their own strength and whittle down that of the enemy . . . To gain a firm foothold and to stick to longterm armed struggle, the revolutionary peasant forces must establish rural base areas in the countryside and enlarge . . . So long as the Indian revolutionaries firmly take the road of the Chinese revolution the armed peasants in Naxalbari will definitely be able to carry the Indian revolution forward step by step toward victory⁴².

Explaining the line to be taken by the Naxalites, the Chinese then invoked the Telengana uprising as the “correct road” for the Indian peasant revolution. Comparing Naxalbari with Telengana the Chinese implied that Naxalbari possessed some vital qualities needed for protracted armed struggle that Telengana had lacked. Naxalbari had “rekindled” the “torch of armed revolution once lit by the peasants of Telengana” and that “red torch lights the road to victory for the Indian revolution”⁴³. Naxalbari had the strategic advantage: “It is only four miles from Nepal, thirty miles from Sikkim, fourteen miles from East Pakistan and sixty miles from China's Tibet.”⁴⁴ The meaning of the statement was discernible. If the armed revolutionary bases could be established in Naxalbari, it could, under certain circumstances, be fed from a rear base established by the Chinese either in Nepal, East Pakistan or Tibet.

The Chinese support to the Naxalites to turn Naxalbari into a “revolutionary base” for the “liberation” of India only strengthened the conviction of the CPI (Marxist) and the united front government in West Bengal that the revolt should be put down quickly. The CPI (Marxist) first tried to persuade the Naxalites to abandon their “revolutionary action” and turn to the party line. When the persuasion failed, the CPI (Marxist)-led West Bengal united front government took drastic action to bring back normalcy in Naxalbari. The “revolutionary base” was wiped out by armed police within a week and a number of Naxalites were arrested.

The flagrant repudiation of the Chinese strategy of armed struggle by the CPI (Marxist) was taken as an insult by the Chinese Communists; hence they intensified their attack on that party and supported the pro-Peking elements more strongly than ever. Communist China mounted vehement attacks on the “revisionist” leaders

⁴⁰ Jen-min Jih-pao, July 5 and 17, 1967.

⁴¹ The Statesman, July 3, 1967.

⁴² Jen-min Jih-pao, August 7, 1967.

⁴³ New China News Agency, August 2, 1967.

⁴⁴ Ibid., July 11, 1967.

of the CPI (Marxist) to expose them to the public as “renegades” of the Indian armed struggle. The chief minister of Kerala, Namboodiripad, and West Bengal deputy chief minister, Joyti Basu, both admirers of Mao, were denounced as “scabs” and “renegades” for alleged adherence to the “reactionary and traitorous” policies of the central government. They were also accused of serving the “interests of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism”. Finally the Chinese called upon the dissidents to overthrow the leadership of the CPI (Marxist) and capture the party organs⁴⁵.

Peking versus CPI (Marxist)

The leaders of the CPI (Marxist), however, refused to bow to Mao Tse-tung. Joyti Basu taunted Mao Tse-tung, saying that his party was not a “Chinese satellite” and was determined to follow its own policy. He also rejected the Chinese viewpoint regarding the Naxalbari uprising and said that the CPI (Marxist) did not opt for armed struggle as suggested by the Chinese. “We are striving to achieve a socialist transformation of India by peaceful means”, he declared. The Chinese contention that the Indian National Congress was a “stooge of imperialists”, he explained, was a “violation of Marxist-Leninist tenet”⁴⁶. Thereafter, the pro-Chinese elements of the party were expelled. Basavapunniah went as far as to suggest that the Naxalites were “agents provocateurs” planted by the “revisionists” in the CPI (Marxist) to discredit the party⁴⁷. The CPI (Marxist) also took the Chinese to task for “praising” the “reactionary Pakistan leaders” and said that the Indian government had a “wider social base when compare to most of the countries of the world” and “does not face any imminent danger of class revolution at home”. It also implied that India had no need to play the “role of a puppet of imperialism” because

our experiences teach us that the Congress Party still holds considerable political influence among the people, that several bourgeois-landlord reactionary parties still command a certain mass following. The proletariat and its revolutionary party are far from properly organized and built. In the face of such reality it would be grave error to exaggerate this aspect of sharpening class contradictions to the point of suggesting that class revolution on the part the masses has already become immediate and acute . . .⁴⁸

The CPI (Marxist) also upheld its own political line and branded the Chinese “gross interference” in the internal affairs of a fraternal party as a “violation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism”. The Chinese leaders were also accused of endeavoring to “dictate” and to “impose” on the CPI (Marxist) their “own political line which they have worked out for our country and for our party”⁴⁹.

The Chinese Communists, nonetheless, refused to acknowledge the failure of the strategy of armed struggle by the Naxalites and bitterly denounced the strategy of parliamentary road adopted by the CPI (Marxist) and the pro-Soviet CPI. They now urged the pro-Chinese elements of the CPI (Marxist) to “spread among the people

⁴⁵ Jen-min Jih-pao, July 11 and December 5, 1967.

⁴⁶ Asian Recorder, New Delhi 1967, pp. 7907.

⁴⁷ The Statesman, August 11, 1967.

⁴⁸ People's Democracy, Calcutta, September 10, 1967, Supplement.

⁴⁹ People's Democracy, September 10, 1967, Supplement.

the thought of Mao Tse-tung, the acme of Marxism-Leninism in the present era in order to give impetus to the present revolutionary struggle and to develop Naxalbari-type movements" all over India. The Chinese once more lashed out at the CPI (Marxist) leadership as "sham Communists" and for allegedly "joining the Indian government in crushing the Naxalbari revolution"⁵⁰.

The reasons of the Chinese attack on Nambudiripad and Joyti Basu are not difficult to discern. They are the most popular Communist leaders in their respective states and they had firmly put down all moves by the pro-Chinese elements to discredit their leadership. Furthermore, they have played a leading role in reshaping the attitude of the CPI (Marxist) toward the Chinese Communist Party. Thus in China's eyes they became the "power-holders", who should be ousted from position of authority in order to make room for the Maoists.

Vexed by continued Chinese interference in its internal affairs, the CPI (Marxist) finally repudiated the entire political and ideological line of the CCP and suggested that it had ceased to be a Communist organization. The CPI (Marxist) characterized the Chinese Party as an organization built on "faith" rather than on the "science of Marxism" and the "principles of democratic centralism". The Chinese leaders were also denounced for "certifying" every splinter group as a "genuine Marxist-Leninist party" as soon as these groups declared their faith in the thought of Mao Tse-tung. In their criticism of the Chinese policy, the CPI (Marxist) also debunked Mao's claim to infallibility and expressed the view that he had not contributed "anything original" to Marxism-Leninism that warranted his being ranked with Marx and Lenin⁵¹.

As the leaders of the CPI (Marxist) repudiated the political and ideological line of the CCP, several Maoist groups have been formed in different parts of India. In the fall of 1967 these groups held a convention in Calcutta to discuss their future strategy and began the publication of journals to popularize "Mao's thought". These developments in the CPI (Marxist) organization accelerated Communist China's seeming decision to carry out its policy to its logical end. By the end of 1968 the Chinese Communists began to call upon the pro-Chinese elements of the Indian Communist movement to establish a "new, genuine Communist Party of India guided by Mao Tse-tung's thought"⁵². Following Peking's advice, a new Communist Party of India known as CPI (Marxist-Leninist) was formed in April 1969 to carry out a Mao-type revolution in India.

Peking and the CPI (M-L)

The birth of the CPI (M-L) was hailed by the Chinese Communists as a "historic turning point in the Indian revolution", obviously a reference to a short-lived Communist uprising in Naxalbari. For the Chinese Communists, the formation of the third Communist Party was a "proof" that the thought of Mao had at last "triumphed" in India and the Indian masses were just waiting for the golden

⁵⁰ Jen-min Jih-pao, February 26, 1968.

⁵¹ Times of India, May 29, 1969.

⁵² New China News Agency, August 1, 1969.

tomorrow promised by Mao. The Chinese logically called upon the leaders of the CPI (M-L) to disseminate the "ever triumphant thought of Mao" among the Indian masses to liberate the country from the "Indian reactionaries" and the "phoney Communists"⁵³. The leaders of the CPI (M-L) also declared their loyalty to the thought of Mao and the CCP and unconditionally accepted China's leadership and guidance in carrying out a Mao-type revolution in India⁵⁴.

The Chinese hope to liberate India with the help of the CPI (M-L) came to a sudden end in the spring of 1971 when the Chinese Communists gave their public verbal support to West Pakistan regime against the Bangla Desh liberation movement. Thereafter, the Naxalites began to express doubt about the revolutionary authenticity of Mao Tse-tung's thought. They wondered how could the Chinese leaders support military rulers of West Pakistan in their heartless extermination of the Bengali people and at the same time maintain their claim to be revolutionaries? They noted that the Bangla Desh liberation movement was not led by an "imperialist stooge", but by a popular leader, Sheik Mujibur Rahman⁵⁵. Finally in the summer of the year the CPI (M-L) was split into two rival groups — one led by Charu Mazumdar and the other by Asim Chatterjee. Chatterjee has set up rival regional committees of the CPI (M-L) in West Bengal and Orissa and circulated rival theses challenging the leadership of the CPI (M-L) led by Mazumdar⁵⁶, indicating that the fourth Communist Party of India will soon be formed in India.

Conclusion

Judging from the Indian environment, Communism is not likely to succeed in India. The conditions that helped the Communists to come to power in China do not exist in India. In India the central authorities are strong and relatively uncorrupt. Communications are good and the army is efficient and disciplined and can move quickly to any area where the administration might have lost control.

There is no Indian Yenan, no isolated area beyond the reach of the law to which the Communists could withdraw and prepare for revolt. Attempts by Indian Communists to launch armed struggle have brought them nothing but disaster. In 1948, following the call of the Cominform, the Indian Communists launched an armed struggle in Telengana to come to power. But soon they discovered that the enemy was not to be defeated so easily. Police arrested some 9,000 Communists and the army scattered the guerilla units. The organization of the Indian Communist Party, built up over years, disappeared overnight. Twenty years later the pro-Chinese Indian Communists tried to wage an armed struggle to come to power in Naxalbari and faced the similar fate. Nearly 400 Naxalites lost their lives in "encounters involving the police or the rival Communist parties" and 4,000 were arrested. Judged by these facts Communist China's assumption that the Indian Communists could liberate their country by armed struggle is questionable. On the other hand, Communist China's policy in supporting the radical elements within the Indian Communist movement might further weaken the entire Communist movement in India.

⁵³ Liberation, Calcutta, February 2, 1970.

⁵⁴ National Herald, Lucknow, May 4, 1970.

⁵⁵ Times of India, New Delhi, April 23, 1971.

⁵⁶ The Statesman, New Delhi, October 11, 1971.