



The following report was published in the November 1968 number of *Liberation*, the journal of the CPI(M). Although the author later betrayed the proletarian revolutionary cause, the report is still of interest as an historical document which sheds light on the Naxalbari events and reflects the then prevailing viewpoint of the communist revolutionaries who led it. — AWTW.

By Kanu Sanyal

After about 18 months, we, the communist revolutionaries of the Siliguri subdivision, met at a convention on 15 September 1968 under quite unfavourable conditions.

Why am I speaking of unfavourable conditions? This is because during these 18 months attempts have been made to crush the revolutionary peasant movement of the Siliguri subdivision and to annihilate the communist revolutionaries there through "encirclement and suppression" campaigns. Who started the campaigns of "encirclement and suppression"? On 22 May 1967, the leaders of the 14-party United Front government led by Ajoy- Jyoti-Harekrishna-Biswanath threw hundreds of peasants and workers into jail and inflicted physical tortures on them, had their homes looted by the police and shot, bayoneted and killed 18 peasants, including men, women and children, with a view to crushing the revolutionary peasant movement.

The importance of the peasant question:

... Why has the peasant movement in Terai region proved to be an event having more far-reaching consequences than even an earthquake?

Ours is a semicolonial and semifeudal country, 80 percent of whose population live in the villages. The contradiction between the people of our country and feudalism is the principal contradiction. The comprador-bureaucrat



Report on the in the

bourgeoisie, the landlords and the jotedars* have been carrying on their rule and exploitation through their political organisation, the Congress Party, by protecting fully and developing imperialist interests and by covering up the basis of feudalism with legal coatings. So the peasants are the basis and the main force of the anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle. Unless the peasants are liberated it is impossible to achieve the liberation of all other oppressed classes. The Terai peasants are a part of the peasantry of our country. Seventy percent of the Terai peasants are poor and landless, 20 percent are middle peasants and 10 percent are rich peasants. These heroic peasants dealt merciless blows to the obsolete and rotten feudal elements — the jotedars, landlords and usurers. The state apparatus of the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie, landlords and jotedars* is preserving the feudal system by force and carrying on an armed rule. Inspired by Chairman Mao's teaching, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," the heroic peasants opposed this

*jotedar - large landowner

armed rule with armed revolt.

The peasants of Terai not only dealt a fierce blow at feudalism, they also expressed their intense hatred for the imperialist exploitation of India, especially the exploitation by U.S. imperialism, swept into the dust the political, economic and social authority, dignity and prestige built up in the villages by the landlords and jotedars, who represent feudalism, and established the rule of the peasant committee in the villages through their armed revolt. That is why the Naxalbari struggle has shown the path for the liberation of India's oppressed classes.

We have seen how the criterion for judging political events changed as soon as the struggle of the heroic peasants started and thus proved how true are the teachings of Chairman Mao. The struggle made it clear as daylight who in a semicolonial and semifeudal country like ours is a revolutionary and who is a counter-revolutionary, who is progressive and who is reactionary, who is a Marxist and who is a revisionist, and which political party wants to advance the cause of democratic revolution, that is, the



Woodcut of peasant uprising.

Peasant Movement Terai Region

agrarian revolution, and which party wants to cover up the semicolonial and semifeudal system in order to preserve it.

Starting from foreign radio broadcasts and newspapers which uphold the interests of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists to the man-in-the-street in the cities and the villages — everyone chose sides on the issue of the peasant struggle in Terai. Not even one of the political parties, which never tire of talking about workers, peasants and Marxism, could maintain its previous position. The struggle of the Terai peasants tore open their masks and forced them to take sides. The struggle of the heroic peasants showed that all the leaders of the 14 “left” parties, including the so-called Marxist party, who had managed to secure ministerial *guddies* for themselves, were serving the state of the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie and landlords, like the Congress Party. The struggle made it clear that, like the Congress Party, the leaders of the 14 “left” parties, including the Dangeite clique and Sundarayya & Co., are enemies of India’s democratic revolution, that is,

agrarian revolution. The struggle of the Terai peasants proved that the agrarian revolution can be led to success only by waging a relentless and uncompromising struggle against them.

The struggle of the Terai peasants acted as a midwife in the revolutionary situation prevailing in India. That is why a single spark of the Naxalbari struggle is kindling widespread forest fire everywhere. In a word, the struggle of the heroic peasants has brought to the forefront quite forcefully the role of the peasants in India’s democratic revolution overcoming the fierce and active opposition put up by all the reactionaries and revisionists.

Establish the Peasant Committees and Get Organised

The Siliguri subdivision peasant convention gave out the call to — (1) establish the authority of the peasant committees in all matters of the village, (2) get organised and be armed in order to crush the resistance of jotedars and rural reactionaries, and (3) smash the jotedar’s monopoly of ownership of the land and redistribute the land anew through the peasant com-

mittees.

The convention further declared that the peasants’ struggle against feudalism would have to face the repression of all reactionaries, be it Indira Gandhi’s government in New Delhi or the UF government in West Bengal. So, all their repression must be resisted by force of arms and by carrying on a protracted struggle.

The call of the subdivisional peasant conference instantly created a stir among the revolutionary peasant masses.

How did the revolutionary peasants of Terai translate this call into action? To put this call of the conference into effect the revolutionary peasants first of all laid stress upon the task of creating the armed groups of peasants in the villages. In every village we heard the words: “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” This is because every single struggle, however small, whether for stopping usury or on any other issue, has been invariably met with lathis* and guns. That is why this call worked like magic in organising the peasants.

Almost all the villages got organised during the period from the end of March to the end of April 1967. Whereas, previously, the membership strength of the Kisan Sabha** could not be increased beyond 5,000, the membership now jumped to nearly 40,000. About 15 to 20 thousand peasants began to do whole-time work and built up peasant committees in villages. The young men of the villages who had never been seen in the front ranks of the Kisan Sabha now occupied the place of veteran peasant cadres. With the speed of a storm the revolutionary peasants, in the course of about one and a half months, formed peasant committees through hundreds of group meetings and turned these committees into armed village defence groups. In a word, they organised about 90 percent of the village population. This action of the peasants completely changed all our old ideas about organisation. Chairman Mao teaches us: “The masses have boundless creative power. * *lathi* - night stick of bamboo ** *Kisan Sabha* - peasant organisation

They can organise themselves and concentrate on places and branches of work where they can give full play to their energy."

We came to realise more profoundly the significance of this teaching of our great teacher Chairman Mao from this action of the Terai peasants.

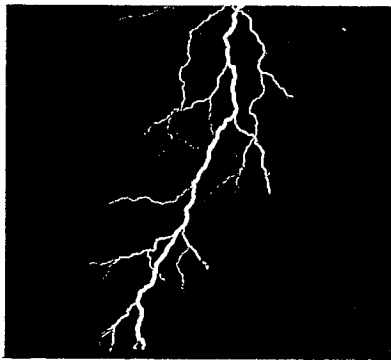
The great Lenin said, "Revolution is a festival of the masses." What it means in reality was witnessed by us during the struggle of the Terai peasants. While the so-called Marxist pundits, Indira Gandhi and all and sundry were rending the skies with loud talks of national integration, we found how the revolutionary activities of the peasants united all the peasants irrespective of their nationality, religion, language and caste.

The revolutionary peasants, through their actions, made their decrees the law in the villages:

1. A blow was dealt at the political, economic and social structure in the villages based on monopoly-land ownership, which dragged the peasants more and more into the depths of pauperisation. "No, not the deeds and documents — what is required is the order of the peasant committee," declared the peasants. They marked out all the land in the Terai with their ploughshares and made it their own. They declared that all land which was not owned and tilled by the peasants themselves was to be redistributed by the peasant committees. By carrying this out in practice, they struck a blow at the main political and economic basis of the jotedars. The old feudal structure that had existed for centuries was thus smashed through this action of the peasants.

2. All the legal deeds and documents relating to the land had been used to cheat them. They held meetings and burned all the receipts, acknowledgments, plans, deeds and documents.

3. The jotedars and money-lenders, taking advantage of the poverty of the rural folk, got them committed to unequal agreements relating to the mortgage of land and bullocks. The peasants declared all such agreements as well as the huge burden of interest imposed on them



null and void.

4. The hoarded rice which is used as capital for carrying on usurious and feudal exploitation was confiscated by the peasants and distributed among themselves. Apart from this hoarded rice, other things like oil, atta (coarse flour), bullocks, cows, a huge number of domesticated animals owned by jotedars, agricultural implements, even articles meant for their personal use, were confiscated and distributed.

5. All jotedars in the villages who were known for a long time as oppressors and those who tried to oppose the peasant struggle were all subjected to open trial and sentenced to death.

6. The wicked ruffian elements and flunkies who are used to preserve the political, economic and social authority of the jotedars in the villages and those who cooperated with the police were all brought to open trial. In some cases, the death sentence was given; in others, the fellows were paraded through the village streets with shoes strung around their necks and with fools' caps on their heads so that they would not dare commit crimes in the future.

7. Realising that their struggle against the jotedars, the landlords, and the money-lenders would be subjected to armed repression by the state apparatus, they armed themselves with their traditional weapons like bows and arrows and spears as well as with guns forcibly taken away from the jotedars and organised their own armed groups.

8. Lest the general administration of the villages should suffer, they arranged for night watch and shouldered the responsibility of running the schools in a smooth way.

The peasant committees announced that severe punishments would be awarded in cases of theft and dacoity and took measures to inflict such punishments in some cases.

9. In every area they created regional and central revolutionary committees and established the peasants' political power.

10. They declared the existing bourgeois law and law courts null and void in the villages. The decisions of the regional and central revolutionary committees were declared to be the law.

In addition to these ten great tasks the peasants also did many other things which wiped out of the villages the old feudal system that had existed for centuries. How intense was the class hatred of the peasants can be seen from the fact that during a raid on the houses of two jotedars, which lasted for two days, they not only ate up the cooked food of the jotedars but also helped themselves to the meals prepared with all the other foodstuff left there. In this struggle we witnessed the festival of the revolutionary peasants overthrowing feudalism.

Whenever the peasants became conscious of any shortcomings during these revolutionary actions, they at once came to the peasant committee for their rectification. This means the peasant committees were not something imposed on them. On the contrary, these committees were wholly their own. That is why the struggle of the heroic peasants of the Terai was able to hit the jotedars and the vested interests.

The leadership of this struggle was, naturally, in the hands of the landless peasants, who are the most militant section of the peasantry. The reason why these revolutionary actions could become so far-reaching and so vast in their sweep is that the leadership of the struggle was in the hands of the poor landless peasants, who constitute 70 percent of the peasantry. After the conference, it was the poor landless peasants who realised before all others that the resolutions of the conference were beneficial to their own interests more than to anyone else. It is only because of this that the work of organising the move-

ment assumed such a broad and militant form. From the experience of their own life the poor peasants realised that any compromise with feudalism would make their future even more miserable than before. That is why, in their fight against the jotedars, the money-lenders, the ruffians and the police it is the poor peasants who have not shrunk from making sacrifices ever since 24 and 25 May 1967. The truth of this is being proved even today through struggles.

Just after the conference, the middle peasants, who constitute 20 percent of the peasantry, looked with suspicion at the call given by the conference. So they were not active in the first phase of the struggle. It was only when they came to realise that their interests would be served by the struggle and that the main target and enemy of the struggle was the jotedars, landlords and money-lenders that they came forward. With the joining of the middle peasants the sweep of the struggle increased manifold and it grew even more intense.

The rich peasants, who constitute only 10 percent of the village population, at no time thought the declaration of the conference and this struggle to be beneficial to their own interests. Rather, they, particularly those rich peasants who carry on feudal exploitation in considerable portions of their land, apprehended that it meant danger for them. So, after the conference they took the role of critics and opposed the struggle in the first phase and sometimes even acted as spies for the jotedars. But as soon as the middle peasants joined the poor peasants, their movements underwent a change. After the jotedar and the wicked people had been punished and they had fled to the towns and business centres, the rich peasants gave up the path of opposition and criticism and began to demand justice from the peasant committees. And the peasant committees considered every case on its merit and did justice to them. As a result, the rich peasants generally became neutral and even took an active part in the struggle in quite a few instances.

The small jotedars split into two

sections in the course of the struggle. One section, comprising those jotedars who were able neither to develop themselves as they desired owing to the oppression by the government of the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie and landlords nor to maintain their existing standard of living, took part in the struggle. Another section, comprising those who realised that it was not possible for them to resist, turned inactive hoping to take revenge in the future.

The struggle of the heroic peasants of Terai demonstrated through practice how to build peasant unity, though, it must be admitted, the task was often found to be not at all easy. Real peasant unity can be built only by not making any compromise with feudalism, only by intensifying class struggle against it and by directing the spearhead of attack against it. The peasants proved this in practice. A look at the past and the present revisionist Kisan Sabha convinces one that intense class struggle against feudalism can never be developed by convening such conferences as the "jute cultivators' conference" or by avoiding class struggle for the sake of unity. A vigorous class struggle against feudalism not only helps to build peasant unity but also guarantees the establishment of the peasants' political power through such peasant unity. This we have learned from the peasants of Terai.

All the so-called left parties joined the Congress Party in their mad crusade to vilify the struggle of the heroic peasants of Terai. But all their vilification can never hide the fact that the peasants of Terai have overthrown feudalism root and branch, a feat which could not be done through any legislation or any other thing during all these hundreds of years. . . .

. . . By carrying out these ten great tasks the heroic peasants have taught us that the struggle of the peasants is not merely a struggle for land. On the contrary, in order to end the monopoly of land ownership and feudal exploitation of the landlords in the villages, which are being preserved by the Congress Party, the political party of the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie

and the landlords, with the help of the political, economic, social and cultural structure that serves the landlords, a new political, economic, social and cultural structure must be created by establishing a new political power. This political power can be established by arousing and arming the peasants, by organising guerrilla groups, by creating liberated areas, by building a regular armed force, and protecting and expanding this force. Such a political power, no matter in how small an area it is established, is the embryo of the future people's democratic state power in India.

It is never possible to overthrow the rule of the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie and the landlords, who have come to terms with imperialism, without arming the peasants in the antifeudal struggle, without leading their struggle courageously, without building their guerrilla and regular armed forces. This is so because in our country, the feudal landlord class is the main social base of the imperialist and comprador-bureaucrat bourgeois exploitation; and the peasants are the main force and the basis of this struggle. Herein lies the distinctive feature of the Naxalbari path, that is, the Naxalbari struggle. It is precisely because the Naxalbari struggle is not merely a struggle for land that it could not be stamped out.

Without this consciousness, any struggle for land, no matter how militant it may be, is militant economism. Such militant struggle for land generates opportunism in the peasant movement and demoralises the majority of the fighting section as happened during the struggle for seizing the benami lands. Such a militant economic movement leads one into the blind alley of revisionism. This means, in other words, becoming, consciously or unconsciously, a bourgeois reformist. The bourgeoisie try to gain this object of theirs, sometimes through their laws and sometimes through a Vinoba Bhave. When they fail in this, they depend on the present-day social democrats who disguise themselves as Marxists. Marxism has nothing in common with this. In short, the question of

making the agrarian revolution victorious in our country is not the same as the question of ensuring social justice to the peasants. . . .

While the heroic peasants of Terai were smashing the foundations of feudalism in the villages by performing the ten great tasks, the tea-garden workers realised from their innate class consciousness that this class struggle was a struggle to overthrow the rule of the Congress Party, which represents the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie and the landlords. That is why the tea-garden workers could not be kept away from the struggle of the peasants in spite of the fact that the unions of tea-garden workers were mainly controlled by the so-called communists. . . . They went on strike and arming themselves they have taken part in every struggle since 24 May 1967.

Our Deviations and the Lessons We Learnt

Taken as a whole, internationally and nationally, the revolutionary situation in our country is excellent. The armed struggle of the peasants of the Siliguri subdivision has begun after the fourth general elections at a time when Anglo-U.S. imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism, finds itself in an acute crisis and the quarrel between the imperialists has become bitter, when U.S. imperialist capital is unable to rely fully on the influence of the Congress Party, in matters of investments, when all the hoax of economic planning of the Congress Party, the organisation of the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie and landlords, is falling into pieces, when the people are suffering from the effects of an acute economic crisis and when people's lack of confidence in the Congress has become even more pronounced, as reflected in the ending of monopoly rule of Congress ministers in eight states.

We know that we must adopt an offensive tactic in our struggle when the enemy is beset with crisis and internal quarrels, and must adopt the tactic of advancing our struggle gradually when the enemy has gained some stability. Judged from this standpoint, the struggle of the

peasants of Terai is just, timely and beyond reproach.

Why have we failed, though temporarily, to advance the struggle of the heroic peasants of Terai? The reasons are: lack of a strong party organisation, failure to rely wholeheartedly on the masses and to build a powerful mass base, ignorance of military affairs, thinking on old lines and a formal attitude towards the establishment of political power and the work of revolutionary land reform. We must always bear in mind Chairman Mao's teachings in discussing these matters. He teaches us: "New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, without difficulties and setbacks or the exertion of tremendous efforts."

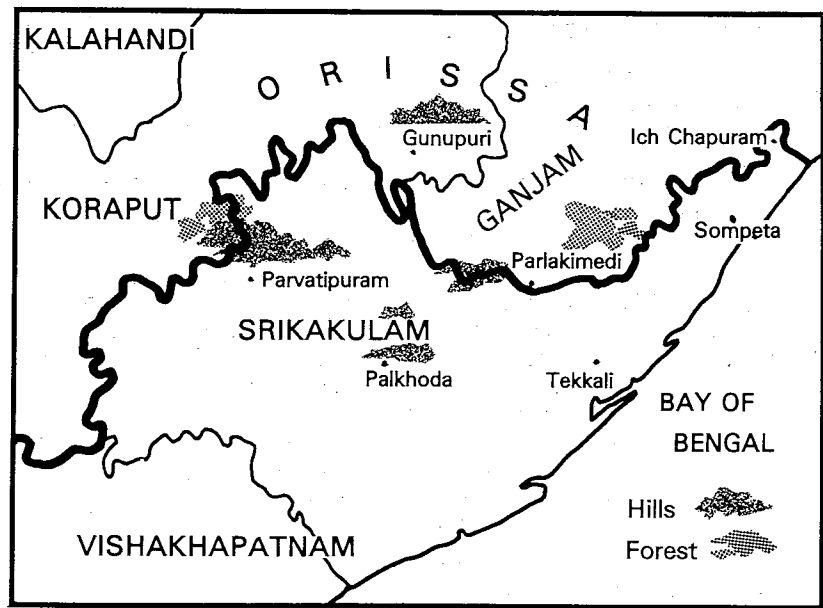
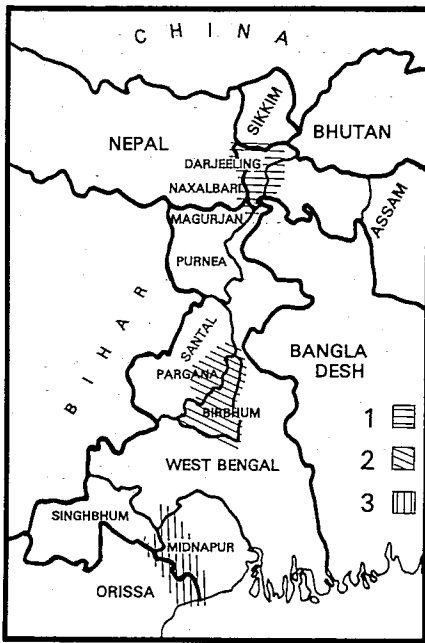
By the lack of a strong party organisation we mean absence of a party which is armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism and its highest development in the present era, Mao Tsetung's thought, which is closely linked with the masses, which does not fear self-criticism and which has mastered the Marxist-Leninist style of work. It is true that the revolutionary comrades of the Siliguri subdivision led by our respected leader, Comrade Charu Mazumdar, were the first to rise in revolt against the revisionists. But this does not mean that we fully assimilated the teaching of our great teacher Chairman Mao. That is, while we accepted the teachings of Chairman Mao in words, we persisted in revisionist methods in practice. Though it is true that the worker and peasant party members of Terai were in a majority inside the party and that there was party organisation in almost every area, yet in reality the worker and peasant comrades were led by the petit-bourgeois comrades and the party organisation in every area actually remained inactive. The party members were all active at the beginning of the struggle but they were swept away by the vast movement of the people. We did not also realise that the party had a tremendously significant role to play in advancing firmly the struggle of the

heroic peasants. As a result, whatever might be the role the party members played spontaneously at the beginning of the struggle, it was afterwards reduced to nothing in the face of the white terror. To belittle the role of the party in the struggle is nothing but an expression of the old revisionist way of thinking. The party played no role in matters like deciding what are the needs of the struggle at a given moment, giving political propaganda priority above everything else, advising the people about what they should do when the enemy attacks, preparing the people politically to meet the moves of the enemy, and developing the struggle step by step to a higher stage.

We did not even politically assess, nor did we propagate among the people, the significance of the ten great tasks performed by the heroic peasants. As a result, there developed among us opportunism and escapism; and even the fighting comrades began to show signs of a lack of firmness.

So, we are of the opinion that we must carry on a sharp struggle against the revisionist way of thinking and fulfil certain definite tasks. These tasks are: to form a party unit in a given locality and elect its leader; to train these party units, which must be armed ones, to observe secrecy. The tasks of the party unit will be to propagate the thought of Chairman Mao in a given locality and to develop and intensify class struggle in that locality; to act as a guerrilla unit and attack and eliminate class enemies by relying wholly on the people; and, whenever possible, to take part along with the people in the work of production. We have now started implementing the above programme.

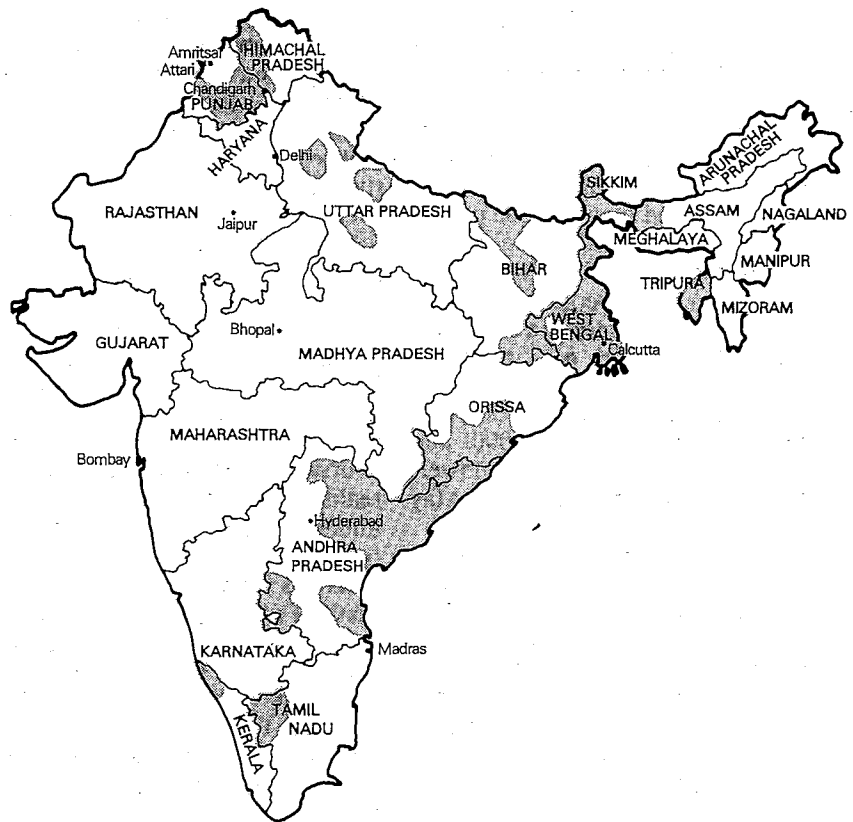
We were unable to raise the struggle firmly to a higher stage because we failed to rely wholly on the people and to build a powerful mass base. We now admit frankly that we had no faith in the heroic peasant masses who, swift as a storm, organised themselves, formed revolutionary peasant committees, completed the ten great tasks and advanced the class struggle at a swift pace during the period from



MAP I: Map of West Bengal showing CPI(M-L) areas of operations in the State and neighbouring regions where bases were set up between 1967 and 1972.

1. Areas of operation under the North Bengal-Bihar Border Regional Committee of the CPI(M-L).
2. Areas of operation under West Bengal-Bihar Border Region Committee of the CPI(M-L).
3. Areas of operation under the Bengal-Bihar-Orissa Border Regional Committee of the CPI(M-L).

MAP II: Map of Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, showing CPI(M-L) bases in the district, and in neighbouring Koraput, Orissa, during 1969 and 1970.



MAP III: CPI(M-L) pockets of operations in India in 1970, based on a map published in *Deshabrat*, April 23, 1970.

April to September 1967. We did not realise that it is the people who make history, that they are the real heroes, that the people can organise themselves and can amaze all by their own completely new style of work. We failed to realise that comrades like Tribeni Kanu, Sobhan Ali, Barka Majhi, Babulal Biswakarmakar and the ten peasant women of Naxalbari are the real heroes and organisers, and so we failed to move forward.

Though we repeatedly recognised this in words during the period from April to September 1967, in reality, however, we, the petit-bourgeois leadership, imposed ourselves on the people. Whenever the heroic peasant masses took the initiative and wanted to do something, we of petit-bourgeois origin opposed them. The reason is we did not understand, nor did we ever try to understand, the actions of the masses. On the contrary, under the influence of old revisionist habits we arbitrarily set limits as to how far they should go. This resulted in thwarting the initiative of the masses and blunting the edge of the class struggle. Having worked in a revisionist party, we were used to bourgeois laws and conventions and so tried to convince the masses about what was right and what was wrong. So when the people wanted to attack the police, we prevented them on the ground that our losses would be heavy. We looked at the people's attitude towards the jotedars and the police from the angle of bourgeois humanism. As a result, we failed to organise the large masses, who numbered more than 40,000, and were thus unable to build a powerful mass base during April and May 1967.

Therefore, during the second stage of our struggle, we have resolved, we must link ourselves with the needs and wishes of the people, go to the people with boundless love and respect in our heart and integrate ourselves with the people. We must learn from them and take the lesson back to them again through practice. In other words, we must not impose anything from above. Mistakes may be made owing to this, but it is

possible to correct such mistakes. The most important thing is — never to allow the initiative of the masses to be suppressed. Our duty is to develop their initiative.

Ignorance of military affairs and old ways of thinking

The struggle of the heroic peasants of the Siliguri subdivision was not a movement to realise certain demands in the old sense. This was a struggle to establish a new political power, the peasants' power in the villages after abolishing feudalism there. So we shall discuss the reasons for our failure in this struggle both from the political and the military viewpoint. Chairman Mao teaches us: "All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful." If, in any struggle, we happen to overestimate the enemy's strength politically, it will never be possible to gain victory in that struggle. In other words, if we do not have, from the strategic viewpoint, the courage and firmness required to defeat the enemy, we shall inevitably face defeat. If we fail to realise that in the final analysis it is the people who are powerful, we shall not be able to achieve victory in any struggle. It is this consciousness that lends firmness to the struggle, urges one to make supreme sacrifice without fear and teaches one to undergo all kinds of hardship in order to win victory. We believed that we had assimilated the teaching of Chairman Mao. But the course of the struggle made us realise how superficial was our understanding. Today our continued participation in the struggle makes us feel with every passing day that this teaching of Chairman Mao has to be realised anew every day, every moment and this realisation has to be tested through our own practice. The day when this realisation is translated into reality, we shall be able to shatter the much boasted strength of the armed forces of India's reactionary government and march forwards undeterred.

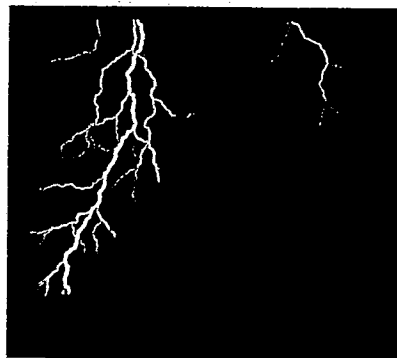
The encounter with the police on 24 and 25 May 1967, and the action of the people in coming forward undauntedly both during and after the shooting down of unarmed peasant women by the police, and the boundless heroism and self-sacrifice of Comrades Tribeni Kanu, Sobhan Ali, and Barka Majhi — how can we explain all these things if not by the fact that they are the expressions of that realisation? And we of petit-bourgeois origin failed to recognise this very thing and so, at times, either underestimated or overestimated the enemy's strength.

In the first stage of the struggle we underestimated the enemy's strength and thought of everything in the old way, and being in a revisionist party we indulged in idle day-dreaming. Sometimes we imagined that "the UF cannot go so far or that it will be difficult for it to go so far." On the one hand, we viewed the revisionists from a purely petit-bourgeois standpoint while, on the other, we underestimated the enemy's strength and kept the people unprepared in the face of the enemy, that is, we did not prepare the people regarding the measures that the enemy was likely to take. This is nothing but a revisionist attitude.

Again, when the people were ready to launch attacks on the enemy, we overestimated the enemy's strength and subjectively magnified the likely effects of such attacks. The people fought with determination and created model heroes whose heroism we belittled. As a result, the people found themselves in disarray in the face of widespread terror, the intensity of the struggle diminished and escapism increased. Comrade Babulal Biswakarmakar, by sacrificing his life on 7 September this year, has enjoined us to advance along the path pointed out by Chairman Mao.

This is a struggle to seize state power and, as such, it demands of us to prepare the party and the people militarily to the fullest extent. Chairman Mao teaches us: "Without a people's army the people have nothing." We have come to realise the truth of this teaching of Chairman Mao deeply through

the struggle in Terai. Though we had known as soon as the struggle started it would be met with suppression by the central government and the reactionary leaders of the West Bengal UF government, yet we failed to take the programme of action which should have been taken eventually. We had a wrong understanding of Chairman Mao's teaching in that we turned strategic defence into passive defence.



Mao, apply them in practice and then study them again. Our greatest responsibility is to make arrangements for our worker and peasant comrades to study the thought of Chairman Mao.

Furthermore, we have learnt from the experience of our struggle that the armed groups formed after arousing the people in the village and arming them will become the village defence groups.

We must acquire knowledge of guerrilla warfare by arming the peasants with conventional weapons (bows and arrows, spears, etc.) and by organising assaults on the class enemies.

We are to build up liberated zones gradually by forming peasant guerrilla groups and by carrying on their activities. It would not be possible either to form guerrilla groups or to carry on their activities for long, if we do not at the same time persevere in building liberated zones also. We must keep in mind the fact that only the liberated zones or those areas which can be transformed into liberated zones form the rear of the guerrillas. We must lay utmost stress on building a people's armed force. To build a people's armed force we must form centrally organised groups of armed guerrillas. These, we think, will be the embryo of the people's armed force.

In some other areas, again, we may try to organise armed peasant revolts and build the people's armed force comprising those armed peasants who have risen in revolt.

In forming the guerrilla groups or the central guerrilla group we must lay utmost stress on the class standpoint. We have come to realise that only the poor and middle peasants

must be the basis for forming the guerrilla groups.

Our failure in establishing the revolutionary political power and in carrying out revolutionary land reforms blunted the edge of the class struggle both during and after the struggle. The revolutionary peasants accomplished two tasks through mass mobilisation. They are: formation of central and zonal revolutionary peasant committees and distribution of land. And we turned exactly these two things into a most formal affair. Our petit-bourgeois day-dreaming was at the root of it. We never seriously considered how deeply significant were these two tasks.

Had we treated these two tasks seriously and carried on a political explanation campaign among the masses about their significance, had we been able to develop the initiative of the people and to participate in carrying out these two tasks by educating them, they would have remembered for a long time the gains which they themselves had won through struggle and would have fought unflinchingly in order to retain these gains.

As regards distribution of land, our policy was to confiscate the land fully and distribute the same entirely.

We did not give any importance to this work also. As a result, in many cases the rich peasants prevented this task from being carried out under various pleas. In many other cases, the top section of the middle peasants, being in the leadership in some cases, managed to divert the emphasis from the confiscation of land to making raids on jotedars' houses, and thus deprived the work of its importance. In some cases again, there developed acute contradictions between the poor and the middle peasants in matters of the distribution of land.

In spite of all these mistakes, the people have been defending heroically the fruits they won through their struggle.

Therefore, we have taken the decision that, of the ten great tasks of the peasants, we must attach the greatest importance to these two tasks and turn them into a weapon for our propaganda. □

When all the population armed themselves, the jotedars, the vested interests and wicked persons fled from the villages, and so we concluded that we had already created the base area. We mistook the armed people for the armed force and adopted the tactic of resisting and attacking by means of broad mass mobilisation as the main tactic of our struggle. The one or two small armed groups which were formed to take away forcibly guns from the jotedars were not recognised by us as the main instrument of struggle. On the contrary, we assumed that guerrilla groups would eventually grow out on the basis of the spontaneous actions of the broad masses. In many cases, fooled by the display of revolutionary ardour in vagabonds, we made them leaders for organising armed groups. Again, when we found armed rich peasants and a section of small jotedars by the side of armed poor peasants and middle peasants we concluded that together they constituted the united armed force of the entire peasantry. We totally forgot that the rich peasants and that section of the small jotedars could desert to the enemy at the first opportunity. We learned in the course of the struggle that a few rich peasants and small landowners might take an active part in a big struggle that was raging. But as soon as counterrevolutionary terror started, these people would desert to the enemy camp, spreading fear among the poor and middle peasants. In short, our total ignorance of military affairs is the root cause of the temporary setback in our struggle.

What we have learnt from the struggle of the Terai peasants is that we must deeply study the political and military theories of Chairman