



Naxalbari and Subsequent Four Decades: A Retrospection

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NOTE

This is a series of essays which were published on <https://www.anvilmag.in> in 5 parts, I am aggregating them in one single EPUB file so it's easier to read the whole thing in one single file on an eReader. They were also published in Hindi in 'Dayitvabodh' and 'Disha Sandhan' magazines.

There are various talks on YouTube by Shashi Prakash on the same topic (in Hindi), and you can check them out as a supplement to this book.

Nothing from the essays has been changed except a few grammatical errors (singular-plurals and missing spaces and commas). If you want to see the original, you can view them on the mentioned website above.

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PART 1

Some things are pushed
to the dark corners
which have to be extracted,
We have to reach the roots
and emerge,
outspreading the branches
towards the sky.
From the edge of this century
our voices have to rise anew
to protect 'liberation', the word,
against wearing out like an overused coin.
We have to reach the intellect of the masses,
lying dormant and concealed,
which will transform the static and sterile elements
into vigorous life yet again.
The things robbed from life
will be reclaimed someday.
The sky will get back its azure hue,
trees their verdancy,
glacier their dazzling white,
and sunrise its scarlet
drawn from your blood...

- Shashi Prakash

There are many such battles in history that have been lost but have made an impact on the trajectory of the life and future of the world in no less a manner than the battles that have been won; in fact, at times their impact have been greater than the latter. Such ephemeral events appeared on the horizon like a blazing star and then disappeared, though not without leaving their indelible imprint in the collective memory of the masses and for a long time they continued to inspire the coming generation to march ahead to build history. The Naxalbari peasant uprising of 1967 was one such great historic event in the post-independence history of India.

The revolutionary mass uprising of the Naxalbari took place like an explosion which besides exposing the reactionary character and policies of Indian ruling class, also revealed the treacherous and anti-people character of revisionist and

parliamentary left, including the Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist) and in so doing it sent out a message to the toiling masses of India that they must take up the task of building and forming the vanguard of the proletarian revolution afresh. Immediately after Naxalbari, a new beginning towards the formation of an all-India Party of the proletarian class was made amid stormy upheavals, however, soon this new beginning got caught in the whirlwind of “left-wing” terrorism. Despite numerous proclamations, it is a bitter historical truth that at the national level a unified revolutionary Party of proletariat could not essentially come into existence as a consequence of the efforts subsequent to Naxalbari. The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI (ML)), the formation of which was announced in 1969, has been split into numerous groups and organizations in the last 37 years and has been passing through a continuous phase of unity and split. The revolutionary communist organizations formed which drew inspiration from Naxalbari and which did not join CPI (ML) also has had the same fate. Amongst the group of these communist revolutionary organizations which have been termed as communist revolutionary camp, some are implementing a revised and refined version of petty-bourgeois line of “left” adventurism, some are in the process of going astray towards the right-wing direction while a few have joined ranks of parliamentary left, some exist only in name while others have been formally liquidated. There are some, which after embracing the path of neo-leftist “free thinking” are inventing new formulae of liberation in their chamber of thoughts. It is important to examine the causes behind such a tragic situation and we will try to do that, but it is certain that the incident which took place in 1967 at Naxalbari was a turning point in Indian history and a point of reference of the history of Indian Left. This incident and the Marxist-Leninist political current which emerged from it, deeply influenced the political scenario across India. The nature of Indian society and politics did not at all remain the same as it was earlier. The bourgeois media invented a new term for Revolutionary Left—Naxalism, and the remote rural block of the Darjeeling district of West Bengal secured its place in history. Today, even the bourgeois politicians and their theoreticians and consultants admit in their own way that the “Naxal problem” is not that of law and order but a problem of socio-economic nature and its solution can only be socio-economic.

The revolutionary mass-uprising of Naxalbari proved to be a symbolic incident of a new beginning of Revolutionary Left in India and of a radical rupture with the revisionist politics. It once again posed the question of state power as a central question before the worker-peasant population. After the days of Telangana-Tebhaga-Punapra Vayalar and the Naval Revolt, the revolutionary energy and initiative was unleashed yet again on a country-wide level, but owing to the

ideological deviation of “left” adventurism and the inherited ideological weakness, which led to an incorrect understanding of the nature of Indian socio-economic formation and state and based on it, an incorrect strategy and general tactics of revolution, this stream suffered stagnation and disintegration instead of moving ahead. Now a lot of water has flown through the Ganges in the last four decades. Social transition which was already underway in 1967 has progressed much further in the same direction and has now reached a definite stage. The counter-revolutionary capitalist land reforms carried out by the ruling classes from above through gradual development has acutely sharpened the contradiction between capital and labour and marked the intensification with which the differentiation of peasantry, proletarianization and displacement is occurring. The hegemony of capitalist mode of commodity-production has been decisively established and the existence of pre-capitalist remnants has become extremely limited. There has been a huge expansion of industries by domestic and international capitalists and that of industrial proletarian population. The Indian capitalist class, while accepting the neo-liberal policies of the era of globalization, has continuously been privatizing the public-sector industries on large scale and it has opened the national market for foreign capital almost completely. In the new circumstances, the Indian capitalist class has come to establish itself within the world capitalist system as a junior partner and co-sharer of the imperialist plunderers. Today, the contradiction between the indigenous and foreign capital and labor has become abundantly clear both in agriculture and industry.

Even in 1960s, the orientation of the social development was the same, but at that time there existed a transitional fluid state and the determination of the stage of revolution by identifying the essence of changing reality required a mature leadership with high ideological capacity, deep observation and study and a prolonged process of political polemic. The leadership which emerged from Naxalbari was not such and the “Left-wing” sectarianism strangled the possibility of exchange of ideas in a democratic manner. The slogan was given to follow the path of Chinese Revolution, but had the mass line been implemented, perhaps the correct conclusions could have been drawn. But first the “Left-wing” terrorism and subsequently the right-wing deviations precluded this possibility. Today, when we look at history in retrospect and conduct an analysis and a summing up, it becomes clear that we cannot rectify the mistakes by going back to the past. Indian society has moved much ahead since then. What was possible or should have been done in 1967 or in 1970 is not possible today as the circumstances have changed. Today, a Naxalbari peasant uprising cannot take place. To whatever extent the things got developed in the correct direction at that time is indeed our heritage, but it cannot be repeated. History progresses with the dialectics of

continuity and change. In the context of the Naxalbari and the Revolutionary Left stream which originated from it, the aspect of change dominates over that of continuity currently. That is to say that both in terms of the objective conditions and the subjective forces of revolution, we are living in a new era. Yet it is certain that without the correct and objective sum-up of the history of that period, no new beginning can be made even today. The ideological deviations, the mistakes of approach and method which came in the way of the determination of correct path at that time, if not analyzed candidly, would repeatedly continue to digress any new journey. We will have to know as to what are the specters of the past which we need to get rid of and what is the heritage of past which need to be internalized and expanded.

One cannot create history just by imitating the past. The specters of history continue to haunt a movement or country as long as all its positive and negative experiences are not internalized after summing up and even after that when we confront a new situation, we establish a critical relationship with history once again on a new ground. History, as a matter of fact, is a continuous dialogue of present with the past. To prevent imitation of the past and the preparation of proletarian revolution in the new circumstances, both these aims (which incidentally are interconnected) call for a critical review of Naxalbari today. As we have stated, today the Naxalbari and the process which arose out of it cannot be repeated by rectifying it. But, today, it is important to understand some basic causes behind the failure and deviation of the process which began in the wake of Naxalbari and the prolonged stagnation resulting from it. It is with this purpose that we will discuss the Naxalbari peasant uprising and the history of the communist revolutionary movement which began from there. It is evident that the fundamental reasons behind the historical importance and failure of Naxalbari cannot be identified without the background of the entire communist movement. Naxalbari happened to be a new milestone, but it was not a sudden event disconnected with the continuity of history. In other words, there was a baggage of history even on Naxalbari and the communist revolutionary stream stemming from it, and it could not recover from it. Despite being a turning point of the Indian communist movement, Naxalbari and its stream could not free itself from some fundamental negative aspects of historical continuity. Further, we will see that the key link of all the negative aspects was the ideological weakness which infected the communist movement right from the beginning. We will also briefly put forward our provisional views on the objective historical reason for the continuity of this weakness. This discussion is needed so that we understand that the role of historical contingencies or that of few individuals were not fundamental to the accomplishments, both positive and negative, of Naxalbari and the communist

revolutionary movement. Though the role of leadership was indeed important with regard to the fact that the task of correctly and accurately summing up the history and to determine the strategy and general tactics of Indian revolution by studying the concrete conditions was its burden. While we cannot go into the details of the history of communist movement here, we will definitely mention its salient points and stages as a background which in one way or the other will help us in reaching to the historical root of the significance and failure of the revolutionary communist movement.

Some Aspects of the Communist Movement in India: A General Perspective

The history of the communist movement in India is nine decades old. Till the time of the Naxalbari peasant uprising it had completed the journey of half a century. During this entire journey, it built several pillars of glory of illustrious struggles, and courageous sacrifices; however, this noteworthy point still confronts us like a pertinent question as to why is it that the communist stream could not establish its political hegemony on the national liberation movement? Why is it that it could not capture the leadership of the national movement from the hands of the Indian capitalist class and its representative political Party? We cannot look for these causes in some kind of historical coincidence or in the role of some individuals. Doing this would be ahistorical.

The basic causes of the failure of Indian communist movement can be identified if the entire Indian history of twentieth century is examined in retrospect as well as a thorough examination of its turning points. The key link to all the lacunae of the Indian communist movement has been its ideological weakness. It was due to this weakness that the Communist Party of India never worked as Party forged as the steel-tempered structure according to Bolshevik principles following democratic centralism; not even in the era when it had not yet fallen into the swamp of revisionism and its basic character was still working class. Its structure remained loose and federal even after a long time after its formation. In December 1933, a 'core of the provisional Central Committee of CPI' was formed for the first time after criticism of the Indian Communist Party of being scattered into groups, for having a non-Bolshevik structure and of ignoring the tasks related to method and Party-building, by a combined letter of the Communist Parties of Britain, Germany and China(May 1932), an article published in the 'Communist International' (February-March 1933), and another letter of the Communist Party of China (July, 1933). Later, it was named as Central Committee after co-opting a few more people. Subsequently, for two and a half years the post of Party General Secretary

was held by one or the other as a working arrangement. This situation ended only in April 1936 when P.C. Joshi was elected as the General Secretary. Despite this, the process of the Bolshevization of the Party was never carried out in a proper way. The terms of Party membership, committee-system and underground structure during the phase of right-wing deviation in the tenure of P.C. Joshi's leadership was quite lax and careless which increased substantially after the party was declared legal after 1942. It is to be noted that the first Congress of the Party could become possible only after it being declared legal (23 May-1 June, 1943, Mumbai). It is evident that Indian communists were not prepared to carry out proper functioning of the tasks of Party in the conditions of repression by state and being declared illegal like the Bolsheviks and other efficient Leninist parties. To a large extent, it was due to the absence of a democratic centralist Bolshevik structure that even during the period prior to the revisionist deviation, there was always a lack of consistency in conducting the two-line struggle. The "left-wing" and right-wing opportunist tendencies always continued to co-exist, sometimes the former dominated the Party and at other times the latter and at yet other times a strange cocktail prevailed. Even after the formation of Central Committee, the tendency of narrow factionalism continuously prevailed at all the levels. In fact, the Party leadership never even considered Party building as an important task. Bolshevization and rectification through the ideological-political-practical education of the ranks was never emphasized.

It was the ideological weakness and the intellectual incapacity and bankruptcy of the leadership due to which the Communist Party of India always failed to apply the universal truths of Marxism to the concrete conditions of India. On the contrary, instead of doing this, it always looked towards the international leadership and the experienced fraternal parties. Most communists kept on determining the policies and strategies of the Communist Party of India under the influence of the proposals-circulars of International, the articles published in its organs, articles of the Soviet Party and the articles of people such as Rajni Palme Dutt of British Communist Party. What could be a greater tragic irony than the fact that till 1951 the Communist Party of India did not have a program of Indian revolution? It was only a few essays, proposals and tactics and policy-related documents written as per the general orientation and guidelines provided by the Communist International which used to state that the task of National Democratic Revolution needs to be completed in India. Despite the fact that the agrarian revolution was the main task; far from devising any agrarian program, detailed examination to comprehend the specificity of agrarian relations was never carried out. Given such a scenario, it is not surprising that the Party could not become the leading force of the national liberation movement, that it repeatedly failed in

making good of the favorable circumstances and the courageous participation of the communist cadre in the people's struggles and immeasurable sacrifices were wasted. For the first time, the Party leadership after a dialog between its delegation and Stalin and other leaders of Soviet Party prepared and issued the program and policy-statement in 1951 which was passed in Party's All India Conference in October 1951 and subsequently in December 1953 during the third-Party Congress. Despite being mainly and essentially correct about the stage of revolution and general orientation, this program of people's democratic revolution was full of many contradictions and inconsistencies. The evaluation of this program about the character of Indian capitalist class and state and transformation of agrarian relations and general orientation of social development did not match with the reality as was explicitly evident with the passage of time. It is here that it should be mentioned that during 1955-56 a section of Party leadership had begun to think and state that the Indian bourgeois state was carrying out the task of transforming the feudal land relations from the top in a gradual manner (like that of Prussia during Bismarck era and Turkey during Ataturk era) and that of curbing feudalism. But instead of boldly taking their point to its logical culmination they kept quiet in a cowardly opportunist manner. The more interesting thing though is that by this time the Party had become completely open and parliamentary and it had marched on the path of revisionism and even if there were some thinking in the right direction with regard to the program, it would have been meaningless because for parliamentary leftists the program of revolution is only to consign it to the cold storage.

Owing to its ideological bankruptcy, the leadership of the Communist Party of India virtually made no independent attempt of determining the strategy and the general tactics of Indian revolution through concrete study of all the aspects of production relations and superstructure (which includes caste question, women question, and the question of nationalities) and always took decisions as per the assessments of international leadership and the big fraternal parties. As a consequence, it kept on swinging between two extremes on the questions of joint front, workers' movement, and other questions. Clearly, in such a scenario, the deviations in the international communist movement which kept cropping up intermittently and the incorrect or unbalanced assessments with regard to India continued to influence the communist movement. This becomes even more evident when we compare the situation with China. In China, the Communist Party was formed in 1921 on a very weak base with minuscule strength and ideological immaturity. But right from the beginning, the Chinese Party laid special emphasis on the task of Party building—Bolshevization of the Party, political education of the cadre, consolidation of Party committees and functioning, discipline, and inner-

Party democracy. The Chinese Party continuously developed through the two-line struggle. It was capable of learning from its mistakes and that was the reason why the shocks of defeat or failure could never break its back. Mao Tse-tung even while accepting the general orientation of the people's democratic revolution in the colonies-semi colonies as proposed by the Comintern determined the concrete forms of the Chinese agrarian revolution and slogans based on the concrete study of the specific conditions of China. He innovatively identified the comprador and national sections of bourgeoisie and prepared the concrete outline of the strategy and general tactics of New Democratic Revolution. While doing so, his thoughts were not always in consonance with the suggestions of the Communist International and Stalin. He never hesitated in presenting and applying the conclusions derived from the concrete study of the concrete conditions and practice. This was the fundamental reason behind the success of Chinese revolution and it is this specificity which is found to be lacking in the leadership of Indian communist movement. Till the time of the decisive victory of the New Democratic Revolution in China in 1949, the Communist Party of India was not even able to present the program of Indian revolution. In fact, now it had got a new big fraternal Party to look up to and emulate. Since it was the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung which had waged ideological struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism the new leadership of the communist revolutionaries which came out from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 1960s thought it incumbent that it consider the stage of revolution in India to be anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution as per the documents of the general line of the world communist revolution as propounded by the Chinese Party without bothering to study production-relations, class structure, and the character of the state power. Going much further, after adopting verbatim the assessment of Chinese Party regarding India, the Communist Party of India (M-L) had in fact followed the old tradition of Indian communist movement by imagining the class structure like that of pre-revolutionary China and by declaring the duplication of the Chinese path. The possibility of improving this situation was dampened further when, as per the old tradition, the pendulum while moving away from revisionism, swung to the other extreme of "left-wing" adventurism and subsequently a long phase of the co-existence of "left-wing" and right-wing opportunism ensued. We will discuss this phase in detail ahead.

It is quite natural here to raise the question of the objective historical reasons behind the intellectual poverty of the communist movement of India. Although a consistent response of this question calls for a detailed historical-social examination it is not within the scope of this essay. We can certainly mention in brief the most basic reason behind the ideological weakness of the communist

leadership of India and its tendency to look up to the international leadership or the big fraternal parties. As in other nations the communist movement in India did not come out of nowhere and its success and failure or the maturity and immaturity of its leadership was not just a coincidence. The dynamic process of protracted class struggle of the specific country and the continuity of the intellectual-cultural heritage distilled from it contributed significantly. If scientific socialism was born in Europe and if it strengthened its roots in the European labor movement there were some objective historical reasons behind this. The lightning journey which the Renaissance period embarked upon by breaking the inertia of the medieval age continued to unfold, except for a few decades of retreats and reversals, passing through the phases of Enlightenment and the bourgeois democratic revolutions. In mid-nineteenth century when the Red flag of liberation was thrown into the dust by the bourgeoisie it was lifted by the proletarian class and in the new historical era of class-struggle, scientific socialism became its guiding principle. The European working class was being equipped with rich intellectual-philosophical heritage as a result of the fierce dynamism of the preceding four centuries. When the advanced section of the European working class elite and privileged, largely made possible through the bribery from the colonial plunder, the centers of revolutions started shifting eastwards and the first proletarian revolution took place in Russia which was the bridge between the East and the West. Russia was a country chained to the shackles of Tsarist tyranny and feudal serfdom, though capitalist development was on its way in a gradual and slow manner. It was a prison of the weak and oppressed nations. Although equipped with huge military power it was also at the receiving end of the exploitation by the western European countries. Despite being the pasture for the capital of the developed Europe it was an independent country which itself was the oppressor of the neighboring East European countries. We can witness the backwardness and barbaric exploitation and oppression of the East in Russia and its intellectual centres maintained lively contact with the philosophical-cultural-scientific developments of the intellectual centers of Europe. Russia was never colonized, was never disconnected with its past, and it had the realization of its backwardness as well. It was on this land that Russia's great revolutionary realist writers and great revolutionary democratic philosophers such as Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov were produced. The generation of Lenin and his co-warriors had received this great ideological-cultural wealth as a heritage which had lent it the courage for independent reasoning. China, despite all its Asian lethargy and medieval inertia, was never completely removed from the continuity of its independent and internal dynamics. Despite the plunder by several imperialist countries and partial occupations and despite several defeats, China was never

completely colonized and hence while there was a comprador capitalist class, there was a national capitalist class as well. While a section of intellectual community suffered from intellectual colonialism, there was also a nationalist section which had the courage to think independently. Although China was lagging a few centuries behind in terms of intellectual-ideological wealth, yet, as a result of not being enslaved, the nationalist intellectual community had not broken its ties with the intellectual-ideological wealth of the distant past and it was also free of the tendency of accept the contributions of West as a hypnotized slavishness. Also, the communist movement of China had inherited the heritage of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the incomplete democratic revolution of 1911. This was the reason why despite making a beginning from very weak ideological ground the Communist Party of China instead of looking up to the international leadership and following its guidelines with devotion mustered courage to determine the character of the Chinese revolution by analyzing the concrete conditions of its country.

The ancient history of India was replete with stormy social struggles and rich and copious philosophical-cultural wealth. It was precisely at the time when the signs of breaking of the prolonged medieval era impasse (in the forms ranging from capitalist development and Nirgun Bhakti movement to the peasant struggles such as Satnami revolt) were beginning to express themselves that the colonization process began which was completed in a century (by the middle of nineteenth century). The colonization completely disrupted the independent internal dynamics of Indian society and imposed a colonial socio-economic structure on it. The new classes which were components of this imposed colonial socio-economic structure were the cursed progenies of history. The Indian capitalist class and Indian intelligentsia did not evolve through a process of Renaissance and Enlightenment. They were the products of colonial socio-economic structure detached from the historical roots. This was the reason why even the radical section of the Indian capitalist class never waged any revolutionary struggle and the entire capitalist class adopted the policy of 'compromise-pressure-compromise' from the beginning to the end and captured power by taking advantage of people's struggle and the international situations. Even though this behavior taught it the charismatic cunningness of running the government by cheating the masses, it remained bankrupt in terms of philosophical-ideological wealth. The nationalism and democracy of even that section of Indian intellectual community which was radical national democratic did not possess the rich ground of rationality and materialism as its European and Russian counterparts. At the same time, owing to the colonial mindset, instead of independent thinking the common tendency of Indian intelligentsia was to blindly imitate Europe or blind opposition to the European knowledge wealth standing on the ground of the past,

due to its sense of inferiority. The Indian working class did not inherit wealth of bourgeois Renaissance-Enlightenment-Revolution. Even the section of middle-class radical nationalist intelligentsia which joined the workers' movement after being convinced of scientific socialism was not free from the historical curse of being born in a colonial social structure. It possessed neither the sense of historical continuity nor the intellectual wisdom and courage to distill the ideological essence of revolution or class struggle and to apply it to the concrete conditions of one's country through study. These intellectuals who brought the ideology of scientific socialism to the workers' movement handed over the same heritage to the leadership of the communist movement which is yet to free itself from it. The colonial mindset has been prevailing in the leadership of the communist movement to such an extent that the blind imitation of the parties which led the successful revolutions and their leaders has been more or less a general tendency on a sustained basis.

The above reason behind the lack of originality, courage, and depth in the leadership of the communist movement is of course not the only reason. There might be several other reasons but the above reason is an objective historical reason which we can assert to be true confidently. It is an inconvenient truth, but it is important to recognize the ground from where we have to make a new beginning. By recognizing this ground of the past, we can free ourselves from its curses in an easier way as we have left behind that past half a century ago. Today, the circumstances are more conducive to study the Indian history by freeing ourselves from colonial or mechanical materialist historical vision. Secondly, in today's world, there is a more favourable objective condition to think by freeing oneself from the historical limits of national boundaries and internalize the world intellectual wealth. Thirdly, today there is no international center or leadership or a socialist country which could be blindly imitated hence the circumstances themselves are compelling us to explore our path ourselves. Fourthly, the changes in the conditions of the country and abroad are so blatant that only an imbecile would try to imitate any revolution which happened half a century ago. Thus, the circumstances are more conducive today for concrete analysis of the concrete conditions independently. While summarizing Naxalbari this historical discussion has been carried out by digressing from the main topic with the hope that in the new era of the new proletarian revolution in the new century the new generation of proletarian revolutionaries would take lessons from history and give a new direction to the Indian communist movement.

After this discussion as a background we now return to the main topic. Before carrying out analysis and summarization of the positive and negative aspects the communist revolutionary movement or the Marxist-Leninist stream which was

born out of the womb of the Naxalbari peasant struggle it is important to know as to how the circumstances evolved to an extent that a big section of communist cadre reached to the point of rupture from revisionism and revolt from the revisionist leadership and became the torch bearer of the Naxalbari peasant uprising. Also, it is important to acquaint ourselves with the chronology of facts as to how the conditions were prepared for the explosion in Naxalbari, how the tide of peasant uprising surged and progressed.

Background of the Immediate Past: Indian Communist Movement During the Two Decades Prior to Naxalbari

In order to have an objective assessment of the historical importance of Naxalbari, it is important to know as to why and how the conditions were prepared to such an extent that an armed mass uprising began under the leadership of the local communist organizers in the remote Terai block of West Bengal (which lasted only two and a half month) and the communist movement throughout the country got divided in its favor or opposition and that event became a standard, a point of departure, a metaphor, and a symbol of the decisive rupture from revisionism. Naxalbari could pick the abandoned thread of Telangana and extend it further but it was not to be. In many ways the mainstream of the ML movement repeated the “left-wing” sectarianism of Ranadive era in an even more distorted and vulgar form. Workers’ movement gets punished for the revisionist sin in the form of ultra-leftist deviation. By proving this dictum of Lenin, the reaction of the 17 years of revisionist phase surfaced in the form of “left-wing” terrorism two years after the Naxalbari peasant uprising. But in order to understand it at a deeper level of realization, a brief discussion of the Party history from the Telangana peasant struggle to the subsequent seventeen years is essential. Such a discussion is important for understanding both its historical significance and its historical failure.

Naxalbari took place in a period when the reality behind the socialist mask of Nehru’s capitalist policies had been exposed. Common people suffering from price rise and unemployment were hitting the streets. The unabated sequence of students-youth movement, workers’ movement, and anti-price rise movements continued to unfold. Within the capitalist parliamentary politics, the expression of this widespread disillusionment and mass anger surfaced in the form of formation of non-Congress governments in nine states after the general elections of 1967. But what was important was the fact that it was for the first time after 1947 and after the Tebhaga-Telangana-Punapra-Vayalar and the Naval Revolt that the anti-system sentiments and aspirations of revolutionary change were agitating the

masses at the national level and yet there was no revolutionary force present at the political stage which could give them orientation and leadership. It needs to be remembered that this was the time when the Vietnamese revolution was on the verge of securing a victory over American imperialism and the students-youth, intellectuals and workers throughout the world including the western countries were lending them support by hitting the streets. In the African countries, the national liberation struggles were securing victory one after another and in Latin America, the resistance struggles against the military Juntas were surging ahead. The relentless series of student movement in France and movements of blacks, women, and youth and anti-war movement in the US was still continuing. After the Great Debate, carried out by the Chinese Communist Party against Soviet revisionism, the storm of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had begun since 1966 which was not only inspiring the working masses and communist cadre worldwide to carry out struggle against revisionism and choose the path of revolution throughout the world, but was also attracting the youth and intellectuals towards Mao's thoughts as well as the epoch-making Chinese cultural revolution. This international backdrop was also deeply influencing and inspiring the communist cadre in India with advanced consciousness and the radical students-youth-intelligentsia. Within the country, the disillusionment of the communist cadre with the revisionist leadership was beyond despair and was fast turning into the spirit of agitation and revolt. When in 1964 after the split in the Communist Party of India, a faction of leadership formed the Communist Party of India (Marxist) after terming the other faction as revisionist, the majority of the radical cadre joined it in the hope that the new Party would plunge itself into the revolutionary struggles by taking forward the heritage of Telangana, but soon it became evident that despite its many illusory radical gestures, the CPM leadership too was not prepared to go beyond the ambit of economistic-parliamentary bounds. When the documents of the struggle by the Chinese Party against the Khrushchevite revisionism (Great Debate) reached to the communist intelligentsia (not just the Dange faction of CPI which was on the verge of split, even the Basavpunaiya-Sundaraiya-Namboodripad-Ranadive faction did not make any attempt to ensure that this polemics reach the cadre who were kept in dark till the time they managed to get these documents from some other sources). And when the advanced elements of the communist cadre of India got acquainted with this debate, a new direction for decisive struggle against revisionism was found here as well. In 1966, along with the commencement of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, Mao's call for bombardment of the bourgeois headquarter inspired the Indian communist cadre as well to wage an open rebellion against the revisionists occupying the leadership.

Within the Communist Party of India, the two-line struggle was going on in one form or other since the days of Telangana peasant struggle. While one section of leadership suffered from revisionist deviation, the other section which represented the revolutionary aspirations of the cadre also suffered from inconsistency, indecision, and the tendency to depend on the international communist leadership and the big parties for guidance. Consequently, by the beginning of the 1950s this second section also fell into the revisionist quagmire and the only point of difference between the two sections was whether to adopt the path of cooperation with the Nehru government as part of the slogan of national democracy or to carry out some radical mass movement also as mainly a parliamentary opposition as part of the slogan of people's democracy.

The Telangana peasant struggle was first such armed struggle as a result of which an area of 16000 square miles consisting of three thousand villages was liberated and for about one and a half year the entire governance of the area was under the control of the village committees. About 4,000 peasants and Party Guerillas were martyred and ten thousand communist activists were kept in prison for three to four years. In all, 3 million acres of land was distributed to the peasants, eviction and begar was ended and the system of minimum wages was imposed. In February-March 1948, in the second congress of the Communist Party of India when B.T. Randive was made the Party General Secretary by removing P.C. Joshi—a rightist, the Telangana peasant struggle had reached to the stage of Guerilla war. It is noteworthy that it was only after the insistence of the delegates from Telangana that the importance of the Telangana struggle was mentioned in the thesis of the second Congress and was given support and a call was made to organize such struggles and the appeal was made even to the working class to launch a movement in its support. However, the belief of the “leftist” opportunist Ranadive behind this call was that it would create a situation of armed revolt throughout the country. Based on the thoughts of Edward Kardelj, a theoretician of the Titoite revisionist Party of Yugoslavia, Ranadive presented a thesis that the democratic and socialist revolution must take place simultaneously and the communists must not only target the big bourgeoisie but all the bourgeoisie and adopt the path of nation-wide general strike and armed insurrection. The harm done by this “left” adventurism to the Indian communist movement is a fact of history. At the same time, this line also worked to halt the onward movement of the Telangana struggle. In May 1948, the Andhra Party unit, while opposing the Ranadive's line, presented its line that the character of Indian revolution was different from that of Russian revolution and to a great extent it bears resemblance to the ongoing Chinese New Democratic Revolution. Here a united front of four classes would have to be forged and the path of protracted people's war would have to be

adopted. In the Andhra thesis, while terming the Mao Tse-tung's principle of New Democracy as relevant, presented the plan of accomplishing the proletarian revolution in India in two stages. Ranadive, while opposing this thesis, also opposed Mao's thoughts and he even went to the extent of terming him a revisionist in the category of Tito and Earl-Browder. The hegemony of Ranadive's line over the Party for two years caused immense damage to the Telangana struggle. Instead of taking the peasant struggles in different parts of country forward along the path of Telangana and linking them with the struggles of working class, the "left" adventurism isolated the Party from the masses and almost paralyzed the initiative of the cadre. After the revolution in China in 1949, Cominform supported Mao's theory of New Democracy in 1950. Zhukov, one of the theoreticians of the Soviet Party, stated the alliance between four classes to be essential in colonies and semi-colonies and another theoretician Balabushevich while supporting the Telangana armed struggle termed it as harbinger of agrarian revolution and the first attempt of establishing a people's democratic regime of Indian people. As the international leadership gave the new orientation, Ranadive's "left" opportunist line in India got isolated overnight. Rajeshwar Rao became Party's General Secretary in May-June 1950 and Party officially accepted the Andhra-thesis. But there had been much delay by this time. The wrong line had to a large extent throttled the possibility of the countrywide expansion of struggle and the new bourgeois regime had got valuable time of three years to consolidate itself. Since the defeat of the "left" opportunist line was not an outcome of the two-line internal struggle but the outcome of the tendency of going along with the stand of Cominform and the Soviet Party, the Party cadre were confused. This phase of confusion continued from the past and since 1947 it was going on continuously. The cadre were getting disappointed due to the adoption of incorrect stand towards the national and international events and then suddenly reversing them and due to the prevalence of mutually opposite two extreme lines continuously in the Party leadership. This was the time when Indian Army entered Hyderabad. After the surrender of Nizam, the Indian Army waged a war against the communist guerillas. The people's army which was divided in small guerilla squads was now faced with an army equipped with advance weaponry numbering 50-60 thousand. Still the Indian Army could push back the guerilla squads only after great difficulties and unprecedented repression. Taking cue from Malaya government's Briggs plan, such villages were habilitated where the people had to live under the control of army. Two thousand tribal settlements were destroyed and people were kept in the torture camps. The guerillas left the villages and went towards the adjoining forests and when the army pressure increased even there they got scattered in the remote forest areas.

It is to be noted that the right-wing faction of S.A. Dange, Ghate and Ajay Ghosh which was dominant at the Bombay headquarter of the Party was opposing the Andhra line since the beginning. After the entry of army in Telangana, some people under the leadership of Ravi Narayan Reddy started putting pressure to withdraw the struggle, though the larger section of Andhra Committee still wanted to continue the struggle. It was of the view that despite the immediate loss, it was possible to carry on the struggle and to expand it to the other territories of the country where the situation was conducive. At this time, the British Communist Party and one of its leaders Rajni Palme Dutt played special role in strengthening the hand of the right-wing faction. Dutt was of the belief that in the new world conditions of cold war, the Indian communists must abandon the path of armed struggle and work towards strengthening the world peace movement and must put pressure on the Nehru government to stay away from the imperialist camp and forge close ties with the socialist camp and for supporting the people's war in Korea. An evolved form of the same idea later surfaced in the form of the national democratic front of the right-wing faction of the CPI and in the policy of co-operation and support to the "progressive" bourgeois Nehru government. The revisionists of the Party, adopting the metaphysical deductive methodology once again followed the approach of viewing the national contradictions from the perspective of international contradictions and when there was any conflict between the two, determining one's tasks based upon the international contradiction. This mistake was committed even during the Second World War and earlier as well. Even the political committee of the Communist Party of Britain, in a letter to the Indian Party, apart from above suggestions, emphasized on getting involved in the legal works and taking part in the upcoming general election, which was scheduled to be held after one and a half years and it also advised on changing the leadership as the Central Committee under the leadership of Rajeshwar Rao was not elected in a democratic manner. These circumstances helped to strengthen the hands of the right-wing leadership of the Party. On 1 July 1950, Ajay Ghosh replaced Rajeshwar Rao as Party Secretary.

In order to deal with the situation of difference of opinion, crisis and confusion, once again the international leadership was relied upon and in the beginning of 1951, a delegation of four members visited Moscow to hold talks with the leadership of the Soviet Party. Two of them—Rajeshwar Rao and Basavpunaiyya—were the leaders of the Telangana struggle, while the other two—Ajay Ghosh and Dange—were opposing it. On behalf of Soviet Party Stalin, Malenkov, Malrov and Suslov held talks. As has been mentioned above, when the Indian delegation returned to India after these talks, a draft of the program of the democratic revolution was prepared for the first time and a policy statement was issued. The

policy statement was part of the huge document of the tactical line which was published legally. In both these documents, even though there was no mention of armed struggle, in the document related to the tactical line, the Guerilla war of farmers and the class strike of workers and other forms of struggle were talked about even while “being careful to avoid immature insurrection and risky actions”. In that, this notion was termed as incorrect that the armed revolt can be declared only when throughout the country, the conditions are ripe for revolt. As per the document, if the general mass movement and Guerilla war are organized properly, then by agitating the peasants throughout the country, it is possible to elevate the struggle to a higher plane after the peasant struggle on a big territory reaches the stage of land-seizure.

The Soviet Party’s general suggestions about the peasant-struggle were correct, but it was the Indian Party which had to take the concrete decisions regarding the Telangana struggle, but by that time the right-wing opportunists had come to dominate over it. The Central Committee directed the Andhra committee to continue the struggle only till the time the Party completes the talks with the government regarding the conditions for suspending it. These conditions consisted of not returning the seized land to the zamindars, release of prisoners, taking back the cases, and to revoke the ban on Party. But going against this decision of the Party, the right-wing faction under the leadership of Ajay Ghosh and the Ravi Narayan Reddy faction from Andhra began to put pressure for withdrawing the struggle unconditionally. Taking advantage of this condition within the Party, the Nehru government refused to agree to any conditions for holding talks. By May, 1951 even the Andhra members in the Central Committee had come to believe that it was no longer possible to even carry on partial guerilla struggle. In October 1951, the Party capitulated and declared the withdrawal of the struggle. The guerilla leaders of the forest came to know about it much later. By now, the Party had completely embraced the parliamentary path. The opponent of the right-wing faction had surrendered before it and an immense sense of defeat prevailed amongst the cadre.

In hindsight, it can be said that the immediate defeat of Telangana was almost imminent at that time due to several reasons. The most important reason was that the Party was not unified in a Bolshevik manner and there existed “left” and right factions in it from top to the bottom, hence it was incapable of giving leadership to the Indian revolution. Between 1946 and 1951, first the right-wing deviation during P.C. Joshi’s period and then the “leftist” deviation during Ranadive period, and then again Ajay Ghosh’s rightist deviation caused immense damage to Party’s tasks at the country level as well at Telangana level. This was a transition period when the consolidation process of the new regime had not yet completed,

but the Party leadership failed to take forward the stream of people's revolution by linking the naval mutiny, Tebhaga-Telangana-Punapra Vayalar peasant struggles and the nationwide labour movements in a chain. Had this process moved ahead, the aspect of the compromising nature of Congress would have been exposed more thoroughly and even if the democratic revolution had not been completed under the leadership of the Party, either the protracted people's war would have entered in an advance phase on strong foundation or owing to the pressure of mass struggles, Nehru government would have been forced to carry out the tasks of agrarian revolution even if it was through above in the way of the Prussian path and with rapid capitalist development, India would soon have entered into the stage of socialist revolution. But it was not to be. By 1951, owing to the difference of opinion in the Party leadership, the damage to the Telangana struggle had been done to such an extent that at least for the time being its defeat was certain. Still, had the right wing faction not been dominant in the leadership and instead of complete surrender, after the temporary retreat and after scattering the military power in the difficult forest areas, the peasant struggle in that area and in other such territories could have been organized afresh, an opportunity could be secured to take control of the situation and move ahead. Even this fact need not be ignored that the faction in the leadership of Rajeshwar Rao, which had pursued the correct line on Telangana was weak ideologically. Because of this, despite being dominant in the Central Committee for some time, it could not consolidate its line at the countrywide level. Instead of decisive struggle against the opponent line, it adopted the attitude of compromise, and finally it yielded. This basic fact also need not be ignored that till 1951 the Indian Party neither had a consistent program of democratic revolution nor did it have any agrarian program. By the time the documents of the program and tactical lines were prepared with the advice of the Soviet Party in 1951, the rightists had come to dominate the leadership, the Party had moved on the path of revisionism, and the defeat of Telangana struggle was certain. Another important aspect is that the faction favoring the protracted people's war like Chinese revolution, despite adopting the correct stand was very immature ideologically and since the Indian situation was not exactly similar to that of China it is doubtful as to what extent it could take forward the struggle had the conditions been conducive. Pre-revolution semi-colonial China was at the pre-colonial stage while India after 1947 was a post-colonial society despite the fact that the decolonization process was not yet complete and it had a centralized state which was under the control of an industrial capitalist class which was not comprador like the one in China. Owing to this very nature, it was inevitable for it to adopt the path of gradual capitalist transformation of the feudal land-relations via Prussian path for the formation of a

national market and to expand its economic options by taking advantage of the inter-imperialist rivalry even while being a junior partner of the imperialists. This character of the Indian capitalist class was referred to first by historian D.D. Kosambi. In this regard, even though the 1951 program was determining the stage of revolution and the path at that time correctly it had nothing to say about the orientation of the development of Indian society due to lack of accuracy and clarity in assessing the character of Indian capitalist class and state. It did not make clear the fact that had the national democratic revolution under the leadership of proletariat not taken place, the Indian capitalist class would have gradually accomplished the task of changing the land relations through non-revolutionary path because it was in its class interest. It was not clarifying even the aspect that owing to a centralized state and relatively higher capitalist development it was not possible to duplicate the Chinese path of protracted people's war, even though the stage of revolution was national democratic in 1947-51. Even the Chinese Party had warned at that time that the Chinese experience of guerilla peasant struggle cannot be blindly imitated in every colony-semicolony-neocolony. Under these complex, fluid transitional conditions, even if everything went on as per the faction implementing the correct line in Telangana, it is difficult to say, owing to its ideological weakness, as to the extent it could take the struggle forward and whether it could escape from the tendency of blindly imitating the path of the Chinese revolution or not. The history of the Indian communist movement in subsequent phase tells us that it would have been quite difficult.

By the way, what actually transpired in history was that the Party had adopted the path of peaceful constitutionalism in 1951 itself and had basically and essentially molded itself on the pattern of Mensheviks and the Kautskyite European parties. Between 1951 and 1962-63, the two-line struggle within it virtually existed between the soft stream of parliamentarism-economism and a radical stream. A bigger section of cadre had revolutionary aspirations and character, though the recruitment of the reformist cadre was continuing. But owing to its ideological weakness, it considered the radical revisionist faction as revolutionary. The mild liberal faction was led by Dange, Mohit Sen, Bhawani Sen, Bhupesh Gupta, Damodaran, G. Adhikari etc. and even the middle roader Ajay Ghosh was basically with them. The second faction was led by Sundaraiyya, Gopalan, Basavpunaiya, Pramod Dasgupta etc. The thesis of the former was that the faction existing in Congress under the leadership of Nehru is the representative of progressive nationalist bourgeois class and the Nehru government is carrying out the national democratic task of decolonization and land reforms, and hence the Communist Party of India must mainly adopt the attitude of cooperation. Also, the government was maintaining friendly ties with the socialist camp. In order to

strengthen this as also to respond to the cold war by strengthening the world peace movement, it was important to adopt the cooperative attitude towards the Nehru government. On the other hand, the radical revisionist faction believed that the bigger partner of state in India is the capitalist class which is making compromises with imperialism and does not wish to carry out the tasks of the national democratic revolution. According to this, what was needed was to struggle for the people's democratic revolution by forging a four-class alliance whose central element would be agrarian revolution. On the face of it, this program looked revolutionary, but the reality was that this faction never presented any concrete action-plan to take forward the Telangana peasant struggle by reorganizing the revolutionary peasant struggle. Apart from distributing the community land, Panchayati land and the land derived from ceiling, putting pressure on the government for expediting the land-reforms, waging struggle on the demands such as minimum wages, giving radical speeches against Nehru's policies, and organizing movement on bonus, salary increment and other facilities for the industrial workers, the faction which presented the program of people's democratic revolution did not do anything. It needs to be mentioned here that during 1955-56 Ajay Ghosh, Namboodripad, Dange, Jagannath Sarkar, Balkrishna Menon were talking on this line that much like the Prussia of Bismarck era, the Indian ruling bourgeoisie too is carrying out gradual capitalist transformation of the land-ownership structure from the top, but later, they kept quiet in a cowardly and opportunist manner. Although for a revisionist Party, there is no meaning of program being correct or incorrect but had there been a debate in the issues related to the transformation of land-relations, this issue would have come on the agenda of debate after Naxalabari even for the communist revolutionaries. But it did not happen. It can be said that while the first faction, through its social democratic conduct, wanted to take the Party into the lap of the bourgeoisie, the second faction wanted to play the role of a responsible parliamentary opposition, a 'pressure block' within the system and the second line of defense of the system by carrying out radical economic-trade-unionistic-parliamentary opposition activities. But the revisionist character of this faction can be understood from the fact that between 1951 and 1964, apart from parliamentary and economic struggles, it did nothing for taking forward the revolutionary agrarian struggle of the peasants and for revolutionary political propaganda and political struggle amongst the working class. This faction never raised any question on turning the entire Party as legal and the Menshevik ways including the 4-ana membership. In 1958, when the Khrushchevite revisionist policies approved by the twentieth congress of the Soviet Party were adopted in the fifth (special) Congress (Amritsar) of the Party and the phrase 'revolutionary violence' was removed from preamble

of the Party constitution not a single delegate opposed this. In order to understand the ideological weakness of the leadership of the communist revolutionary stream which was born out of the Naxalbari peasant uprising, it is important also to mention here that several people of the future ML leadership were present in this session as delegates. Among them, D.V. Rao (member of the Central Committee) and Nagi Reddy were national level leaders and several other state level leaders were present. In the sixth Congress (Vijaywada, 1961), there did surface serious difference of opinion on two mutually opposing drafts of the program, but the split was avoided due to the mediation of Khrushchevites of the Soviet delegation. It needs to be mentioned that during 1956-1961 the Chinese Party while indirectly opposing the revisionism was writing positively in its organs in favor of Stalin and the Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian revolution, but instead of openly attacking, it was trying to resolve the differences through dialogue at Party level. It was hoping that perhaps the entire Party would not be with Khrushchev and it was possible to bring the Soviet Party on the right track through dialogue and a split in the world communist movement could be avoided. In the process, even though the Chinese Party did register its stand in the documents passed in the international communist movement in 1957 and 1960, it made some compromises as well. Owing to these ideological compromises, several revisionist propositions got included in these documents which were thoroughly utilized by the revisionist parties all over the world. The experience of history was not supporting the optimism of the Chinese Party and its conduct did not match with that of Marx, Engels, and Lenin who used to immediately wage struggle against reformism and revisionism. The undue delay by the Chinese Party in waging direct struggle against revisionism helped revisionists in the communist movement throughout the world. They fully utilized this time in confusing the cadre and consolidating themselves. The Indian communist leadership did not have a habit of thinking without any guideline from the international leadership. So the question of raising question against Khrushchevite revisionism in the fifth and sixth congress does not arise. Even the revolutionary spirit of the cadre was continuously decaying after 1951. Now criticism of Stalin and the acceptance of parliamentary path contributed to enhance the despondency and disappointment. In 1962, during the time of India's China war, the Dange faction, as a logical culmination of its class collaborationist line, adopted jingoistic line and emphatically supported Nehru's border policy while considering China as aggressor. At the time China was a victim of the encirclement of the western powers and the haze of slandering, still insofar as the India-China border dispute is concerned, the western media and the majority of the western intellectuals were holding India responsible for acts of provocation and attacks owing to the

patronage of the US and other western countries and its expansionist ambitions. These facts are brought out in detail in many books, Neville Maxwell's book being the most popular one. Even within India, several people including veteran revolutionary Pt. Sundarlal were staunchly critical of Nehru's expansionist policies and several books and articles were written to bring out the facts, though owing to the jingoistic propaganda they could not reach to the people at large. The communist cadre of India were not familiar with all this material, but through their natural class instinct they were unwilling to accept socialist China as expansionist and aggressor and also they were familiar with the reactionary and expansionist character of the Indian bourgeoisie. While facing the huge jingoistic tide, large section of Indian communist cadre opposed the aggressive and expansionist border-policy of Nehru government. The faction within the communist Party which opposed the Dange faction and which was in minority declared the majority line of the Dange faction as anti-Marxist and based on the opportunist theory of bourgeois nationalism. But the events in the coming days proved that it was not done due to the commitment towards proletarian internationalism, but for keeping the revolutionary cadre on its side. Instead of boldly exposing the truths behind the myth of the Chinese "attack" and taking an anti-jingoism program, Ram Murthy, on behalf of this second faction, presented an alternative resolution in the National Council of party in which only this much was stated that China and India are two great neighboring countries, they must not engage in war as both the countries would have to face destruction and chaos. But despite this cowardly manipulation, they could not manage to escape. The Indian government, based on the information given by Dange, arrested them and sent to prison.

In the latter half 1963, a debate on the basic ideological question of 'Revolution or Peaceful Transition?' having an unprecedented dimension commenced in the communist movement of India probably for the first time, which took the entire Party cadre in its fold. Between 1957 and 1962, based on whatever literature of the Soviet Party and the Chinese Party was reaching to a section of communist cadre, it was clear that the Chinese Party opposed not only the revisionism of Togliatti and Tito, but it also did not accept the principles of three "Peacefuls" of Khrushchev and its criticism of Stalin. But the broad cadre throughout the country had the access to the Soviet writings only. The literature of the Chinese Party could reach only the Marxist intellectuals and the enlightened cadre of the metropolitan cities. The Party leadership was aware of the ongoing differences within the international communist movement, but even its second faction never tried to take the stand of the Chinese Party to the cadre. In June 1963, the Chinese Party presented the alternative general orientation document against the Khrushchev's

line by opening the debate for the first time. Subsequent to this, during the period of September 1963-July 1964, the Chinese Party, by totally exposing the phony communism of Khrushchev through nine essays, declared the Soviet Party as a capitalist roader. This was the debate which became famous by the name of 'Great Debate' in the international communist movement. At the time, the bigger section of faction opposing the official Party-line was in prison. Those who were outside did nothing to take the documents of the "Great Debate" to the Party cadre. These documents reached the Party cadre mainly through intellectuals and then the word was spread rapidly. Now the initiative was totally in the hands of the cadre. The large section of the militant cadre supported the Chinese position. It took no time for it to understand that the main target behind the false propaganda of Chinese "attack" and the tide of jingoism actually happen to be the revolutionary line of the Chinese Party, hence the cadre began to carry out bold propaganda against jingoism entirely on its own independent initiative. This campaign was most resolute in Bengal. A huge rally took place in the Shaheed Maidan of Calcutta followed by a procession on the streets. Its main slogan was: 'Those raising the specter of China are the agents of imperialism'. The entire situation could be understood from the fact that the Bangla organ of Party 'Swadheenta,' despite being in control of the faction opposing the official Party-line of the leadership, maintained a studied silence on this issue. On the other hand, a new weekly 'Deshhitaishi' and a new monthly 'Nandan' which had begun on the initiative of the Party cadre, were writing on this entire issue with militant articulation and were attacking revisionism.

When the leaders belonging to the faction which was opposed to the official Party-line came out of prisons, they found the situation going out of the bound of their understanding and control. Before their imprisonment they were seen in association with the Chinese line, though they themselves did not say so. Within the prison differences emerged even amongst them. Some liberals stated that both the position—that of Soviet Party and the Chinese Party—are wrong, while their opponents believed that the Chinese position is in the main correct. A small section of the leadership which opposed the official line which had managed to escape the arrest and which acting as the state committee of the Party by going underground issued a document with a pseudonym of 'Prithviraj' in which it was clearly stated that the differences in the international communist movement are on the fundamental principles of Marxism. But despite asserting this, one of its members Samar Mukherji clarified that they on their own would not take initiative for split. Even the leaders who came out from the prison believed the same, however they realized that this feeling is fiercely present amongst the cadre that the links with Dangeite majority which is dominant in the Party leadership must be

severed. Under this circumstance, the official partly-line opponent faction in order to divert the attention of the cadre from the ideological issues started enthusiastically distributing the Dange's letter after retrieving from National Archives, which he had sent to the British regime as a mercy petition. But this trick failed to work. The ideological struggle got intensified even more and there was no other alternative left to these leaders other than taking steps towards the formation of a new Party. Towards this purpose, a convention was called at Tenali (Andhra Pradesh). But the intention and character of the leaders of this faction can be understood from the fact that just before this convention Jyoti Basu flew to Delhi to meet Bhupesh Gupta and Rajeshwar Rao with a proposal for compromise. Their condition was that if the next Party Congress takes place on the basis of 1962 membership and if Dange is removed from the Party chairmanship, the idea of the formation of a new Party could be dropped. From these facts, it is clear that for such a leadership, the issue of split was not that of ideological-political, rather it was regarding the softer or harder policies and strategies within the arena of parliamentary politics. In the 'Prithviraj document', the differences between the Soviet Party and the Chinese Party were being termed as ideological and the Chinese position was supported while the Dange faction which was dominant in the national council had passed a resolution terming China as aggressor. In these two lines, those who were thinking about co-existence could only be rank opportunist.

The radical cadre were suspicious of such opportunist leadership from the beginning. Still they felt that after separating from the Dange faction, the new Party could be taken on the right track by putting pressure on the wavering nature of the new leadership. The cadre were further shocked when the leadership which was expected to apply the revolutionary line, got assembled for a congress openly at a time of immense alertness of the repressive state machinery and then what followed was obvious. All the main leaders who opposed the official line were peacefully picked and put in jail. At a time when the radical cadre were on the streets against jingoism, this faction probably found prison to be the most secure place. The suspicion of the cadre towards this new leadership got further impetus when it distributed the draft Party program for the proposed congress for the formation of a new Party (CPM). Even though the leadership of the working class, united front on the basis of worker-peasant alliance and the agrarian revolution being the axis were talked about while talking about the people's democratic revolution, it contained several elements of revisionism and reformism and all possibilities relinquishing the revolutionary line completely in future were inherent in it, which a large section of radical cadre had sensed. Consequently, at all the levels of Party convention organized for preparation towards Party congress

sharp debates arose. Even within the Party congress, the draft of an alternative program were presented, but in the old bureaucratic manner, every radical critique was suppressed by manufacturing majority through manipulation. Only few words here and there were changed in the draft of the Party program.

Despite all these developments, the radical cadre failed to understand that even the new Party which was being formed happens to be revisionist from the perspective of the leadership and policies. They were expecting that it was possible to orient it towards the revolutionary path by carrying out two-line struggle within the Party and by sidelining the middle roaders. The factors which were responsible for this confusion were: the long history of Party's ideological weakness, long tradition of the lack of political education and the fourteen-year long phase of blatant revisionism.

The essence of the stand adopted by the newly formed Party on the fundamental ideological question of proletarian was evidently revisionist. Despite critiquing the Khrushchevite revisionism, the leadership of the CPI-CPM believed that the Chinese Party suffered from ultra-leftist sectarianism. Its assessment of Soviet Union was that the Party over there suffered from revisionist deviation, though the character of the society was still socialist. This stand on its own was ridiculously inconsistent. As per Lenin's definition, a revisionist Party means a bourgeois Party with a socialist mask. If such a Party rules the state, then the state's character is not that of proletarian dictatorship, rather that of bourgeois dictatorship and while such a state exists, it would be only a matter of time for the socialist fabric of society to disintegrate. Between 1955 and 1964 the socialist fabric of the society of Soviet Union was completely disintegrated and it was replaced by state monopoly capitalism. After the attack on Czechoslovakia in 1968, the imperialist character of the Soviet Union also got exposed. In the later decades, the Soviet policy of causing splits in the national liberation movements in the name of helping them, preaching them to compromise by relinquishing the path of armed struggle, exploiting the newly independent countries in the name of aiding them and the Soviet policy of exploiting the people of east European countries, exposed the social imperialist character of the Soviet Union like a broad day light. But the CPM leadership kept on believing Soviet Union as socialist until the state capitalism yielded to private capitalism of Western type and until the Soviet Union was disintegrated. As per CPM's thesis, despite the 35 years long reign of a revisionist Party the character of the state and society remained socialist. Can there be a bigger joke with Marxism than this! As if it was not sufficient, slowly CPM even stopped calling the Soviet Party as revisionist.

CPM never wrote in detail on Mao Tse-tung's analysis and theoretical derivations regarding the nature of the class struggle which goes on during the period of

socialist transition and reasons of capitalist restoration, but it kept on rejecting the experiment of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution right from the beginning and continued to believe revisionist theory of Liu Shao Chi and Deng Xiao Ping of the development of productive forces to be Marxist. Hence it is not surprising that today it considers the naked capitalism of China in the garb of “market socialism” as socialism and singing the tune of Dengites it declares the Cultural Revolution as an “ultra-leftist aberration” and “catastrophe”. Much like all the revisionist parties, CPM often maintains silence on every crucial ideological issue of international communist movement and puts forward its revisionist stand only when compelled. Even though it verbally stated the Chinese stand in the Great Debate to be correct, instead of accepting the stand of the Chinese Party in 1963 regarding the general line of the world proletarian revolution including the revolution in the colonies-semi colonies-neocolonies, it essentially accepted the general line of the Khrushchevite revisionism. After the death of Mao, the capitalist roaders in China who had acquired power through reactionary coup, began calling the Soviet Party as the fraternal Party, CPM did not oppose and accepted this sly somersault. This revisionist character of CPM got more and more exposed with the passage of time, but looking from the perspective of ideological position and the character of Party, it was a revisionist Party right from its inception.

So, instead of narrow empiricist observation if we look from the perspective of the Leninist principles of the Party organization, the revisionist character of CPM was evident from 1964 itself. The CPM continued the entirely open, legal, parliamentary character and modus-operandi as it is. The nature of Party membership in it was worse even than the Mensheviks. The changes made in the Party constitution at the Amritsar Congress were maintained as well in the Seventh Congress of 1964. As per the program of people’s democratic revolution, the path of revolution could only have been protracted people’s war, but instead of mentioning it the Party program in a deceptive language mentioned “parliamentary and non-parliamentary” paths. Any revolutionary Party uses the bourgeois parliamentary election according to the circumstances as a tactics only. To put the parliamentary path at par with non-parliamentary path in itself is revisionism. While opposing the slogan of election-boycott of the “left-wing” adventurist stream of ML movement CPM used to claim that it was just following Lenin in saying that the elections could be used as a tactics and it was precisely doing that. However, it has been loyally implementing the bourgeois policies while it has been ruling in one state for three decades and instead of using the forum of elections and parliament as a preparation for mass struggles it has been using brutal authoritarian force of the state in order to crush the mass movements. It had exposed its character in the late sixties itself by brutally repressing the

Naxalbari peasant uprising.

Insofar as the question of program is concerned, the CPM under his program of people's democratic revolution believed that the character of the Indian big bourgeoisie was not comprador but rather possessed dual nature and all in all its position was supposed to be that of a junior partner of imperialism, which was closer to the reality. However, the inherent logic of the ruling capitalist class could only be such that as per its industrial-financial interest it would try to transform the semi-feudal land-relations from above, in a gradual process akin to the Junker-type transformation of Prussia, giving opportunity to the feudal landlords to convert themselves into capitalist landlords (and those who fail to do so are left free to be ruined), would convert the rich tenants into profiteer Kulak, would secure and expand its economic interest by taking advantage of inter-imperialist rivalry and by adopting the import-substitution policy and would try to bring even the remote villages in the fold of the national market. In fact, that is what actually transpired (and this process had picked up in 1964). The economists associated with CPM have been in part accepting the truth of the capitalist development, though they stop short of taking this logic to its culmination. The CPM, instead of taking the logic derived from the character of the Indian capitalist class to its conclusion, continues to believe till this day that for last half a decade that India has remained in the stage of people's democratic revolution. In any case, the program of revolution hardly bears any meaning for a revisionist Party. There are many smaller revisionist parties that believe India to be in the stage of socialist revolution, they engage themselves in economism-trade-unionism with the proletarians in villages and cities and contest parliamentary-state assembly elections or only engage in theoretical babbling. But CPM is a Party having a relatively big social base which has to keep the big and medium owner farmers in villages and the petty bourgeois and upper middle class in the cities to its fold at any cost, otherwise there would be severe blow to its vote bank (it maintains its vote bank by waging legal and economic struggles, howsoever meek, for the economic interest of the organized workers and by carrying the drama of protest against the government on salary revision, PF, Pension, terms of service etc. in the parliament, it can keep its vote bank intact, though its electoral fortune cannot be strengthened merely on this basis.) Hence the idea of a strategic alliance between of four classes inherent in program of the people's democratic revolution act as a theoretical cover for adopting the class collaborationist attitude towards the big owner farmers in villages, small bourgeoisie and the upper middle class in the cities. It is because of this reason that the CPM continues to talk about the people's democratic revolution till this day.

Anyhow, these developments belong to much later date. We will have to return to the period of 1964. The revisionist character of CPM today which has been exposed in form of the rampantly anti-people social-democratic character was like this right from its birth. But since the CPM's leadership at that time was attacking Dangeite revisionism and since it appeared to be opposing Khrushchevite revisionism, even if mildly, a big section of the cadre having low theoretical understanding and consciousness who were used to looking at things empirically, considered them as revolutionary. Yet, it is an undisputed fact that a large section of cadre was looking at them with suspicion and was considering it as wavering middle roaders. The cadre having advanced consciousness were in despair since the 1964 congress itself. However, they could not see any alternative. A large section consisted of those who, despite considering the leadership as revisionist, were with the Party only for the time being and were in the wait-and-watch mindset. A substantial portion of intellectuals and activists had become inactive after losing any hope from the new leadership. All in all, the ambience of enthusiasm, hope and zeal which was needed for the formation of an all India Party was nowhere in sight.

Ground being laid, that Historic Explosion and Afterwards

In November 1964, when the Party congress was being held in the Tyagraj Hall in Calcutta, a small group of a few people had distributed pamphlets and had also levelled the charge on the new Party leadership as being middle roader and suffering from revisionist deviation. Most of the delegates returned depressed and skeptic from the Congress. In January 1965, the General Secretary of the newly formed CPM, P. Sundaraiya, was arrested and with the government permission went to Soviet Union for medical treatment. After returning from there, while referring to several positive aspects of the Soviet leadership, he wrote that even the Soviet Party has a point. By the time the documents of the Great Debate had started reaching the lower echelons of organizers and activists as well and a substantial portion of the cadre having advanced consciousness had come to believe that there was no scope of adopting the middle path between revisionism and Marxism and doing so would be tantamount to standing on the side of revisionism. This was the time when the national bourgeois leadership in the national wars of independence and the anti-neocolonial armed struggles in the countries ranging from South Vietnam, Philippines and Malaya to the African countries and the Latin American countries was applying the military strategy of protracted people's war and most of them were on the threshold of victory. The leaders of the African liberation struggles like Amilcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere were openly admitting Mao's contribution of military strategy. The

Khrushchevite revisionists, who were trying help the national wars of liberation through bargaining and who were advising them to sit on the negotiating table with the rulers and to get power through compromise were increasingly getting exposed. During the Cuban Missile crisis, the surrender of Khrushchev before the US browbeating had already raised a question mark among the communist cadre throughout the world about the character of the Soviet regime. Its policy of continual compromise with the imperialists was also putting it under suspicion. Towards the end of 1965, unprecedented barbaric repression of the communists took place in Indonesia, and even this event made it clear before the communist cadre in India that if a Party despite its huge mass base and cadre-force shows laxity in terms of secrecy, cadre-recruitment, discipline related to work-culture and military preparation, the bourgeois state power would drown it into the quagmire of blood by crushing through brutal military force. This event also helped the communist cadre to understand the ideological differences between the Soviet path and the Chinese path and in this light they began to think about the new leadership of CPM as well. Immediately after the 'Great Debate', the 'Great Socialist Education Movement' had begun in China in 1964. This movement was actually a form of the struggle between revisionism and revolutionary line within the Chinese Party on the question of socialist construction and a prelude to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was beginning to be prepared. The Chinese Party document related to this movement were reaching the intellectuals associated with CPM and the conscious cadre, and were helping them understand the things. Contrary to the pompous talk of mass movement during the Seventh Congress, no initiative was visible on behalf of the leadership to organize agrarian struggle or a militant movement on the political and economic demands of workers. Aside from the routine rituals, no activities of revolutionary political propaganda and education, which happens to be a necessary task for a newly formed Party, was being carried out. The main or almost full emphasis of the Party leadership was on getting prepared for presenting an alternative to Congress in the coming elections by forging a broad united front. Although in order to conceal its electoral character it was continuously talking about "setting up transitional governments strengthening the mass movements" (by the way, the "transition phase" continues till this day!). Even during the India-Pakistan war in 1965, the Party did not muster courage to take any program in its hand to wage anti-jingoistic and anti-war revolutionary propaganda. All these national-international events and tides of all round advancement of the liberation movements in that era of world-history were helping CPM cadre to revolutionize their consciousness, in teaching them to distinguish between revisionism and revolutionary Marxism, and

in recognizing the real character of the CPM leadership. The attitude of the Party leadership itself was revealing its character.

Immediately after the Seventh Congress, amongst those who were raising question on the character of the leadership of the newly found party, some people with the initiative and leadership of Kanhai Chatterji, Amulya Sen and Chandrashekhar Das secretly formed a secret revolutionary center within the Party for carrying out theoretical struggle (in their assessment, the bureaucratic Party leadership would not let them carry out basic theoretical discussion within the Party and no sooner they would do this, they would be sidelined by terming them as extremist and adventurist. Later the attitude of the CPM leadership on several issues actually proved that their assessment was absolutely correct). On behalf of this center, the first edition of a bulletin named 'Chinta' came out in March 1965, and it was secretly distributed amongst the Party cadre (especially in Bihar and Bengal). It was precisely around this time that Charu Mazumdar also started writing his famous eight document series. On 28 February 1965, he completed the first document of the series: 'Our tasks in the present situation'. These two decisive initiatives calling for revolt against the neo-revisionism of CPM were taken separately but exactly at the same time. Besides these, several people from Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Punjab had begun to believe the Party leadership as travelers on the path of revisionism ever since the Seventh Congress itself and were thinking as to what could be the way of waging the struggle against revisionism within the Party? There were some people (especially intellectuals) who, believing the Party to be revisionist had relinquished the membership of the Party or had become inactive even if they retained the membership.

In the period March 1965 to the middle of 1966, six editions of 'Chinta' bulletin were published. After that the pioneers of this revolutionary center were expelled terming them as extremist and adventurist. After the expulsion, in order to carry out the debate on the varied questions related to the strategy and general tactics on a wider platform, this group under the leadership of Kanhai Chatterji and Amulya Sen began the regular publication of an open magazine named 'Dakshin Desh' by mid-1966. Charu Mazumdar had completed writing six of his 'eight document series' till August 1966. He wrote the seventh and eighth document in February and April 1967 respectively when the peasants of Naxalbari had begun to take out huge processions and the ground for the peasant-revolt in May had been prepared. Before discussing about the content of these documents and editions of 'Chinta', it is important to know about Naxalbari as to how the objective

conditions for this revolt were present and how there had been a tradition of peasant struggles and the communist movement in Naxalbari from an earlier time.

Situated in the Siliguri Sub-division of Darjeeling district the rural region of Naxalbari area falls under Terai zone. The hill area begins from there. Besides agriculture, there are tea plantations in the region which are adjacent to the villages. The Communist Party began systematic work amongst the peasant and the workers of the tea plantation of the region since 1951. Darjeeling district was a 'Non-regulated area' under the British rule. Its imprint was etched in its ambience even after 1947. An authoritarian rule of the Tea plantation owners, planter landowners and Jotdars (land owners) prevailed in the region. There was no union of the workers of tea plantations and the terror of the Tea plantation owners was such that they could not even think in this direction. An activist of any political Party could not even reach to the huts of the peasants without the wish and permission of Jotdars. Such were the circumstances under which the Party began its work. Charu Mazumdar was a leader of the Siliguri local committee under which Naxalbari region fell.

Charu Mazumdar had become communist after coming into contact with the communist students in the 1930s while studying at Edward College in Pabna (now in Bangladesh). After leaving the final examination of intermediate, he started working amongst the peasant in the Pachagarh of Deviganj police station (now in Bangladesh) of Jalpaiguri district. He received the basic education of communism from Madhavdutt and then he came into contact with Sachin Dasgupta and Virendra Dutt, the communist leaders of Jalpaiguri. After participating in the Adhikar movement of peasants, he worked as an organizer amongst the rail workers from Lalamanihar Junction (Dinajpur district) through Jalpaiguri and the tea plantation workers of Duar. He was also active in the famous Tebhaga movement (1946-47) involving about 7 million peasants. It needs to be mentioned that when the direct leadership of the Tebhaga movement was thinking about organizing armed defense force for peasants for resisting against the brutal repression, the provincial leadership withdrew the movement after the blank assurances of the Muslim League government. At the time Charu Mazumdar was among those who staunchly criticized the provincial leadership. After the country's partition in 1947, when Charu Mazumdar's main area of work went to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), he started working among the tea plantation workers, rail workers and Adivasi peasants in the section of Jalpaiguri district which fell into India. Charu was in jail during the Ranadive era's ultra-leftist line and in the duration when Party was declared as illegal. It was in the prison itself that he got to know about the ongoing debate within the Party during Ranadive's era and about the Andhra document. Within the prison he was known to be in favor of

Mao's and Chinese Party's line. Charu was released from prison in March 1952, after the withdrawal of the Telangana movement. Now Siliguri sub-division of Darjeeling district became his new area of work and he took charge of the leadership of the local committee there. In 1951, the Party began its work among the peasants in villages in the Naxalbari region and the workers of tea plantation. This was the time when Kanu Sanyal also started working there as a full-time organizer and a team of local activists got ready which included Jangal Santhal, Kadam Lal Mallik, Khodan Lal Mallik etc.

The period between 1951 and 1954 was the initial phase in organizing the peasants and tea plantation workers of Naxalbari, but the atrocities of Jotdar were so prevalent that even the initial work was impossible without engaging in the bloody strife with them. The Party organizers while organizing the peasants against the illegal extortions and barbarities committed by the Jotdars, also organized the adjoining tea plantation workers in their favor. Thus, in practice a united front of workers and peasants was formed at the local level and between 1955 and 1957, the peasants and workers jointly waged continuous struggles. Owing to the tyrannical atrocities of the Jotdars and plantation owners, the tea plantation workers and the peasants of the region had to take resort to conventional weapons in self-defense right from the beginning. This was the important reason as to why the peasants of Naxalbari did not have any illusion about the legal and peaceful means from that time itself. The Bonus movement of the tea plantation workers in 1955, despite being an economic struggle, saw the demonstration of militant unity and combativeness of thousands of workers and peasants and not only did they succeed in forcing the hired goons of the tea plantation owners to go back but the police as well. On one occasion, ten-thousand-armed tea plantation workers and peasants compelled the police force to disarm. From the perspective of the class struggle in Naxalbari, this second phase of 1955-1956 assumes special importance.

The period of 1958-62 can be termed as the third phase of the evolution of the peasant-worker struggle in Naxalbari. In this duration, the Paschim Bengal Kisan Sabha gave the slogan of reoccupying the 'Benami' land by the peasants. However, the Siliguri subdivisional peasant committee's conference, held in Naxalbari, believed that this appeal was incomplete insofar as the objective of the real land reform is concerned and it made an appeal to seize the entire produce of the Jotdar's land. The conference made an appeal to the peasants that after harvesting they must put the entire crop on its place, that the peasant committees must give the crop to the Jotdar only after they present proof of the ownership and the peasants must be armed in order to safeguard the crop from police and the Jotdars. During this movement, in the year 1958-59 alone, two thousand

peasants were arrested and seven hundred criminal cases were filed against them by police. Armed scuffles between peasants on the one side and jotdars and police on the other, ensued and many incidents of seizing of arms of jotdars happened. The peasants succeeded in capturing 80 percent of the crop and they managed to safeguard it from being captured by the police as well.

Throughout the movement, the police could not arrest even a single leading organizer. Charu Mazumdar was not associated with this movement directly. Organizers included Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal, Kadam Mallik etc. In fact, Charu Mazumdar played a negative role when on the directives of the leaders of the provincial Kisan Sabhas he announced the withdrawal of the struggle without even consulting the leaders of the struggle and the participating peasant activists. Despite this, the peasants of Naxalbari succeeded in safeguarding the achievement of this struggle more or less by 1962.

The phase of 1962-64 can be considered as the fourth phase of the peasant struggle in Naxalbari. Even during the 1962 Indo-China border war and in the atmosphere filled with extreme jingoism and anti-communism, the communist activists of the Naxalbari area firmly stood on the stand that China was not the aggressor and that the war was initiated by the Indian ruling class for its expansionist ambition at the behest of the imperialists. The reputation of the communists amongst the peasants and workers was so strong that they continued to firmly stand with them. At the time in the campaign of arresting the communists who took correct stand, hundred peasants-workers were arrested in Naxalbari alone. Even during these difficult years, the peasant-workers in the region succeeded in keeping their organizational power intact even while facing the attacks of Jotdars and tea-planters and the repression by state. In 1964 the worker, peasant and middle-class activists of the Darjeeling district resolutely struggled against revisionism and completely sidelined the Dangeites. The activists of the Siliguri division were firmly opposing the Khrushchevite revisionism and were supporting the stand of the Chinese Party.

The special conditions of the brutal oppression by the Jotdars and plantation owners which prevailed in Naxalbari and the one-and-a-half-decade long history of the work of the communist cadre amongst the peasant-workers and their militant struggle under the communist leadership had prepared the base for the Naxalbari peasant revolt and the establishment of the ideological-political hegemony of the revolutionary communism. However, this is not to say that this series of militant struggle automatically evolved and appeared in the form of the Naxalbari peasant revolt in 1967. Believing this would be a spontaneist deviation. The Naxalbari peasant revolt was not just a revolt. It was a communist peasant-uprising whose

leadership was in the hands of communists. Naxalbari had not rejected revisionism through sheer class-instinct only, rather there was a role of a conscious ideological leadership behind it whatever be the theoretical weaknesses and inconsistency of that leadership. The question of positive and negative role of Charu Mazumdar is related to the analysis of this issue only.

After the formation of CPM in 1964, there was large-scale arrests of the communist activists in West Bengal just before the Party congress. Between October 1964 and the first half of 1965, almost all the Party activists of the Siliguri division had been arrested. By that time, Charu Mazumdar had developed a heart disease due to which he was not arrested. Later towards the end of 1965, he too was arrested. During their stay in prison between 1964 and June 1966, the Party activists of the Darjeeling district spent time to understand the revisionism of the CPM leadership, took firm stand against it and they reached to the conclusion that the Chinese path would be the path of the Indian liberation struggle as well. These imprisoned activists, while they did carry out their political preparation against revisionism, did not try to write any document against the CPM leadership and did not make any attempt to take it to the other sections of the cadre. It is only a matter of speculation that whether or not they would have done so had they been outside prison and there is no significance of this speculation while carrying out objective examination of history. It is an undoubtable contribution of Charu Mazumdar that by writing the eight documents, he played the fundamental role in the radical rupture from the neo-revisionism of CPM, though this widely prevalent notion does need amends that he was the only person doing so. It was exactly at the same time that the 'Chinta group' (later 'Dakshin Desh' group) also did this in Calcutta through its bulletin and this bulletin was reaching to greater numbers of cadre as compared to Charu's document-series. Later on, owing to the light of the Naxalbari peasant-struggle and the popularity of Charu Mazumdar as its architect and that of his eight documents, the efforts of the 'Chinta group' were largely deprived from the proper assessment of their significance. Insofar as the role of Charu as the architect of the Naxalbari peasant-struggle and his eight documents is concerned, their proper assessment can be done only after examining the concrete facts of that time. Hence we will briefly discuss them here.

Between February and September 1965, Charu while analyzing the national-international conditions of that time and while analyzing the role of the communists in those conditions, wrote five articles: 'Our Tasks in the Present Situation', 'Make the People's Democratic Revolution Successful by Fighting Against Revisionism', 'What is the Source of the Spontaneous Revolutionary Outburst in India?', 'Carry on the Struggle Against Modern Revisionism', 'What Possibility The

Year 1965 is Indicating'. After this, he was arrested. Because his disease turned serious in prison, he was admitted to a hospital in Calcutta and it was from there itself that he was released on 7 May 1966. In August 1966, he wrote his sixth article. In these six articles of the famous 'eight document series', the propositions which Charu Mazumdar put forward need to be mentioned briefly here.

As per these documents, what is needed is to come out of the narrow confines of carrying out movements on the partial demands through Kisan Sabha and trade union and to wage struggle for political power. The capture of power does not mean the capture of government, but rather it means the area-wise power seizure through armed struggle. It is the Chinese path which is path of liberation for India and the armed struggle happens to be our immediate task. For this, the revolutionary activists need to be prepared and secret structure needs to be erected, then secret armed squads would have to be created, attacks on Jotdars would have to be carried out, their homes would have to be burnt, crops would have to be seized and the weapons would have to be collected. By completely ignoring the activities of political propaganda and agitation these articles put forward the proposition that it was with the effect of 'action' (armed personal attacks on the Jotdars by combat groups) that the mass mobilization would begin. Although in these documents, the mass organizations and the mass movements were not declared as reformist-revisionist in the same manner as was begun to be said by Charu Mazumdar since around 1969, but instead of mentioning about the role of mass movements in the development of armed people's struggles what was stated was the formation of secret armed squads and activities through 'action' only, hence amongst the task of Party, the organization of mass movement and activities of political propaganda was openly ignored and it was stated to begin with the guerilla struggle directly. In these documents, the economic struggle was per se criticized as being economistic and it was stated that even while lending support to the workers' movement the Party would not waste time in trade union and legal struggles. In the sixth document, the CPM was unambiguously termed as revisionist and the cadre were called upon to wage revolt against the leadership by breaking its structure and it was stated that the CPM leadership wishes to use the mass movements merely for forming the government and the only meaning to its anti-congress united front was to become a tail of bourgeoisie. It was in this very document that it was said clearly that the revolutionary struggle cannot move ahead without opposing the revisionism of the Soviet Party and in today's world Mao has taken the place of Lenin and hence those opposing him are not the opponents of revisionism. Actually, its backdrop was a recently held meeting of the Central Committee of the CPM in which a resolution was passed to disapprove the criticism by the Chinese Communist Party of Indian government and it was also

stated that it was not proper to criticize the Soviet leadership at that time because doing so would lead to decline of trust among people's mind for socialism. Besides this, these documents also entailed discussion on the crisis of Indian system, deepening repression and increasing public anger as also the strong condemnation of the Indian ruling class for fanning the jingoistic tide against China and Pakistan and they also referred the public sector built with the aid of Soviet Union as being established in the interest of the Indian monopoly capitalist class.

Charu's sixth document was released on 30 August 1966 on behalf of the 'Maoist Centre for the Communist Party of India'. In fact, this name carried only symbolic significance because such a center had not come into existence at that time and this document was written by Charu alone. Right from the first article of Charu Mazumdar, the debate had started among the communist cadre of Darjeeling who were outside the jail. By the time Charu went to prison, his five documents had managed to reach only a limited number of people. After coming out of prison in May, he sent five-six selected youth activists to the rural areas for propagating the line derived from the five documents. The news of these documents got published in the bourgeois newspapers as well and the CPM activists of other regions and the jailed activists also got acquainted with this fact.

If we pay attention to the substance of the six documents that had been published by August 1966, they entailed frank discussion on international revisionism and the radical rupture from CPM's neo-revisionism and Mao thought was established as a revolutionary ideology. This was their positive aspect. But at the same time, these documents, instead of carrying out the task of determining the program of Indian revolution by studying Indian conditions, assumed it to be pre-ordained and were putting forward the idea that the path of the Indian revolution would be completely similar to that of the Chinese revolution. However, the path of armed guerilla war in the Chinese revolution had evolved on the basis of revolutionary mass line, while Charu Mazumdar was stressing on the formation of secret armed squads and their 'action' from the beginning itself and on the mass mobilization on their basis by ignoring the mass work. As per them this could not be termed as terrorism since these actions would receive the support of the wider masses. This was the line which later surfaced as blatant "left" adventurist line, although the elements of this deviation were clearly present in the six documents themselves. After the release of the Party activists of Darjeeling, the leading organizers of the Siliguri local committee had a discussion with Charu Mazumdar. A consensus reached among them that a struggle against the revisionism of CPM would have to be waged, that the path of liberation of India would be the Chinese path, the agrarian revolution could only be accomplished through armed struggle and the

politics of agrarian revolution would have to be propagated amongst the peasants and workers, they would have to be organized and secret Party organization would have to be built. But the Party organizers of the local committee, including Kanu Sanyal, were of the opinion that the mass organizations and mass movements of people were essential, that the political work is the necessary precondition for the preparation of armed struggle, without 'politics in command' there was no meaning of 'action', that the higher form of struggle could be evolved only through the mass struggles and the mass organizations are needed even in the urban areas. Charu Mazumdar was not in agreement with this idea. Under this circumstance a compromise was reached that the organizers of the Siliguri local committee would implement their line in Naxalbari and Charu Mazumdar's line would be implemented by the new activists who favoured him in Chatarhat-Islampur of Western Dinajpur district adjacent to Naxalbari.

In Chatarhat-Islampur the work began as per the six documents of Charu Mazumdar. The secret squads burnt the homes of some Jotdars and some crops were also cut in the night. No effort of building mass organization and mass movement was made. Soon the combat groups started turning into the jamboree of the lumpen elements. In 1967 when the Naxalbari uprising was at its peak the Jotdars of Chatarhat-Islampur carried out organized attacks on the homes of the known members of the combat groups. The entire peasant population supported them. The activists of the group found themselves at sea in front of these attacks and soon these secret squads got dissolved completely. Thus, the first experiments of the Charu's line proved to be a disastrous failure.

In Naxalbari, mass line was implemented. The revolutionary Party activists, in order to take the majority in the district committee along with them, decided to carry out ideological struggle within the CPM. Out of the 26 members of the district committee 20 accepted the political line of the Siliguri local committee and a secret committee was formed within the district committee. After widespread campaign, most of the tea plantation workers of the hill and plain areas of the Darjeeling district had begun to support the political line of the secret district committee. The tea plantation workers who were dissatisfied with the revisionist union leaders began pulling their socks for militant struggles on the economic demands. The entire period of the latter half of 1966 was such when the background for the Naxalbari peasant uprising was getting prepared in the Darjeeling district. The nine-day general strike which took place in the tea industry in 1966 was an important event during this period. When the strike was about to be broken in the Jalpaiguri district, the workers in the Darjeeling district were sticking to the ground. Along with the workers of Lal Jhanda Union the workers of other unions and the unorganized workers of plantations also joined the strike.

The revisionist leaders who were horrified with all this wanted to enter into some kind of settlement as soon as possible. In Darjeeling, more than 25000 workers resolutely confronted the police which had come to repress them and a worker was martyred with the police bullet. During this entire period, the peasants of Naxalbari, despite being busy in farming, continued to firmly lend their support to the striking workers. There were some skirmishes with Police as well. The revisionists got completely sidelined from the workers due to the withdrawal of the strike without any of the basic demands being met. The activists of the secret district committee and the local committee took full advantage of this situation. The branch conferences of the plantation unions passed a resolution in support of the program of agrarian revolution. The annual conference of the tea plantation workers of the hill area strongly condemned the revisionist leaders and expelled them from trade unions. The annual conference of the plantation workers of Naxalbari passed a resolution calling upon the peasants to start agrarian-struggle. Thus, the line which was implemented by Kanu Sanyal and other Party organizers in Naxalbari and throughout the Darjeeling district in opposition to the Charu Mazumdar's "left" sectarian line, resulted into the formation of a militant and strong alliance between the workers and peasants of the region, the hegemony of the revolutionary line got established on the trade unions and other mass organizations. The strength of the peasant-worker alliance can be understood from the fact that during the Naxalbari peasant uprising, the tea plantation workers carried out three general strikes in their support.

Charu Mazumdar wrote the seventh and eighth document respectively of the 'eight document series'— 'Take this Opportunity' and 'Carry Forward the Peasant Struggle by Fighting Revisionism'—in the Darjeeling district and particularly after the above incidents of the mass movements of workers and peasants. The seventh document was written just before the general election of February 1967 and the eighth document was written in April 1967. The successful practice of the opposing line in Darjeeling compelled Charu Mazumdar to accept in these documents the significance of open mass activities, economic struggles and political propaganda, though these documents were not free from the ultra-leftist deviation. In these documents, it was stated to form the secret armed squads and weapon collection from the initial phase itself, no clear plan of mass actions and forming mass organizations was presented, they were indirectly given the status of merely the supplementary to the armed activities, no program was presented for the struggle on the class demands of revolutionary middle class and the working class or a joint struggle, their only task was to support the agrarian struggle and participate in it, and instead of the necessity of deciding about the concrete program and slogans of agrarian revolution what was stated was merely seizure of crops and land of

land owners through armed squads. The positive aspect of these documents was that there was a stress on the formation and building of a new revolutionary Party in concrete form and it was stated to carry forward the peasant struggle through uncompromising struggle against the class collaborationist politics of CPM leadership and all kinds of revisionism. The coming days proved that Charu had temporarily stepped back under the pressure of the successful implementation of the mass line and circumstances created out of it, otherwise he was always consistent and firm on his stand. Due to the ideological weakness of those who led the mass line, as soon as an impasse surfaced in the movement, Charu put forward his line as an alternative, by terming all forms of open, legal and economic struggles, mass movements and mass organizations as revisionism he declared the annihilation of the class-enemies by making secret armed squads itself as guerilla war and presented a terrorist line in a highly vulgar and distorted form. However, this was to happen in future.

In 1966, due to the struggle against revisionism which was going on in the Darjeeling district, particularly in the Naxalbari region and the militant struggles that were continually developing, the leading role in all these were considered to be that of Charu Mazumdar, since he was the leader of the Siliguri local committee and the Darjeeling district committee. The revisionists, the communist cadre outside and even the people in bourgeois circles were of this very understanding. The information regarding the differences between Charu Mazumdar and the local organizers was confined to the 'secret committee' working within the Darjeeling district committee. In October 1966, some leaders belonging to the CPM state committee and central committee came to Siliguri to make him understand, but he refused to pay heed to them. Earlier in July 1966, Pramod Dasgupta, secretary of the Bengal state committee, came to Siliguri for persuading him but to no avail.

In November 1966, a peasant conference was held in the Darjeeling district in which it was decided that the sharecroppers will not give any portion of their crop to Jotdars. In February 1967, legislative assembly elections were held in which Jangal Santhal and Sauren Basu got tickets for Faansideva and Siliguri respectively. There was a difference between the party activists of Darjeeling and some new activists even on the issue of this election. The activists of Darjeeling were of the view that the election must be used for the propaganda of the revolutionary Party and this was exactly what was done. There was considerable advantage out of it. Immediately after the elections the sharecroppers launched a campaign for crop seizure against the Jotdars. Several regional conferences of peasants were held in which resolutions were passed to launch a movement for seizing the land in possession of Jotdars. On 7 May 1967 a Siliguri subdivision peasant conference took place in which it was decided that the peasants must begin the work of

seizing the land of Jotdars and their redistribution through peasant committees, they must arm themselves in order to confront with the Jotdars' resistance and the peasant committees must take the work of administration in their hands. By this time, the United Front government of non-Congress parties had come to power in West Bengal in which CPM was the biggest partner and its character was getting exposed more and more. From 8 May peasant revolt began in many villages of Naxalbari, Kheribari, Phansideva and Siliguri police station.

Before going into the details of the Naxalbari peasant-uprising, it is important that we pick the thread of the process of the struggle and revolt against the neo-revisionism of CPM in West Bengal and other parts of the country which was going on since 1964, from where we left it, and take it forward. We have discussed above about the communist group under the leadership of Kanhai Chatterji and Amulya Sen and the six editions of the 'Chinta' bulletin published by them. 'Chinta' systematically raised the inevitability of armed struggle, the question of the path of protracted people's war, the question of neo-colonial character of Indian nation and the question of ideological struggle against revisionism in the articles published in its editions. This secret publication which was being distributed amongst the cadre was getting quite popular and was giving headache to the revisionists in Bengal. It can be guessed from the fact that several articles were published against the articles of 'China' in the CPM's central organ 'People's Democracy' and 'Swadheenta' and in 'Desh Hitaishi'— the organ of the state committee. In the mid of 1966, several revolutionary activists who were either associated with 'Chinta' or were holding similar opinion, were expelled from the organization by terming them as "extremist". Then, in order to take the debate to the ordinary cadre on wider level the Kanhai Chatterji-Amulya Sen group began the publication of an open magazine named 'Dakshin Desh'. From 1966 to October 1969 till the formation of 'Maoist Communist Centre', 'Dakshin Desh' magazine published several important articles on the topics such as imperialism, neo-colonialism, Soviet Social imperialism, character of Indian nation, the problems concerning the strategy and general tactics of Indian revolution, mass line for revolutionary propaganda, Guerilla struggle, Revisionism, Economism, Parliamentarianism, Spontaneism etc. These articles helped in educating the cadre against the revisionism of CPM. Also, the Dakshin Desh group later put forward its view through the same magazine on the questions of differences while indirectly critiquing the line of Charu Mazumdar faction which was dominant in AICCCR. This time period will be discussed later in this article. The magazine helped immensely in the initial political consolidation of this group and an initial organizational structure was formed as well consisting of activists agreeing on its position and with whom the work among workers, students, intellectuals was started. By the

end of 1966, this group started working amongst peasants in the Sonarpur region of 24 Pargana district where in the October month of 1967, five months after the Naxalbari revolt, armed peasant revolt erupted which had to face brutal police repression from the Front government.

In 1966 itself the Food movement started in Bengal spontaneously, which was particularly intense in Calcutta and the adjoining regions. At that time, the entire old generation of central and state level leaders of CPM was in prison and a new state level leadership was organized with almost all youth and fresh faces for coordinating the Party activities. This new leadership had forged a united front of almost all left parties for taking forward the food movement. But the leaders of this movement, instead of giving leadership to the spontaneous movement, were trailing behind the masses. Due to immense police repression even though the movement got disintegrated, but the young generation of the new state level leadership, based on its sum-up, made a plan to reorganize the movement and take it forward on their own leaving aside the other Left parties. It was decided that the movement must be taken to the villages, a slogan of forcible seizure of the crops of land owners must be given and the necessary organizations must be built to prepare for an effective resistance. This was the time when the leaders of the old generation came out of the prison. While accepting the warm welcome by the people in the Shaheed Maidan Meenar, these leaders praised the militant participation of the masses in the Food movement and expressed resolve to take the movement forward. But immediately after getting down the podium, they started closed door meetings with CPI leaders for forging United Front for participating in the upcoming fourth general election which was scheduled in February 1967. This was totally opposite to the sentiments prevalent amongst the cadre which used to consider CPI as nothing less than an enemy. Their experience of the CPI's attempt of blunting the militant attitude of the Food movement by adopting the soft path of hunger strike was still fresh. Consequently, the cadre started to ridicule the old leadership. The new leadership saw that after coming back from jail, the old generation leaders were at every step intervening and obstructing the activities of the editorial board of 'Desh Hitaishi' and 'Nandan' that wanted to carry on the propaganda work on the radical revolutionary line. A directive was issued to halt the distribution of a booklet 'Philosophy of hunger strike' which was published by Institute of Marxism-Leninism in order to expose the role of CPI in the Food movement. The same leadership which had supported the Institute of Marxism-Leninism before going to jail, started to obstruct its activities in various ways after coming out of jail. Even the basic Marxism classes which used to run at different levels were halted and it was said that only the rationale of the points of Party program needs to be explained in the classes. All

plans to take forward the Food movement militantly were put on hold. Even the local partial struggles which unleash the revolutionary initiative of the masses began to be halted through various tricks and bureaucratic means. Owing to all these activities, the inner-Party struggle which was continuing from the time of the formation of CPM deepened further. Although the efforts of forging a United Front with CPI could not bear fruit, but after the election the CPM formed the United Front government by taking along CPI, Bangla Congress which was formed after splitting from Congress and all non-congress opposition parties in which Jyoti Basu became the home minister and minister of police department. The only logic of the CPM leadership was that with the Party being part of the Front government the class struggle including the struggle for radical land reform would be speeded up and the people would be saved from the police repression. However, the revisionist-parliamentary-economistic and bureaucratic character of the Party leadership was more and more getting exposed. The eruption of Naxalbari peasant uprising and its brutal police repression by the state government completely exposed the CPM leadership in front of the cadre. During 1967-68, the situation was such that had the 'All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries' (AICCCR) formed after the Naxalbari revolt not been dominated by Charu's leftist terrorist line, and had the mass organizations and mass work not been abandoned completely, the majority of the cadre active on workers, peasants, students, intellectuals front would have come with the revolutionary stream and an existential crisis would have been produced for CPM at least in West Bengal.

It is known that in Calcutta, Susheel Roy Chaudhary, Saroj Dutt, Parimal Dasgupt, Asit Sen, Pramod Sengupt etc. had formed 'Inner Party anti-revisionism committee' within CPM from 1965 itself. Charu Mazumdar had managed to contact this committee by the mid of 1966. In those days, the slogan of forming 'Party within Party' had become very popular and besides various zones of Bengal such anti-revisionism groups within CPM had come into existence in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. By the end of 1966 the 'Dakshin Desh' group had come into contact with the revolutionary faction of the Darjeeling district and they had a long discussion with Charu Mazumdar in the beginning of 1967. Dakshin Desh group was not in agreement with the decision to make Jangal Santhal and Sauren Basu as the candidate in the elections, but despite that both parties agreed to widen the anti-revisionism struggle, strengthen the work among the peasants according to their strength and to maintain close contact.

On the morning of 8 May 1967, the peasant revolt began simultaneously in few villages of Naxalbari and the three nearby districts. Equipped with bows and arrows, large numbers of peasants, waving the red flag, began occupying the land

and crops in possession of Jotdars. Their guns also began to be seized. During the same period a small incident in a village falling in the Naxalbari police station gave a new turn to the struggle. A landless peasant, named Bigul, had got the right over some land from the civil court which the local Jotdar Ishwar Tirky tried to dispossess by beating him up. The local peasants united on this and ensured that the hirelings of Ishwar Tirky ran away. As the news arrived on 23 May 1967 as always, when the police arrived to teach the peasants a lesson and to help the Jotdars, three thousand peasants equipped with bow and arrow surrounded it. Several people were injured in this skirmish in which three people were from the police battalion as well. Amongst them Inspector Sunam Wangdi passed away in the hospital. On the same day, i.e. 25 May 1967, a huge armed battalion of police again reached the village. At that time a woman procession was underway in favor of the peasant revolt, on which the police opened fire indiscriminately. Due to this, ten people were martyred including seven women and two children. This incident acted as a spark. Suddenly the inferno of revolt spread throughout Naxalbari. The campaign of seizure of land and crop got intensified. Peasants, thousands in numbers, used to assemble at different places and raise the flags on the Jotdars' land and they also used to attack the homes of the brutal Jotdars. Naxalbari became the topic of discussion throughout the country. The tea plantation workers declared strike in protest against the 25 May killing. In Siliguri, a big procession of rail and electricity workers was taken out. Teachers, students and common middle-class people also came out on the street. A sense of desperation prevailed among the ruling CPM revisionists. The then land and land-revenue minister Hare Krishna Konar rushed to Siliguri along with another minister Vishvanath Mukherji of CPI. Konar had recently returned from Vietnam, "equipped" with the experiences of class struggle! Who else could have been more appropriate to tackle the grave situation of the Naxalbari peasant revolt! After reaching Siliguri, Konar neither met the members of the Darjeeling district committee, nor the peasant organisers of Siliguri. Rather he presided over a secret meeting with the top police officers and returned. Several state level leaders made many visits to Siliguri and tried to get the underground leaders surrendered. Their logic was old one that since now they were in power, if the movement is taken back all the grievances of the peasants would be addressed. But the activists did not have an iota of trust left for the revisionist leadership. It is to be mentioned that the CPM leaders did not even express grief on the killing of peasants. On the contrary Pramod Dasgupta gave a statement that police acted as a reaction to the murder of Inspector Sunam Wangdi.

Not even a fortnight had passed after the failure of the governmental efforts to withdraw the movement that the state police and the para military forces of the

central government began a fierce phase of repression. More than two thousand people were arrested. Yet some main leaders including Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal tried to continue the struggle while being underground. Jangal Santhal was arrested after a few months. Kanu Sanyal could be arrested after one and a half year. Despite maintaining the reign of terror in the entire region, it took slightly more than three months to crush this peasant uprising.

This mass revolt unleashed the revolutionary initiative and creativity of the peasants of Naxalbari. By implementing the determined short-term program of 'Naxalbari Krishak Samiti' the peasants took the land in possession of Jotdars in their possession and started carrying out its redistribution through Kisan Samitis. The old government documents related to land-ownership and loan related documents were burnt in public meetings. The debt with Jotdars and rentiers were scrapped and the land and other articles being kept as mortgages were returned. The grain hoarded by the Jotdars and plough and oxen and other articles seized from the peasants were seized and distributed among the peasants. The tyrant Jotdars, their hirelings and the usurers were sentenced by the Kisan Samitis in open courts and these sentences were executed as well. In some cases, death sentence was also given. Rejecting the recognition of bourgeois courts-law-administration, the Kisan Samitis declared that the decisions of central and regional revolutionary committees would be deemed as laws. The responsibility of general administration in the villages—patrolling, settlement of mutual disputes, schooling arrangement etc. were declared to be taken over by the Kisan Samitis. Peasants confronted the resistance offered by the Jotdars by arming themselves and started these works. However, this process could not last long. When the state and center's police force carried out organized campaigns and most of the people in leadership were arrested, the struggle started getting weakened and started disintegrating. Still the government could take control of the situation only in the month of September.

During this period Naxalbari remained the central topic for discussion throughout the country. The news of Naxalbari peasant revolt and the revolutionary communist leadership continued to be printed in the newspapers throughout the country. The Cabinet sub-committee visited Naxalbari. Bourgeois economist, political theoreticians, journalists, Marxist and bourgeois academicians and official communists, all had almost a consensus that if the explosions like Naxalbari and their possible "dreaded" outcomes are to be avoided, the pace of land reforms would need to be accelerated, the land ceiling act would have to be made effective at least to some extent, some effective steps would need to be taken towards the bourgeois solution of the question of the ownership of peasants and some

bourgeois reformist action for distribution of land amongst landless would have to be taken up at governmental and nongovernmental level. This was the time when the Indian capitalist class was slowly moving on the “Prussian path” of gradual change for transforming the pre-capitalist relations from top in order to expand the scope and reach of the national market. The pressure lobbies of the kulaks-farmers which had emerged in some parts of the country, were even putting pressure on Congress for the same. The imperialists too wanted to increase the scope of capitalist investment in agriculture in the third world countries including India through direct “aid” and through the international agencies and for this reason they were eager to help the bourgeoisie of the countries such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Phillipines, Sri Lanka, etc in implementing the “Green Revolution” type agricultural policies. In the latter half of the decade of sixties the process of gradual capitalist transformation of land relations which was going on since earlier time, was entering into a new phase according to the class interests of the imperialists and the Indian capitalist class. The Naxalbari peasant-uprising had put pressure on the Indian ruling class to expedite this process and to implement the bourgeois land reforms in a systematic manner which resulted into the speeding up of the process of capitalist transformation of Indian society, the speed of capitalist transition got increased in all such parts of the country where the character of the land relations was still primarily pre-capitalist, or where the pre-capitalist remnants were abundant, or where a transitional backward peasant economy prevailed. It was in the decade of seventies that in most parts of the country the capitalist class structure and the situation of capitalist polarization had become abundantly clear. Immediately after the Naxalbari peasant-uprising, Jayprakash Narayan plunged into the Sarvodaya, Bhudan, Gramdan of Vinoba and tried to give a new lease of life to them. It is not without reason that Jayprakash Narayan had camped and pooled all his strength in Mushahari (Bihar) and other “Naxal affected” regions and the regions having the potential for agrarian-struggle and thus tried to extinguish the fire of class struggle by sprinkling cold water. By partially resolving the land ownership question through bourgeois manner by registering the bargadars, the Left government under the leadership of CPM did the same thing as was done by Bismarck of Prussia and Czar’s minister Stolypin. It led to the release of tension related to land struggles and with the change in land-relations, CPM’s new social base was created amongst the newly born tyrant Kulaks. All in all, it can be stated that an important consequence and a by-product of the Naxalbari peasant-uprising was that a pressure was created on the Indian ruling class to expedite the process of bourgeois land reform and the timespan for the completion of the process of capitalist transformation of Indian society was squeezed and shortened. By the way, this was not the aim of Naxalbari movement,

rather its objective effect. But even this effect also left a progressive imprint on the motion of the social development objectively. With the capitalist class-relations getting clearer and fiercer it became a lot easier to understand and decide that the nature of Indian revolution would be socialist rather than national democratic.

But as has been mentioned above, the above process was a consequence and a by-product of Naxalbari. It was the effect of a historic mass revolt on the policy of the ruling class. An uprising in a remote small zone of the country compelled the ruling class to think precisely because the revolutionary potential inherent in it were clear. Despite the repression and disintegration of the Naxalbari peasant-uprising, the impact which it had on the entire communist movement of the country clarified it even more. Naxalbari was not a spontaneous peasant revolt. Behind it were such emerging communist revolutionary elements which had resolved to form and build a new revolutionary Party through radical rupture from revisionism. These communist revolutionary elements had received ideological guidance from the 'Great Debate' which was carried out by the Chinese Party against Khrushchevite revisionism and the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' which was started by the Chinese Party in 1966 against the capitalist roaders within Party and state had shown them the way that the establishment of a new revolutionary center by revolting against the revisionists dominant in the Party leadership was the only proper and correct path. The revisionist character of the middle roaders who did not take part in the ideological debate which had been going on in international communist movement had been exposed to a large extent by the steps taken by the leadership after the formation of CPM. Their attitude towards the Naxalbari peasant revolt had completely exposed them. This was the reason why there was a wave of revolt amongst the CPM cadre throughout the country immediately after Naxalbari. From the perspective of historical assessment, Naxalbari, despite failure, had great achievements. A nondescript rural zone of the country influenced the history in such a way that it became a symbol of the stream of revolutionary communism and a point of departure. After being buried in the quagmire of parliamentarianism for about eighteen years, the spirit and tradition of Telangana emerged for one more time and spread throughout the country. While the politics born out of Naxalbari might not have succeeded in forming and building a leading Party of Indian revolution and while it might not have succeeded as an onward movement of revolution due to its ideological weaknesses and various negative factors born out of it, while it might have suffered splits and disintegration in future, but the historical importance of Naxalbari would always remain due to the manner in which it gave a decisively effective blow to the parliamentary dogmatism which was dominant in the communist movement in India. Before doing a thorough review of Naxalbari

while taking a few more issues, it is important that we discuss the flow of events within the sphere of left politics immediately after the Naxalbari peasant-uprising.

As Charu Mazumdar himself admitted in his speech in the rally at Shaheed Minar on 11 November 1967, the leader of Naxalbari was not him but the local organizers including Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal, Kadam Mallik and Khokan Mazumdar etc. We have discussed above that Naxalbari was built by rejecting the proposal which was put forward by Charu Mazumdar in his eight document series in which he began his agrarian revolution not through mass line, rather on “left” adventurist basis. Naxalbari peasant-uprising was in fact a proof of the success of revolutionary mass line and concrete rejection of “leftist” deviation. But it would be wrong to say that there was no role of Charu and his eight documents in it, because there were two aspects of the ‘eight documents’. Its important aspect was that it brought the clear proposal of the re-formation and re-building of an All-India Revolutionary Party in the agenda by making a decisive blow on revisionism and parliamentary dogmatism. Its negative aspect was that instead of determining the strategy and general tactics of Indian revolution through the study of Indian economic-social-political structure, it not only gave the slogan of blindly following the program and path of Chinese revolution, but it also made the Guerilla peasant struggle as synonym of ‘action’ of armed secret squads by denying the importance of political education and propaganda along with economic struggle and by rejecting the importance of all kinds of mass activities and mass organizations. The leadership of Naxalbari rejected the second aspect, but the first aspect became its ideological-political basis. The organizers like Kanu Sanyal etc. too had prepared themselves politically against the revisionism of the CPM leadership during their stay in prison but it was Charu who wrote the series of documents against it, made an attempt to take it to the cadre and after coming out of prison of Kanu, etc, to provide theoretical basis for the act of rebellion against the CPM leadership in the form of the ‘eight documents’. Hence, while on the one hand it is incorrect to say that Charu was the leader and architect of the Naxalbari peasant uprising, on the other hand it must be admitted that he played a fundamentally important role in preparing its ideological basis. It can be said that Charu Mazumdar played a decisive role in undertaking radical rupture from CPM politics. Had it not been for Charu, perhaps the Naxalbari struggle would remain as merely the next episode of various radical economic and democratic (or political to a limited extent) demands under the communist leadership in that area in the decade of sixties. Behind the decisiveness of anti-revisionist struggle, there could be a petty-bourgeois impatience of a “left” adventurist (as his “left” adventurist line was consistent

from the beginning to the end), but at that time it was the aspect of decisiveness which was dominant. It can be said that it was Charu's line which became responsible for the impasse, fall and disintegration of the Revolutionary Left politics, but on the other hand, it is also true that had it not been for Charu, perhaps the Naxalbari peasant-revolt could not become a point of departure and a symbol of Revolutionary Left politics. There is a famous dictum that workers' movement pays for the sin of revisionism in form of "left" adventurism. Even in India, after eighteen years of the phase of revisionism, there was a possibility of the pendulum going to the other extreme and perhaps it was to be the satire of this dialectical irony of history that the person who had to secure the status of a hero in history did not possess the ideological-political capacity expected from the leadership and who suffered from impatient, idealist, emotional petty-bourgeois revolutionism. Based on the complete available political writings, it would not be a mistake to say so.

While there is a positive aspect to the incident of Naxalbari becoming a revolutionary symbol, there is a negative aspect as well. After the Naxalbari peasant revolt, a wave of revolt against revisionism spread throughout the country. The revolutionary cadre of CPM started revolting. The sentiment of suspicion, mistrust and restlessness which prevailed at empirical plane, was given the orientation of revolt by Naxalbari and the fluid situation got precipitated. While the leading organizers of the revolutionary side in different states were more or less aware about the ideological content of 'Great Debate', cultural revolution of China, and the middle path of CPM, but for common cadre, whether a person is in favor of Naxalbari or in opposition became the only straight forward benchmark of distinguishing between revisionism and revolutionary path. While this led to rapid polarization of cadre, but the political education which takes place in any prolonged process of ideological struggle and the necessary process of ideological-political consolidation before organizational struggle, did not take place. Owing to its ideological-political weaknesses, the revolutionary leadership did not lay stress on it. This too was one reason as to why the cadre easily got carried away by the wave of "left" deviation in future and in its turn the "left" adventurist line strangulated even the remaining possibility of the ideological-political consolidation of the cadre. Just imagine, what if the Naxalbari incident had not occurred in 1967. Would the Marxist-Leninist stream not be born in India? It is not so. The writing of eight documents, the anti-revisionist struggle of 'Chinta' group and dissent among the CPM cadre against the revisionist leadership and the presence of various forms of anti-revisionist factions before Naxalbari revolt give an indication that in that situation a long ideological struggle would have been carried out against revisionism which would have given birth to an alternative

revolutionary leadership after reaching its logical conclusion. It is noteworthy that in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America (and even in Europe and America), the communist revolutionary cadre formed Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations by revolting against the Khrushchevite revisionist leadership by taking guidance from the 'Great Debate' the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the decade of sixties. The possibility that something similar would have happened even in India was higher and, in that event, the process of political education and consolidation of cadre during the long ideological struggle would have been carried out in a better manner. Hence, while Naxalbari speeded up and cut short the process of rupture from revisionism and polarization, this speed and shortness left serious adverse impact on the process of ideological-political consolidation of cadre which takes place during the process of an intense and prolonged struggle between the two lines. Today, Naxalbari acquires the place of a milestone in the history of communist movement of India which exists before us objectively, but related to it is a second aspect inherent in it which cannot be ignored. By ignoring it, the ritual of emotional tradition-worship may be accomplished, but the glorious revolutionary tradition of Naxalbari cannot at all be revived and expanded.

There is yet another aspect related with the historical evaluation of Naxalbari which needs to be discussed, because looking in hindsight after four decade things look clearer today. Naxalbari had occurred at such a time in the post-colonial period when entire India, while passing through a transition in uneven manner, was standing almost midway of the long transition period. The ruling Indian capitalist class had been expanding its industrial-financial base by consolidating the bourgeois power for the last two decades and by implementing the import-substitution policies while taking advantage of the inter-imperialist rivalry and at the same time it was striving to transform the land relations from top by implementing the policies of bourgeois gradual land reforms in order to include the villages within the ambit of the capitalist national market. This process was underway throughout the country in an uneven manner. For instance, relatively most radical and earliest land reforms took place in Jammu & Kashmir. By the mid of the 1960s, the situation was such that in Punjab, Western Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra and some pockets of Andhra Pradesh, the tendency of capitalist agriculture had gained momentum and the Kulak class had become powerful. In many regions of the country, along with the presence of feudal landlords some capitalist landlords had also been born out of them and some Kulaks had also been born out of the big tenants. In some regions the feudal remnants were more predominant and in other regions they were feeble, some were at the stage of the transition of the backward peasant economy and in some places still the aspect of

semi-feudal land relations was dominant. In states like Bengal, Bihar and Orissa at that time, either the semi-feudal land relations were predominant or strong feudal remnants existed. In Bengal, so long as the question of the ownership of land was not partially resolved through the registration of Bargadars, the semi-feudal character of land-relations was primarily dominant. Naxalbari peasant uprising occurred at such a moment. The revolutionary cadre throughout the country were called upon to develop Naxalbari-type agrarian struggles. The first inconsistency of this slogan was that instead of anti-revisionist ideological heritage of Naxalbari, it was presenting the path of Naxalbari as the general path and thus it was muddling the question of ideology with that of program. On the top of it, even when this slogan was being given, essentially the “left” adventurist line was being peddled with the label of Naxalbari on the top of it. However, what we wish to assert is that even if the mass line of Naxalbari had been applied throughout the country, it would not have succeeded. In parts of country where the capitalist land relations had developed and where there was the transitional stage, neither was it possible to implement the land-revolution on the basis of the strategic alliance of four classes, nor was it possible to develop the guerilla struggle and base-area. The condition throughout the country was no longer such that the military strategy of protracted people’s war could be implemented by building the liberated zones in the rural areas and encircling the cities by the villages. Unlike semi-feudal-semi-colonial China, there was a centralized state power in post-colonial India, whose social props were wider, it had much developed state, military system and communication-transportation system. Here, the condition was neither like China nor like Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Latin American countries having military juntas. Yet another problem was that while the general formulation given for the People’s Democratic Revolution in the third world countries in the General line related document of the Chinese Party for the world proletarian revolution in 1963 and in Lin Piao’s 1965 article ‘Long Live People’s War’ was proper for most colonies and neocolonies of Asia, Africa and Latin America (and was in general correct at that time), but the newly independent countries such as India, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaya etc. where the process of capitalist transition was underway, were not fitting completely in its framework or scheme. The Chinese Party’s formulation of Indian big bourgeoisie as comprador and India to be a neo-colony too did not match with the reality. The problem was that instead of grasping the dynamics of the changing reality of post-colonial societies the dominant tendency in the communist movement was to consider it as a continuity of the colonial era and the Chinese Party’s formulation related to India were not free from it. The problem was also that unlike the Prussia of Bismarck-era, Russia of Czar-era or Turkey of Kamal Ataturk-era the ruling bourgeoisie in India (which though it was a

junior partner of imperialism, was master of the state and was practicing limited bourgeois democracy), was for the first time implementing the similar policies of bourgeois land reforms, hence it could be understood only by breaking the old framework, which did not happen. By the way, coming back to the old context, what we wish to assert is that even if the model of Naxalbari-type struggle was supposed to be implemented throughout the country, even if mass line would have been implemented, the conditions, in 1967-1970, was not such that any success could be achieved. At the most it could have become possible to do so in the areas having strong feudal remnants and its logical conclusion could surface only in this manner that the bourgeoisie would have expedited the pace of bourgeois land reforms in those areas. It is not without reason that later the ML organisations which tried to implement the program of People's Democratic Revolution on the basis of revolutionary mass line could not succeed and as a consequence of a long stagnation, they have now turned into Marxist Narodniks, who fight on the class demands of support price and low input cost of the owner farmers. Meaning thereby, even in 1967-70, Naxalbari could not be a universal phenomenon throughout the country. In other words, even if the revolutionary mass line were to be implemented, the success of the Naxalbari path was doubtful in 1967, and hence even Naxalbari could not last very long. Had the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries, which was formed after Naxalbari, not been found wanting in its task of determining the program of Indian revolution on the basis of study and experiment, the revolutionary mass struggles would have changed their programmatic orientation in the process of continuity itself. But, even in that case the historical-ideological importance of Naxalbari peasant-uprising would continue to be as a turning point for the decisive break from revisionism.

As has been mentioned above, the Naxalbari peasant armed revolt was based on the victory of the revolutionary line over the "left" adventurist line of Charu Mazumdar. But, after the state repression when the struggle was suffering from stagnation, the leaders implementing the mass line such as Kanu Sanyal, owing to the ideological immaturity, found themselves bewildered and having no alternative. Under this circumstance, Charu Mazumdar carried forward his terrorist line again and the leadership of Naxalbari completely surrendered before it. Charu Mazumdar who used to completely deny the importance of economic struggles had said that the peasants in Naxalbari did not fight for any economic demands but for state. In September 1968, Kanu Sanyal wrote a document named 'A Report on the peasant movement of Terai Area' in which while summing up Naxalbari he repeated the proposition of Charu. Again in 1974 he wrote an article titled 'More about Naxalbari' in which he changed his stand and while criticizing "left"

adventurism he wrote that the question of land and state are intertwined in agrarian revolution, and the same was the case with Naxalbari. It is neither correct theoretically nor did it happen in this manner practically. In the phase of agrarian revolution, the peasants begin their struggle for the demand of ownership of land. The Party continuously carries out the propaganda that this issue can be resolved only by struggling against the state. When peasants carry out the campaign of seizing land and crop, they have to face the repression of Zaminadars and state, to confront which they have to arm themselves; volunteer squads, people's militia and Guerilla squads are formed and gradually the struggle evolves gradually into the stage of area-based state intervention. It is in this process that the question of land becomes that of the state. The same process was unfolding in Naxalbari as well which Kanu Sanyal failed to grasp, neither in 1967 nor in 1974. In 1974 while criticizing the "left" terrorism, he went to the other extreme—right wing opportunist deviation, which will be discussed later in this article. In Terai report, in "ten great tasks" determined by peasant conference, he enumerated the failure of the leadership as suffering from petty-bourgeois deviation, the leadership having no faith in masses, lack of a powerful mass base, lack of a powerful Party structure, establishment of political power and the influence of formalist approach and old revisionist thinking towards the revolutionary land reforms, lack of awareness about the military affairs as the factors responsible for the failure of Naxalbari peasant-rebellion. In reality it was a superficial, formalist and eclectic sum up. The reality is that before the beginning of the Naxalbari peasant-rebellion, the leadership had not done systematic preparation by applying farsightedness. There was no plan as to how the armed defense of the peasants would be taken to the stage of formation of Guerilla squads and how in the event of repression it would scatter its armed power in other areas. There was no plan as such for building rear base in the adjoining forests and hilly areas. Notably, in order to get hold of the situation, an attempt was made much later in 1968 to develop a rear area in the hilly region of Mirik which could not succeed. More important was the fact that by that time the situation was no longer within control. And even more important was the fact that in the absence of a well-formed Communist Party, even if the conditions of Protracted People's War existed, it could not have been carried forward. In such a situation, had there been a capable leadership, it could have chosen the path of suspending the struggle for some time or even some compromise with the enemy on tactical plane, though if it was done without intense political propaganda among the masses and without preparation, the resulting hopelessness and disintegration would be obvious. The same was the situation in Naxalbari.

These were the circumstances in which the Naxalbari leadership surrendered

before Charu's line. In Terai report, Kanu Sanyal did not discuss the struggle between Charu's line and the mass line before Naxalbari and the Chatarhat-Islampur affair and particularly underlined the role of the capable leadership of Charu in the Naxalbari struggle. These facts were mentioned for the first time in 1974. This opportunist surrenderist tendency which arose out of ideological weaknesses certainly aided the dominance of "left" terrorism.

By the way, the historical importance of Naxalbari did not lie in its local context. The main aspect was that it carried the message of decisive struggle and radical rupture with revisionism and the inevitable necessity of the formation of a new revolutionary Party to the communist cadre throughout the country. A new enthusiasm and energy had prevailed among the communist cadre. The revisionists were desperate. The bourgeoisie was viewing this wave as a serious challenge.

The Question of Unity Among the Communist Revolutionaries On Agenda: Towards the Formation of an All India Party Immediately after the armed peasant rebellion in Naxalbari, a wave of revolt against revisionism spread amongst the Party cadre of CPM and the communist elements outside Party throughout the country. Outside Bengal, the situation of anarchy and division arose due to the revolt of Party cadre in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, Orissa and Tripura. Even the fresh young elements also got attracted towards this revolutionary wave. Revolutionary groups began to be formed both within and outside the Party in spontaneous manner. If we take the example of Bengal alone, several groups such as 'Nishan', 'Padatik', 'Bhitti', 'Suryasen', 'Chhatra Fauz' etc. got active there and played an important role in anti-revisionist theoretical struggle and revolutionary propaganda. We have already discussed the 'Chinta' group which was active from 1966 itself and the 'Inner Party anti-Revisionist Committee' formed within the Party.

In different states, among those providing leadership to anti-revisionist struggle, D.V. Rao and Nagi Reddy from Andhra Pradesh were the national level leaders and they had been members of the central committee. Besides them, there were several state level leaders such as Satyanarayan Singh in Bihar, Shivkumar Mishra in Uttar Pradesh, R.P Saraf in Jammu & Kashmir. In Bengal, Susheetal Roy Chaudhary and Saroj Dutt were state level leaders, Parimal Das Gupta and Asit Sen were famous Trade Union leaders and theoreticians. In the above states, large section of cadre was with the rebels.

On 14 June 1967, a public meeting was held at Calcutta's Ram Mohan Library Hall against the killing and repression of peasants in Naxalbari and in support of the struggling peasants on the call of some labor unions whose leadership was unsatisfied with the revisionist, economist policies of CPM. During the meeting, a

resolution was passed for setting up 'Naxalbari aur Krishak Sangram Sahayak Committee' and famous Trade Union leader and CPM's Calcutta district committee member Parimal Dasgupta was made its secretary. The task of establishing contact with the communist revolutionary elements throughout the country was first started under the banner of this very committee.

The office of the West Bengal state committee's organ 'Deshhitaishi' had come under the control of communist revolutionaries at that time. Its editorial board included Susheel Roy Chaudhary and Saroj Dutt and its majority was with them only. On 28 June 1967, the CPM leadership occupied the office by forcibly removing them. One week after this event began the publication of Bangla Weekly 'Deshvriti' which happened to be the first organ of Marxist-Leninists. By this time, the CPM leadership had begun the nationwide campaign of purging. Throughout the country, more than one thousand leaders and activists who were vocal in favor of Naxalbari were expelled from the Party. In Bengal alone, number of those expelled exceeded 400. Among them, the main people were Charu Mazumdar, Kanu Sanyal, Sauren Basu, Saroj Dutt, Susheel Roychaudhary, Parimal Dasgupta, Asit Sen, Suniti Kumar Ghosh etc. Satyanarayan Singh, Gurubaksh Singh from Bihar, Shivkumar Mishra, Mahendra Singh, Shrinarayan Chaturvedi, R.N. Upadhyay from Uttar Pradesh, Daya Singh, Jagjeet Singh Sohal, Balwant Singh etc. from Punjab were also included among those who were expelled. This process of expulsion went on till 1969 in several phases. The broadcasts of Peking Radio in favor of the activists also played an important role in taking the side. On 5 July 1967, an article titled 'Spring Thunder over India' was published in 'People's Daily' (organ of the Chinese Party) in which, while supporting the Naxalbari, the neo-revisionists of CPM were declared as renegades and lackeys of Indian ruling class. Subsequently, several comments were published in 'People's Daily' in support of the revolutionary movement. Their long-term negative aspect was that later on Charu Mazumdar used them to propagate as an international recognition for his line. Another negative aspect was that as per the notion of the Chinese Party the Indian Communist Revolutionaries removed the question of program from the agenda of thinking and started believing that like China, even in India the path of New Democratic Revolution and protracted people's war would be applicable. However, on immediate basis the stand of Chinese Communist Party helped the revolutionary side by intensifying the process of polarization in the Indian communist movement.

On 11 October 1967, a public meeting was called at Calcutta's Shaheed Minar Maidan by 'Naxalbari aur Krishak Sangram Sahayak Committee' for celebrating October Revolution Day and for Marxist-Leninist propaganda in which Charu Mazumdar gave his last speech from an open platform. In the resolution passed in

this meeting, the Chinese Party was supported while condemning the Soviet revisionism and CPM was criticized by terming it as revisionist. Immediately after this, as per the plan a meeting of the representatives of communist revolutionaries from seven states took place in which after the discussion on the crucial political-organizational questions an All Indian Coordination Committee of the Revolutionaries of the CPI (M) was formed and a declaration was issued on its behalf. This coordination committee took four tasks upon itself: (1) To develop and coordinate the militant and revolutionary struggles at all levels in the leadership of the working class and particularly the Naxalbari type peasant-struggle, (2) To develop the militant struggles of the working class and other toiling masses, fighting against economism and to orient these struggles towards agrarian revolution, (3) Carrying out uncompromising principled struggles against revisionism and neo-revisionism and to popularize Mao Tse-tung thought which happens to be today's Marxism-Leninism and to unite all the revolutionary elements within and outside Party on its basis, and (4) to take the responsibility of preparing the revolutionary program and tactics on the basis of the definite analysis of Indian condition in the light of Mao Tse-tung thought.

The task of establishing contact with the communist revolutionaries active in different parts of the country was being done from earlier, in the main, by Susheetal Roychaudhary. It was he who was elected as the secretary of the coordination committee and it was decided to issue an English monthly organ named 'Liberation'. Its first edition was published in November 1967.

In Andhra Pradesh two of top most leaders of CPM — T.Nagi Reddy and D.V.Rao had been struggling against the revisionism of CPM leadership right from the beginning. They had taken the side of Naxalbari. But they were of the view that as long as it was possible, they must carry on struggle against revisionism, within the CPM so that a larger section of the cadre could be taken in favor of revolutionary side. On this issue they had the difference of opinion with Charu Mazumdar. In April 1968, CPM's Burdwan plenum took place which was mainly focused on ideological issue. The draft of the document 'for ideological debates and discussion' was distributed earlier itself and D.V.-Nagi had registered their strong differences. The same document was passed in the plenum. According to the document while the Soviet Party suffered from right-wing deviation, the Chinese Party was suffering from "leftist" sectarian deviation. An accusation of intervening in the internal affairs of CPM was also labelled in this. The revisionist character of the middle path of CPM had now got completely exposed. The state committees of Jammu & Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh opposed the draft of the document. One issue of opposition was that the document did not accept the universal form of People's war in all the backward countries like India and the land revolution as the

main line had been rejected. Immediately after the Burdwan Plenum, the coordination committee in its second meeting held on 14 May 1968, removed the phrase 'within the CPI(M)' from its name and put a new name 'All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) and its leadership was handed over to Charu Mazumdar. After the second meeting the coordination committee issued its 'second declaration' in which it was said that the neo-revisionist too have joined the counter-revolutionary camp like the Dangeites, they were actively backstabbing the agrarian revolution and those who still see the possibility of inner Party struggle within the CPM are putting the seed of illusion among those who wish to fight against revisionism and are precluding them from being organized and getting powerful. In this last phrase essentially a direct criticism of D.V.-Nagi was made. In this second meeting even the communist revolutionaries from Punjab too joined.

Immediately after the Burdwan Plenum, the majority of Andhra Committee of CPM under the leadership of D.V.-Nagi revolted and split from the Party. The communist revolutionaries from Jammu & Kashmir also left the Party. It was the outcome of the struggle waged by D.V.-Nagi within the Party that majority of the activists of Andhra left the Party. D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy-Chandrapulla Reddy etc. formed Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Committee (APRCC) which joined with AICCCR and started acting as its Andhra state committee. Right from the beginning, there existed some crucial difference of opinion between Andhra group and Charu Mazumdar. The section under the leadership of Charu Mazumdar believed that the Nagi Reddy group does not accept the Chinese Party's line in toto. A basis of this was that the Nagi Reddy group used to term Soviet Union as merely revisionist instead of social imperialists. This was not basic ideological question, rather that of objective assessment, which was turned into basic due to the dogmatic imitation of the Chinese Party. The second crucial difference of opinion was that the All India Coordination Committee used to consider the question of boycotting elections as a strategic one and it talked about implementing it from the beginning to end, while the Andhra Group used to consider it as a question of tactics and it talked about taking decision as per the circumstances. Their stand on this issue was as per the classical Leninist formulation. The Coordination Committee used to consider Naxalbari as the first experiment of Mao thought in India while the Andhra Group believed that the first experiment of Mao thought took place in Telangana and Naxalbari was in its continuity. The Coordination Committee was ignoring the open forms of mass struggles, struggle on economic issues and mass organizations with which the Andhra Group did not agree. The Coordination Committee stressed on organizing Guerrilla struggle from the beginning itself while the Andhra Group believed that the armed struggle would begin in the advanced

stage of the process of mass movements, volunteer squads, local squads and regular Guerrilla squads would come into existence and the base areas would be built. Instead of the actions by a few armed squads, their emphasis was on revolutionary mass demonstrations, revolutionary mass movements, founding of revolutionary village Soviets and armed mass struggles. Even on this question the struggle was essentially on the question of “left” adventurism and mass line. Apart from these basic questions there were some differences between the two groups on the details, explanations and emphasis of the democratic program (the Coordination Committee wanted to use the term ‘People’s Democratic Revolution’ while the Andhra Group wanted to use the term ‘New Democratic Revolution’), which though were secondary but the difference in approach was crucial. The Coordination Committee used to blindly imitate the program of the Chinese Party while the Andhra Group, even though it agreed on its general orientation and framework, tried to adapt it to the Indian conditions to some extent. One charge of the Coordination Committee was that the Andhra Group, instead of giving enthusiastic support to the Srikakulam armed struggle, was only giving token support. We will return to this issue later.

Despite these differences, the Coordination Committee of Andhra Pradesh joined the All India Coordination Committee after the first meeting. It was decided that the process of debate on the differences would be carried on while doing practice as this was the objective of the Coordination Committee. But nothing of this sort happened. On 7 February 1969, in totally unilateral and arbitrary manner the Andhra Pradesh Committee was expelled from the All India Coordination Committee and their repeated request of dialogue was not paid heed to.

The Coordination Committee was formed precisely for the purpose that based on mutual debates and discussions among the communist revolutionaries who broadly agreed on Mao thought and by exchanging the experiences a consensus is reached on the question of the strategy of Indian revolution, its tactics and path and to prepare a program on the basis of studying the Indian conditions. But the Coordination committee went astray as soon as it started. After the surrender of the leadership of the Naxalbari before the “leftist” line, Charu Mazumdar pompously promoted it among the communist revolutionaries throughout the country. Ordinary revolutionary cadre believed that it was Charu who was the architect and leader of the Naxalbari and his line had the full backing of the Chinese Party. A faction from Bengal which included Saroj Dutt, Sauren Basu, Suniti Kumar Ghosh got together to declare Charu as the great leader of Indian revolution. Even Satyanarayan Singh and Kanu Sanyal started showering excessive praise. Although in the ‘Report of the Terai peasant struggle’, the principal aspect

was that of surrender by the mass line of Kanu Sanyal and others before Charu's line, it also contained a description of the development of the broad mass struggle. But the Coordination Committee never made the report as the topic of discussion amongst the revolutionaries throughout the country nor did it discuss it on its own. Taking advantage of this entire scenario Charu Mazumdar started running the Coordination Committee as a Party and started acting as self-proclaimed undisputed leader. The Coordination committee instead of doing coordination between various communist revolutionary groups started behaving as a Central Committee of a Party. Directives were issued to various groups to stop their organs. Instead of carrying out healthy debate on the differences of opinion and the question which were raised, those expressing different opinions were started to be expelled by taking resort to slandering and blame game. The Coordination Committee completely gave up its basic task of preparing the program and strategy of Indian revolution on the basis of study-analysis of Indian conditions. It was declared that the program, tactics and path of Indian revolution would be exactly like that of Chinese revolution. But in the name of the Naxalbari type peasant struggle and the Chinese Path, in practice Charu Mazumdar was actually talking about applying the terrorist line. Even while talking about the working class, the trade union activities and all kinds of mass activities were being rejected by terming them as economism-reformism. The Party was supposed to be "rural-based Party". And even there only 'action' was supposed to be carried out directly against the landlords by forming the armed squads while avoiding any kinds of mass activities, economic struggles and open political struggles (soon Charu clarified it and gave the 'line of annihilation' i.e. assassination of the class enemy which was the naked form of individual terrorism).

The Girijans of the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh were carrying out a movement against the exploitation and oppression of landlord and police repression for 8 years prior to the Naxalbari incident. This area did not fall under the influence of D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy. The revisionists of the Communist Party never made any attempt to develop this struggle further. After the popularity of Naxalbari, the leaders of Srikakulam approached the Coordination Committee and invited Charu Mazumdar to be their leader. In January 1969 Charu Mazumdar went to Srikakulam and gave the guideline of carrying forward the armed struggle on the "left" terrorist line. In Srikakulam from January 1969, the line of Guerilla attack on the houses-godowns of landlords and their annihilation was commenced. Since the Girijan's movement had been going on for a long time, the initial armed actions received widespread mass support. The incidents of assassination of landlords-usurers and Guerilla attack in Bathapuram, Padmapur, Budibanka, Akupalli and Garudbhadra gained a lot of popularity. Charu Mazumdar faction

termed it as a sign of people's war. After the failure of Chatarhat-Islampur, the terrorist line was implemented at wide level for the first time in Srikakulam. Police initiated intense repressive action. In May 1966, one of the main leaders of the struggle Panchandri Krishnamurti was killed in a police encounter along with his wife Nirmala and five other Guerilla fighters. Despite severe repression, the Srikakulam struggle continued till 1970. Only a few months after the founding conference of the CPI (ML) in May 1970, that many popular leaders of Girijans including Venkatapu Satyanarayan and Adimatala Kailasham were murdered and Nagbhushan Patnaik and Appala Suri were arrested. The movement which had become almost leaderless soon got scattered. Thus a protracted broad based mass struggle was thrown into the pit of defeat by misdirecting it on the "terrorist" path.

After getting the leadership of Srikakulam struggle in January 1969 into his hand, Charu Mazumdar thought it proper that it was an opportune moment to get rid of D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy who were staunchly advocating mass line and in February 1969 they were removed from the Coordination Committee in an absolutely bureaucratic manner. It was in the leadership of D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy that the majority section of CPM in Andhra Pradesh had come out of the Party. In no other state was the mass base and activist base of the communist revolutionary politics as broad as that in Andhra Pradesh. Charu's success in getting the Andhra Revolutionary Communist Committee expelled was a major setback to the communist revolutionary movement which severely impacted the formation of Party in the beginning itself.

After the crushing of the required democratic nature of debate and discussion and the dominance of bureaucratic and sectarian factional style of work in the coordination committee several smaller groups of Bengal and other parts of the country did not even join it. Many groups which were associated with it in the beginning were separated later on. 'Chinta/Dakshin Desh' group has been mentioned above. Five months after the Naxalbari rebellion, this group organized peasant struggle in Sonarpur of 24 Pargana district which had to face severe police repression. In this repression a founder leader of the group Chandrshekhar Das was even murdered. Besides Sonarpur this group organized the work amongst farmers in some areas of Havda, Hughli, Medinipur, Birbhum, Malda and Bardmaan districts and worked on the trade union front amongst industrial workers in South Calcutta, Asansol and Durgapur during 1968-69. The Dakshin Desh people had come into contact with Charu Mazumdar and the communist revolutionaries of Darjeeling towards the end of 1966. Immediately after Naxalbari they again met Charu Mazumdar. After the formation of the

Coordination Committee, despite several differences the Dakshin Desh group did get associated with it, but owing to the bureaucratic functioning and having no process of resolving the differences, it had to be separated soon. The political thinking of Dakshin Desh group was dogmatic and mechanical in many respects, but they did raise some issues of basic importance related to the organizational functioning. On several issues of interrelationship between mass organization and Party organization, development of Guerilla war, use of elections, practical forms of the strategic alliance between classes, they themselves suffered from ultra-leftist deviation, but they used to consider the terming the formation of secret squads and 'action' without any political work as Guerilla warfare and the line of annihilation as "left" adventurism and at the same time they believed that Charu's line suffered from spontaneism and anarchism. Their attitude towards the Chinese Party was imitationist and on various organizational issues they suffered from purist romantic perspective, but they did underline this question with sincerity that the Coordination Committee must pay special attention to the determination of the program and tactics of Indian revolution on the basis of study and analysis of the Indian conditions, whereas it was neglecting it. They too believed that it was Telangana and not Naxalbari which was the first experiment of Mao thought in India and that Naxalbari was in its continuity. Instead of carrying out a debate on these issues in a democratic manner, Charu faction adopted the tactics of ignoring, slandering, and putting labels (even by writing in 'Deshvrat'). As if this was not enough, using the coordination committee like a Party and itself as the Party leadership, the Charu faction even began to ask for stopping the publication and distribution of 'Dakshin Desh'. Under this circumstance, 'Dakshin Desh' dissociated from the coordination committee. But at the same time, it also decided that while struggling against the incorrect policies they would continue making efforts for unity. 'Dakshin Desh' group separated and the Andhra Pradesh revolutionary communist committee was expelled. Without carrying out a review of the performance of the Coordination Committee and without even accomplishing its basic objective, at this juncture, when on 22 April 1969 suddenly the founding of the CPI (ML) was announced and a decision was taken to hold the Party congress within a year, it came as a surprise to the 'Dakshin Desh' group. It sent a letter to the leadership of CPI (ML) which mentioned its thoughts and differences of opinion, but they did not reply. It was then that the 'Dakshin Desh' group took a separate path and on 20 October 1969 it founded the 'Maoist Communist Centre.'

The West Bengal Coordination Committee of Revolutionaries (WBCCR) also raised some crucial questions related to politics, organization and functioning before the All India Coordination Committee and expressed its differences with the "left" adventurist line. Its questions and differences too were completely ignored and

this organization also did not join the Coordination Committee.

Other two people who raised the basic and important issues of differences were Parimal Dasgupta and Asit Sen. Parimal Dasgupta did not agree with the decision of the Party-formation in haste after merely one to one and a half years of work of the Coordination Committee. He was in favor of the foundation of a Communist Party free from revisionism and opportunism after a long theoretical struggle and practical work. It is true that no revolutionary Party can guarantee the final riddance from deviations as the deviations keep on raising heads within the Party against which the perpetual two-line struggle needs to be waged. But despite this idealist deviation the stand of Parimal Dasgupta was correct in the sense that the Coordination Committee had not accomplished any of its aims including the study and analysis of Indian conditions for determination of program and the responsibility of debate and exchange of experiences for establishing the real unity between the communist revolutionaries was almost given up. After this difference, Parimal Dasgupta and his supporters dissociated themselves from the Coordination Committee and formed a parallel Coordination Committee (which became inactive in due course) which mentioned its differences of opinion with Charu Mazumdar by writing a document. In this document it was mentioned that Charu Mazumdar had deviated from Mao's path and was following the petty-bourgeois revolutionist path of Che Guevara. While Mao thought talks about organizing the masses on the basis of politics, Che Guevara's path was to organize them through combats. According to the document, terming the Guerilla war through secret squads as the only path of revolutionary movement, opposition of trade union movement in the name of avoiding economism, the feeling of hatred towards the movement of urban workers and middle class in the name of formation of base area in the rural areas, the attempt to carry forward the agrarian revolution only through the struggles by the small groups and the attempts of revolutionary struggle without the class organization and mass struggles—all these components of Charu's line were borrowed from Che Guevara, this was a distortion of Mao thought and a Party formed without rectifying these trends would turn into a terrorist Party in due course.

On 1 May 1969, the public meeting at Calcutta's Shaheed Maidan in which Kanu Sanyal announced the establishment of CPI (ML) was chaired by Asit Sen, but barely after a few weeks he separated owing to his serious differences with the leadership which had been going on since earlier days. The differences of opinion of Asit Sen with Charu Mazumdar's line were there from initial phase itself. Charu Mazumdar believed that the fight for land leads the peasants into the quagmire of economism and revisionism, hence they must only fight for state power. He believed that the peasants in Naxalbari were fighting not for land but for the right

on state. Asit Sen believed that any class gets organized first on its class demands, the struggle for land is the first necessary step for the preparation of the peasants for people's democratic revolution. As against Charu Mazumdar's line, Asit Sen considered trade unions to be the primary school of revolution and he believed trade union to be essential for the working-class movements. He used to oppose the concept of "rural based" Party and stressed on the working-class vanguard character of the Party. Charu Mazumdar faction believed that CPI (ML) was a pure proletarian Party as most of its leaders had come from the areas of armed struggle. Asit Sen believed that merely this fact that a few comrades have been associated with armed struggle does not alter the petty-bourgeois character of the Party. The main question being that of ideology and the recruitment among Party cadre from the working class. Also, the vanguard of a revolutionary army cannot be prepared by merely giving revolutionary politics while neglecting the wider class struggle. Asit Sen contended that calling the struggle for economic demands as revisionist and distancing oneself from working class movement is to entrust working class to revisionism and every kind of reactionary ideology. He stated that the assassination of individuals and line of annihilation is akin to mixture of Narodism and Che Guevara's petty bourgeois romanticist theory. Asit Sen believed that the assassination of enemies and seizure of property can never be the principal form of class struggle. At the same time, as there is a fundamental difference between the spontaneous armed struggle of people and the armed struggle under the leadership of a revolutionary politics, there is a fundamental difference between an armed struggle initiated by petty-bourgeois revolutionary adventurists and the class struggle under the leadership of a revolutionary Party of the working class which is equipped with Marxism-Leninism-Mao thought.

Refuting this notion of Charu Mazumdar that everything will be sorted out through Guerilla struggle, Asit Sen wrote in his document that had carrying out armed struggle itself formed the revolutionary Party, India would have witnessed revolution long ago. He also underlined this fact that Charu's line completely alienates the main element of a revolutionary Party viz. the working class from the armed struggle!

While it is true that criticism of Charu Mazumdar's "left" opportunist line by Parimal Dasgupta and Asit Sengupta was ideologically not that consistent and thorough as that presented by D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy group or later on by Punjab Revolutionary Communist Committee (Harbhajan Singh Sohi Group). Still, they fundamentally did correctly recognize the nature of "left" adventurism, class-character and the main expressions of it. The problem was that in the absence of a deep ideological understanding and thorough vision they raised the question

quite late and at different times. When the differences with the Andhra Committee arose and when they were expelled in a bureaucratic manner, they did not take the correct stand. Not just this, after getting separated despite having the basic unity on mass line they made no attempt to coordinate with them (i.e. the Andhra Committee). So, owing to their own ideological weaknesses and deviations, the groups and individuals which opposed “left” terrorist line, continued to give extra importance to their secondary differences and this was also the reason why the process of polarization between the ultra-left wing and mass line got impacted. It is also a fact that the revisionist deviation and some ideological confusion existed even in the thinking of Parimal Dasgupta and Asit Sen as well (for instance, Parimal Dasgupta though used to consider Soviet Union as revisionist, but he had justified Soviet Union’s attack on Czechoslovakia on the ground of “opposition to the western imperialist intervention”), though rather than being consistent revisionists they were genuine Marxist-Leninists. The subsequent phase of their lives proved this. Both remained associated with the communist revolutionary stream throughout their lives and before his death in 1996 Asit Sen was associated with CPI (ML) (Janshakti) group. The main and essential point is that had AICCCR played the role of carrying out of democratic coordination and political debate, such capable and honest people would have freed themselves from the deviations through debates and discussions and they could have played immense role, but the bureaucratic hegemony of the terrorist line on the Coordination Committee did not let that happen. From the perspective of historical assessment today, the main aspect is that despite their weaknesses the people like Parimal Dasgupta and Asit Sen also recognized the basic character of the line which played the key role in pushing the communist revolutionary movement in the direction of disintegration and destruction and presented its critique.

During the period of AICCCR, among those who presented consistent, logical and thorough critique of Charu Mazumdar’s “leftist” line and firmly oppose it, after the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Committee (D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy Group), second was a revolutionary communist faction of Punjab which was led by Harbhajan Singh Sohi. After 1970, working as a separate group during the CPI (ML) period this section of the communist revolutionaries while successfully applying the mass line concretely in Punjab had even decisively defeated the “left” adventurist stream in practice. Differences and disputes began to surface in the Punjab unit of CPM right after Naxalbari and soon the activists having Maoist orientation were expelled from the Party. These revolutionary communists formed a coordination committee at the state level whose secretary was Daya Singh. Daya Singh was a mature communist and he had some reservations with the “leftist”

line as well. But due to the dominance of the “leftist” wave in Punjab since the end of 1968 and owing to his liberal attitude, Daya Singh favoured to go along with the majority. The beginning of armed struggle in Punjab on the basis of terrorist line was from 1969. After merely a few ‘actions’ the process of police repression, arrests and fake encounters ensued. Towards the end of 1970, the secretary of the Punjab state committee of CPI (ML) (by the time the Party announcement had been made) Daya Singh, secretary of Ropad district committee Balwant Singh, veteran Gadri Baba and Patiala’s leader Harisingh Mrigendra were killed by police in the fake encounters. Among the veteran leaders of Ghadar Party who joined the ML movement was Baba Niranjan Kalsa and Baba Bhuja Singh. They too were later killed in cold blood and were later shown to be killed in police encounter. The “left” adventurist line continued in Punjab even after the first Party Congress. Around 90 class enemies mostly usurers were annihilated. In Punjab, unlike some backward areas of the country the question of land and feudal oppression was not there even during 1967-70, but there was a deep sense of hatred against the usurers not only among the poor peasant but even among the middle peasant as well. There has been a long tradition of militant brave struggles and sacrifices in Punjab society. Due to lack of ideological understanding amongst the communist cadre this tradition helped “left” adventurism to flourish. In this state alone by 1974 more than 100 communist revolutionaries had been killed in fake encounters and dozens of revolutionaries were facing the long sentences in prisons.

Right since the formation of the state level Coordination Committee in Punjab, the people belonging to Bhatinda-Ferozpur Committee were firmly opposing the line of annihilation, the line of negation of economic struggles, mass struggles and mass organizations and the terrorist understanding of the origin and evolution of the people’s war. Even on the question of uneven development of revolutionary struggles and the leadership of the working class their opinion differed with that of Charu’s line and they were unrelenting on the question of implementation of mass line. They had put forward their different opinion even at the time of the announcement of the formation of CPI (ML) and its Congress. Despite facing tough isolation and even after being hurled with the “titles” of “renegade”, “revisionist”, “enemy of the people” they stood firmly on their stand and continued to confront the powerful wave of the revolutionary terrorism. Despite this, formally they remained part of first the Coordination Committee and then of CPI (ML) after the announcement of Party-formation. In February 1970, just before the Party Congress, the Bhatinda-Ferozpur Committee got separated from CPI (ML) and it reorganized itself as Punjab Communist Revolutionary Committee (PCRC). Later on, it successfully and effectively implemented the mass line and completely isolated Charu’s stream and made them ineffective. It would be discussed further in the

article at an appropriate place.

During the entire period of AICCCR, abandoning all the tasks determined by the Coordination Committee, using the Coordination Committee as a centralized Party by rejecting its form and by acting in a bureaucratic manner as a whole sole leader, and by taking advantage of the approval by the Chinese Party through its articles and broadcasts and the reputation of being a proclaimed leader of Naxalbari, Charu Mazumdar cornered all the groups and individuals opposed to him one by one and as soon as the hegemony of his line was established on the Coordination Committee, he moved towards Party formation. In the process, the fact that several opponents of his line were themselves suffering from “leftist” or rightist deviation, their line was not consistent, the voice of protest were not being raised simultaneously but separately and the supporters of mass line had differences among themselves on several crucial and secondary issues. As the cleansing of opposition from the Coordination Committee proceeded, the “left” opportunist character of Charu’s line began to surface in more and more naked and vulgar form. Earlier he used to talk about mass struggles or the program of agrarian revolution or the struggle of working class in ambiguous terms, but now while outrightly rejecting all kinds of mass work, open work, economic struggle and political propaganda work he began to assert that “the fight of annihilation is both the highest form of class struggle and beginning of Guerilla struggle”, the Indian peasant masses would be awakened through this only, the problems of building liberated zones and making of revolutionary army would be resolved and it is through this only that the fierce spontaneous mass uprising would make fatal attack on the state. In an article about Guerilla actions, written three months prior to the Party Congress, he wrote that that Guerilla squads would be completely secret and independent, even the Party committee would have no control over them, the method of their formation would be disseminated through whispering into the ears of every individual, even the Party’s political units would have no idea about them and for this the petty-bourgeois intellectuals need to take initiative. As if this was not enough, inspired by the line of annihilation, he also envisaged fierce countrywide revolt by rejecting the tendency of protracted people’s war and even before the Congress after the announcement of the Party, in 1969 itself he gave the slogan of turning the decade of 1970s into a decade of liberation.

Essentially it was an extremely vulgar and crude edition of the “leftist” deviation of Ranadive era, which had nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism and Mao’s thoughts related to democratic revolution.

Besides the theorization, the practice of revolutionary terrorism too was continuing in different parts of the country in full swing. In different parts of the

country, the stray communist groups inspired by Charu's line used to implement the line of 'action' by forming squads in scattered form and of annihilation and everything would be ruined after a few activities. After Srikakulam the second big experiment of "left" adventurism took place in the two police stations Debra and Gopivallabhpur of Midnapur district of Bengal. By that time the Coordination Committee had announced the formation of Party. The activities began here since November 1969 by the West Bengal-Bihar-Orissa border zone Committee whose secretary was Aseem Chatterji and the main organizers were Santosh Rana, Mihir Rana, Gunadhar Murmu etc. It is to be mentioned that even here the beginning was made in form of extensive mass initiative and mass movement.

40,000 peasants took part in the campaign of reaping the farms of tyrant Zamindars. The peasant committees established its rule in the villages and punished the landlords and usurers by holding Lok Adalats (people's court). The wages of workers working at the farms of landlords and rich farmers were increased five-fold. But after this beginning the terrorist activities of squad shattered the mass movement. By April 1970 sixty class enemies had been assassinated. This campaign was spread to areas beyond the Debra and Gopivallabhpur police station to Kharagpur local, Sankrail, Keshapur and Chakulia. But along with increasing repression and stagnation differences also began arising in the leadership and the questions began to be raised on the line. By the mid-1970s the movement had been disintegrated.

In about twelve districts of Musahri zone of Muzaffarpur district of Bihar a land movement began in 1969 in the form of mass movement in which about ten thousand peasants participated. After the initial phase the line of annihilation was applied even there and by February 1970 ten class enemies were assassinated. Even there the movement was stagnated and got disintegrated within one and a half year.

In Palia of Terai zone of Lakhimpur district of Uttar Pradesh, in January-February 1968, a peasant movement began with the mass-initiative and mass-participation. The poor peasants and workers occupied the land of Pilibhit Terai farm and the farms of Patiyan, Gholia, Ibrahimpur after confrontation with the goonda gangs of farm owners (it is another question whether the issue here should have been that of land or not as these farms belonged to capitalist landowners who used to hire workers and who used to do farming for profit). Then the phase of the dominance of "leftist" line came with it repression also rose. The movement was disintegrated within a year.

Despite these failures, Charu's claims of the continued forward progress of the liberation struggle went on. The reason was when the failure of the "leftist" line

was surfacing at one place, its implementation started in some other area in full swing. By the end of 1970s the “left”-terrorist campaign of the ML movement had been defeated and the all-round stagnation was causing despair amongst cadre on the one hand and laying down the ground for difference and split in the leadership on the other. It would be discussed in the next part of the article during the description of flow of events after the period of Party Congress and its sum-up. Here we will conclude by explaining the chronology of events till the Party Congress.

After the expulsion of the Andhra Pradesh Communist Revolutionary Committee (7 February 1969), Charu began to feel that the biggest stumbling block before the “leftist” line had been removed. Suddenly changing his earlier thinking he now began to put forward this idea that now the appropriate time for the formation of an All India Party had come. No review of the performance of the Coordination Committee was done. Some people objected but were convinced later. After the expulsion of Parimal Dasgupta, the only remaining opponent of this decision also was cleared from the way. On 22 April 1969 the Coordination Committee dissolved itself and founded CPI (ML) and in a public meeting held at Calcutta’s Shaheed Meenar Maidan on 1 May 1969, Kanu Sanyal made this announcement. In the Plenum held on 27 April Central Organising Committee was formed as a Provisional Leading Committee of the Party (till the Congress) whose members included: Charu Mazumdar, Susheel Roychaudhary, Saroj Dutt, Kanu Sanyal, Sauren Basu, Shivkumar Mishra, Satyanarayan Singh, R.P. Saraf, Panchadri Krishnmurti, Chaudhary Tejeshwar Rao and L. Appu. Charu Mazumdar was elected as the secretary of the Party. A decision was taken to convene the first Congress of the Party within a year. The Communist Party of China welcomed the foundation of Party and granted its approval. Peking Radio broadcasted the resolution of 22 April 1969 and Kanu Sanyal’s speech and the resolutions passed in the public meeting on 1 May. It enhanced the newly formed Party’s respectability among the cadre and spread new energy. By the end of 1969 a Party delegation even made a secret visit to China.

In April 1970, the Central Organising Committee of the Party convened a three-day meeting towards the preparation of the Party Congress. In the meeting Satyanarayan Singh, Shivkumar Mishra and Sauren Basu were given the responsibility of preparing the draft of Party’s program and Susheel Roychaudhary, R.P.Saraf and Saroj Dutt were to prepare draft for political resolution.

The Founding Congress of CPI (ML) (which was also termed as the eight Congress in terms of the continuity of the history of Communist Party) was held on 15-16 May

in Calcutta in which delegates from West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Andhra, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir participated. Before this, intense debate took place in the Uttar Pradesh state conference on the draft of the political resolution in which following were opposed: to make the Guerilla struggle as the only form of struggle, the line of annihilation and the allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party as the only condition for unity amongst the revolutionaries. In the Congress R.N. Upadhyay put forward the report of this debate. It was evident that in Uttar Pradesh the faction of opponents of Charu's line was dominant. But after the speech of Satyanarayan Singh in favour of the draft of political resolution it was passed. Party's program was based on the People's Democratic Revolution of China. In this conference, while referring the Indian society as semi-feudal, semi-colonial and the independence as sham independence, American imperialism, Soviet social imperialism, feudalism, comprador-bureaucratic capital was termed as the four enemies of Indian people. India was termed as a neo-colony of both American and Soviet imperialism (simultaneously) and feudalism was identified as the principal contradiction of that era. This program was prepared by deductively applying the general assessment of international situations on India and it was full of inconsistencies. The independent study and analysis of the concrete conditions had no role in it. Further in this article the numerous inconsistencies and contradictions of the program of New Democratic Revolution would be done when the context of the question being raised from within the Marxist-Leninist camp would come, hence we are not going into its details here. The political resolution too was as per this program only. At the same time the shadow of "left" opportunist line prevailed in the stand on myriad questions related to tactics and path. Whatever was remaining was completed by the Charu Mazumdar through his speech in which he had emphatically put forward the terrorist line.

Here it is also important to discuss that during the Congress Sauren Basu (Saroj Dutt too accompanied him) had presented a resolution to formally establish the individual authority of Charu Mazumdar. Aseem Chatterji while speaking in favor of the resolution went on to say that in case of differences between the Central Committee and Charu Mazumdar, he would go with the latter. Kanu Sanyal only said that it was crucial to give more description about the role of Charu Mazumdar in the Terai Report. Satyanarayan Singh vocally opposed it. Shivkumar Mishra and R.P. Saraf expressed their opposition in low voice. Susheel Roychaudhary narrated all the quotations of Mao regarding strengthening the Party Committee from the book of Mao's quotation and he termed the proposal as going against Mao's teachings. The proposal could not be passed for lack of consensus, though in latter phases the Charu supporters' caucus essentially implemented the Charu's

position of authority which rendered the Central Committee as meaningless. It was but natural as the “left” adventurist ideological-political line can only be effective through the medium of the organizational line of bureaucratic and commandist centralism.

The Congress elected a twenty-member Central Committee whose members included: Charu Mazumdar, Susheeta Roychaudhary, Saroj Dutt, Kanu Sanyal, Sauren Basu, Suniti Kumar Ghosh, Aseem Chatterji (West Bengal), Satyanarayan Singh, Gurubaksh Singh (Bihar), Shivkumar Mishra, Mahendra Singh (U.P.), Venkatapu Satyanarayan, Adimala Kailasham, Nagbhushan Patnaik, Appala Suri (Andhra Pradesh), L. Appu, Kodandraman (Tamil Nadu), Ambadi (Kerala), R.P. Saraf (Jammu-Kashmir), Jagjeet Singh Sohal (Punjab). Charu Mazumdar was elected as the secretary of the Committee.

If we put together the accepted program in the eighth Congress, political proposal, political-organizational report and Charu Mazumdar’s speech and look at them, at once, it becomes abundantly clear that the ideological essence of the line agreed at the Congress was against Marxism-Leninism-Mao thought. Here, as of now, we are not mentioning the analysis of Indian society and determination of its character as presented in the Program. The main aspect is that of ideology. If a revolutionary Party consistently applies mass line and the organizational line of democratic centralism, it can rectify the mistake related to the program of revolution through summing up the experiences and inner-Party debates and discussions. But if the ideological base of the Party is itself incorrect, even the correct program would be reduced to a mere piece of paper. The formation of CPI (ML) had taken place not on the basis of Marxism-Leninism but of “left” adventurism. The eighth Congress did not at all accomplish its task of the formation of an All India Party. The Marxist-Leninist organizations which used to apply revolutionary mass line mainly and essentially (and the organizations which suffered from “leftist” deviation or right-wing deviation to a lesser degree) were kept out of CPI (ML). Hence, at best it can be said about the CPI (ML) which was formed in 1970 that it was a communist revolutionary organization suffering from serious “left” opportunist deviation, and in no way an All India Revolutionary Communist Party.

PART 2

Failure of the “Left” Adventurist Line in Srikakulam

It has already been discussed in this essay that the guerrilla struggle along the “Left” adventurist line (line of annihilation) had been suffering from severe crisis and impasse after the sustained campaign of blockade and repression by the police and paramilitary forces and murders of several leading organizers in real or fake encounters in Srikakulam before the party congress was held in 1970. Yet, the movement continued, especially in Uddanam and Agency areas. Immediately after the Congress, two members of Central Committee Vempatapu Satyanarayana and Adibhatla Kailasam were martyred in fake encounters on 10 July, 1970 and on 30 July, leading organizers like Mallikarjunudu, Appalaswamy and Malleshwar Rao also faced the same fate. At that time, two surviving members of Central Committee from Andhra, Appalasuri and Nagbhushan Patnaik had gone to Calcutta to meet Charu Majumdar and they received the information of these martyrdoms via radio. Soon after this, both of them were also arrested.

It is necessary to mention here that in 1969 Nagbhushan Patnaik and Bhuvan Mohan Patnaik had started working on the line of Charu Majumdar in the Koraput district of Orissa bordering Andhra as well. Both were arrested after some time, but after managing to escape by prison-break on 8 October, 1969, Nagbhushan Patnaik gave a new fillip to the annihilation campaign in Koraput and Srikakulam and after Party Congress, the Central Committee gave him the responsibility of carrying out the movement in the areas of Koraput of Orissa and Vishakhapatnam and Ganjam of Andhra Pradesh apart from Srikakulam. After the murders of Vempatapu and Adibhatla and arrests of Nagbhushan Patnaik and Appalasuri (all four were Central Committee members), the Party work became stagnant and began to disintegrate in Srikakulam and also in areas of Koraput, Ganjam and Vishakhapatnam owing to sustained face-off with police blockade and suppression. Paila Vasudev Rao was the only important leader left in Srikakulam who could not be arrested by police.

Even at this crucial juncture, Charu Majumdar did not find it necessary to reconsider the line of annihilation; rather taking forward the same line he called upon the surviving comrades of Srikakulam to take the leadership into their own hands and directed them that every unit has the right to chart out its own plan towards the objective of setting up a people’s liberation army in Srikakulam by annihilating class enemies and police and seizing their rifles. Although some of the surviving comrades did make such efforts but they could not succeed. After this a

section of local organizers reached this conclusion that it was wrong to linearly emphasize on the annihilation of class enemies and neglecting other forms of struggle (though they considered this as a tactical mistake only). Such people tried to overcome the mistakes by adopting other forms of struggle on partial and economic demands of people, but they did not achieve any considerable success in the milieu of repression and terror by the state power and isolation from the public. There was another section which was emphasizing on organizing the masses by starting from the economic struggles by completely abandoning the armed struggles. There was a third section of those comrades who disagreed with these conclusions. They were in favor of implementing the policies and tactics of the Central Committee word by word and who believed that the residual influence of revisionism amongst the cadres has been the main reason behind the setbacks to the movement. This third section later re-organized itself as Andhra Pradesh State Committee. Anyway, the struggle of Srikakulam had disintegrated by the end of 1970, however, some isolated 'actions' here and there continued to be taken up even after that. The "Left" adventurist line of Charu Majumdar was implemented for the longest time in Srikakulam in the most organized and thorough manner, but ultimately it proved to be a complete failure after incurring heavy losses.

Students-Youth Rebellion in Calcutta

The second leading representative expression of "Left" adventurism got manifested in the form of widespread uprising of students-youth of Calcutta in March 1970 just before the Party Congress which after reaching the zenith in the so-called cultural revolution ('Bhanjan' (idol-smashing), 'Dahan' (burning), 'Hanan' (annihilation) -program) and the urban annihilation campaign by the mid-1971, got disintegrated owing to the unprecedented ruthless repression by the state. Estimation of the heavy toll that the "Left" adventurist deviation of the students-youth movement of Calcutta took on the Party-building process by strangulating the possibilities of recruitment of revolutionary students-youth in huge numbers amongst the revolutionary cadre requires a short discussion on how the political events unfolded before that uprising.

1960s was the decade of rapid radicalization of the consciousness of the students-youth of Bengal. Majority of the agitating students-youth during the food movement of 1966 (which has been mentioned earlier) had got mobilized against the revisionist leadership apart from the bourgeois system. Amongst the students-youth of Calcutta in 1967-68, there was a widespread wave in favor of Naxalbari peasants-uprising, but the communist revolutionary movement could not give it a definite course due to the impact of "Left" extremism. Charu Majumdar in his article 'To the Youth and the Students' in 1968 in 'Deshvrat' wrote, "The political

organization of the youth and the students must necessarily be a Red Guard organization, and they should undertake the task of spreading the Quotations of Chairman Mao as widely as possible in different areas.” Thus, dismissing the need of extensive issue-based students-youth movements and mass fronts, Charu Majumdar confined their activities to the ideological propaganda only. But during the entire period of the Coordination Committee, students-youth of Calcutta launched several movements on issues like food price hike, tram fare increases and their several demands. ‘West Bengal State Students Coordination Committee of Revolutionaries’ prepared a draft political program of revolutionary students-youth movement and circulated it amongst the revolutionary students-youth activists of Bengal for deliberation and discussion. This draft was also published in the April, 1969 issue of ‘Liberation’. As against the general line of the aforementioned article of Charu Majumdar, the revolutionary mass line of students-youth movement was advocated in this document and it was said that the propaganda of the politics of agrarian revolution alone would only attract the advanced and conscious elements of students-youth to participate in the struggle; therefore, in order to mobilize and organize the wider population of the common students-youth with relatively backward consciousness on the basis of the general political program, it is required to raise the issues connected with food, education, unemployment, culture etc. which directly affect them and for that it would be necessary to build the mass political organization of the students-youth. However, by the time of Party formation, this idea of mass line had been pushed back under the all-encompassing influence of the Left adventurist line. In August 1969, Charu Majumdar in ‘Party’s Call to the Students and Youth’ (‘Deshvratī’) again emphasized that the unions of students-youth will have to unite with workers and poor and landless farmers by completely rejecting the economic, opportunist and corrupt politics. Further advancing his line, he wrote in his article ‘A Conversation with the Revolutionary Youth and Students’ published in ‘Deshvratī’ in March, 1970 that students-youth would have to sacrifice their schools-colleges for the cause of revolution, would have to move towards villages forming squads in order to unite with poor-landless farmers and workers, would have to do revolutionary propaganda amongst them forming squads, would have to form red guard organizations in cities after returning from villages and these red guard organizations would have to retaliate in a guerrilla fashion to the attacking fascist armed gangs along with political and revolutionary propaganda amongst the workers. After this call from Charu, large number of students from Calcutta went towards villages and got engaged in the attempts to apply the “Left” adventurist line. Thus, by the time of Party Congress, Charu’s line had strangled the

possibilities of an uprising of a strong revolutionary students-youth movement in Calcutta.

The students-youth who had gone to the areas of Debra-Gopivallabhpur and other rural areas were soon disappointed because of the enormity of state repression and the failure of terrorist line and most of them went back to the city. The youth activists who returned from villages played a crucial role in the extreme Left students-youth uprising which went on from March 1970 to mid-1971 (approx.) in Calcutta. It started from the attacks on educational institutes run on American funding. Then schools and colleges were attacked and red flags were unfurled there. After this, statues of bourgeois reformists of the so-called Bengali Renaissance such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar; and bourgeois leaders like Gandhi, Chitranjan Das, Subhas Chandra Bose etc. and of Ravindra Nath Tagore were demolished and the copies of 'Gandhi Vangmaya' were burnt on streets. This "cultural revolution" relying on the anger borne out of the hopeless present adopted an extremist, lopsided and ahistorical attitude towards history and heritage. Initially, the CPI (ML) leadership adopted an indifferent attitude towards this new course of events, but after this wave spread in the entire Calcutta, Charu Majumdar strongly supported it terming it as an inevitable consequence of the peasants uprising in the rural areas. Declaring the vandalizing of the statues of Gandhi and other bourgeois leaders as the "festival of idol-smashing", he wrote that students have launched attack on the colonial education system because they have understood that creating revolutionary education system and culture is not possible without destroying the colonial education system and the statues erected by the comprador capitalist class ('Forge Closer Unity with Peasants' Armed Struggle, 14-07-70). Charu further wrote in this article that the aim of this struggle is not to demolish the entire cultural superstructure unlike the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution of China, nor it is possible in this stage (i.e. before the victory of revolution), hence the students-youth will have to note that they can preserve their revolutionary character only by integrating with the workers and landless peasants. The differences of senior leader and Secretary of West Bengal State Committee Sushital Ray Chowdhary with Charu Majumdar started with the question of idol-smashing and eventually he presented the critique of the whole line of "Left Adventurism". We will discuss this difference later. Saroj Dutta, Politburo member and old poet and journalist who strongly supported the idol-smashing offensive, emerged to be a new cultural theoretician of the Charu Majumdar line. He wrote articles indiscriminately lambasting Gandhi, Subhas, Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Tarasankar Banerjee etc. According to Saroj Dutta, social reformers of the Bengali "Bhadralok" (civilized folk) – the leaders of the Bengali renaissance – who were the outcome of the colonial

education system were a medium of communication between the ruling and exploited classes and acted as the governing machinery of the ruling classes. They were against the anti-colonial mass resistance and were only focused on social reform confined merely to the middle class. He used to portray Gandhi as an agent of colonialism and considered Subhas Bose a fascist, acting as a puppet of the Japanese imperialism. In fact, cultural line of Saroj Dutta was just a mechanical and extreme elaboration of the evaluation of Indian society and the character of Indian capitalist class (in the form of comprador capitalist class) as formulated by the program of CPI (ML). This was the period during which the considerable section of intellectuals and cultural activists of Bengal that sympathized with the communist revolutionary stream, split away after realizing the consequences of the political line of Charu Majumdar and ultra-Leftist cultural thoughts of Saroj Dutta.

As has been mentioned above that the campaign of attacking educational institutes and idol-smashing had started spontaneously. There were meritorious students involved in it in large number, but many lumpen elements were also involved. Party supported the movement but in fact it had no control over it and it was dragging itself behind it. Charu in his above article also wrote that the students-youth and workers are annihilating the police instead of kneeling down. Such incidents were sporadically happening by that time, but after the publication of this article by Charu Majumdar, the campaign of annihilation of the police personnel, bureaucrats, merchants, agents and hired goons ('Mastans') was intensified. Calcutta district committee had announced in July that the murders of comrades from Bengal and Andhra will be avenged by annihilating the police, CRP, black-marketers and the capitalists. During this indiscriminate campaign of annihilation, some prominent individuals like vice-chancellor of Jadavpur University, one judge of Calcutta High Court and a secretary of the government of Bengal were murdered, but mostly traffic constables, some petty-merchants and businessmen turned out to be its victims. Then started the clash on streets with CPI (M) activists and by August 1971, 368 CPI (M) activists along with 1345 ML activists were killed. Annihilation of electoral candidates during the midterm elections of 1971 also started. Forward Block's veteran leader Hemanta Kumar Bose, in spite of being the leader of a revisionist Party, was quite popular due to his simple life and modest nature. His assassination created a lot of turmoil in Bengal and played an important role in increasing the isolation of CPI (ML). During this entire annihilation campaign, there were 700 squads in the whole Bengal and 150 squads active in Calcutta only. As per the instructions of Charu Majumdar, these squads used to be independent of the local Party Committees and carry out their actions without their knowledge.

Even if the revolutionary mass line were to be implemented in accordance with the New Democratic Revolution program, then the general line in that period should have been that of defense in spite of development of class struggle in villages along with some partial uprisings in the cities and the mass struggles should have been developed under the strict supervision of the Party. But extending his terrorist line even beyond Srikakulam, Charu Majumdar aggressively adopted the line of annihilation in cities as well, he completely dismissed the mass struggles and formation of mass organizations by terming them as revisionist activities, freed the squads from the leadership of the Party Committees and fostered their chaos and spontaneity and completely subordinated the politics under weapon.

State repression of the revolutionary communist movement, which was already underway, turned even more intensified and extensive since 1971. CRP and police were given 'shoot at sight' orders. Fake encounters became routine incidents. ML activists would be brutally tortured in jails. By the end of 1972 around 20,000 activists (mostly students and people belonging to their families) were killed in Calcutta alone. 3,000 activists in Naxalbari, 4,000 in other rural areas of Bengal, more than 6,000 activists in Bihar and Assam as well as thousands of activists in Andhra, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala and Tamil Nadu too had been killed. The extent of the military operation in Bengal can be estimated from a statement by Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora. According to Aurora, three divisions of the army (about 50 thousand soldiers) had gone to West Bengal and after the elections the soldiers remained there to deal with the Naxalite violence. After the suppression of the Telangana struggle, the Indian state had launched the most comprehensive and planned suppression against the communist movement during 1970-72, however this action continued in some form or other until the Emergency-period. Barbarism of this period is a known fact of history today and this truth has also been exposed in many studies that in addition to the Central Home Ministry, Army officers and bourgeois think tanks, specialists of various imperialist agencies were also involved at that time in formulating strategic policies of suppressing "Naxalism" and socio-economic policies to deal with it.

Nevertheless, the root cause of stagnation-disintegration of the movement was not the state repression, but its own ideological line (Left adventurism) and wrong understanding of the Indian program (program of New Democratic Revolution following the path of the Chinese Revolution). The state repression can push back a country's revolutionary struggle for some time, but it cannot be the fundamental reason for the stagnation-disintegration that continues for more than four decades. With hindsight, this point can be easily made with complete certainty.

Any revolution does involve martyrdoms and sacrifices, but this is certain that the Left adventurist line of Charu Majumdar was responsible for the numerous unnecessary martyrdoms and sacrifices during the early years of 1970s. Wrong estimation or underestimation of enemy's power, self-righteousness, impatience, belief in brave heroes instead of masses and weapons rather than politics – these are the basic attributes of Left adventurism and Charu Majumdar (and his supporters in the leadership) was also equipped with these qualities. Next, we will see how the organizational line of the leadership implementing the Left adventurist line, in accordance to its ideological line, applied the bureaucratic working style, individualism, factionalism and manipulation (such instances have been observed during the AICCCR period as well), because of which the process of debate and healthy summing-up was repeatedly throttled in the organization and it was decisively pushed towards the path of disintegration.

Nevertheless, at the moment we will go back towards Calcutta during the latter half of the historic year of 1971. President's rule was proclaimed in West Bengal on June 29, 1971. Union minister Siddhartha Shankar Ray was given the responsibility of implementing the President's rule in the state. The period from July to November was the most brutal period of fake encounters, arrests and tortures in jails throughout the state, and especially in Calcutta. In the meantime, during the midnight of 4-5 August, police arrested Saroj Dutta and shot him dead. Students-youth of Calcutta, full of romantic revolutionary zeal and spirit of sacrifice, showed remarkable courage. There were many incidents of struggles inside jails and jail breaks. But in the end, the advanced armed forces and the unbridled repressive machinery by the state was bound to win. By November 1971, Calcutta's students-youth movement had been crushed.

The fundamental reason behind the waste of this unlimited revolutionary energy and failure of the uprising of students-youth was the "Left" adventurist line of Charu Majumdar. The mass line entailed in the draft political program presented by the 'West Bengal State Students Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries' had been abandoned in very beginning of 1970. Mao's conception of New Democratic Revolution emphasized on protracted revolutionary struggle, main focus on land struggle in villages and encircling the cities from villages, but with the full support of Charu Majumdar, the extremist agenda of the action of squads in the name of urban guerrilla war and "cultural revolution" were implemented in Calcutta. During 1970-71, the hearts and minds of youth remained occupied with the utopian thought of Calcutta's freedom by 1975. In addition to Sushital Ray Chowdhary, Suniti Kumar Ghosh also raised voice against it, but Charu Majumdar, Soren Basu and Calcutta district committee rejected these objections

outright. Not only this, neither there was any clear policy to carry out the actions of squads, nor was there any well-organized Party structure. There was no arrangement of the ideological-political education for the young activists. On the contrary, if someone studied the Marxist classics, he had to face criticism and humiliation for being the “victim” of the tendency of book worship. Students-youth struggles had no link or coordination with revolutionary peasant struggles which were going on in various parts of the country and in West Bengal, whatever be their extent and form. After the students-youth movement of Calcutta had been crushed, Charu Majumdar wrote in ‘Liberation’ (July 1971 – January 1972): “We cannot occupy Calcutta and the different towns now and that is not also possible. Therefore, the Party members who are in the urban areas cannot directly participate in the struggle for seizure of power” (‘A Note on Party’s Work in Urban Areas’). Clearly, Charu Majumdar was turning away from his former position without any critical sum-up and was avoiding to own the responsibility for the failure of students-youth uprising. It would not be an exaggeration to term it as opportunism.

Although, by the end of 1971, wherever the “Left” adventurist line was applied in the form of organized or isolated action, it failed. But after Srikakulam, its failure during the students-youth uprising of Calcutta came in the most obvious and deadly form. It was the line of Charu Majumdar, because of which sacrifices of thousands of students-youth went in vain, youth energy with unlimited possibilities was wasted and the state repressive machinery plunged it into the pool of blood.

Impact of Communist Revolutionary Wave on the Urban Working Class from 1967 to 1971, waves of revolutionary uprising amongst the industrial workers of entire India and especially Bengal-Bihar, kept on acquiring violent forms time and again. Not only CPI, but the open and unashamed betrayals on repeated basis by the revisionists of CPI (M) too made this truth clear before the big section of workers that despite its deceiving and furious rhetoric, in fact CPI (M) too was a new renegade gang of parliamentary Leftists. In such a scenario, conditions were quite favorable to mobilize the workers on a revolutionary line and a large number of them were themselves getting attracted towards the communist revolutionary wave, but the all-encompassing effect of the “Left” adventurist line easily let this golden historic opportunity go waste. Workers’ struggles dispersed after spontaneous strikes and short-term rebellions in limited geographical regions. Disastrous consequences of the “Left” adventurism gave opportunity to the trade unions of bourgeois and revisionist parties, to regain their loosing hold on industrial workers. In the entire historiography of communist revolutionary

movement, there is little discussion about its impact on workers' movement. The series of uprising and disintegration of the militant movements of industrial workers during the period from Naxalbari peasant uprising to 1971 is a neglected and forgotten chapter of the history. Here, we will discuss some of the important incidents of that period one by one, so that it can be understood as to how much harm did the "Left" adventurist line of Charu Majumdar cause to the workers movement of India and how, by throttling its revolutionary possibilities, the road to undisputed domination by revisionists on the trade union movement was cleared.

Forty lakhs of central employees of postal-telegraph as well as railways went on strike on 19 September, 1968. Central and state governments adopted authoritarian repressive attitude to crush the strike. More than ten thousand employees and workers were either dismissed or suspended, the equal numbers were put in jails and ten workers found themselves at the receiving end of the police firing. The approach of vandalism, deception and surrender adopted by the revisionist leaders caused much harm but its second consequence was that the new revisionists of CPI (M) were largely exposed amongst the working-class population. There was tremendous adverse impact on the strike due to betrayal by the revisionists in West Bengal. "Marxist" Chief Minister of the united front government of Kerala, Namboodiripad criticized the draconian ordinances imposed by the central government in words but applying the same draconian ordinances in deeds his government filed 207 cases on the strikers, arrested 233 people and also used force on them on large scale. Prior to this strike when 700 employees of Kerala secretariat took collective leave on their demands on 26 July, 1968, then not only the Namboodiripad government took help of armed police force to crush them, but it also issued directions of their salary cut and 'service break'. Even before this, when the workers of Gwalior Rayon mill of Birla situated in Mavoor of Calicut went on strike towards the end of March and start of April, the government tried terrorizing and pressurizing them for a compromise in favor of the owners by sending police.

After the symbolic strike on 19th September, 1968, when the central employees, workers and employees of the post-telegram department continued their struggle adopting the strategy of 'working as per the rules', the trade union leaders of the revisionist parties came forward to help the central government. Making every possible effort by pressurizing and blackmailing the workers-employees, they forced them to retreat. The United Front government of the West Bengal, which had used its full might to crush the Naxalbari peasant uprising in 1967, openly adopted the suppressive attitude towards workers as well. This ensured that their character before the majority of working-class population continued to be

exposed. Defying the revisionists of CPI and CPI (M), the workers started organizing militant movements on their own and what is important is that they were victorious in most of their movements until the end of 1970. During the rule of the united front government, of which both CPI and CPI (M) were a part, 1,20,000 workers were fired between March to September 1967 ('Yugantar', 19 November, 1967). Deputy Chief Minister Jyoti Basu shamelessly said that he wants a just agreement, not strike and lockout ('Statesman', 6 October, 1967). A big section of workers was itself getting away from revisionists due to these misdeeds by them. Workers with advanced consciousness were rapidly getting attracted towards the communist revolutionary stream, but by the latter half of 1968 the "Left" adventurist line had become dominant in AICCCR which considered the trade union works in themselves as revisionist and was against any form of mass action. As a result, even the most favorable conditions could not be taken advantage of in time and a historical opportunity slipped from the hand. In order to understand the whole scenario and the spirit and attitude of working class at that time, mention of just a few more incidents will be sufficient.

There were many incidents of wildcat strikes and vandalism in the South Eastern Railway in February 1970. Organizationally, there was no role of CPI (ML) in these incidents, nonetheless 'The Statesman' in a report had suspected that the influence of some "extremist elements" has increased amongst the personnel of South Eastern Railway who want to disrupt rail operations particularly in the Ranchi-Jamshedpur belt. The effectiveness of the organized power of these workers in disrupting the country's economy can be gauged from the fact that at that time, 60 percent of the country's freight was transported via Eastern and South Eastern Railway and only these two railways connected the leading industrial centers like Calcutta, Durgapur, Asansol, Jamshedpur etc.

In July 1970, the workers and employees of North East Frontier Railway went on a wildcat strike. They were demanding the release of the arrested people for the murder of the in-charge of Siliguri police station. The strike that started from Siliguri railway junction soon spread to other areas and the entire rail-system of North-Eastern India came to halt. Strike continued despite Railway minister Nanda threatening to use army, efforts to run trains with the help from Eastern Frontier Rifles and the tremendous efforts by the trade union bureaucrats of CPI-CPI (M). Employees of postal-telegraph department and state electricity board and the students of Siliguri showed complete solidarity. 'The Statesman' newspaper in its editorial of 2 August suspected that possibly "underground extremists" are leading the strike. In the end, this 11-day strike was called off only when the government succumbed to all the demands of the striking workers.

In July, 1970, a big strike took place in South Eastern Railway as well. On 26th July, a

wildcat strike was called in protest against the beating of some railway workers by the police at the Adra Railway Station. The strike that began with the Adra division was joined by the railway workers of Chakradharpur and Kharagpur divisions as well and the rail-operations of the entire South-Eastern part of India got disrupted. Only after the government succumbed, the railway workers returned to work. Against the arrest of some workers of the Bhilai Marshall Yard on August 1, 1970, the workers of the Bilaspur division of South Eastern Railway called a strike. On 6-7 August, railway workers of Chakradharpur, Adra, Kharda Road and Kharagpur division also joined the strike. This strike too ended only when the government accepted the demand for the release of the arrested workers.

All these strikes of workers were not based on economic demands, but were of political nature. All these strikes took place by revolting against the established union leadership (which were affiliated to bourgeois and revisionist parties). The desperate steps taken by the revisionist leaders of trade unions in response to this further exposed their character before the workers. Trade union leader of CPI Indrajit Gupta while shamelessly criticizing the workers' wildcat strike gave a written undertaking to the government that in future, he would make all the possible efforts to prevent workers from going on a 'wildcat strike'. Jyoti Basu said that he is in favor of polite compromise, not strike. The intensity of hatred and resentment against the revisionists in the industrial workers of Calcutta was even more fierce. Workers were showing solidarity with CPI (ML), communist revolutionary stream and peasant struggles. The requirement was simply that they were organized on the basis of a certain revolutionary mass line and that they were told about the concrete tasks, which could not happen. In 1970, there was an important strike in the Central Dairy, an undertaking of the state government situated in North Calcutta. CPI (M) goons fatally attacked a worker of the said dairy while he was visiting outside Calcutta and handed him to the police after badly injuring him. All the workers of the dairy went on strike immediately after hearing this news. Strike ended only when the dairy management got the arrested worker released and brought him amongst his comrades. From 1970 to the first half of 1971, in Calcutta and nearby industrial areas, red flags could be seen unfurling everywhere –in the whole port area from K.P. Docks to Strand Road, in the area of Taratala-Hide Road and headquarters of Calcutta Tramways Company, Garden Reach Workshop (Defense Production Factory of India) and Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory (central government undertaking). If police removed them, workers would unfurl them again. Workers were carrying out this under the leadership of the local CPI (ML) activists without waiting for any instructions from the Party leadership. Trade union offices of the revisionist parties used to be deserted. Police used to watch them. CPI (M) goons, with the help of police, often attacked

the rebel workers and CPI (ML) activists and ML cadres would strongly resist them and counter actions would also take place. Prior to line of annihilation in the name of urban guerrilla warfare and seizure of weapons becoming completely dominant in the Calcutta students-youth movement and the state suppression reaching the extreme levels, when the atmosphere of mass uprising prevailed, the examples of militant solidarity amongst the workers and petty-bourgeois youth were often witnessed. There had been a lockout for a long time in S. P. Engineering Company situated in Cossipore of North Calcutta. When the owners, conspiring with police, tried displacing the machines from the factory on August 9, 1970, then a large number of workers residing in the nearby slums as well as students-youth under the leadership of CPI (ML) activists came to the fray. Even after many rounds of firing by the police, workers and the students-youth did not budge and the owners' purpose was not served. In the beginning of August, 1970 when a young communist revolutionary named Samir Bhattacharya was arrested by police and killed after torture in the lockup, then in bringing the entire life of Calcutta to a standstill and bravely facing the police and the paramilitary forces for three days, a large number of workers in camaraderie with students-youth stood their ground.

Several strikes took place in state electricity boards of W. Bengal and Bihar and Damodar Valley Corporation during 1970-71. Four out of these were largescale strikes, which involved vandalism on large scale and plant and transmission systems had been damaged. Police suspected that "Naxalites" were active behind these strikes, while the truth was that CPI (ML) had no role in them. When a contractor of Hindustan Steel plant situated in Durgapur fired five workers on 20 June, 1970 then all the workers under the contractor immediately encircled the plant manager and another officer. People affiliated with CPI (M) and SUCI made lot of efforts to end the encirclement, but workers turned them away. Then they brought police which too failed. Eventually the men of the Eastern Frontier Rifles came packed in three trucks and they pulled both the officers out of the encirclement. The workers' movement still continued. Finally, management had to unconditionally take back all the dismissed workers to work.

On the basis of above description, from 1967 to 1971, the anti-system consciousness and the spirit of rebellion against trade unionism-economism prevailing amongst the workers in most of the industrial centers of India including Kerala, Bihar in general and Bengal in particular, can be easily guessed. Due to complete focus on annihilation campaign in the name of guerrilla warfare in villages under the leadership of "village-based Party" till 1970, the "Left" extremist faction of Charu Majumdar, that dominated the AICCCR and then the leadership of CPI (ML), did not pay any heeds to the struggles of urban workers. People like Asit

Sen and Parimal Dasgupta who were supporters of mass line and who had experience of working amongst the urban workers had been expelled from the Party even before the Party Congress and building any kind of mass organization, carrying out mass movements and open political-economic struggles had been declared as revisionism. Just before the Congress in March 1970, Charu Majumdar in his message to the working class talked about its only task of coming forward as the vanguard of revolution and going to villages and leading the armed peasant struggles and mobilizing around the CPI (ML). Clearly all workers could not participate in the armed struggle in villages. Thus, according to Charu, majority of the industrial workers had no role in revolution. In another article published this month which was addressed to the Party activists working amongst the urban proletariat, Charu Majumdar wrote, emphasizing on building secret Party organization amongst the workers, that Party's work is not to organize trade unions, but it should encourage every struggle initiated by the workers. Besides, he wrote that attacks by the organized capitalist class in the form of lockouts and retrenchments cannot be confronted now with a measure like strike, now struggle cannot be developed in a peaceful way without bloodshed and the workers now would have to carry forward their struggles via encirclement, barricade struggles, clash with police and capitalists and annihilation of the class enemy and its agents. Charu repeatedly emphasized that instead of getting workers involved in the economic and everyday struggles, they must have a sense of self-esteem against humiliating slavery. If this happens, they will become courageous and militant revolutionaries. Much after the rail strikes of 1970, Charu Majumdar welcomed them and said that this is the impact of youth uprising on the working class and these strikes form a new era in the workers movement because the working class is not fighting for any economic reason but for their self-respect.

During 1970-71, following the call of Charu Majumdar, some industrial workers of Durgapur and Asansol did carry out some tasks of seizure of weapons, annihilation and unfurling red flags over the factories by forming guerrilla squads, but these actions failed to awaken or influence the wider working class and such squads quickly disintegrated. Towards the end of 1970, realizing the limitations of students-youth uprising, Charu Majumdar wrote in a letter addressed to a comrade that it would not be right to think that the petty-bourgeois class will never be horrified. The time would soon come when only the working class will be able to safeguard us. He also wrote that 'actions' themselves do not raise the level of political consciousness and we would have to take in our hands, the important tasks of building Party units amongst the urban and rural poor. It is noteworthy that here too Charu was only emphasizing on Party building, he did not even mention about organizing mass actions and trade union activities. Students-youth

uprising of Calcutta had disintegrated by the end of 1971 and the tide of the labor movement had also ebbed and Charu Majumdar too had accepted that for the time being it was not possible to capture Calcutta or any other city. At that time, Charu Majumdar once again, emphasizing on building maximum Party units amongst the working classes, increasing their political consciousness and nourishing Party organizers from amongst them, wrote in his note titled 'About Party Works in Urban Areas': "The working class is ceaselessly conducting struggles, big and small. Our political work among them will help them in those struggles and draw the broad sections of the working class into the fold of our politics. The class-conscious worker will then voluntarily go to the villages and participate in the peasants' armed struggle. It is in this way that the firm unity between the workers and the peasants will be established." It is noteworthy that here too, workers organizing mass movement on their own class (economic and political) demands and leading role of the Party in the trade union activities have no place in Charu Majumdar's thinking. Apart from helping in the struggles of workers, he believed that the only objective of political education of workers was to bring them under the influence of revolutionary politics, so that workers could go to villages and participate in the armed struggles of peasants. Clearly this understanding about the role of Party in the labor movement was totally opposed to the Leninist understanding. This point of view was quite similar to the understanding of Narodnik terrorists.

If the communist revolutionary movement could not attract the subversive spirit of rebellion against the Indian bourgeois system and the despicable economic-trade unionist politics of revisionists that was agitating the collective psyche of the Indian working class during 1967-71 and that was being manifested in spontaneous radical struggles, to its fold and missed out a historic opportunity, its fundamental reason was the "Left" adventurist deviation whose architect and leader was Charu Majumdar.

PART 3

In the first part of this essay we had discussed the brief background of the history of communist movement and revisionist departure of the party along with the Naxalbari peasant uprising, the formation of 'All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries', the process of further strengthening of the "Left" adventurist line by cornering every approach, thinking and line of revolutionary mass line during the lifetime of the committee and subsequently the holding of the Eighth Congress in May 1970 on the same line until the formation of CPI (M-L). In the second part, apart from the mention of the failure of the "Left" adventurist line in Srikakulam these less known facts were discussed that how deeply the revolutionary uprising of Naxalbari had also influenced the industrial working class besides students and youth, though the party could not take any advantage of the historic opportunity due to complete negation of revolutionary mass line by Charu Mazumdar and the party leadership.

Now in this current part of the essay we will discuss the circumstances and sequence of events which arose and developed within the party after the party-congress. The process of split along with unity which had ensued in the tenure of the coordination committee itself, continued even after the congress.

After the Congress: Differences with Satyanarayan Singh, the First Split Within the Party and the Subsequent Beginning of the Process of Disintegration

The first meeting that was held immediately after the founding congress of the party proved to be the last meeting. The Central committee formed an eleven-member polit-bureau whose nine members included Charu Mazumdar, Sushital RayChauduri, Shiv Kumar Mishra, Kanu Sanyal, Saroj Datta, Satyanarayan Singh, Rampyare Sarraf, L. Appu and Sauren Basu. Two positions were left vacant. Besides this, four zonal bureaus were formed: the bureaus of south, north-west, north-central and north-east areas. Saroj Dutt and Suniti Kumar Ghosh were made in-charge of the party organs. No meeting took place in future of these zonal bureaus as well. The proposal to accept Charu Mazumdar as 'revolutionary authority' was rejected in the congress and the meeting of central committee and it was decided that Charu Mazumdar would work in consultation with the other members of central committee, but, in practice, Charu Mazumdar took most of the decisions on his own including the important decision to announce the formation of 'people's liberation army'. Even the polit-bureau member Sushital Raychaudhury

who used to be available for consultation was not consulted generally. Hence after the congress, in practice, not only Charu did act as a 'revolutionary authority' but, in fact, went further and acted like an unchecked sole leader. Even the remaining democratic modus operandi that used to prevail before the party congress, did not continue.

Exactly four months after the party congress the Bihar state committee passed a resolution in September 1970 that was titled as "The new rising and the struggle against left opportunism". Earlier, immediately after the congress, Satyanarayan Singh had written a letter to Charu Mazumdar in which he had asked Charu to remove that portion from the 'political-organisational report' and from Charu's speech based on that, in which it was mentioned that the US attack on Cambodia was the beginning of the third world war. Satyanarayan Singh's argument was that since the report and speech were not published yet, hence removing those portions would make these documents in consonance with Mao-tse-tung's speech on 20 May 1970 in which he had said: "The danger of a new world war continues to prevail, and the toiling masses of all the countries must be prepared for this, however the main trend in today's world still is revolution." Although the assessment presented in the eighth congress report was wrong, but documents that are passed in a congress cannot be amended by an individual or even by central committee in a random manner. It would have been the negation of the democratic methodology. The suggestion of Satyanarayan Singh was reflective of his undemocratic and opportunist modus operandi. Charu Mazumdar did not accept his suggestion. Here, he stood with the correct modus operandi despite being wrong. Even while opposing the Left opportunism, the resolution by the Bihar state committee was not free of the left opportunist deviation. While showering lofty praises for Charu Mazumdar, the "annihilation of class enemy" was termed as a "higher form of class struggle and the beginning of guerilla war" and it was claimed that guerilla zone existed in twelve states and they are continuously spreading and strengthening. This description was not just an exaggeration but much too far away from reality. It was claimed in the document that the enemy's campaign of encirclement and repression had failed and all the disorganizing ideological offensives of the "reactionary hirelings" like Nagi Reddy-Asit Sen had failed. Firstly, the indiscriminate campaign of state repression had superseded the campaign of annihilation of enemy going on in the name of guerilla war in Srikakulam and other regions even before the party congress. Secondly, Satyanarayan Singh was still hurling abuses such as "reactionary and hirelings" on Nagi Reddy and Asit Sen who were the leaders with impeccable revolutionary character, who had boldly struggled against the "Left" adventurist deviation during the coordination committee period. In order to understand the opportunist

character of Satynarayan Singh, an example of just one incident would be sufficient. After separating themselves from party he reached the home of Asit Sen to take along with them. Then Asit Sen had snubbed him. With reference to the workers the resolution of the Bihar state committee mentioned that they are understanding the limits of economic struggle more and more, instead of waging struggle on day-to-day problems, demands and issues, they have now begun struggle on the issues of dignity and self-respect and their struggle is becoming more and more protracted and turning into violent clashes. Needless to say, this assessment too completely matched with Charu Mazumdar's "Left" adventurist line about working amongst urban working class and its task. Not only this, in tune with Charu Mazumdar's call, it was appealed that the party while linking the revolutionary armed struggles going on in cities with those going on in the villages, would bring about people's democratic revolution and thereby turn 1970s into the decade of liberation from imperialism and feudalism.

Then, naturally, the question arises that what were the issues on which the resolution of Bihar state committee was opposing the "Left" tendencies? There was only one issue, that of rich peasants. The resolution stated that the "Left" opportunism while blurring the distinction between the landlords and rich peasants is narrowing the scope of revolutionary front and is strengthening the counter-revolutionary front. Only a handful of rich peasants are our enemies who have feudal tendency or who are with feudal landlord. Theoretically speaking, it was correct that the rich peasants too are (wavering) friends of revolution as per the strategic alliance of four classes in the new democratic revolution. However, party's official position on this issue was the same. The problem was arising out of the mistake of assessing the concrete circumstances. By 1970, even the old feudal landlord did not remain rent-seekers and the tendency of producing for the market was taking roots even amongst them. On the other hand, even from the rich and prosperous middle peasantry, the class of rich owner farmer had come into being who used to exploit-oppress the poor-landless of villages. Often caste-based clashes used to take place among these new and old land owners. Yet another fact was that new landlords who were experts in capitalist agriculture were surpassing the old landlords. The party instead of making a distinction between feudal landlords and rich farmers as per the program of new democratic revolution, used to believe the family history to be the criteria as to who was landlord in the past and who was tenant.

Yet another empirical criterion was the caste-based discrimination because the landlords having feudal background often hailed from upper castes while the rich peasants used to belong to the middle peasantry. In the villages where the rich peasants too used to oppress the landless, there was a deep anguish among the

poor even against them and the guerilla battalions that were carrying out annihilation of enemy largely consisted of these poor themselves. Consequently, the rich peasants too were on the hit list of the guerilla battalions. Instead of finding root cause of this situation in the ongoing changes in the production relations, Satyanarayan Singh saw it as an effect of “Left” deviation in the party. The subsequent course of events provides ample basis to believe that Satyanarayan Singh had raised it as per his political careerist thinking. This precisely was his opportunism owing to which from being a staunch advocate of “Left” adventurism, he performed a somersault to reach eventually to the serious right-wing deviation.

But the resolution of the Bihar state committee had adopted some relatively correct positions and some substantive issues as well. Looking at the unequal and protracted character of Indian people’s democratic revolution, the document had criticized that no distinction was being made between the nature of struggles in the city and the villages and it was stressed that before the advance stage of countrywide class war, the nature of guerilla activities in the cities must be that of self-defense. This was the time when Charu faction while giving the slogan of making Calcutta as the liberated zone during the days of student-youth uprising in Calcutta had given up the old position. The document of the Bihar Committee had indirectly opposed this position. Within the framework of the new democratic revolution, its position was relatively correct. The document of the Bihar Committee also made correct criticism of terming the contemporary time as ‘the era of self-sacrifice’ by Charu Mazumdar and it was stated that there was no such separate era. The document had also rightly criticized the authoritarian trend and the lack of collective functioning, but only the central leadership (i.e. Charu) was held responsible for this. To what extent Satyanarayan Singh was really a genuine opponent of authoritarianism and over-centralisation, can be understood from an incident mentioned by Sauren Basu and Suniti Kumar Ghosh on separate occasions. Before the Congress, in 1970 when Satyanarayan Singh had gone to Calcutta to make arrangement for Charu Mazumdar’s Bihar tour, Suniti Kumar Ghosh had asked him his opinion about an article written by Sauren Basu that called for declaring Charu Mazumdar as ‘revolutionary authority’. Satyanarayan Singh opined that it was fine but there was no mention of the successor of Charu Mazumdar in it. Clearly, he used to carry the ambition of seeing himself as the successor. This was one of the reasons why he had started doing criticism and condemnation of the “Bengal faction” of Charu’s close circle including Suniti Kumar Ghosh, Sauren Basu, Saroj Dutt and Asim Chatterji by terming it as “Charu Chaukadi”.

In October 1970, a meeting of the polit bureau of the central committee was held in which the a deliberation on the resolution of the Bihar state committee was scheduled. This was the first and the last meeting of the polit bureau. Out of the nine members of the polit bureau only four could take part in it. They included Charu Mazumdar, Shiv Kumar Mishra, Satyanarayan Singh and Saroj Dutt. While coming to attend the meeting, Appu was killed in Tamil Nadu by a landlord gang and this information reached the leadership later. Before the meeting Satynarayan Singh and Shiv Kumar Mishra met accidentally and Satynarayan Singh showed his document to him. After a cursory glance Shivkumar Mishra promised him to extend his support. Shiv Kumar Mishra was a guileless communist revolutionary. He reached the conclusion that the document of the Bihar state committee is carrying on the same process of the struggle against “Left” deviation that had already been raised in the Uttar Pradesh state committee (here Shri Narayan Tiwari and Ramnayan Upadhyay played more important role than that of Shiv Kumar Mishra). In the meeting, Satynarayan Singh delivered his speech while presenting the document. Subsequently, Shiv Kumar Mishra also delivered his speech. Charu and Saroj Dutt were obviously against this. The meeting could not last long due to the sudden sickness of Charu. Out of nine members only four were present. Hence it was decided that the document of Bihar Committee would be placed before the central committee. But after this, no meeting of central committee was convened. The document of Bihar committee was placed before the West Bengal State Committee that was convened in January 1971. By this time Sushital Ray Chaudhuri had begun his famous series of articles against “Left” adventurist line (it will be discussed further in essay) and a debate was also scheduled in this meeting of the committee. Nevertheless, the Bengal State Committee rejected the resolution of the Bihar Committee by terming it as revisionist and counterrevolutionary and demanded the central committee that those who prepared the resolution must be thrown out of party. Earlier, Charu Mazaumdar had written against the Bihar resolution in ‘Deshvratī’. Immediately after this, Satyanarayan Singh and his comrades were expelled from the party. Neither a meeting of central committee took place before this nor was this decision approved in any subsequent meeting. By this time a caucus consisting of Charu and his acolytes had begun working as a de facto central committee. Bihar state committee was dismissed and was replaced by an ad hoc committee.

As an immediate response, Satyanarayan Singh called a plenum of Bihar state committee and presented a 110-page detailed report titled “The problem of Indian revolution and neo-Trotskyist deviation”. In brief the conclusion of the above report was as follows: (1) Neo-Trotskyite “Charu Chaukadi” is destroying all possibility of revolutions by mixing democratic, socialist and cultural revolution (2)

It does not believe in the Mao's assessment of the world situation, considers imperialism as a decisive power rather than people and instead of revolution it believes war to be the main trend in today's world (3) It does not accept the strategy and tactics of protracted people's war, instead it promotes swift victory, general insurrection and open skirmishes everywhere, and aimless action and hence it leads to the deviation of the revolution from a definite path of victory (4) In order to destroy the revolution it is abandoning the line of making base areas in villages and instead making cities as the main centre of gravity (5) By opposing the economic and partial struggles of workers, peasants, petty bourgeois class and other section of people, it is destroying the mass character of revolution (6) It wants to distort Marxism by carrying out revisionist manipulation, e.g. the amalgamation of democratic and socialist revolutions, war and revolution and other forms of armed struggle and class struggle, the mixing up of the strategy and tactics of people's war and political struggles with economic and partial struggles, and its wrong conception about party building and party work style (7) The 'Charu Chaukadi' wants to make Charu thought as the guiding principle of party rather than Mao thought. The report ridiculed Charu Mazumdar's assessment of the beginning of the third world war as it was opposed to Mao's assessment and finally it was concluded that "Charu Chaukadi" was no longer a part of CPI(M-L), it had become the vanguard squad of the counter-revolutionary forces which is hell bent on harming the revolution, party and the leadership of world communist movement. In this plenum, the process of split got consummated and Satyanarayan Singh group started acting as a parallel party-centre.

By the time of the plenum of Bihar State Committee Shiv Kumar Mishra had been arrested. He supported the Bihar state committee's resolution in the meeting of polit-bureau meeting. He used to consider the "Leftist" deviation as a serious tactical mistake, though he had profound faith in the Charu Mazumdar's leadership (which remained throughout his life) and he had a strong belief that Charu would correct it in due course. He received the Satyanarayan Singh's document 'the Problems of Indian revolution and neo-Trotskyist deviation' in the prison. He had a strong disagreement with the document. He was a staunch opponent of labelling Charu as a Trotskyist. He developed the opinion that right from the beginning Satyanarayan Singh intended to sideline Charu and even some comrades from Uttar Pradesh committee wanted this. He believed that with the purpose of split Satyanarayan Singh, as a manipulation, used him by taking advantage of his trust (this opinion remained intact throughout his life). After this, the U.P. Committee kept itself away from the organizational attempts of Satyanarayan Singh, but they too had to pay for supporting the resolution of Bihar

committee. Charu Mazumdar dissolved U.P. state committee and Shiv Kumar Mishra and his comrades too were expelled from the organization.

The next process of important difference and separation with Charu Mazumdar took place with Asim Chatterji. Satyanarayan Singh had charged Charu Mazumdar of being encircled with the 'gang of four' of Saroj Dutt, Sauren Basu, Suniti Kumar Ghosh and Asim Chatterji, however, meanwhile, when the plenum of Bihar state committee was taking place, the difference between Charu and Asim had surfaced. In June 1971, the 'Bengal-Bihar-Orissa border regional committee' that was working under the leadership of Asim Chatterji, had vehemently criticized the official party-position towards Pakistan in the ongoing struggle in East Pakistan (current Bangladesh) by issuing a document and had termed it against the position of the Chinese Party. Asim Chatterji believed that Pakistan is waging struggle to safeguard its national independence, geographical integrity and sovereignty and China is extending its support, while the Soviet Social Imperialism and the Indian expansionists want to divide Pakistan for their vested interest and it is against the people of Pakistan. It is correct that China used to consider the Soviet imperialism as more aggressive and more dangerous (social fascist) among the two great powers and used to consider India to be its credible partner. In this way it was against the Soviet-backed Indian intervention in the internal affairs in Pakistan. But at the same time, it also used to believe that the question of East Pakistan must be solved as per the wish of its people (S. Nihal Singh: 'The Yogi and the Beer', page 92, 172). China suffered from a dilemma between supporting Pakistan and the fight of the people of East Pakistan for their national independence and the Pakistani dictator Yahya Khan was surprised on not getting Chinese support on the issue of East Pakistan (The review of Sultan M. Khan's book 'Memories and Reflection of a Pakistani Diplomat' by A.G. Noorani, published in Calcutta edition of Statesman, 16 November 1998). Despite all this, some questions can indeed be raised on China's foreign policy in that era which was based on the assessment that owing to the aggressiveness of more dangerous Soviet Union, the danger of Third World War remained and under this situation a joint front the bourgeois powers of Third World countries and the western countries could be forged. As the time proved, this assessment itself was fundamentally wrong, however, this is not the place for that analysis. The basic mistake of Asim Chatterji was that he was determining the policy of a particular country according to the foreign policy and diplomacy of a socialist state. It was true that India at the regional level and Soviet Union at the world level were adopting the interventionist and expansionist policy, but the principal contradiction was the internal contradiction of the Pakistani society. The Bengali nationality of East Pakistan was waging a valiant fight for its liberation against the central power of Pakistan (on which the bourgeois class of

Punjabi nation was dominant) and was facing the brutal repression. Under such a situation the support to this fight for self-determination and freedom must have been the policy of any communist party. It is to be noted that despite being weak, Communist Party of East Pakistan (M-L) under the leadership of Mohammad Toha, besides waging the guerilla struggle in some areas against the dictatorial regime of Pakistan, was also opposing the Soviet and Indian intervention besides opposing the submissive attitude of the bourgeois leadership of Awami League (Sheikh Mujeeburr Rahman). But Asim Chatterji while adopting the lopsided perspective towards the facts went on to consider Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his party to be the representative of the national bourgeois class. On this question, overall, Charu's stand was correct. His view was that even while opposing the policies Soviet imperialism and Indian expansionism it is the duty of the party that it must emphatically support the right to self-determination of East Pakistan and its liberation struggle.

Soon, Asim Chatterji released yet another document on behalf of 'Bengal-Bihar-Orissa regional committee' that was titled as 'With reference to the current Party line'. Later on Asim Chatterji, in an article published in a short magazine, had accepted that before Sauren Basu went to jail he had received this information that the leaders of Chinese Party while seriously criticizing some aspects of the political line CPI (M-L) had given some suggestions (the context of 'Chinese Suggestion' will be discussed later in detail). This was the information which was acting as a decisive factor behind the new document of Asim Chatterji. It was under this light that he summed up his experiences and raised the banner of revolt. Sauren Basu had even sent him a letter from Alipur jail encouraging him to write this document (by that time he had been arrested). In his second document Asim had raised question over the annihilation of 120 people in Midnapur (West Bengal), Singhbhum (then in Bihar, now in Jharkhand) and Mayurbhanj (Orissa) and not being able to form base area and people's liberation army despite attacks on many prisons and for this he had held the negligent attitude and wrong thinking of Charu Mazumdar responsible. It was stated in the document that the tactical line needed to be changed after summing up the experiences of armed struggle under the leadership of the party. The document had correctly indicated the uneven development of Indian revolution and while improving upon the "left" deviation to an extent this question was also raised that the armed struggle needed to be linked with mass movements and mass organisations. However, armed struggle here meant secret annihilation of class enemy only and such actions were advocated even in urban areas. The document also strongly criticized the party leadership for sleeping over the Chinese suggestions. It was held that establishment of base areas happens to be the highest form of armed land

struggle without which all annihilation was futile and people's power, people's liberation army and capturing state power bore no meaning. Thus even while accepting the massline in a fragmented way, the document in its ultimate conclusion itself suffered from "Left" opportunism because it used to consider the line of annihilation and that of 'revolutionary authority' as necessary. The abominable form of this deviation was that the existence of a people's liberation army under its leadership was claimed and the building of base area was called upon at a time when in reality the struggle in the area under that committee had been scattered and the leading members of the committee had left the area for secured shelters. In this document, Asim Chatterji and his comrades had also given this warning that they would not carry on ideological-political debate within the party and they would implement their line independently. In practice, it meant to be separated from party. Thus, Asim Chatterji's journey from being a blind supporter to a blind opponent reached completion.

Asim Chatterji had entered the party along with his young friends when the Chinese party was continuously issuing articles, comments and statements in favour of the revolutionary communist movement. At that time Charu appeared as 'revolutionary authority'. As soon as he received the information about the criticism by the Chinese party, he took no time in turning into staunch anti-Charu and in leaving party.

No sooner than leaving the party Asim Chatterji established contact with Satyanarayan Singh who after the plenum of Bihar state committee was going to conduct a meeting in November 1971 to form a new party. Both shared the ground of opposition to Charu and of their dramatic somersault, hence it did not take much time to reach to a consensus. Asim Chatterji was arrested in Devghar (Bihar) on 3 November while he was going to attend the meeting that was scheduled for November 1971. After some time his other two comrades Santosh Rana and Mihir Rana too got arrested, but another comrade managed to attend that meeting. In the meeting a new central committee was formed and Satyanarayan Singh was chosen as general secretary of the party. Santosh Rana and Mihir Rana too joined the party later. Satyanarayan Singh announced the expulsion Charu Mazumdar and Suniti Kumar Ghosh by terming Charu as 'Wang Ming' of India. Asim Chatterji, during his long incarceration, adopted a new path and after coming out of prison in 1980 he started a new innings of politics with Kanu Sanyal rather than going with Satyanarayan Singh. This companionship did not last long. Then he adopted a separate path which was to go towards the disgusting mire of revisionism. This journey will be discussed later at appropriate place.

The comrades of Asim Chatterji who were active in his work area continued making some efforts in their own way until the middle of 1972. Then they got scattered and some of them went along with Satyanarayan Singh. The difference of Sushital Ray Chaudhury with Charu Mazumdar and his supporters was an important development during the period of one year after the party congress. Sushital Ray Chaudhury was an old communist leader and a respected theoretician who had been the general secretary of 'All India Coordination Committee' and was a member of central committee and polit-bureau and secretary of West Bengal committee. As has been mentioned earlier, in the first and last meeting of central committee that was held immediately after the party congress, when Sauren Basu, Asim Chatterji and Saroj Dutt were arguing for declaring Charu Mazumdar as 'revolutionary authority', Sushital Ray Chaudhury had indirectly opposed them by reading Mao's quotation on the consolidation of the party committee. During the period of coordination committee when D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy, Parimal Dasgupta, Asit Sen, Pramod Sengupta etc. had waged struggle against "Left" adventurism on different occasions, Sushital Ray Chaudhury stood with Charu's line. He and several leaders like him did not pay heed to the arguments of the opponents of "Left" adventurism and subsequently they themselves gradually started turning against the "Left" deviation. With the help of hindsight, it can be said that its basic reason was the fact that their ideological understanding was to a large extent very weak (which was the historical legacy of the Indian communist movement). It was owing to this weakness that they had the tendency of uncritical imitation of international leadership and experienced party. That is why as long as there was a voice of support and praise for the coordination committee, CPI (M-L) and Charu Mazumdar in the organs of Chinese party and Chinese media, they did not pay any attention to any argument opposing Charu's line and the failure of that line in practice. But as the situation changed, among those who started thinking with a critical wisdom and gradually went towards correct position, Sushital Ray Chaudhuri's name is included prominently.

In this essay we have already discussed the student-youth uprising of Calcutta. After the party congress (May 1970) when the action squads of students-youth began the process of attacking the school-college library and breaking the statue of bourgeois leaders, the differences of Sushital Ray Chaudhury with Charu and his supporters developed rapidly in this period. In October 1970 (i.e. immediately a month after the above-mentioned incident of the passing of the resolution against Charu's line by Bihar state committee) Sushital Ray Chaudhuri took a leave from the post of state secretary for one month due to health-related issue. It was during this time that he wrote a document with the pseudonym of 'Poorn' and presented it before the party. In the document he criticized the attacking of the

educational institutions in Calcutta and some other cities of West Bengal, obstructing the examination, sabotaging libraries-laboratories during the student-youth uprising of Calcutta and he termed them as 'Luddite type actions'. It is to be known that after the end of Napoleonic wars when England was suffering from serious economic crisis, unemployment and hunger, many industrial workers were directing their anger towards machines and they were breaking them by assuming that the machines are the demonic force that is crushing their life. These activities were termed as Luddite. Sushital Ray Chaudhuri's argument was correct that targeting the educational institutions was like Luddite action because educational institutions are mere instruments in the hands of exploiters and oppressors which function as maintaining and operating the counter revolutionary educational system.

Sushital Ray Chaudhuri also criticized the desecrating of statues as an act "Left" extremist activity, though his argument in this regard was problematic. He was of the view that it was wrong to desecrate the statues of people like Ram Mohan Roy, Vidysagar and Tagore as they were the intellectuals of era of old bourgeois democratic revolution. But the statues of the representatives of Indian bourgeois class such as Gandhi must be desecrated so that such impressions must be removed from people's psyche. The first problem with this line of argument was that Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Vidysagar were in no way the intellectuals of the era of any kind of bourgeois democratic revolution. They were the representatives of the middle class that was born out of the womb of British colonial socio-economic structure whose existence depended on the colonial rule. This lacuna was brilliantly caught by Charu Mazumdar in his response and raised this question as to whether the statues must be desecrated selectively? The basic point was that the desecration of statue was wrong under any circumstances because by desecrating the statues and burning the images, the impression of an individual etched in the people's psyche cannot be erased. It calls for a protracted ideological work. In the 'Investigative report of Hunan peasant movement' Mao Tse Tung had clearly stated that the very peasants who make statues with their hands will in due course corner them, hence nobody needs to do that before time. The communist party works to advance the political consciousness of the masses, and leaves the responsibility of getting rid of idol worship, superstitions and mythical beliefs on the people. Clearly, without raising the political consciousness of people and without adequate ideological work, the desecrating of idols of people who were familiar to every household was an extremist act. It was also an act of antagonizing the urban middle class and pushing it towards the enemy camp, which happened to be the strategic friend of the working class in Indian revolution. Sushital Ray Chaudhuri raised his objection on the issue, but his

argument was lopsided and problematic.

No sooner than Sushital Ray chaudhury presented his paper, he was isolated. None of the members of Bengal state committee and the Bengal's members of central committee stood with him. In the state committee meeting in January 1971 the situation was such that very aggressive members such as Sauren Basu and Asim Chatterji were presenting resolution to expel Sushital Ray chaudhury from the party. Saroj Dutt and Suniti Kumar Ghosh chose the path of maintaining silence. However, Charu Mazumdar knew that the expulsion of a veteran, popular and respected leader like Sushital Ray chaudhury would have an adverse impact in Bengal, hence he mediated and said that no one could expel Susheetal Babu from party and the state committee would call the meeting of party units according to his wish and he will be free to present his ideas in it. But in practice Sushital Ray chaudhury was completely isolated even while being in the party. It was under these circumstances that he passed away in March 1971.

Before his demise, he had written a document in Bangla language: 'The Problems and Crisis of Indian Revolution'. It was published by some of his supporters after his death. In this document the time of writing is given as November 1970, but according to Suniti Kumar Ghosh (Naxalbari: Before and After. Page 264), it was wrong as there is a mention the document of the declaration of the formation of people's liberation army. This declaration was made on 7 December. Hence this document was written sometime after this date. It is very well possible that Sushital Ray chaudhury would have prepared it after the above meeting of state committee in January 1971.

In this essay Sushital Ray chaudhury while presenting more thorough and vocal criticism of the political line of Charu Mazumdar, had termed it as 'extremely adventurist'. He wrote that earlier party thought the path of Indian revolution would be strenuous and protracted. Then Charu Mazumdar changed the line and gave this astrological prediction that by 1975 the revolution would be victorious. It changed the way of functioning and rapidity held sway everywhere. Terming the Charu Mazumdar's interpretation of the term annihilation as against Mao thought the essay stated that for Mao this term meant to deprive the enemy class of its 'power of resistance' while for Charu Mazumdar it meant to kill the individuals from enemy class and this act was being performed secretly by secret squads.

According to Sushital Ray chaudhury, in the subsequent phase of urban activities, 'actions' were given excessive importance and the importance of political propaganda was denied that was reflective of revisionist thinking. In the essay, this criticism was put forward that after Charu Mazumdar's line became dominant the task of arousing and mobilizing the masses during the revolution through class

struggle was neglected, abandoning the earlier stand, the economic struggles were given up and the task of forging joint fronts with the friend classes was not taken up, on the contrary, during the 'annihilation campaign' in the urban areas the small shopkeepers and similar people were targeted who were the potential ally of the working class in the revolution.

Sushital Ray chaudhury believed that the building the foundation of proletarian base, formation of all just and beneficial mass struggles and saving one's strength while carrying out those struggles patiently and to wait – these were the tasks of party in the urban areas as per Mao, which Charu and party leadership did not take on. While criticizing the bureaucratic style of Charu he wrote that authoritarianism had reach to such heights that the party committees had become non-functional and Charu had concentrated all powers in his hand. So much so that after the Magurjan incident, he declared the formation of people's liberation army without consulting anybody. Contrary to Charu's declaration it was stated in the essay that none of the era in itself is the 'era of self-sacrifice'. As Mao said the aim of war is always to protect oneself and destroy the enemy, though sacrifice is also required in war.

In the last writing of Sushital Ray chaudhury, a thorough and sharp critique of "Left" adventurist line was presented, but sadly despite its publication after his death, owing to the dominance of bureaucratic work style and lack of transparency this document could not even reach the party cadres within West Bengal forget about the entire country. After many years people got acquainted with the evolution of Sushital Ray chaudhury's ideas and his ideological struggles.

Sushital Ray chaudhury was not the last one to present a critique of Charu Mazumdar from the standpoint of mass line. After this, the remaining confidants of Charu started leaving him one by one and they turned into bitter critique of the "Left" adventurist line. We will discuss it later.

PART 4

Sushital Roy Chowdhary died in March 1971 and it was in the same month that Sauren Basu, a staunch supporter of Charu Majumdar's line, was also arrested. A few months later, Saroj Dutta, the second closest person to him, was murdered by the police on August 5, 1971. As discussed earlier, before being arrested on November 3, 1971, Ashim Chatterjee had already taken stand against Charu's line.

By the latter half of 1971, differences arose even between Charu and Suniti Kumar Ghosh, who was considered one of the four closest persons to Charu. These differences got deepened with the passage of time. This will be discussed later at a relevant place. Prior to that, it is important to discuss the much talked about visit of Sauren Basu to China and the fraternal suggestions of the Chinese Party, because these suggestions essentially contained a critique of the Left adventurist line, which played a crucial role in motivating one-by-one the remaining leadership, too, to take stand against Charu Majumdar. But prior to that, it is important to briefly discuss the attitude of the Chinese Party towards Naxalbari and CPI(ML), because in one way or the other, the emphatic support of the Chinese Party helped, to a large extent, in strengthening the leadership of Charu Majumdar and his line between 1967-1970.

Naxalbari, CPI(ML) and the Communist Party of China

The Communist Party of China had enthusiastically supported the Naxalbari revolt. The Chinese press and radio also whole-heartedly welcomed the unity of the communist revolutionaries which ensued in the wake of the Naxalbari as a radical rupture from revisionism and neo-revisionism and as a new beginning. *Radio Peking* welcomed the Naxalbari struggle for the first time on June 28, 1967, and then the famous article *Spring Thunder Over India* was published in the Party organ *People's Daily* on July 5. Subsequently, the Chinese media kept broadcasting and publishing about the developments in the communist revolutionary camp and about different actions being carried out in different parts of the country until the initial months of 1970. In a month after July 1967, Kanu Sanyal, Khokan Majumdar and few others also travelled to China by crossing the border. Apart from discussion with some leaders there, they also had a brief meeting with Mao who simply said that you should forget whatever you saw or heard here and after returning to your country, you should study the concrete conditions there in a concrete manner and proceed with the struggle accordingly. When the publication of *Liberation* began, translations of many of its articles were published in Chinese press as well.

This support by the Chinese Party certainly helped in a significant manner in taking the message of Naxalbari to the whole country and in the process of uniting the communist revolutionaries. But this support, in the next stage, adversely affected the ongoing two-line struggle between revolutionary mass line and Left adventurism inside the 'All India Coordination Committee'. Chinese publications and broadcasts clearly indicate that they regularly received the literature of the Indian communist revolutionary movement (especially *Liberation*). Even if the Chinese Party did not receive the accurate and detailed information about the questions raised on Charu's line by several important figures like Parimal Dasgupta, Asit Sen, Pramod Sengupta and various small groups and their splits during the period of Coordination Committee, it is almost impossible that they would not have received the information about the split of *Andhra Pradesh Coordination Committee* under the leadership of D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy and *Dakshin Desh Group*. Even after this, instead of thoroughly analyzing the whole matter, the Chinese Party kept on portraying Charu Majumdar as the undisputed leader of the Naxalbari struggle and the Indian revolution, while the Left adventurist line of Charu Majumdar had started coming out very clearly from his articles and comments published in *Liberation* (and from other articles too), especially since the beginning of 1969. This validation received from the Chinese Party helped Charu Majumdar a lot in advancing his line.

In this duration, the conduct of the Chinese Party's media, many a times, appears to be contradicting the lessons of Mao Tse-tung himself. From Marx to Mao, all the great teachers of the world proletariat have repeatedly highlighted the fact that the Communist Party of each country should decide its own line and policies independently after the study and analysis of the concrete conditions of its country. The Chinese Party had always emphasized on this after some negative experience during the Comintern era. During a conversation with the representatives of some Communist Parties of Latin American countries in 1957, Mao had clearly said: "*The Chinese experience, viz. establishing rural bases of support and to encircle the cities from the countryside and finally to seize the cities, is not necessarily valid for a number of countries, but it can serve as a reference for you. Be careful, I dare advise you, not to transplant it readymade. An experience from abroad can only be taken as a reference, not as a dogma. You must therefore integrate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions of each country.*" ('Some Experiences in Our Party's History', *Selected Works, Volume 5*, Page 326). It is noteworthy that the approach in the articles on Naxalbari and the communist revolutionary movement of India that were published in the Chinese media used to be different from the above approach of Mao. In the article *Spring Thunder Over India* itself it was emphasized that the path of Indian revolution will

be same as that of the China. 'Xinhua News Agency' published an article on December 27, 1967: '*Indian revolution is marching on the radiant path illuminated by Chairman Mao*'. With minor changes, the same article titled '*Historical Juncture in the Indian Revolution*' was published in some other magazines. Both forms of the article contained the reference to the first declaration of the 'All India Coordination Committee' and the tasks set by it. But, out of the four tasks set by the Coordination Committee, the one that was omitted was: '*Developing the militant revolutionary struggles of the working class and other oppressed masses....*' Here this possibility cannot be denied that this omission was intentional and that this action was suggestive, because from the viewpoint of the Chinese commentator, this task would not be in accordance to their thinking of the 'Chinese path'. Be that as it may, even if it was a mistake, it was a serious one and was going to entirely benefit the Left adventurist line only. The Chinese Party's assertions repeatedly implied that the path of Indian revolution would be that of the Chinese revolution and it was portraying Charu Majumdar as the leader of the Indian revolution. This was the reason why there was not any opposition from inside the Coordination Committee when Charu gave the slogan of '*China's path is our path*' and extended it so far to say that '*China's chairman is our chairman*'. Those who could have opposed were already sidelined. The remaining people were ideologically so weak that after the validation from the Chinese Party, they did not feel the need, at least at that time, of thinking on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of these slogans.

As has been mentioned earlier in this essay, the elements of ultra-Left deviation were present in the initial six of the eight documents of Charu Majumdar, but since the implementation of revolutionary mass line in Naxalbari until the start of 1969, he never discussed the 'combat units' or the secret annihilation of the class enemies.

Coordination Committee clearly said in its declaration issued after its second meeting of May 1968: "*If the enemies of the Indian masses are to be uprooted, then instead of adopting conspiratorial methods, only the mass line will have to be implemented.*" It has also been discussed that Charu Majumdar, after getting in touch with the leadership of the Girijan struggle of Srikakulam, following his visit to Andhra in February 1969 and after forming the Andhra State Coordination Committee by taking along the comrades of Srikakulam, Charu Majumdar once again took his line forward more openly and promptly. The line of annihilation was initially implemented successfully on a large scale in Srikakulam and Charu's belief in his line got strengthened. Now the 'combat units' of 'eight documents' were replaced by the 'guerrilla units'. Charu Majumdar in his comment titled A Few

Words About Guerrilla Actions' had clearly stated that these guerrilla units will be formed by conspiratorial methods and they will remain secret from masses as well as party units "which have not yet fully mastered the methods and discipline required for illegal work." It goes without saying that Charu Majumdar's conception of guerrilla warfare was completely different from that of Mao and the Chinese Party. In China, guerrilla warfare was a stage of the people's war which was carried out with the active assistance from the broad masses and which inflicted heavy losses on its more powerful enemy and thus resulted in the formation of base areas in the remote rural regions where the hold and reach of the enemy was weaker. Once a more favourable change took place in the class power balance, the people's war entered the more advanced stage of the mobile warfare and then in the war of positions.

Charu believed that guerrilla warfare was the only way to mobilize masses as against starting the guerrilla warfare after the mobilization of masses up to a certain extent and for him guerrilla warfare meant annihilation of class enemies by the secret squads. While writing about the protracted people's war, Mao clearly stipulated that annihilation of bourgeois class does not mean that it will be annihilated physically; rather it means that it will be annihilated as a class. He also said that destroying the enemy means disarming it and depriving it from the power of resistance (*Selected Works, Volume 5*, p. 504, and *Selected Works, Volume 2*, p. 156). Mao did say that there are some landlords and reactionaries in each county who barbarically torture the peasants and the poor. Most barbaric of them can be awarded with the death penalty in order to suppress the enemies, but murder in indiscriminate manner is strictly forbidden, the lesser the number of murders the better (see, '*Report on An Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*', *Selected Works, Volume 1*, and '*Essential Points in the Land Reform in the New Liberated Area*', *Selected Works, Volume 4*, p. 202). An important member of the Polit Bureau of the Chinese Party and the specialist of land reforms Jen Pi-shih has also elaborated the thoughts of Mao regarding suppression and annihilation of class enemies in one of his speeches and interestingly this speech by him was also published in the March 1968 issue (1, Issue 5) of *Liberation* (Jen Pi-shih, '*Important Questions Arising During the Agrarian Reform in China*', '*Speech to An Enlarged Session of the North-West People's liberation army's Front Committee*', January 12, 1948, *Liberation*, March 1968, p. 34, 37, 38, 42, 43).

The above discussion was not aimed at highlighting the Left adventurist character of Charu Majumdar's line as the same has already been done in the essay. Here, the objective of this discussion is to understand the deviation that affected the political practice of the Chinese Party. Understanding of guerrilla warfare is

completely based on the revolutionary mass line in the writings of Mao and the Chinese Party and the Chinese Party was not at all in favour of making the annihilation of class enemy as the general form of struggle. However, it is to be mentioned that ever since (i.e. since the start of 1969) Charu Majumdar started implementing his Left adventurist line openly and taking it forward, the Chinese media was quoting Charu Majumdar day and night and was presenting him as the leader of the Indian revolution. Only one example will suffice here. 'Xinhua News Agency' wrote in its dispatch of March 28, 1970: *"Charu Majumdar, leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) pointed out that the practice of the struggle in 1969 proved: 'rely on the poor and landless peasants; educate them in Mao Tsetung thought; adhere firmly to the path of armed struggle; build guerrilla forces and march forward along the path of liquidating the class-enemies; only then can the high tide of struggle advance irresistibly."* ('CPI(ML) Leads Indian People Onward Along Victorious Path of Seizing Power by Armed Force', reprinted in *Liberation*, III, Issue 6, April 1970). Needless to say, that such a glorification and the "certificate" especially helped in the consolidation of Charu Majumdar's line of annihilation of class enemy. It needs to be recalled that it was the same time when Charu Majumdar had begun to openly oppose the mass organizations and mass movements contrary to the previous positions of the Coordination Committee and had started terming them as the obstacles in the path of revolutionary struggles and that they promoted the revisionist trends.

Coordination Committee and then CPI(ML) used to blindly imitate the Chinese Party even while assessing the world situations. In such a scenario, it was natural that the over-optimistic and over-enthusiastic assessment about the decisive victory of the world proletariat within a few decades on the basis of deepening rivalry between the two superpowers, possibility of the third world war and the possibility of the "final collapse" of imperialism, being presented by the Chinese Party while assessing the world situations during 1969-70, would adversely affect the communist revolutionary movement of India. An article titled *'Confession in an Impasse: A Comment on Nixon's "Inaugural Address" and the Contemptible Applause by the Soviet Revisionist Renegade Clique'*, was published in 'Peking Review', Issue 5, 1969 (it was earlier published in the Chinese language Party organs). Towards the end of this article, in a surprisingly absurd prediction, it was mentioned that the start of the third millennium i.e. the year 2001 would be the time of the glorious celebration of the proletarian revolution and the worldwide victory of Marxism-Leninism-Mao thought. This article was also reprinted in the May 1969 issue of *Liberation* and the same spirit and language was reflected in the discussions within the CPI(ML) about the future of revolution. Bangla organ *Ghatna Pravah* (Second Year, First Issue) also wrote in its editorial that the revolutionary

China has predicted that by 2001, oppressed masses of the entire world would become free. Kanu Sanyal repeated the same point while addressing the May Day procession in Calcutta in 1969. Translation of the above article of 'Peking Review' was published in the Bangla organ *Deshbrati* on June 5, 1969. On its basis, Charu Majumdar while completely ignoring the Marxist methodology of concrete analysis of concrete conditions and taking resort to arithmetic calculation, even gave the call of making the decade of 1970 as the decade of the liberation of the Indian masses (*Liberation*, III, Issue 4, article published in February 1970). Even while speaking on the 'political-organizational report' that was presented in the Party Congress of May 1970, he laid emphasis on this point. Then after some time he took his absurdity to a new height when based on the Chinese prediction he declared 1975 to be the year of the Indian revolution. In his article '*March Onward, Day of Victory is Near*' published in *Liberation* in September-December 1970 he wrote: "*Even if this fear (fear of attack on China by the US and Soviet Union) comes true, India will surely be liberated by 1975 ... When Chairman (Mao Tse-tung) saw the possibility of the fierce explosion of the 50 crores of Indian people, he declared that the history of human civilization will enter a new era in 2001.*" Obviously, it is nothing more than a speculation and the Chinese prediction which is the basis of this speculation is nowhere to be found in any comment or conversation of Mao Tse-tung. Rather, there are several evidence proving that Mao's approach was to the contrary. In the *Great Debate* document '*On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World*', one can find reference to Mao's assertion that the complete victory of socialism would require five to ten generations or even longer and not just one or two generations. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and until right before his death, Mao emphasized on several occasions that ensuring the final victory of socialism in China and on the world-scale would still take a lot of time and in this duration the possibility of capitalist restoration will remain there for a long time. Therefore, it is certain that the above absurd prediction by the Chinese Party cannot be considered as Mao's prediction.

The outcome of the impatience of predicting the year of 1975 as the year of revolution was that the already half-baked and ideologically immature Party leadership and cadre forgot that the path of democratic revolution is people's war, which is protracted. Only by completely disregarding all the lessons of Mao about the stages, ups and downs and military strategies of people's war, could the year 1975 have been declared as the year of revolution. One of its logical conclusions was that the annihilation campaign was to be carried out more swiftly across the country, because according to Charu, masses would be aroused under its influence. Its other logical conclusion surfaced in the form of ultra-Leftist rise of students-youth in Calcutta, which has been discussed earlier.

It is true that if the sizeable section of the leadership stood behind the Left adventurist line of Charu Majumdar, its fundamental causes can only be internal and that is why we have discussed the ideological weakness of the Indian communist movement, its causes and its historical background at the start of this essay. But this is also true that during 1969-70, the evaluations about the Indian communist revolutionary movement by the Chinese Party which were subjective and based on insufficient facts, its incorrect understanding of the Indian conditions and the certain serious mistakes in the evaluation of the then world situation had a definite role in advancing and consolidating Charu Majumdar's leadership and his line in the two-line struggle (to whatever extent his line was opposed inside and outside the Party). During that time, Chinese Party in practice violated its own conception that any big and experienced Party, while playing the role of international leadership, should not tell the general line of revolution to the Party of any other country. Although in the case of the Chinese Party, this was just a minor deviation, main mistake was by the Indian leadership which considered every assessment by the Chinese Party as a set of guidelines for itself.

Anyway, how did the Chinese Party commit such mistakes pertaining to the assessment and evaluations regarding the communist revolutionary movement of India, which were contrary to the approach and methodology specified by Mao himself—talking about this in a deterministic language will be pure speculation. At the most, we can make some guesses, and some possibilities can be discussed. From 1966 to 1969, i.e. until the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Party, first phase of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was carried out in China which was a stormy period. During this time, as it happens with any trend-setter revolution, there were some excesses, imbalances and mistakes as well. Although the revolutionary communist faction under the leadership of Mao defeated the capitalist-roaders, in the process of polarization inside the Party and State, many imbecile Left extremists also came to the side of Mao. And some careerists also tended to take benefit from such a situation. As it came to be known later, Lin Biao himself was a Left extremist and a careerist. Internal struggle against him had started before the Ninth Congress and his influence within the Party had diminished to a great extent by the first half of 1970. It was under such a complex condition that the deviations of the Chinese Party emerged. It is noteworthy that there is a consistency of militarist deviation in Lin Biao's articles too. No wonder that Charu Majumdar used to be very impressed by his articles.

It seems that the leadership of the Chinese Party systematically evaluated the condition of the communist revolutionary movement of India, its documents and the articles published in the organs by the initial months of 1970 when the

internal storm was pacified to some extent and the order was somewhat restored. Before this time, the Left adventurist line was in full bloom in its childish, naked and farcical form and it was not very difficult to reach at any conclusion about it.

Sauren Basu's China Visit and the Fraternal Suggestions by the Chinese Party

Reports in the Chinese media about the communist revolutionary movement of India had significantly declined in numbers before the Party Congress of CPI(ML) in May 1970. Broadcast and publication of such reports and news was completely stopped by the middle of 1970. Documents of Party Congress were also sent via contacts to the Chinese Party, but the silence continued. And when enquired, it was suggested that the Party should send a delegation to China for discussion. Then the Central Committee decided to send its delegation to China. Sauren Basu, Suniti Kumar Ghosh and Saroj Dutta were to go in the delegation, but due to some unavoidable technical reasons Suniti Kumar Ghosh and Saroj Dutta could not go and Sauren Basu alone left for Peking on August 25, 1970 via Paris, London and Albania's capital Tirana.

While staying in London between 27 August and 12 September, he met the Chairman of the Communist Party of Great Britain (ML) Reisburg, its Vice-chairman Bill Ash, Polit Bureau member Ranjana Ash and the Chairman of the Communist Party of New Zealand (ML) Taylor. These leaders, while questioning the allegiance of CPI(ML) to the Communist Party of China, said that as a policy it is not proper for a Party to be allegiant to another fraternal Party. They also criticized the actions being carried out in the cities and the line of annihilation and said that a lot of revolutionary energy is being wasted in the 'actions' in the urban areas. They also strongly criticized the slogan '*China's Chairman is our Chairman*' and expressed their disagreement from this statement of Charu that '*He who has not immersed his hands in the blood of the class enemy, is not a true Communist.*' They said that such a loose comment has not been heard from any leader of a communist party any where in the world. These party leaders from Britain and New Zealand were of the opinion that CPI(ML) does not have any agrarian policy suitable for the struggles of peasants in the rural areas and without properly organizing the armed forces of the revolutionary masses, the achievements of the rural areas cannot be maintained. They especially criticized some writings of Charu Majumdar in which he had said that all the forms of struggles hitherto developed by the communist movement of India had become entirely useless in the present era (*Liberation*, September 1969, p. 8-9). They said that the work style is developed via the struggles of the masses in each country and work style developed by the Indian

people so far cannot be completely rejected only on the ground that the leadership of the struggles was in the wrong hands. They also expressed their disagreement with this thesis of Charu Majumdar that every deviation in the Party should be considered as 'revisionism'. They said that deviations should be seen as mistakes that can be committed by any comrade including the Party leadership. Mistakes can be rectified through discussions and investigation. These leaders also criticized the complete absence of mass movements and trade union activities in the policies and practice of CPI(ML).

During the conversation, the party leaders of Britain and New Zealand also clarified that leaders of the Chinese Party also have almost the same opinions, but Sauren Basu did not completely believe it. All his suspicions evaporated when he spoke to Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng in Peking. From London, Sauren Basu reached Peking via Rome and Tirana. There was not any conversation on political matters from Albanian leaders in Tirana and they arranged his visit to Peking. He reached Peking on 24 September, '70 and met Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng after a month on October 29, 1970 and talked to them. After the conversation, Sauren Basu returned to the guest house and noted the main points in some pages (because he was asked not to return to India with complete notes) and later prepared his report on that basis. After a few years, minutes of the whole conversation were released by the leadership of the Chinese Party, which not only confirmed Sauren Basu's report, but it included a more detailed description of the whole conversation.

At the start of this two and half hours long conversation, Zhou Enlai first congratulated for the founding of CPI(ML), its achievements and its first Congress and termed it as a victory for the Indian masses along with the international communist movement. He said that the Chinese masses had to carry the burden of three mountains on its back before the revolution, while the Indian masses have to bear a fourth mountain too – the modern revisionism along with imperialism, feudalism and comprador capitalism. The social imperialism that has arisen in the Soviet Union is different from the old revisionists in the sense that it has political power and armed forces. After that, while congratulating for the initial successes of CPI(ML), he termed it as a new victory in India after the Second World War.

Then Zhou Enlai severely criticized the slogan of '*China's Chairman is Our Chairman*' and said that it is an important question of principle. To consider the Chairman of one Party as the leader of another Party is contrary to the Mao Tse-tung thought. He clarified that the relations between two parties are fraternal and any one Party cannot be considered as the leader of the international communist movement. He said that currently the Chinese Party is opposed to the idea of building any international organization like the Third International. Citing the examples from

history, he explained how 'big brotherism' takes place, which is despised by the Chinese Party. He also said that calling another country's Party Chairman as the Chairman of your Party hurts the national feelings of the masses.

Talking about the need of building a true proletarian party, Zhou Enlai indirectly criticized the Left adventurism by saying that such a Party compulsorily follows the mass line and remains in close contact with the masses. Citing his own experiences in the villages, Zhou Enlai opposed the idea of making the annihilation of class enemies as the general line of the struggle and said that some feudal lords and cruel people who are worthy of the deep hatred by the masses, can be killed if needed, but this should be done on the basis of demand by the masses and before this they should be publicly tried. When the masses are completely mobilized, and we start making use of our armed forces for safeguarding the achievements of revolution and also start distributing land and grains, then having arrived at such a situation the peasant population gains the courage to divide the land and grains themselves. It is important to have an agrarian policy to openly mobilize the masses. Then this policy is developed by the party as an agrarian program through practice.

Discussing his own experience of ultra-Leftist deviation, Zhou Enlai said that after the defeat of the first revolution there was the problem of the line of "Leftist" deviation in China also for some time. Some people would go armed in the villages and kill the landlords. There used to be no propaganda and mobilization work amongst the masses before such actions. People were expected to arise after the actions and the confiscated grains would be distributed amongst them. But soon the military force from the nearby villages-cities would reach the spot and then the advanced elements either had to flee or they were arrested or murdered. Party had to bear huge losses in such areas of "Leftist" deviation. Therefore, while leading the armed struggle in the villages the most fundamental issue is the political line, principles and policies of the party and it also depends on whether we have mobilized the vast masses or not, we have trusted them or not. Without this we cannot establish ourselves firmly at all.

It goes without saying that while discussing his experience Zhou Enlai clearly and in no uncertain terms criticized the line of annihilation of class enemy and the negation of all forms of mass movements by CPI(ML). Zhou Enlai also referred to his experience of urban 'actions' in 1927, when he himself was the incharge of such activities in Shanghai. Some actions like murders of some police authorities and illegal distribution of pamphlets were carried out, but the ultimate result was that all of this was nothing but pure adventurism. He unequivocally said that it is wrong to consider the open trade union works and open mass movements as

“obsolete” and consider the murders carried out secretly by forming squads (regarding it as “guerrilla war”) as the only way to take the revolution forward and there is a need to ponder over it. Indirectly commenting on Charu Majumdar’s call for self-sacrifice, he said that it is not self-sacrifice to give life for adventurism and secondly, if there is not equal attention on self-examination along with self-sacrifice, then it only harms the revolution. Zhou Enlai emphasized that party should continuously run the process of its purification via criticism and self-criticism. If this process is not carried out amongst the leadership and the cadre, then deviation of the party from the correct path is inevitable.

Zhou Enlai said that party’s second most important weapon to defeat the enemy is the army, an organized force of masses which works under the party leadership and implements the right policies. Third most important weapon of revolution is the united front of all revolutionary classes led by the proletariat and whose leadership is in the hands of the Party. Zhou Enlai also termed this thesis of Charu Majumdar incorrect that different ally classes can form a united front only after power in some areas has been seized. He opined that the formation of united front is a process. Some changes keep happening in this according to different stages of the struggle. All of those should be included in the united front who can be won over to our side, and those who cannot be won over to our side, should be made inactive or neutralized. In this context, he also emphasized that the bourgeois class should be studied in a proper manner and the national bourgeoisie which has contradictions with imperialism should be correctly identified.

After Zhou Enlai left, Kang Sheng carried forward the conversation. While appreciating the Naxalbari struggle, its extension to other areas, bravery of the cadre, struggle of CPI(ML) against imperialism and revisionism, and the support to the Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the respect for the Mao thought, he said that CPI(ML) and the Chinese Party are two fraternal parties and their relationship is of two equals, therefore the Chairman of the Chinese Party cannot be called as the Chairman of the Indian Party. He said that since the CPI (ML) is a new Party, some weaknesses and mistakes are natural. He also underlined the incorrect thinking of Charu Majumdar about the united front.

While clarifying why Charu Majumdar’s article *‘China’s Chairman is Our Chairman, China’s Path is Our Path’*, published in *Liberation*, was not published in the organs of the Chinese Party, he said what is objectionable in this article is evident from its title itself. Giving the reason behind not publishing Charu Majumdar’s other article *‘March Onward by Summing Up the Experience of The Peasant Revolutionary Struggle of India’*, he said that the theses given in this article about mass

organization, mass movement, trade union etc. are objectionable to the Chinese Party. *'Guerrilla War is the only way to mobilize the masses'* – Charu had presented this quote by Lin Biao in support of his line and as an argument to negate the mass actions. Kang Sheng clarified that this was said in the context of warfare and in the context of that stage of war when the powers of two armies are unequal. He said that if 'annihilation of class enemy' means the action of murder by the secret squads, then it is dangerous.

Kang Sheng said that the general line of CPI(ML) is correct but some policies are wrong. Chinese Party had a program of agrarian revolution, on whose basis it mobilized the peasants for occupying the power. It seems that the Indian Party has not been able to solve the question of relation between the land struggle and the guerrilla struggle. He indicated that this formulation that 'Peasants are not fighting for the land, but for the political power' is incorrect, because the questions of land revolution and the political power are connected to each other and they cannot be separated. Mass movements and mass organizations are not obstacles to the guerrilla war, rather their absence is an obstacle to the guerrilla war.

In the end, Kang Sheng suggested that all these mistakes pertaining to the policy matters should be rectified step by step in such a way that there is no setback to the enthusiasm of the Party cadre and the masses. We should not act impatiently in correcting our mistakes and the changes should not be sudden.

After this conversation, Sauren Basu left from Peking on October 31, '70 and reached Tirana via Shanghai, Canton, Dhaka, Karachi and Rome. After spending a few days in Tirana and London, he reached Calcutta on November 27. Suniti Kumar Ghosh (it was he who was responsible for managing the secret shelter of Charu Majumdar) took Sauren Basu to Charu Majumdar's shelter. Sauren Basu briefly explained the critique of Party line by the Chinese leaders. According to Suniti Kumar Ghosh, Charu fainted during the conversation. Then he was administered some medicines and the conversation was postponed until the next evening. When Sauren Basu gave his written report to Charu Majumdar, Suniti Kumar Ghosh was not present. He had left to meet Ashim Chatterjee as per a pre-scheduled program.

According to Suniti Kumar Ghosh, he arranged a shelter and took Charu to Puri. At that time, Charu was so shaken from inside that one day he even began to cry. Suniti Kumar Ghosh believed that Charu Majumdar will put the suggestions of the Chinese Party for discussion at least before some leading comrades of the Party. But Charu did not put forward any such proposal. When Suniti Ghosh was returning to Calcutta on December 7, Charu handed over a note to him which

carried the declaration of organization of the People's Liberation Army in West Bengal. It was written in the comment that the incidence of rifle-snatching in Magurjan had made it clear that the people's liberation army of the peasants of West Bengal had arisen, from now onwards all the guerrilla squads of the poor and landless peasants would be the 'contingents' of the people's liberation army under the leadership of the party and the poor and landless peasants would be preferred while selecting the commanders. Perhaps for the first time in the world a people's liberation army was being built in such a manner. It is to be mentioned that Charu Majumdar did not even consult any comrade from the leadership before this declaration. After this note was published in 'Liberation', Sushital Ray Chowdhary also questioned it as has been discussed before. The subsequent decisions and activities of Charu Majumdar made it clear that he wanted to bring his line as close as possible to the Chinese suggestions by slowly changing it under the disguise of concrete conditions so that cadre do not feel very shocked from the criticisms by the Chinese Party, nor his self-respect is hurt much. It will be discussed later.

After Suniti Kumar Ghosh returned to Calcutta, Saroj Dutta told him on the morning of December 8, '70 that Chinese leaders have a critical attitude towards our party line and that it is not to be told to anyone. After this Saroj Dutta went to Puri and when he returned, Sauren Basu left and brought Charu back to Calcutta in the end of December. According to Suniti Ghosh's impression, he again found Charu in his old confident mood in Calcutta. After talking to the ardent supporters of him and his ultra-Leftist line like Saroj Dutta and Sauren Basu and after deciding the work plan, Charu had now become free of contradictions and his lost self-confidence was back.

Thus, much to the surprise of even Suniti Kumar Ghosh, Charu Majumdar did not put the critical suggestions of the Chinese Party leadership before the leading comrades of the party and he suppressed it completely. This indicated Charu Majumdar's political opportunism, which after reaching a certain stage, had resulted into individual opportunism. At this stage, the questions of 'self' and the self-respect had come to dominate the interests of the revolution and the party.

Undoubtedly, if the Chinese suggestions were put before the party leadership immediately and if they were made open for debate within the entire party, then the losses that the communist revolutionary movement had to bear due to the Left adventurist deviations, could have been avoided to a large extent in the later phases as well. Then if the stream of mass line would have been stronger, the revisionist politics could have been given severe fatal blow. But Charu Majumdar's one unforgivable historical mistake did not let this happen.

In this whole affair, the most interesting and questionable role was that of Sauren Basu. Sauren Basu and Saroj Dutta were the two people who had been striving since the time of congress itself that Charu should be given the status of 'revolutionary authority' in the Indian Party, as was the case with Mao in the Chinese Party. To some extent it has been discussed earlier and will be discussed later as well. During the conversation in China, as Sauren Basu had accepted, his entire belief was deeply shaken. After returning to India, on one hand he was showing that he was firmly standing with Charu Majumdar and was advising him that it is not necessary to open the Chinese suggestions in the party yet and on the other hand, he himself was dropping some hints here and there in the party.

Ashim Chatterjee himself wrote later that whatsoever little information about the Chinese suggestions was received from Sauren Basu, it had played a decisive role in his rebellion against Charu Majumdar. After getting arrested in 1971, Sauren Basu told about the Chinese suggestions in detail to the leading comrades present in the jail and was also one of the eight people who wrote a letter to Charu Majumdar appealing him to make amendments in the party line as per those suggestions after tabling them before the party. This will be discussed later in the essay.

Now, if we evaluate the criticism and suggestions of the Chinese Party in the hindsight, there are some notable points. Firstly, this critique of the Left adventurist line was almost entirely correct, accurate and contained all the aspects. But after looking at all the documents and history of that period, this evaluation of the Chinese Party does not seem correct that the general line of the CPI(ML) was correct and only a few policies were wrong. Facts prove that every prominent voice in the party which talked of mass line was sidelined before the party congress itself and even the functioning of the congress shows that the Left adventurist line was completely dominating after 'managing' the remaining wavering and moderate people. Coordination Committee and the party were implementing the ultra-Leftist line from 1969 itself. This was a consistent deviation from Marxism and was the question of ideological-political line, and not only of the policies. Leadership of the Chinese Party advised to rectify these mistakes in a gradual and step by step manner, so that the masses and the cadre do not feel disheartened. History proves that the ideological mistakes are not rectified inch by inch in an incremental process, rather they can be defeated or destroyed only in a stroke by waging struggle against the ideologically incorrect line, by frontally attacking them. This is the approach we see in Lenin in struggle against the alien tendencies. Once the struggle against the Khrushchevite revisionism was made open, the Chinese Party had played an amazing role during the 'Great Debate', but

this is also true that it delayed this task by seven long years. During this period, there were attempts to make the Soviet Party understand at the bipartite level and compromises with the incorrect line were also made. The same approach is seen even in the struggle against the capitalist -roaders inside the Chinese Party. Because of the lack of space, we cannot discuss this in detail, but our evaluation is that many a time, the Chinese Party used to adopt the attitude of waging even the ideological struggles and struggles on questions of principle in a gradual manner or delaying the open struggle due to keeping the organizational interests or unity in command, which is incorrect. This is reflected in the above suggestion as well.

Thirdly, although the Chinese Party was fraternal in its suggestions and it did not at all intend to give instructions pertaining to the party line, but objectively speaking some of its evaluations were inevitably going to have adverse impact. Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng had pre-supposed that in India there will be a new democratic revolution like China. The right advice in this context would have been that they would advise the communist revolutionaries of India to work on mass line along with making a concrete independent study of the production relations, class structure and superstructure of the Indian society and draw conclusions regarding the stage, nature and strategic class alliance of revolution, as the Coordination Committee had decided. Although Mao used to especially emphasize that communists of each country will have to study the peculiarities of their own countries and decide the form and path of revolution themselves, but especially in the 1960s, the Chinese Party often seems to take resort to this type of over-generalization that path of revolution in most of the countries of Asia-Africa-Latin America would be that of the Chinese revolution. Half-baked and immature ML parties formed across the world in the decades of 1960 and 1970 extended this point so much so that they ended up making even the stage of revolution and question of program a part of ideology and started giving such ridiculous formulations that those who do not consider the new democratic revolution in the so-called Third World countries, are not the followers of Mao thought/Maoism. Anyway, in order to return to the original topic, we will have to wrap up and leave this topic here itself.

PART 5

Criticism of Charu Majumdar's Line and the Continuance of the Differences

Before continuing the discussion on the increasing differences within the CPI (M-L), it is to be noted that apart from the Chinese party, several other fraternal parties had also criticized the “left” adventurist line of Charu Majumdar. We have already discussed about the criticism presented by the M-L parties of Great Britain and New Zealand. Around June 1971, Shanmugathan, the leader of the Communist Party of Ceylon (at that time Sri Lanka was known by this name only) had sent his fraternal criticism through Appu from Tamil Nadu who was a central committee member of CPI (M-L). Shanmugathan was a well-known name in the world M-L movement. He had close contact with Mao and the top leaders of the Chinese party. His criticism included three points. The first point was concerned with rejecting all forms of struggle. Shanmugathan was of clear view that the role of mass organizations and mass movements is inevitable in any revolutionary struggle. His second criticism, which was related to the first one, was that the slogan of ‘struggle for capturing political power’ is wrong because it neglects the basic need of the struggle for economic demands. The third point was regarding the title of Charu Majumdar’s article, ‘Will Telangana become the Yenan of India?’. The comrades from Sri Lanka were of the opinion that such unnecessary slogans alert the enemy and help it in identifying the places where it has to focus its attacks. Among these three points, the last one is insignificant and it depends on the concrete conditions of the class struggle in the country in question as to whether or not a party writes in this manner about its areas of struggle and whether or not it presents such an assessment in its party organs. But the essence of the first two points was the same as that of the Chinese suggestions and that of the criticism of the Charu Majumdar’s “left” adventurist line as presented by the DV-Nagi group, Harbhajan Singh Sohi group, Asit Sen, Pramod Sengupta, Parimal Dasgupta, Sushital Roy Chowdhury etc.

An important criticism of the “left” adventurist line was put forward by the ‘West Bengal-Bihar Border Regional Committee’, which is usually known as Birbhum Committee. Apart from West Bengal’s Murshidabad and Birbhum districts, the Santhal Pargana of Bihar at that time (today it is in Jharkhand) also came under the purview of this committee. The Birbhum Committee sent this criticism to the West Bengal Committee and through it to the Central Committee, but it was suppressed first by the state committee (which was under the stranglehold of the

Charu acolytes such as Deepak Biswas and Dileep Bose etc.) and then by Charu Majumdar and no member of the central committee apart from Suniti Kumar Ghosh could even get a clue of it. Later, we will briefly mention how it all happened while discussing about the development of the differences of Charu with Suniti Kumar Ghosh. Because of this reason, this document does not find any mention in most of the books written on Naxalbari and the M-L movement. Subsequently when the Central Organising Committee, CPI (M-L) was formed, the other members of its leadership were informed about this by Suniti Kumar Ghosh. Later, when the Communist League of India (M-L) was formed in 1978, this document and the fact of its suppression do find mention in the document pertaining to history presented in its first conference. All this will be discussed at appropriate place. This document and the fact of its suppression do find mention in 'Naxalbari: Before and After', the memoir written by Suniti Kumar Ghosh a few years before his death on Naxalbari and the M-L movement.

This report of the Birbhum Committee assumes special significance because after Telangana, Charu's "left" adventurist line was implemented on the biggest scale in this region itself. The party activities began in Birbhum in the beginning of 1971. The Sriniketan Agricultural College of Bolpur had come under the hegemony of the students who were influenced by the M-L politics. A large number of students and youth from Calcutta also started working there. In this extremely poor region, the landlords and usurers had established their reign of terror over the poor peasants. Hence, even the terrorist activities of the communist revolutionaries received tremendous support of the common poor population initially. In the entire region, the guerilla squads consisting of ten to twenty people were formed in which two or three people used to be from the middle class and the rest were landless peasants. About 255 rifles and pistols were snatched away from the landlords and the police and were distributed among the landless. By the end of June, 175 people had been annihilated in which there were 5 policemen, 17 big, 32 medium and 26 small landlords, 12 usurers, 11 dacoits and 7 police agents. Finding the landlords and the goon gangs of the local leaders of Congress and CPM into helpless situation, the CRPF was called, but despite that, the situation could not be brought under control. The guerilla squads used to march openly not just in the villages but also in the towns of the area. The Santhal peasants under the leadership of guerilla squads used to attack the houses of landlords and their crimes were read out loud and sentences were given in the people's courts. Some were released while others were given death sentence as well. The usury had come to halt in the entire region. It is to be noted that Magurjan, too, came under the purview of the Birbhum Committee, where a squad of poor peasants had attacked on the camp of Railway emergency force and snatched away six rifles and

bullets after which Charu Majumdar hurriedly declared the formation of the People's Liberation Army without consulting the committee. We have already discussed this declaration earlier. The mid-term election of 1971 was approaching and it was feared that due to the Naxal activities, the election might not take place in West Bengal. Then, on behalf of the central government, the Bengal in-charge Siddharth Shankar Ray decided to use army. The Eastern command regiment of Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Arora, which had just returned from the Bangladesh war, was asked to stay in Bengal and all the armed forces of police were also attached. Then began the historical phase of repression which is mentioned in detail by Sumanto Bannerji, Suniti Kumar Ghosh, Amit Bhattacharya, etc. in their respective books. Before going into its details, we will first discuss the Birbhum Committee's report and subsequent developments.

After the beginning of the intensive cycle of repression, the ongoing struggle in the Birbhum region got scattered. The Birbhum Committee had sent its first report to the leadership when the activities of the guerilla squads were in their full swing. In this first report, special mention of the contributions of Charu Majumdar was made while supporting the party policy and the line of annihilation. The committee sent its second report at the time when the struggle was in dispersal and a situation of stagnation had come to exist. In this, the Birbhum Committee had put forward a vocal and clear criticism of Charu Majumdar's 'line of annihilation' based on the sum up of its experiences. As per the report, the thought of mobilizing the peasants by the annihilation of the class enemies had proven to be incorrect. Through this only ten percent of the youth population of poor peasants could be made active in the struggle. Due to this tactics, the guerilla squads got isolated from the peasant community at the time of the attack by enemy. The peasants could be mobilized to some extent only in those areas where the documents of mortgaging the land were burnt after the annihilation and the fixed property of the 'jotdars' were confiscated and distributed among the peasants. The committee stated in unequivocal terms that not only the line of annihilation is not the highest form of class struggle, it is not even a class struggle in itself and on its own. The second point of the criticism was that there was no policy of the party as to what should be done in case of the organized attack of the enemy's armed forces and how to carry forward the struggle along with the encounter. This proved to be a fatal mistake. Along with these focal points, the report also criticized the party's non-participation in the struggles of the working class.

According to the information gathered from Bharatjyoti Roy Chowdhury, a member of the Birbhum Committee, this report which had sixty printed pages had been

handed over to the Bengal State Committee in March or April of 1972. It was printed and published from 'Bengal Printers', located in Sheoraphuli in Hooghly district by Bharatjyoti's father Pradyut Roy Chowdhury who had been the accused of 'Birbhum conspiracy cases' during the British raj and had even served the 'Kala-Pani' sentence in Andaman's cellular jail. By the time this report was handed over to the Bengal Committee, the committee had come to be captured by Charu acolytes' faction including Deepak Biswas, Dileep Bannerji and Mahadev Mukherji who used to consider Charu to be the 'revolutionary authority' and 'India's Mao' and who wanted to continue the line of annihilation at all costs.

The death of Sushital Roy Chowdhury and Sauren Basu's arrest had taken place by March 1971 itself and by August, Saroj Dutt was also murdered. After the martyrdom of Saroj Dutt, Deepak Biswas and Dileep Bannerji were coopted within the Bengal State Committee and the responsibility of the editorship of party's Bangla organ 'Deshbrati' which earlier was with Saroj Dutt was now given to Suniti Kumar Ghosh. Immediately after the martyrdom of Dutt, Deepak sent a brief note along with a letter to be published in the 'Deshbrati' and he claimed that it was the summary of Saroj Dutt's speech given before the Bengal-Bihar Regional Committee. A note which has been given by Suniti Kumar Ghosh in his book after having edited parts of it is as follows:

Every party implements Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought after assessing the concrete conditions of its own country. Our relation with other (communist) parties will always be fraternal. If, while leading the revolution, our ideas would be different from the international leadership, we would have to implement our own assessment. Chairman Mao is our international leader; but the Chinese party can never be international authority. Its relation with other (communist) party would be fraternal. Hence the Chinese communist party and Chairman Mao are not one and the same. Those who are dependent on external hearsay and refuse to see the internal development, can never understand dialectical materialism. Lenin built the Bolshevik party; Mao built the Chinese party. The history of India has vested the responsibility of the historical task of the party building in this country on comrade Charu Majumdar. That's the reason why in the current circumstances, Comrade Charu Majumdar is the central committee of CPI (M-L). To establish Charu Majumdar's line is to demolish the counter-revolutionary revisionist line.

Suniti Kumar Ghosh was a bit sceptical about the authenticity of this comment, however, it could be very well possible that Saroj Dutt did make such a comment as he himself was a staunch "left" adventurer and a Charu acolyte. Owing to the petty-bourgeois sentimentalism, he was replete with the tendency of the personality cult. On the basis of some previous incidents, it is very well possible

that he would have said such things. We have stated earlier as to how Charu was rattled and shattered after receiving the Chinese suggestions, but when Saroj Dutt and Souren Basu brought him from Puri to Calcutta, how he regained his lost confidence after talking to these staunch supporters of his ultra-leftist line. It may well be possible that Deepak Biswas had exaggerated while summarizing Saroj Dutt's comments and the entire note could well be forged by him too. Be that as it may, the fact that this note was sent to 'Deshbrati' for publishing shows the extent to which the Bolshevik work-culture had got degenerated in the party by that time under the adverse impact of the ultra-leftist line and there was no meaning of the committee system. On the one hand, Charu Majumdar was eager to fulfill his eternal aspiration to declare himself as the authority and on the other hand he wanted to gradually change the line to bring it closer to the Chinese suggestions. This dual purpose was repeatedly creating dilemma in his decisions and behaviour. When Suniti Kumar Ghosh received the note sent by Deepak, he was at Devghar with Charu himself. When he read out the note to Charu Majumdar, he initially said not to publish it. In December 1971, in a meeting with Ghosh in the presence of Dileep Bannerji, Sadhan Sarkar and few others, when Deepak Biswas raised the issue of not publishing the brief note of the Saroj Dutt's speech, Ghosh said that the reason behind this was that there were some objectionable comments in it about the Chinese party. Deepak was of the view that the note must be published by editing out those portions. Suniti Kumar Ghosh, while later meeting with Charu opined that the note cannot be published only under the condition that Charu himself writes such a letter as most members of the State Committee were in favour of publishing it. Initially Charu was ready to write such a letter; however, he changed his mind only after half an hour and asked to let the note be published. When asked by Ghosh, he even suggested its title as 'There cannot be a revolution without a revolutionary leadership!' The note was published with the same title in 'Deshbrati'. After some time, when Ghosh relinquished all the party responsibilities, the note was republished with the title of 'Without revolutionary authority there can be no revolution'.

In January 1972, Sadhan Sarkar was also arrested. After this, the meeting of state committee was called in a dubious manner, for instance, the intimation of the meeting was given to all the members quite late and the information about the venue was also not given in time. In that meeting, Deepak got himself elected to the post of the secretary of Bengal State Committee through manipulation with the help of Dileep and Mahadev Mukherji. When, on the request of Deepak and Dileep, Suniti Ghosh met them in February 1972 they raised the question as to why he does not use the words 'revolutionary authority'? When Suniti Ghosh asked them as to what was the difference between 'revolutionary leadership' and

‘revolutionary authority’, Deepak and Dileep said that one has to accept the ‘revolutionary authority’ unquestioningly. On hearing this Ghosh said that the communists must always use their brains and instead of blindly believing anything, they must carefully think whether what has been said corresponds with the reality or not, and they must never promote the slave mentality. When Deepak and Dileep said that Saroj Da used to believe in the ‘revolutionary authority’, Suniti Kumar Ghosh said that even if he believed in it, they would have to prove it with logic and arguments. On this, Deepak and Dileep expressed the desire to meet the ‘respected leader’ (Charu). Suniti Ghosh gave them the address of Charu’s shelter in Cuttack at that time and they immediately proceeded to meet him. Meanwhile, Charu Majumdar was continuously getting the information that Suniti Kumar Ghosh does not consider him as ‘political authority’ and he has differences with the party line as well. In this regard, he got a comment written on March 9, 1972, which was published in the ‘Deshbrati’ of 22 April-1 May 1972. ‘Deshbrati’ was now under the control of Deepak and Dileep. The comment was as follows:

We can work with those with whom differences have arisen, but can never enter into any compromise...we can engage in debate with those who have read too much just on the basis of ‘Red Book’ (selected quotations from Mao Tse-tung).

A bourgeois individual makes a lot of hue and cry by citing ‘why and for what’. Their aim is to create suspicion about proletarian ‘authority’ and to establish their own authority. But when we communists raise the question of ‘why and for what’, we do exactly opposite. We consolidate the proletarian authority, implement the party line in lively manner and question the bourgeois **authority....**

Bourgeois influence prevails in the party and it has been there for some time. It gets reflected in the form of interpreting the quotations in bourgeois manner. Chairman Mao has said, “nothing should be done with eyes closed”. – – but it does not mean that everything must be suspected. Why should we question the party directives? We must do so as to understand the intensity and importance, so that we could implement them in the best manner...

It is obvious that the comment was targeted at Suniti Kumar Ghosh and he did not fail to understand it. When Suniti Kumar Ghosh met Charu Majumdar next time on April 11, he said that it’s been 5 years since the Naxalbari peasant struggle, hence a sum up of these five years must be done in order to rectify our mistakes and only Charu could do this. Charu bitterly responded by saying that even Suniti Ghosh could do this. Since Charu’s health was not well, Suniti Ghosh did not continue the discussion and said that he would present his thoughts in writing. After a couple of

days, when he was about to leave from Charu's shelter to Chauduar, Deepak reached there with the second report of Birbhum Committee. Suniti Ghosh wanted to stay there to listen to the report, but Charu asked him not to change his plan. Later, neither Suniti Kumar Ghosh saw that report nor did Charu mention about it with any comrade from the leadership who met him in his last days. However, Suniti Kumar Ghosh managed to find the report from his sources. Further, besides doing a sum up from the period between Naxalbari and then, Suniti Kumar Ghosh in a letter to Charu, written with the pen name 'Saumya', also put forward the demand that in line with the Chinese suggestions, there should be a rethinking on the party line and in order to study the suggestions deeply, it should be distributed among the responsible people of the party. But, nothing of this sort happened.

On April 23, Suniti Ghosh met Charu with his written sum up of the time period after Naxalbari and he read it out to him on Charu's request. Even though that document is not available now, after some time he wrote down his conclusions in the form of an essay, which had been published in the 12-13 May, 1973 issue of 'Frontier' weekly with the title 'Naxalbari and After: An Appraisal', with the pseudonym 'Prabhat Jana'. The important conclusions of this report were as follows: (i) The political line of the Naxalbari was correct, but as a consequence of the area of the struggle being limited, the inexperience of its leaders and owing to it the inability to expand the area of struggle and in the absence of a correct strategic line, it could not be extended; (ii) After 1968, the "left" opportunist line gradually infiltrated the movement, whose main expression was the fact that in the name of waging a struggle against economism, the party gave up massline itself and it isolated itself from all mass organizations including the peasant associations, trade unions, students-youth organizations and from all mass movements; (iii) Secretly annihilating class enemy through small secret squads formed in conspiratorial manner was made equivalent to class struggle and they were termed as Guerilla war, whereas as per Maoist principles, the Guerilla war is waged only by depending on the masses; (iv) Those groups which used to believe in the armed land revolution and believed Mao Thought, but used to oppose the line of annihilation, were in blatantly unjust manner termed as agents of imperialism and international revisionism which was an expression of ultra-leftist sectarianism; (v) Even the study of Marxist classics was discouraged and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Thought had been reduced into unquestionable allegiance towards the authority of one leader.

Broadly, it can be said that these points of criticism of Charu's "left" opportunist, "left" sectarian, "left" adventurist line were correct and of the nature of a sum-up.

But, the question again arises that when D.V. Rao-Nagi Reddy group was putting forward even more consistent criticism, or when people like Asit Sen, Parimal Das Gupta, Sushital Roy Chowdhury were raising questions at different points of time from the same perspective, why is it that these questions were not raised in the mind of Suniti Ghosh who had read Marxist classics more than others and why is it that he continued to be among the people closest to Charu! Why is it that this understanding epiphanically dawned upon him in a very short duration when he became aware about the Chinese suggestions and the movement had rapidly started moving towards the slope of disintegration and destruction! Till his last days, Suniti Kumar Ghosh continued to believe that the mistake was not that of Charu Majumdar alone, but rather that of the entire leadership collectively which was quite weak from the perspective of political understanding, which did not lay emphasis on collective leadership and suffered from cult of personality. This is true to a large extent, but still as the proponent and leader of the “left” adventurist line, Charu’s mistakes must be considered the gravest of all, which historically turned out to be catastrophic. History will do positive assessment of those who were critical of Charu Majumdar’s line, partially or comprehensively, and among them those who raised questions by going against the grain and risking isolation will be put at the highest pedestal! At the lowest pedestal placed will be those who started raising questions after becoming aware of the Chinese suggestions, and Suniti Kumar Ghosh, too, is among them. When we proceed in this discussion of history, we will also clearly see Suniti Kumar Ghosh’s methodological errors and it will be clear that his method of sum-up and review was also to a large extent quite empiricist, dogmatic and fragmentary. It would be apt if we do that discussion at the appropriate place. Here let us go back towards the days of March-April 1972!

After reading out the review and sum-up note to Charu, Suniti Kumar Ghosh requested him that he be relieved from the responsibility of editorship of the ‘Liberation’ and that of arrangement and management of Charu’s secret shelter, and that he would be associated with the ‘Liberation’ as an ordinary worker only (although he did not put forward the proposal of resigning from the Central committee or Polit bureau). Charu wanted that he should continue to look after the work of his shelter because he was indisputably considered to be the ablest executioner of the tasks related to the underground structure. However, Suniti Ghosh was of the view that under the atmosphere of so much mistrust it would neither be possible nor appropriate for him to shoulder such a big responsibility! He also told that Deepak and Dileep were ready to take this responsibility! In fact, earlier Suniti Kumar Ghosh had already requested to relieve himself from the responsibility relating to shelter way back in the two meetings with Deepak, Dileep

and Mahadev on December 1971 and March 1972. The three remained silent on hearing this, but only a few days later Dileep informed Ghosh that Police is planning to arrest him (that is, Ghosh) first to reach to Charu. In this assertion, this suspicion was implicit that if arrested Suniti Ghosh would reveal Charu's location. Ghosh retorted that if he were to relinquish this responsibility, police would not be able to reach to Charu even after he gets arrested. Dileep said that they are prepared to take this responsibility. Anyways, they continued the arrangement made by Suniti Kumar Ghosh till the end of April.

Suniti Kumar Ghosh in his last meeting with Charu Majumdar on April 23, had requested the alleged comment of Saroj Dutt and Charu's comment indirectly criticizing Suniti Kumar Ghosh which was published in 'Deshbrati', must be published in the party's central organ 'Liberation', but Charu Majumdar rejected this proposal by terming it as unnecessary. Then when Suniti Kumar Ghosh was about to leave after handing over his sum-up document to Charu, the latter asked him to call a meeting to resolve the problems that have arisen in the party. Suniti Ghosh said that being the General Secretary, such a meeting can only be called by Charu himself. This was their last meeting.

On the morning of 25th April, when Suniti Ghosh had just arrived in Calcutta, he received this horrible news that some party members and well-wishers had killed Kamal Sanyal, the secretary of south Calcutta zone and Agni Roy, the secretary of Baliganj-Tiljala Regional Committee on the pretext of calling them for talks. In the pamphlet distributed after the murder, they were labelled as police agents. The pamphlet also mentioned that more such killings would be carried out in future. Both the slain were trustworthy organizers, who were popular among the cadres and they had shouldered important party responsibilities in the past. Their only crime was that of late they had begun to raise questions on the line of annihilation and the 'revolutionary authority'. Evidently, the "leftist" adventurist line had by now reached to its dangerous and perverse logical conclusion as the comrades' hands were stained with the blood of comrades. In response to the above pamphlet, Satish Bannerji, a member of South Calcutta Zonal Committee and a few others released a pamphlet in which the people responsible for the killings were declared as police agents. There was ample evidence to hold Deepak and Dileep responsible for these cold-blooded murders, who had begun to label all those who used to raise questions over Charu's line as anti-party and state agents and used to utter things such as now an armed struggle would be raised against the lines that are opposed to Charu Babu's line. As soon as Suniti Kumar Ghosh learnt about this incident, he wrote to Charu Majumdar that the question as to whether or not he is a 'political authority' is a political one and it cannot be

solved in this manner. Those responsible for these killings are taking the party towards destruction, and under such a situation Charu must immediately intervene to save the party and publicly condemn those involved in this criminal act. Also, he again raised the demand that suggestions of the Chinese party which were received through Sauren Basu must be circulated as soon as possible among the responsible party comrades and the party line must be reviewed.

Yet another incident which happened during the same period must be mentioned here. Amidst the above incidents, two comrades from Bihar met Suniti Ghosh. One of them was Jauhar who later played the leading role in building a struggle on the "left" adventurist line in Bhojpur, was the first secretary of CPI (ML), Liberation and was martyred. More on this later. Jauhar was also part of the leading team which was given responsibility of reorganizing party under the leadership of Narayan Sanyal (who was soon arrested) in Bihar after the split with Satyanarayan Singh. In the Central Committee, Suniti Kumar Ghosh was given the responsibility of guiding and leading this team. Ghosh told these comrades that for now he has relinquished all organizational responsibilities given by the party. Bihar's comrades were suspicious of the arbitrary and autocratic work style of Deepak and Dileep, and they wanted that this responsibility must be shouldered by Suniti Ghosh himself, but he did not accept to this request.

On May 27th, Suniti Ghosh received a letter from Dileep in which he wrote that Charu wanted to meet him, but it was also written in it that first he should meet Deepak and Dileep. It was also written that Charu has severely criticized both of them. Suniti Ghosh replied that his meeting depends on whether he gets answers to some of his questions or not! His first question was whether they accept the responsibility of the murders of Kamal and Agni and are they ready to undertake self-criticism? At the same time, he wrote a letter to Charu in which he reiterated his demands. In the later half of June, Suniti Ghosh received a self-criticism in the handwriting of Deepak and Dileep, which was very formal. Suniti Ghosh, expressing his disagreement, wrote a letter to them regarding their sidestepping the main issue and indulging in evasive self-criticism. As he was waiting for the response, Suniti Ghosh learnt that on July 16th, 1972, Charu Majumdar was arrested by the police from a shelter in Calcutta. The Deepak-Dileep faction had practically taken the responsibility of shelter in their hands from the first week of May and only after two and half months Charu was arrested. Police got hold of a courier sent by Deepak and after being subjected to intense torture he disclosed the location of the shelter to the police where Deepak and others were present. He had estimated that after so much time they would have left the shelter, but when police raided the location Deepak was found sleeping there. Then this Charu-acolyte quite adept

at revolutionary phrase-mongering was terrorized and broken even without any police torture and disclosed the address of Charu's shelter. Charu Majumdar who suffered from tuberculosis and had serious heart ailment, was continuously questioned by the police in the central lockup situated in Lal Bazaar for twelve days. Meanwhile, he was not even given the regular medicines and Pethidine injection, leave aside providing medical care. After Twelve days, on July 28th, 1972, Charu Majumdar breathed his last. Later, police released an abnormally long statement of Charu. Charu refused to sign on this statement. Most of the responsible old comrades within the revolutionary left movement believe that a large part of the above statement was concocted by the police officials.

Charu Majumdar's Efforts in his Last Days to Slowly and Gradually Change His "Left" Adventurist Line and to Bring it in Conformity with the Chinese Suggestions

Just a few days before his arrest, Charu had met some leading comrades from Bihar on July 13th, 1972. The meeting was aimed at furthering the efforts of reorganization of the Bihar State Committee which at that time existed only in name. Suraj (Swadhin Roy) was one among those who met Charu. Suraj was among those comrades from middle class background who was sent to Bihar to lead the armed struggle even before Jauhar, later he surrendered before the police. During 1975-76, when he was shifted to Presidency Jail for some time, he had told a few political inmates about his meeting and conversation with Charu. When Suraj gave report about the mass movement of Dalits in Punpun area of Patna district, Charu suggested him to focus on that area and make it as a focal-point of the struggle in future. The notes of this conversation can be found in the collected works of Charu Majumdar. It is noteworthy that in this conversation, Charu did not make any mention of guerilla squads and the annihilation of class enemies. In this, he talked about making revolutionary committees of poor peasants, taking of initiative by the petty-bourgeois comrades in this and strengthening the unity between poor peasants and the middle peasants by terming them as revolutionary class. Also, he asked to think about the possibilities of expanding the work among the workers of huge colliery area which spanned from Asansol to Madhya Pradesh.

Earlier, he had already met Sharmaji (Jagjit Singh Sohal), the Central Committee member from Punjab. By that time, Saroj Dutt who knew about the Chinese suggestions had been murdered and Sauren Basu had been arrested. We have already discussed how Sauren Basu had dropped the hints about the Chinese suggestions at many places. We have also discussed about how the differences

with Suniti Kumar Ghosh, who was the third individual in the know of the Chinese suggestions, had begun to surface. Now it was clear to Charu that it would not be possible to suppress the Chinese suggestions for long. Under these circumstances, Charu had also expressed his desire to call the meeting of rest of the members and hold a discussion on the Chinese suggestions, though no concrete decision had been taken in this regard. Third such meeting of Charu took place in June or July just before his arrest with K.G. Satyamurthy from Andhra Pradesh State Committee and another member Rauf. According to Rauf, in this meeting discussion took place regarding the reorganization of the Central Committee too, in future. Charu Majumdar was in the mood of 'self-criticism' that day. With both the comrades who came to meet him, he discussed about the criticism and suggestion of the Chinese party about the policies of CPI (M-L) and said that since the Chinese party does not approve of the slogan of 'China's chairman is our chairman', he wants to take back this slogan. Except for the question of annihilation, he expressed his agreement with all the suggestions of the Chinese party. On the question of annihilation, he said that he never meant it to be individual annihilation and there was some confusion with the Chinese party on this point. However, if one goes through Charu's writings, his clarification looks far from truth. Rauf told these things in 1977 to his fellow political inmates in Presidency jail. It was during this period that Bhawani Roy Chowdhury also met Charu. It was his first and last meeting with Charu. Bhawani Roy Chowdhury was among the founding members of CPI (M-L) Party Unity which was formed later. Roy Chowdhury told the political inmates in the Presidency jail that when he requested Charu to issue a statement regarding the reasons for withdrawing the slogan of 'China's chairman is our chairman', he said that we cannot quote an international release. Even Gautam Bannerji, who too was incarcerated in the Presidency jail, and who used to act as a messenger between Saroj Dutt and Charu had told the fellow political inmates about Charu's decision to withdraw the above slogan.

These meetings and conversations in his last days clearly indicate that Charu had gradually started to change his "left" adventurist line in the light of the Chinese suggestions and criticisms, which he had tried to suppress for about one and half year, so that when these suggestions were to be circulated among the leadership and some level of cadres, the points of criticism become very few and mild and he could have opportunity to say that there were some mistakes which were rectified in time. The biggest evidence of this is Charu's writings in his last days in which he is seen gradually changing the line without any sum-up and review and is trying to rid himself of the spectre of the extremely crude version of "left" adventurism. After the Magurjan incident, while leaving from the Puri Shelter that was looked after by Suniti Kumar Ghosh to Calcutta, Charu had given him a note to be

published in 'Liberation' in which the announcement of People's Liberation Army in West Bengal was made and all the 'action squads' scattered in the state were termed as its 'contingents'. In this note, no mention of annihilation was made. We have already discussed this incident. Moving further away from this, in 'Build up the People's Liberation Army and March Forward' published in 'Liberation' (January-March, 1971) Charu Majumdar wrote:

Hence the attack on the armed forces of enemy must be carried out. Only attacking the class-enemies would now amount to a kind of economism itself. Along with attacking the class-enemies if we do not attack the armed forces of the enemy, we would fall in the morass of a special kind of economism.

Clearly, looking at the condition of class-struggle and the preparation of the party, whatever Charu Majumdar was saying, that too was nothing but pure militarist "left" adventurism itself. Even now he was not talking about mass struggles, mass movements, economic struggles or mass organizations, but his immediate purpose was to get rid of the line of annihilation. After this, in his writings and statements such as 'One Year Since the Party Congress', 'To the Comrades of Punjab', one hardly finds any mention of the annihilation of class-enemy as a form of struggle. Two days before his arrest, in a letter to his wife he wrote: "We have been waging very few struggles against the imperialists because too much importance has been given to annihilation. This is a deviation and we are recovering from it."

Extending the process of slowly changing the line, in his comment 'A note on Party's Work in Rural Areas' he wrote:

The movement for crop-seizure is also a mass movement. After launching the armed struggle, we are giving leadership to a mass movement for the first time. Without carrying out the mass movement, we would not be able to achieve our goal of making every peasant a warrior.

It needs to be recalled that it was Charu himself who in his article published in December, 1971 issue of 'Liberation' had said:

The revolutionary peasants through their struggle have shown that the mass movements or mass organizations are not at all inevitable for waging guerilla struggle. The mass movement and mass organizations promote the open and economic trend and expose the revolutionary activists before the enemy. Hence the open mass movements and mass organizations act as a hurdle in the development and expansion of guerilla war.

It is obvious that without summing up the past, Charu had silently changed the line and had started talking exactly the opposite. But the most dramatic

somersault is seen in an article which Charu wrote five weeks before his arrest. In 'It is the People's Interest that is Party's Interest', Charu admits that mass movement has received a setback. He said that forget about 1975, the way the party leadership is moving ahead in the struggle, our country will not be free even by 2001. In this article, Charu stressed on the need for party building among the broad cross-section of peasants and workers and wrote that only then the struggle could be taken to an advanced stage. According to him, the US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism are badly crisis-ridden and hence they could wage a third world war. Under this circumstance, the broad public unrest could give rise to country-wide uprising. Hence, if in some areas revolutionary land reforms would be accomplished, they automatically will spread to other regions as well. Not just that, Charu also talked about a broad united front against the repressive rule of Congress, in which apart from the 'Leftist' parties, those could also be taken who till yesterday were the enemies of the communist revolutionary movement. Clearly, at this juncture, in the eagerness to get rid of the ghost of "left" adventurism, Charu Majumdar while whitewashing his old devastating mistakes, had got entangled into a web of contradictions. Instead of the secret squads, he is seen talking about party-building among the broad cross-section of the masses, instead of carrying forward the land revolution through annihilation and the so-called guerilla struggle, he is seen reposing his faith in a kind of spontaneity which would give rise to a country-wide mass uprising and saying that the advantage of such a scenario could be secured only when the party would be successful in implementing revolutionary land reforms in some areas. Hence, he is alluding to a mass line in the context of land revolution. Although he does not discuss as to in what form this mass line would be implemented. However, he does not stop at this. Charu talks about a broad united front whose form and policies are not clear and which could be easily interpreted in revisionist manner! No wonder that extending such an interpretation and taking its refuge as well as holding the banner of Charu's legacy, CPI (M-L) Liberation sank into the quagmire of the most degenerated and most hideous form of parliamentary leftism under the leadership of Vinod Mishra and Dipankar Bhattacharya.

With the death of Charu Majumdar, an important chapter of the communist revolutionary movement came to an end. We have made some comments related to the assessment of Charu in the earlier parts of this essay, and have been discussing at appropriate places about the content, characteristics and the process of evolution of his "leftist" opportunist line and his undemocratic, bureaucratic organizational method of work. Now we shall present here a comprehensive sum-up of his role in the revolutionary movement!

Charu Majumdar: An Assessment in the Form of the Final Conclusion

Charu Majumdar began his political life as a communist organizer in 1930s. Apart from participating in the Adhiyar movement of peasants and Tebhaga peasant struggle, he also worked as an organizer among the railway workers and tea plantation workers of Duar. When the regional leadership of the Tebhaga peasant struggle was thinking about armed counter-defence of peasants to resist the brutal state repression, the state leadership had withdrawn the movement after trusting the empty assurances of the then Muslim League government. Charu was among those who had vehemently criticized this decision. When the Andhra Committee of the party was carrying out two-line struggle against Randive's "leftist" opportunist line, Charu had chosen the side of the 'Andhra thesis' and in the prison, he was known as the supporter of Mao and Chinese party.

While the Communist Party of India had gone ahead on the path of revisionism in 1951 itself, in the Palghat Party Congress of 1956, the faction led by Dange gang had started openly advocating to collaborate with the "progressive government" of Nehru and to be part of the government. At that time, Charu was with those opposing this faction. In the Fifth (special) Congress of the Party in Amritsar in 1956, the party had accepted the line of Khrushchevite revisionism, but a division had occurred within the party from top to bottom on the basis of the two opposing lines of 'United Democratic Front' (UDF) and 'National Democratic Front' (NDF). The first line was talking about carrying forward the anti-imperialist anti-feudal struggle on the basis of worker-peasant unity, while the second line was talking about peaceful transition to socialism by forming a united front with the "progressive" bourgeoisie. Even though despite its radical gesture, the second line was also essentially revisionist, the party cadre with the revolutionary spirit were with it as they considered it to be revolutionary. Charu was one among them. When Nehru dismissed the Nambodiripad government of Kerala in July 1959, a widespread movement had begun against it in the entire Bengal and in different parts of the country. The Siliguri Committee under the leadership of Charu was especially active in it. In the Terai zone of Siliguri, the peasant movement got intensified, but when the state leadership withdrew the movement after the hollow assurance by the state government, a tide of discontent spread among all the organizers of Terai including Charu and Kanu. After this, Charu was in a state of despair and disappointment due to the revisionist regression of the party. When Party's Sixth Congress was held in Vijaywada in 1961, Charu did not take part in it as he considered it to be futile. We have already discussed that at the time of the Indo-China war in 1962, when the storm of anti-China jingoism was underway, the

party cadres of Siliguri under the leadership of Charu were waging struggle against it by going against the current. The division of CPI had in fact taken place in 1962 during the Indo-China war when on the basis of identification by Dange, most of the leaders and activists of the opposing faction were sent to jail. Charu was also arrested at that time. When among the leaders in the prison, people like Jyoti Basu and Namboodripad were adopting soft attitude towards revisionism, Charu and Saroj Dutt used to be in its opposition.

CPM was founded in 1964 and in the same year the documents of "Great Debate" reached the communist cadres of India. These historical documents especially helped the Indian communist cadres in developing a theoretical understanding of not just the Khrushchevite revisionism, but also the revisionism of CPI as well as the neo-revisionism of CPM. Among the two drafts of the new party, one was that of Sundarayya, Vasavpunayya, Pramod Dasgupta and Harekrishna Konar, in which the position of Chinese party was supported while criticizing the Soviet revisionism, whereas in the draft presented by Namboodripad, Harkishan Singh Surjit and Jyoti Basu, a middle ground was taken. Charu and Siliguri Committee took the side of the first draft, but right from the beginning Charu had reservations about this new party. Still, he hoped that the party could be revolutionized by carrying out ideological struggle from within. But it did not take long to dash these hopes. There is no doubt that Charu's eight documents played an important role in making a radical rupture from the neo-revisionism of CPM, but this credit cannot be given to Charu alone. The leaders of Chinta/Dakshindesh group, Kanhai Chatterji, Amulya Sen and Chandrashekhar Das, had also blown the bugle of struggle against the revisionism of CPM exactly at the same time. What is important is that all of them had received inspiration for making a consistent understanding of revisionism from the Chinese party's document of 'Great Debate'. In 1965, the two-line struggle against the capitalist roaders within the Chinese party had got intensified and the Great Socialist Education movement had begun as a prelude to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In 1966, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution commenced. The documents of these historical revolutions helped all the leaders of the Communist revolutionary movement in India including Charu in a fundamental way in developing an understanding of revisionism to move ahead in the direction of forming and building a new revolutionary party by rebelling against the revisionist leadership. If we talk only about Charu, it is evident that his own ideological understanding was extremely weak and he adopted his decisive position as well as took decisive steps on the basis of the positions of the Chinese party itself.

Undoubtedly, no question can be raised on the revolutionary spirit of Charu and his disdain for revisionism, however, in his revolutionary sentiment, one could find the continuity of the tendency of the petty-bourgeois impatience owing to which he used to oscillate between subjective kind of ultra-enthusiasm and dismay. The ideological weakness which was responsible for this also prevented him from patiently carrying out sustained two line-struggle and instead he used to choose the path of deciding hurriedly. Charu's eight documents played an important role in making a radical rupture from the neo-revisionist CPM, but as has been mentioned earlier, one can find the indications of Charu's "left" adventurist line in these very documents. During the Naxalbari peasant uprising, when the massline was being effectively implemented, Charu had withdrawn for some time, but as soon as a period of stagnation and disintegration ensued in Naxalbari, Charu aggressively pushed forward his line. The Naxalbari peasant struggle had progressed by defeating Charu's line and the first experiment of Charu's line in Chattarhat Islampur was defeated in no time, but since he was the leader of the Siliguri Committee, he gained popularity throughout the country (and abroad as well) as the builder and the leader of the Naxalbari struggle and he took full advantage of this reputation in pushing forward his line. Undoubtedly, due to the ideological-political bankruptcy of the local organizers of the Naxalbari struggle, especially of Kanu Sanyal, and consequently their surrender before Charu's line and its exaggerated recognition and appreciation by the Chinese party helped the Charu's "left" adventurist line a lot in becoming hegemonic. The first important step towards the consolidation of the incorrect line was taken when by doing away with all the democratic norms the DV-Nagi led 'Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries of Andhra Pradesh' was unilaterally removed from the 'All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries'. Similarly, people like Parimal Dasgupta, Pramod Sengupta, Asit Sen etc. who raised question on Charu's "left" opportunist line were removed without carrying out any debate by labelling them 'revisionist' and 'renegade'. Thus, Charu's line had become dominant virtually during the period of AICCR itself. Charu had started using the Coordination Committee as party and had consolidated his position as its supreme leader. After removing all the opponents, he changed his earlier stand and declared in no time the formation of an all-India party. Due to the incorrect and undemocratic ways of AICCR, several organizations and groups like MCC and WBCCR and many individuals did not join it and in February, 1970 some comrades from Punjab (Bathinda-Ferozpur Committee) under the leadership of Harbhajan Singh Sohi separated themselves from the process of formation of CPI (M-L) by criticizing the ultra-leftist line of Charu. The most devastating work done by Charu was to shelve the four tasks decided for the Coordination Committee. By

renouncing the task of the development of the militant mass struggles of working class and all the toiling classes, building of mass movement and mass organization itself was labelled as revisionism and carrying out economic struggle itself was termed as economism. According to Charu, the poor and landless peasants had to now carry forward the guerilla struggle by making small action groups, and this “guerilla struggle” was the annihilation of the class enemy! The Coordination Committee was supposed to establish Mao Tse-tung Thought as Marxism-Leninism of current era by carrying out prolonged ideological struggle against revisionism and on this basis all the communist revolutionary cadres were to be united. However, in Charu’s agenda, there was no place for cadre’s ideological-political education, exposure of the incorrect line through carrying out debate on ideological-political issues and the political-ideological upgradation of the cadre. Just reading Mao’s three articles, Charu’s eight documents and Red Book was considered sufficient and even those reading Marxist classics were labelled as “bourgeois intellectuals”. Thus, Charu took the ideological weaknesses that were entrenched in the communist movement since its beginning to the newer heights. An important task of the Coordination Committee was to determine the program, strategy and general tactics of Indian revolution by studying the concrete conditions of India. This was a task of fundamental historical significance. Had the Coordination Committee implemented revolutionary mass line and had it made some beginning in the direction of study, debate and experiments towards determining the character of Indian society, the nature of production relations, stage of revolution and program, the history of the communist movement in India would have been different today. However, Charu did not let this process even begin. By giving the slogan of ‘China’s path is our path’ and by doing a carbon copy of the new democratic revolution of China, Charu “solved” the most basic questions in a trice. Charu not only used the platform of the Coordination Committee as party for implementing his line in unhindered and unopposed manner, he even established himself as an undisputed leader by forming a small clique of his acolytes. Undoubtedly, in achieving his goal, Charu received special help from those organizers like Kanu Sanyal who had once implemented mass line, but later due to their extremely weak ideological-political understanding, had knelt down before the “left” adventurist line. On the basis of these facts, it can be asserted that the party formed in 1970 under the leadership of Charu Majumdar was not an All-India Marxist-Leninist party, but was one amongst many Marxist-Leninist organizations and groups and it was an organization which was most firm and most consistent on the “left” adventurist line. From the time of the Coordination Committee itself, Charu’s line was defeated wherever it was implemented, but instead of review and sumup, what used to happen was that

when the line was defeated at one place, it was being implemented at another place with renewed aggression. We have discussed this process in detail earlier. Even before the party was formed, the struggle in Srikakulam was beginning to get disintegrated which reached its culmination a few days after the party formation. The massline of the student-youth movement which was decided under the leadership of Asit Sen during the period of Coordination Committee was given up and Charu's line was implemented on this front. Its peak point was Calcutta's student-youth movement (*'Bhanjan-Dahan-Hanan'* program) whose adventurism was utilized by the Indian state to immerse it in the pool of blood. But, instead of summing it up, Charu's faction sidelined Sushital Roy Chowdhary who had raised questions on it and who had criticized the "left" opportunism. The disintegration of the Debra Gopiballabhpur struggle, and the criticism and sum up presented by its leadership, was not even deliberated upon and we have earlier discussed about the suppression of the critical report of Birbhum Committee in an extremely conspiratorial manner.

Charu suppressed the suggestions and criticisms of the Chinese Communist Party for about one and half year and started talking about it to those meeting him only when it was clear that it could no longer be suppressed. In the same period, he also suppressed the second report of the Birbhum Committee. This was the period when the trio of Deepak, Dileep and Mahadev was creating much hullabaloo of Charu's 'revolutionary authority' and was trying to project him as 'India's Mao' (It needs to be recalled that the proposal to declare Charu as 'revolutionary authority' was rejected in the first and last meeting of the Central Committee held immediately after the Congress). This last phase of Charu's life was that important phase in which his "leftist" opportunism had been transformed from political opportunism into individual opportunism. Initially, like any committed "left" adventurist, Charu suffered from self-righteousness, his organizational line was infected with bureaucracy and commandism, he used to consider himself as the committee; however, during the last one and half year he strived hard towards somehow saving his individual reputation and prestige and was slowly changing his line in a way that it becomes more and more in conformity with the Chinese suggestions and that he has to face least criticism and his leadership is not endangered. It cannot be termed anything else but political dishonesty.

In a nutshell, looking at the entire course of events in retrospect, it can be said that Charu suffered from "left" adventurism since 1965 itself, and this deviation went on acquiring dangerous form after being coupled with the political immaturity and extremely weak ideological understanding of the others in the leadership. The revolutionary impatience of Charu was in fact a petty-bourgeois

impatience. This impatience was also a reaction to the long period of revisionism and existed in Charu's thinking right from the time of the radical rupture with CPM itself. The task of strangulating the new revolutionary beginning had been virtually accomplished when Charu had given up the goals set by the Coordination Committee, the task of development of the experiments of revolutionary mass struggles of workers and peasants was not even taken up and by shelving the goal of research and study for determination of the program of Indian revolution afresh, the carbon copy of the program of Chinese revolution was made as the program of Indian revolution.

If one surveys the entire body of writings of Charu, it can be affirmed that his theoretical understanding of Marxism-Leninism was extremely weak. He perhaps hardly read Marxism classics. His intellectual calibre was not at all of the level of giving leadership to an all-India revolutionary communist party. At the most, he could have been a leader at the regional level of such a party. But like all the "left" adventurists, he was firm and decisive on his line and in implementing his line in undisputed manner he got great help from the capitulationist attitude, weak ideological understanding and liberal political-organizational conduct of those from the leadership who themselves were very weak from standpoint of political understanding. The "left" adventurist line was a rebellious reaction to the revisionist party practice and Charu Majumdar happened to be its agent because he had the quality of decisiveness of the leadership. The responsibility for this devastating phase of the "left" opportunism in the communist revolutionary movement in India also rests with those leaders of CPI (M-L) who continued to adopt docile and surrenderist stand, who did not raise questions at the right time and to a large extent remained victim to the tendency of hero worship. Most of these people were enlightened only when they came to know about the Chinese suggestions. However, the leader of this deviation was Charu himself and the history will principally put him in dock for its catastrophic outcomes. More than his positive contribution owing to his role in making a radical rupture from revisionism, his role proved to be negative since the "leftist" adventurist infantilism catastrophically liquidated a historical new beginning as soon as it was born.