

# On Elections

by Com. Madhu

Almost one year elapsed since the demise of our beloved Comrade Madhu. In this context we remember him with this article written by him in 1987 'On Elections' which is reproduced here.



Every view of Communist Revolutionaries was distorted by the "left" opportunist leadership. When the Communist Revolutionaries tried to utilise all the possibilities to take ideological struggle among the widest sections of CPI (M) ranks and rally them towards revolutionary politics, they were branded as opportunists and as cherishing illusions in CPI (M) leadership; When the Communist Revolutionaries talked about the need to have correct conception and strategic planning regarding base areas, they were dismissed as attempts at delaying revolution and putting obstacles in the way of revolutionary movements that had already come up in some pockets; When the Communist Revolutionaries proposed about the need to adopt various forms of struggle and combine them with the highest forms of struggle, they are characterised as attempts to divert the attention of revolutionary ranks and people from the armed struggle to economism- the same old practice of some revisionist and neo-revisionist parties. Thus, the "left" opportunist leadership has done everything to desort the views and avoid fruitful discussion on important questions of revolution.

Elections is a question used by the left opportunists to sling mud at the Communist Revolutionaries. They raised much hue and cry against Communist Revolutionaries who held the view that elections is a tactical question. Pointing at the revisionist and neo-revisionist practices they declared that any attempt to utilise election as one of legal forms of struggle only amounts to going over to parliamentary path. With this position, they refused to go into theoretical aspects of this question and to apply the international

experiences to the concrete practice of present revolution. Though a section of revolutionaries, who were influenced by this trend, has rejected it in the course of time, confusion and certain incorrect views still exist on this question.

From the beginning, we were of the view that the elections is a tactical issue. Yet, we must admit the fact that there existed hesitation, for quite a long time, to apply this view to concrete practice and our stands were not always in keeping with this view. As on 1977 Parliament elections we had been boycotting the elections, In 1977 Parliament elections, we adopted the stand of "non-participation," though, in practice it did not differ much from the stand of boycott; this continued for some more time. In the period that followed, we reached, through the course of discussions and drawing lessons from experiences, to a more clear stand of utilising elections as one of legal forms of struggle in the interests of revolutionary movement. In 1983 Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections, in December 1984 Parliament elections and in 1985 AP Assembly elections' we have called upon the people to defeat Congress (I). On all these occasions; we had put up some candidates. Our Political Resolution (June 1984) explained our stand to an extent. The statements that we have released in connection with elections in the later period also explain our stand.

However, task of explaining our attitude on the question of elections from the theoretical point of view as well as in the light of experiences still remain. Today, the left opportunists are still persisting in their views on this question. Even among those who agree that it is a tactical issue, divergences are manifesting on the questions like, how to explain, concretely apply and practice it in the interests of revolutionary movement. Here we make an attempt to discuss these questions and explain our view.

### **Not Peaceful but Revolutionary Path**

In his "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists" in Oct 1919, Lenin said, in his characteristic sharp tone that "Only scoundrels can think that the Proletariat must first win a majority in elections carried out *under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, under the yoke of wage-slavery* and must then win power. This is the height of stupidity or hypocrisy; it is substituting elections, under the old system and with the old power for class struggle and revolution." ("Against Revisionism", P-501)

The "Thesis on Comintern Fundamental Tasks," drafted by Lenin and adopted by the Second Congress of Communist International in July, 1920, said:

"In the concrete situation created throughout the world, and above all in the most advanced powerful, enlightened and free capitalist, by militarism, imperialism, the oppression of colonies and weak countries the worldwide imperialist butchery and the "Peace" of Versailles. In that situation the very idea of the capitalists peacefully submitting to the will of the majority of the exploited, the very idea of peaceful, reformist transition to socialism, is not merely sheer philistine stupidity but also downright deception of workers; embellishment of capitalist wage-slavery, concealment of the truth." (C.W. Vol. 31, P-186)

Lenin has also pointed out in the same Thesis) that "Only the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the confiscation of its property, the destruction of the entire bourgeois state

apparatus from top to bottom,” and only with such measures that can “foil their inevitable attempts to resist and to restore capitalist slavery” that can “ensure real submission of the whole class of exploiters.”

Here Lenin was only reasserting the fundamental principle of Marxism. The period of preparation for October Revolution (1905–1907) in Russia and period of First World War (1914–18) had seen an intense struggle between revolutionary Marxism and various varieties of opportunism, Lenin at the head of revolutionary Marxism has to wage a bitter, relentless and uncompromising struggle against Mensheviks and their collaborators who indulged in all stupid, philistine and deceptive talk of peaceful reformist transition to socialism and had done everything to create obstacles in the way of preparations for October Revolution. Likewise, Lenin has to wage a similar struggle against the opportunists of Second International represented by Kautsky and Co. These opportunists, faced with imperialist war and the task of more resolutely organising revolutionary civil wars (in the developed capitalist countries engaged in imperialist war) against the ruling classes in their own countries, lost all their bearing and raised the shameless slogan of “defence of Fatherland.” This slogan, in those conditions, only meant helping their own imperialist ruling classes in waging predatory wars. With the flag of Marxism in one hand, these opportunists also embellished bourgeois democracy and advocated the possibility of peaceful, reformist transition to socialism through elections carried out “under the yoke of bourgeoisie and under the yoke of wage-slavery.” This opportunist trend has engulfed the entire communist movement in Europe. It was even threatening the very fate of Russian Revolution with its pernicious influence right inside the revolutionary movement in Russia. Lenin’s struggle, in defence of revolutionary principle of Marxism, more particularly, on the crucial question of state power decide the very fate of Marxism and revolutions. Now it is an established historical fact, that the struggle waged by the revolutionary Marxists and the successful completion of October Revolution had throw theories of peaceful, reformist transition into dust bin. Though the European Communist movement could not form a major setback, conditions were prepared for the reorganisation of Communist International on the basis of revolutionary principles and the revolutionary experiences gained in the course of class struggle.

We can see not a single instance in the period that followed, wherein, the proletariat by itself or along with other revolutionary classes came to power by peaceful means and without revolution. The period from October Revolution of 1917 and 1949 saw major revolutionary upheavals in the world. In the post-First World War period, people marched in the path of revolution in a number of colonial, semi-colonial and capitalist countries. Advancing Socialist Russia and its revolutionary solidarity provided a great Impetus for them. These revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism was grasped, concretely applied and people were moved into revolutionary action by the concerned communist parties. The achievements of Chinese Peoples Democratic Revolution led by CPC and Mao stood as an outstanding example in this direction. Revolutions saw new impetus, unparallel advance and victories during and immediately after the Second World War wherein, Fascism faced ignominious defeats in the hands of socialist, democratic, anti-

fascist and peace forces led by Socialist Russia and Stalin. Peoples Democratic China emerged victorious; East European countries saw victorious Peoples Democratic Revolutions several oppressed countries freed themselves from the imperialists yoke, or greatly advanced either under the leadership of communist parties or national forces. These advances and achievements of revolutionary movement as well as the counter-revolutionary policies pursued by the imperialist and reactionary forces only reaffirmed and further strengthened the validity and significance of – revolutionary path and the principles of Marxism Leninism.

Opportunist and revisionist trends raised their heads even during this period. They harmed revolutions in the individual countries depending upon their strengths in the respective communist parties and revolutionary movements. However, in those conditions of revolutionary advances, and presence of International Communist leadership headed by Stalin that was upholding revolutionary path and principles of Marxism – Leninism, the opportunist and revisionist trends had not come up capable of influencing the course of communist movement in a significant way. Tito revisionism came in bitter antagonism with the inter-national communist leadership and revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. Yet it could not rally much and got itself isolated in the world communist movement.

Emergence of Khrushchev Modern revisionism and the developments that followed inflicted a big blow on the world communist movement and the world revolution. The communist movement in India also is a victim of it. Khrushchev dug out the theories of peaceful, reformist transformation from the dust bin and dressed them up in new costumes, and set himself on an all out drive to drag the world communist movement into this rut. While the European Communists declared their own “independence to practice their own brand of revisionism, rest of the opportunist and revisionist forces rallied around Soviet modern revisionism. Now it has become the task of CPC and Mao to lead the world communist forces in the struggle in defence of revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism from the onslaught of modern revisionism. Though it could not stop the modern revisionists and their followers from the chosen path of degeneration, it definitely and greatly helped to strengthen and advance the communist forces along revolutionary path.

Now, we are facing one more great reversal with the usurpation of leadership in the party and state by the revisionists led by Deng in China, and their all out efforts to restore capitalism in China. We already see various attempts to develop relations between CPC and Soviet Party.

These reverses are a severe setback for the world Communist and revolutionary movement. At the same, time they prove, by negative experience, the validity of revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. They point out the significance of Lenin’s warnings about the need to continue revolution even after the seizure of power to foil the “inevitable attempts to resist and to restore capitalist slavery” and to “ensure real submission of the whole class of exploiters”.

Promises of modern revisionists about bright prospects of peaceful transition to socialism never came true in whole of this period. Even in Indonesia and Chile where communists were allowed to share power along with the bourgeois on the strength of popularity that they had built up by leading various class struggles and popular movements, they met with worst counter revolution in the end. Where ever communist developed illusion in the possibility of coming to power through elections and deviated from or abandoned the path of class struggle and revolution, they either ended themselves as class collaborators in the service of exploiters or faced a great disappointment and caused great losses to the class struggles and revolutions.

During this period, the imperialists received severe blows in the hands of Socialist, democratic, national and peace forces and are facing crises; However, the revisionist forces gaining upper hand in various communist parties in the world gave them respite and strength. They had further sharpened and built up their lethal as well as sugar-coated weapons. The later are proving more effective than the former in suppressing peoples revolutions.

Now the two super powers – Soviet Social imperialism and US imperialism are fiercely contending for world hegemony and are preparing for another world war to settle this question. The essence of this contention is nothing but to further intensify oppression and plunder on world people, particularly the oppressed nations and people. The Soviet Social imperialists are pursuing an offensive policy to realise their objective. They have, various advantages including “socialist” garb, anti-imperialist, anti-US and anti-War posture and the major part of opportunist and revisionist forces trooping behind them, in addition to huge destructive modern war machinery. The huge destructive apparatus that the two Super powers had built up is not meant for war alone, but also is a weapon to suppress the people of various countries who dare to take the path of class struggle and revolution.

Thus, now the world people are faced with the enemy armed to the teeth and the intensified onslaught from the opportunist and revisionist forces. With this the task of upholding revolutionary principles of Marxism Leninism and the revolutionary path assumed much more significance today. We, the communist revolutionaries must wage a relentless and uncompromising struggle against revisionist trends in what ever form they may appear. We must lead the vast masses of Indian people along the path of class struggles and revolution with all the resoluteness and convictions it requires.