

Clarifying notes by the Spokesperson of the Central Committee Azad on the interview with General Secretary Ganapathy.

PEOPLE'S MARCH

Voice of the Indian Revolution

Vol.11 No. 2, Mar-Apr. 2010 p. 28-39

From:

"Response by Azad, Spokesperson, Central Committee, CPI (Maoist)"

In an exclusive interview to The Hindu, Azad, spokesperson of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), answers in writing questions on his party's attitude to dialogue with the Union Government.

...

3. The Maoists also have their preconditions for talks. In his recent interview to Jan Myrdal and Gautam Navlakha, Ganapathy made the following formulation on the issue of talks:

"To put concisely the main demands that the party has placed in front of the government [of India] for any kind of talks are

1. All out war has to be withdrawn;

2. For any kind of democratic work, the ban on the Party and Mass Organizations have to be lifted;

3. Illegal detention and torture of comrades had to be stopped and they be immediately released.

If these demands are met, then the same leaders who are released from jails would lead and represent the Party in the talks"

My question is whether these are realistic preconditions. For example, the "all out war" can be suspended first before it is "withdrawn," i.e. a ceasefire, so why insist on its withdrawal at the outset? Are you asking for a ceasefire or something more than that?

Secondly, you want the ban on the Party and its mass organizations lifted and prisoners released. Usually in negotiations of this kind around the world between governments and insurgent groups, the lifting of a ban is one of the objects of talks rather than a precondition and the release of political prisoners an intermediate step. Is the Maoist party not putting the cart before the horse, making demands that the government may be unlikely to accept as a starting point, rather than positing the same as one of the end points of the proposed dialogue?

Azad: I concur with the logic of your arguments. It is logically a valid argument that such demands could be resolved in the course of actual talks and not as a precondition for talks. But you must also understand the spirit of what comrade Ganapathi has said in his interview given to Mr. Jan Myrdal and Gautam Navlakha. Some clarification is required here. I will try to clarify what comrade Ganapathi has said.

Firstly what he meant when he said the government should withdraw its all-out war is nothing but a suspension of its war, or in other words, mutual ceasefire. Let there be no confusion in this regard. What Chidambaram wants is unilateral ceasefire by Maoists while the state continues its brutal

campaign of terror. On the contrary, what the Communist Party of India (Maoist) wants is a cessation of hostilities by both sides simultaneously. This is the meaning of the first point. A ceasefire by both sides cannot be called a precondition. It is but an expression of the willingness on the part of both sides engaged in war to create a conducive atmosphere for going to the next step of talks.

Secondly, if peaceful legal work has to be done by Maoists as desired by several organizations and members of civil society, then lifting of ban becomes a pre-requisite. Without lifting the ban on the party and mass organizations how can we organize legal struggles, meetings etc in our name? If we do so, will these not be dubbed as illegal as they are led by a banned Party? According to us, the ban itself is an authoritarian, undemocratic, and fascist act. Hence the demand for the lifting of the ban is a legitimate demand, and, if fulfilled, will go a long way in promoting open democratic forms of struggles and creating a conducive atmosphere for a dialogue.

Thirdly, what comrade Ganapathi had asked for is that the government should adhere to the Indian Constitution and put an end to the illegal murders in the name of encounters, tortures and arrests. We must include the term "murders" which is missing in the third point. There is nothing wrong or unreasonable in asking the government to stick to its own constitution. As regards the release of political prisoners this could be an intermediate step as far as the nature of the demand is concerned. However, to hold talks it is necessary for the government to release some leaders. Or else, there would be none to talk to since the entire Party is illegal. We cannot bring any of our leaders over ground for the purpose of talks.

...

6. If the government believes the Maoists "misused" the Andhra talks, your party believes the dialogue there was abused by the authorities to identify and then target your leaders. How, then, do you hope to deal with the risks of once again entering into a dialogue with the Indian state?

Azad: The talks we held with the Congress regime in AP provided us with important lessons. And these lessons would guide us in any future talks with the governments of the exploiting classes. It would be too simplistic to conclude that the police could identify and target the leaders by utilizing the talks interregnum. They used it to some extent just as we used it to take our politics widely among the people in the State and outside. The setback we had suffered in most parts of AP is not a fall-out of talks but due to several inherent weaknesses of our Party in Andhra Pradesh and our failure to adopt appropriate tactics to confront enemy's tactics. This is an entirely different subject and can be dealt at some other time.

What is of relevance here is that the talks in Andhra Pradesh have given us a rich experience and important lessons. If at all a situation for talks arises once again – which we do not foresee in the near future given the inexorable compulsions on the government from the corporate sharks for total control of the mineral-rich region – we can instruct our leadership in various prisons to take the responsibility. Our General Secretary had explained this in the course of his interview with Mr. Jan Myrdal and Mr. Gautam Navlakha. The mistakes committed in AP during talks with the government will not be repeated.

...

12. In Ganapathi's interview to Jan Myrdal and Navlakha he said: "I reiterate that at present no one party or organization is capable enough to be a rallying center for all revolutionary, democratic, progressive and patriotic forces and people. Hence, at present juncture our Party can play a significant role in rallying all revolutionary, democratic, progressive and patriotic forces and people." This suggests you see the Maoists as one part of a wider force of progressive, patriotic people. Who else do you consider part of these forces? Which organizations or parties do you regard as progressive and patriotic part of these forces? Does this not include the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist)? Why then have Maoists in Bengal been involved in assassinating cadres of other communist parties like the Communist Party of India(Marxist)?

Azad: It is not only now, but all along we have been considering ourselves an indivisible part of the broader force of other revolutionary, democratic and patriotic sections of people. Firstly, we are one of the several revolutionary detachments in the international detachment of the world proletariat and we see ourselves as a part of the broad world-wide anti-imperialist front. Our mass organizations are a part of the International League of People's Struggles and are in the forefront of the struggle against American imperialism.

Within India, our party took birth in the midst of the revolutionary upsurge of the late 1960s, particularly with the glorious Naxalbari uprising, and hence we are an indivisible part of all that is revolutionary in the Indian political stream. We are also an heir to the great Telangana Armed Agrarian Uprising (1946-51), the Tebhaga uprising of 1946, and all the revolutionary struggles led by the Communist Party since its birth in 1921, notwithstanding the betrayals by its central leadership at every critical turning point in the revolutionary political history of our country.

Second, and the one more pertinent to your query, is the fact that the Communist revolutionaries are politically (i.e., in terms of its programme), a part of the wider democratic stream of all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces in the country. This is the essence of our programme of New Democratic Revolution, which seeks to unite all those opposed to imperialism, feudalism, comprador bureaucratic capitalism into one broad front to overthrow these enemies and establish a government comprised of the four-class alliance of the working class, peasantry, urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie. Once you grasp this political basis of our New Democratic Revolution it will not be difficult to understand why we are trying to form numerous tactical united fronts as part of forming a strategic united front in various States and at the all-India level.

To identify the organizations or parties that can be called progressive (usage of the term "democratic" would be more appropriate) and patriotic, one has to see not only whether they have any anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-state or anti-authoritarian aspect included in their political programmes, but also their actual practice. We consider most of the Marxist Leninist revolutionary forces as part of this front.

We consider national liberation organizations like the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, the United Liberation Front of Asom, the People's Liberation Army of Manipur, and the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front in Kashmir as part of the wider democratic forces fighting the Indian state. We consider the various non-parliamentary trade union organizations, various progressive organizations belonging to the religious minorities which are persecuted by state-backed Hindu fascist organizations; various organizations of dalits and other oppressed castes, adivasis and women; the non-parliamentary organizations that are fighting for demands like separate Telangana, Gorkhland,

Vidarbha, Bundelkhand and so on; the organizations that are waging struggles against the Special Economic Zone's, mining and other so-called development projects leading to massive displacement of people; organizations fighting against the Liberalisation-Privatisation-Globalisation policies of the reactionary rulers; those which boldly confront the growing authoritarianism and unbridled state repression resulting in fake encounters, mass murders, and violation of all fundamental rights of the people; and so on, as part of this broad-based non-parliamentary democratic people's front.

There are also a large number of intellectuals and other democratic individuals who are concerned about the well-being of the people and the sovereignty of our country at large. We consider all these as genuine patriotic forces that are deeply concerned about the future of our country, about the well-being of the overwhelming majority of the Indian people rather than that of a tiny parasitical class that runs the country through the so-called mainstream parliamentary parties.

I am obviously leaving out the names of the organizations and individuals who, in our opinion could play a crucial role in the revolutionary transformation of our country into a self-reliant, genuinely democratic society. Today we are passing through a phase of Indian McCarthyism that brands every form of dissent and anyone who questions the authoritarianism of the Indian state as Maoist in order to legitimize its witch-hunting and brutal repression.

Today immense possibilities have unfolded for the rapid advance of the revolutionary war in India and the task of the revolutionary Party lies in how effectively and ably it can utilize the present situation, rally all those who have become the victims of the anti-people, imperialist-dictated policies of the comprador-feudal forces ruling our country, and forge a broad-based united front of all these affected sections of our society and all revolutionary, democratic and patriotic forces in the country. This task should be achieved by defeating the brutal all-out countrywide coordinated war unleashed by the reactionary ruling classes of our country with the aid and assistance of the imperialists, particularly American imperialists.

If we fail in achieving broader unity of all these forces, the fall-out would be disastrous for the Indian people at large since the aim of this cruel armed onslaught is not only to suppress the Maoist movement, but also to suppress every form of democratic dissent and struggle of the people against the authoritarian, feudal and autocratic structure of the Indian state and socio-political system. As put forth by our General Secretary, comrade Ganapathi, in the same interview given recently: "This war is principally against Maoist movement but not limited to this movement and aimed enough against all revolutionary, democratic, progressive and patriotic movements and the movements of oppressed communities of our society including oppressed nationalities. At this juncture, all these forces have to think together how to face this mighty enemy and for this how to unite to go ahead."

Now, coming to your specific question regarding the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Are they not a part of the wider democratic and patriotic forces? I would say YES and NO. As far as the rank and file cadre of these parties is concerned, there is still some amount of sincerity and zeal among a section of them to work for the well-being of the people. But the leadership has completely capitulated to the exploiting ruling classes and pursues a reformist line that would only help sustain the status quo albeit with a few cosmetic changes. Here too, we have to differentiate the Communist Party of India from the Communist Party of India (Marxist). We do not place both the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the same

category. The Communist Party of India leadership has been critical of the policies of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has consistently opposed counter-revolutionary vigilante gangs like Salva Judum propped up by the State and central governments, and is opposing the Operation Green Hunt launched by the Centre. One can witness the reactionary anti-people nature of the policies of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), especially in States where it is in power. Singur, Nandigram, Lalgarh, and a host of other names have stripped the Communist Party of India (Marxist) of its guise of anti-imperialism and anti-neoliberalism. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is not even a thoroughgoing democratic force, let alone being Communist. However, we are prepared to join forces with even these revisionists if they come forth into non-parliamentary struggles on the basic issues of the people, and to the extent they uphold democratic values.

It is wrong to say we are assassinating the cadres of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). We are confronting the armed onslaught by the storm-troopers like the Harmad Bahini and other armed [men] maintained by their party leaders by putting up courageous resistance. The struggle against the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is part of the class struggle of the people against exploitation and oppression. We challenge them to an open debate on any issue. Despite their diplomatic and opportunistic stand that their fight with the Maoists is mainly political, they are in the forefront in the war waged by the Indian ruling classes against the Maoists. Unable to confront us ideologically and politically, their leaders and spokespersons have unleashed a vicious campaign of outright lies and slander against the Maoists.

We call upon the cadres of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other so-called left parties to come forward to unite with other forces to fight against the disastrous policies of the central and State governments, to unite with others to oppose the brutal war waged by the reactionary rulers guided by the United States imperialists against the Maoist movement and all forms of democratic dissent. We are prepared to unite with all sincere and genuine forces in these parties who take the side of the broad masses of people.

...
