

Ranadive Tries To Deceive

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This is an English rendering of an article by **Comrade Sushital Roy Choudhuri**, which appeared in the Bengali weekly **DESHABRATI** of August 10, 1967, in answer to Ranadive's article, "Ultras' Thesis: Inverted advocacy of Congress Rule," in **PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY** of July 16, 1967 - **Editor, LIBERATION**.

The leaders of our Party have abandoned the revolutionary path of Marxism-Leninism and taken to the road of revisionism. As a logical consequence they have to resort to dishonesty in polemics. It has been a well-known practice of the revisionists since the time of Marx conveniently to pare and prune the statements of their opponents and to quote them in a distorted manner.

Let us examine the long article by Ranadive in *People's Democracy*, dated 16th July 1967 captioned: "Ultras' thesis: Inverted advocacy of Congress rule."

In our previous article we referred to the existence of a very feeble trend inside the Party which favoured boycotting of the 4th General Elections. We have also shown how the basketfuls of quotations which Ranadive has produced from Lenin to refute this trend and to establish the justifiability of their own stand in regard to the 4th General Elections, may be likened to cannon-salvoes to kill mosquitoes and how this cannonade served only to betray his own clumsiness.

Now, before we enter into an elaborate discussion of his callowness and of the revisionist character of the party leadership, let us probe a little into the nature of Ranadive's dishonesty.

In the very beginning of his article under discussion, Ranadive, the 'theoretician', quotes from a pamphlet of the 'adventurists' in an attempt to show up those who were in favour of boycott. It reads as follows: "[It was possible] to persuade the masses to boycott the elections, if conscious efforts were made to bring to its natural culmination the form which the mass movements displayed in the different states, especially in West Bengal, and to raise the movements to a higher stage. But without making any attempts towards this the movement was terminated-under the slogan of a bigger movement-in the 48-hour strike and hartal and now that the elections are due all thinking has been concentrated on elections, on the pretext of the election-mindedness of the people. This is dangerous opportunism" (*People's Democracy*, July 16, 1967).

True to their 'tradition', Ranadive does not reveal the identity of the leaflet and suppresses its source. Nevertheless, the leaflet has reached us, too. The leaflet has been identified as Bulletin No. 1 bearing the caption "*Present Situation and our Tasks*," circulated by the 'Committee for Inner-Party Struggle against Revisionism.' In the past also we had had occasion to refer to this bulletin since it appears that for some mysterious reason, Ranadive is much too eager to suppress its identity.

The last chapter of this draft is captioned "The role of Parliamentary Activities." But the central theme of the bulletin, which was circulated among comrades for discussion, is a line of thought in regard to the situation in India in 1965-66 and the perspective of Indian Revolution. However, Ranadive has quoted only a portion from the chapter, "The Role of Parliamentary Activities". For the information of the readers we reproduce below this portion as it stands in the original document:

"We have discussed above about the mass movements in India and about the character and development of the Indian Revolution. We have to judge all things in that perspective. It can be said if conscious efforts were made to advance the mass movements-the form it took in different states, especially in West Bengal-to their natural culmination and if the movements advanced to a higher stage, it is doubtful whether the Elections would have been held at all and it is a matter for serious consideration whether the masses could not have been persuaded to boycott the Elections at that time. But having done nothing in this respect and having terminated the movement with a 48-hour peaceful general strike and hartal in the name of intensifying the movement, it is the worst kind of opportunism to raise now pretexts of people's present attitude towards elections and consequently, to concentrate all thoughts on elections. The truth is, our leaders have gone bankrupt, they are unable or deliberately refuse to discover the new content which has recently been growing in the democratic movements; as a result, their outlook has become one of electioneering and their political tactics have been reduced to electoral tactics. Yet what else could be the main task before us, if not to enrich the new forms of the mass movements and to undertake political and organizational measures to this end? **Elections must be subordinated and made complementary to this task.** The responsibility to acquaint the people with basic facts and questions rests primarily on us. The people will have to be made conscious of the power-frenzied offensive that may be launched by the reactionaries after the elections are over and of the need for appropriate preparedness. Once again the present party leadership is confining a major section of the leading cadres within the four walls of Parliament and Assemblies, and is reinforcing this pattern in the party's organizational setup. This is the natural culmination of their political thinking and attitude. This is why they brand as 'adventurist' and 'sectarian' anyone who dares to oppose their policy and line. This has given rise to an ideological conflict inside the Party."

Readers who compare the two excerpts, one quoted by Ranadive and the other by us, from the same portion of the original text, can clearly find out for themselves how great is the difference between the two.

There is not only difference in the choice and composition of words, but the idea expressed is also faulty. For instance, the original text reads: "... if conscious efforts were made to advance the mass movements-the form it took in different states, especially in West Bengal-to their natural culmination and if the movements advanced to a higher stage, it is doubtful whether the elections would have been held at all and it is a matter for serious consideration whether the masses could not have been persuaded to boycott the elections at that time." Ranadive renders it thus: "[They say it was possible] to persuade the masses to boycott the elections, if conscious efforts were made to bring to its natural culmination the form which the mass movements displayed in the different states, especially in West Bengal, and to raise the movements to a

higher stage." Clearly, a part of the original text, viz. "it is doubtful whether the elections would have been held at all" has been dropped by Ranadive from his quotation.

Anyway, let us now consider the more original aspects of Ranadive's dishonesty.

Ranadive has left out the first two sentences and the concluding portion of that paragraph in the original text and quotes only the portion in between. The first two sentences clearly testify that the author of the original document at first stressed the importance of taking into account the nature and characteristics of the mass struggles in India during 1965-66 and those of the Indian Revolution and considering every aspect of the 4th General Elections in this context and only then proceeded to make his own observations on what was actually done. And in the concluding portion the author, while reviewing the mass struggles of 1965-66, speaks about the emergence of a "new content" in the mass struggles of the recent period and accuses the leaders for their failure to perceive the same. It is further noticed that it is in the context of the emergence of the new in the mass struggles that the author observed in the concluding portion: "What else could be the main task before us, if not to enrich the new forms of the mass movements and to undertake political and organizational measures to this end?" and "Elections must be subordinated and made complementary to this task." The concluding portion exposes the character of the leadership which believes in parliamentarianism, and says, "Once again the present Party leadership is confining the major section of leading cadres within the four walls of Parliament and Assemblies, and is reinforcing this pattern in the party's organizational setup. This is the natural culmination of their political thinking and attitude."

However, anyone who glances through the portion quoted by Ranadive can find for himself that it is impossible even by the utmost stretching of imagination to extract the meaning from it that the author of the original document was an extreme "boycottist." But that matters little to Ranadive! This is how he follows up his quotation: "It is no use telling these people that through the elections the Party could approach vaster sections of the population than it could do otherwise (*People's Democracy*, July 16, 1967, p.5).

He who has once started to glide down the slippery path of revisionism and yet tries his utmost to cover it up from the eyes of revolutionaries, has inevitably to resort to worse and still worse dishonesty. Ranadive has not proved an exception to this.

In the course of his distorted interpretation of the above excerpt, Ranadive quotes another excerpt from a different document (*Ibid*; col. 2). In this case, however, the identity of the document has been revealed by him which is, "Anonymous letter to P.B. & C.C." The portion which has been quoted out of context is most likely to convey the idea that the author was absolutely against our participation in elections. We have already discussed in our previous article that there was a feeble trend which favoured boycotting the elections. The document may well be by one of them. But the interesting thing to note is how skilfully Ranadive builds up his case so as to make the two different documents appear, at least to the casual readers, as one and the same. Ranadive begins his first quotation with the words, "They say," and continuing the thread of his discussion prefaces his quotation from the second document with these words, "at one place they say...." The identity of the latter has been revealed while that of the former has

been suppressed, and this whole manner of presentation can only lead people to conclude that the authors of the two documents, whom Ranadive calls "they", the same person. Bravo, Ranadive !

Ranadive chose to suppress completely the fact that the Bulletin issued by the 'Committee for Inner-Party Struggle against Revisionism' discussed the characteristics and nature of the mass struggles in India during 1965-66 and of the Indian Revolution and considered the entire matter relating to the 4th General Elections in this context.

We reproduce below the full text of that portion of the Bulletin which relates to the issue we have presently discussed, so as to enable the comrades to judge properly the whole for themselves. The text reads:

The Present Situation and Our Tasks

Now, let us come straight to the main aspect of our document. Our understanding of the present situation, the nature of the activities of our Party in this situation and our general understanding of the perspective or the path of the Indian Revolution—all these we are placing for the consideration of the comrades. This is something fundamental. A clear understanding in this regard and a policy based on it are absolutely essential for a revolutionary Party.

The mass struggles of the recent times clearly show that our country has entered into a phase that marks the beginning of a revolutionary upsurge. The mood of the people of our country is day by day becoming revolutionary. The atmosphere is growing tense as a result of huge social upheavals taking place again and again. The causes of these eruptions happen to be different but it was inconceivable before that they could lead to such eruptions. It is also observed that there was no preconceived plan behind these eruptions; that is to say, they occur quite spontaneously. Again, such outbursts are occurring more and more frequently. In the current year (1966) not a single month passed without the news being published of some section of the people coming into dash with the police in some part of the country or other. No doubt, the nature of these explosions is rather crude, yet their frequent recurrence unmistakably shows that they are nothing but the rumble of the approaching revolutionary tide.

Moreover, the following special characteristics can be traced in the mass struggles of this time:

- (1) Even the movements for partial demands or for certain rights have to face the hard, unyielding attitude of the ruling classes. To fulfil even ordinary demands people have to wage stubborn struggles. In most of the cases these movements are being confronted with the organized might of the ruling classes.
- (2) The consciousness that it is necessary to struggle against the whole system is fast growing. A feeling for change, if not class consciousness, is developing even among backward sections of the people, whose participation determines the sweep and intensity of any movement.
- (3) The traditional weapon of the working class—the general strike—as a means of fighting for demands, as a means of rousing the consciousness of the people, uniting them and drawing them into the struggle—is growing popular.

(4) At the time when people wage united struggles-at the time when democratic mass movements spread, specially during general strikes and *hartals*-hundreds of hitherto unknown agitators emerge; these agitators, in reality, turn out to be very influential because they have the closest ties with the vast masses.

(5) We have already referred to the clashes between the people and the police at the time of struggles. A very significant feature noticeable during these struggles or clashes is that the masses show a firm determination to carry forward the movement in the teeth of fierce police onslaught. People do not surrender enduring these confrontations with the police, the people display ingenuity in devising various methods to weaken the enemy by returning every blow they receive.

This is deeply significant from the point of view of mass struggles. No doubt, such actions are at present crude in nature, but their manifestation is a reality. Their second important characteristic is that in many cases they bear unmistakable signs resembling a civil war. This is specially observed in West Bengal where the ruling class, in order to suppress the democratic movements, depend mainly on the police force on the one hand, and on the other, try to unite all the reactionary forces of their own class for violent attacks on the people.

The fundamental question in the context of the above situation is whether the tremendous social upheaval taking place now throughout the country will develop into an increasingly powerful tidal wave. The only way to have a definite answer to this question is to study carefully the social contradictions behind the present situation and to understand correctly the principal aspects of the contradictions. It is as a result of the sharpening of these contradictions that objective conditions are created for this social upheaval to grow into a tidal wave.

During the post-Second World War period, the contradiction between the imperialist powers within the shrinking and crisis-ridden capitalist system and the contradiction between the imperialists and the working class within every imperialist country began to grow sharp. On the other hand, national liberation struggles, too, against imperialist forces became irresistible. The imperialist powers, in a bid to resolve these contradictions, resorted to the policy of preserving and intensifying their colonial exploitation through neocolonialism. As a result, the contradiction between national liberation movements and imperialist powers has grown more acute and this has proved to be the principal contradiction among all the contradictions of the present-day world. In our country the period 1945-46 was the time when the contradiction and conflict between imperialism and the people became the sharpest. In such a situation the big bourgeoisie (representatives of the monopolists and big capitalists) grew afraid of a popular revolution and established in 1947 the Congress rule on the basis of its collaboration with imperialism in order to preserve intact the imperialist interests and to exploit India's labour power and resources jointly with them.

Since then they have adopted the policy of attempting to resolve the contradiction between imperialism and the Indian national liberation movement at the cost of the people. The phenomenal increase in the tax-load on the Indian people reflects the increasing intensity of the joint exploitation by imperialism and Indian big capital and their attempt to resolve this contradiction at the cost of the Indian masses. It is also reflected in the perpetuation of black-

marketing and inflation, which has brought about a disproportionate difference between the price of the agricultural commodities produced by the peasantry and that of other commodities. To this is added the contradiction arising out of their failure to release the productive forces in the countryside through a radical reform of the feudal land tenure system and thus to reform the land relations in favour of the peasantry. In addition, there is the contradiction due to the unresolved issue of the right to self-determination of various nationalities in a multinational country like India.

As an outcome of the whole process the economy of the country was plunged into an unprecedented crisis in 1962 and the ruling class resorted to turning the economy of the country into a war-economy at the cost of the people. Thus they intensified the exploitation of the people under cover of rabidly chauvinist slogans.

This orientation towards war-economy put India's backward economy under a very great strain and all kinds of contradictions entered into a new phase of intensification. India's economy and political conditions entered a qualitatively new phase since the time of the Sino-Indian border clashes. The situation is like this: The miseries of the vast peasant masses and the poor urban people are beyond endurance; the exploitation of the working class has been intensified to the utmost limit; the plight of the middle class working people is extremely miserable; there is uncertainty and insecurity in different spheres of the social life, crisis in the sphere of education owing to the cut in education expenditure, shrinkage in scope of employment and ever-increasing unemployment and, above all, there is growing lack of confidence in and hatred against the government in the minds of the people. An understanding of this situation and of the true nature of the aforesaid contradictions should make it easy for one to visualize that all the contradictions will inevitably grow increasingly sharper and will certainly make the social upheaval irresistible. The objective conditions for this are growing. This is the main thing. To explain the idea that "A revolutionary flood-tide is inevitable," we may say in the words of Comrade Mao Tse-tung: "A Marxist is not an astrologer; he can merely indicate the general direction as to the future development and change; he can do that much and nothing more. He cannot mechanically foretell the date and hour and never should he do that." [Retranslated from Bengali-Ed.] But to say that "revolutionary flood-tides will soon come" certainly does not mean that it has no significance for our way of functioning. In other words, the analysis and realization that revolutionary flood-tides will soon come underline the necessity for a completely new outlook regarding the whole situation and a new programme of action.

But it is not enough to consider the issue of revolutionary flood-tide in isolation; suitable organizational measures to meet the needs of such a situation must also be considered. This is so, because political activities and organizational measures are inseparably connected. The present stage of our revolution is People's Democratic in nature; this is not a socialist revolution. At the present stage this revolution is directed towards overthrowing imperialism, big and monopoly native capital and feudalism and towards establishing a People's Democratic State. The immediate task to achieve this goal is to end the Congress rule by means of a genuine democratic revolution through militant people's struggles waged under the works class leadership. The main basis on which the People's Democratic State is to be built is the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry. So it is necessary for us to orientate and organize all our activities accordingly. To realize this objective, our immediate aim should be to win over the people as

rapidly as possible both in the rural and in the urban areas to the side of revolution through systematic revolutionary activities; but the key to the victory of the revolution is the leadership of the proletariat. For this it is necessary to establish the base of the party in all principal industrial areas as well as in the workers' organizations of Transport, Post and Telegraph, etc., and to make the Party genuinely proletarian both in its appearance and in its roots, by bringing in truly militant and tested working class cadres. Along with this, powerful working class movements and organizations will have to be built up.

But at the same time the basic orientation of the movement has to be kept in sight. It must not be forgotten that the **main condition for helping the struggle in the urban areas and for hastening the nationwide revolutionary flood-tide is to develop the struggle for land, which is the basic struggle of the peasantry in the rural areas.** So, we must give serious attention to this matter. But, this does not mean giving up the struggles in the urban areas or minimizing their importance. Again, to neglect, in any way, the task of developing basic struggles and building up militant bases in the rural areas, will be a fatal mistake. Hence the necessity for building up powerful broad-based peasant organizations, especially mass organizations of agricultural labourers, of poor sharecroppers and of poor peasants, which will create objective conditions for establishing militant bases. It is our conviction that with the resources which our party **has at present, and provided a genuine class-consciousness is there,** it should not prove difficult for the Party to tackle the problem of these two types of organizational activities. But that requires a conscious effort, a revolutionary initiative and efficient leadership.

The Emergence Of The New In Indian Mass Struggles

While we should, under the sustaining inspiration of this understanding, ceaselessly strive to develop the organizational and militant activities of the above two types, serious attention must be given at the same time to the **new** - which, from time to time, appears like a flash of lightning and electrifies the whole atmosphere during its brief spell of existence. We must realize its significance, realize its revolutionary potentiality in the context of the programme of action discussed before. In fact, this 'new' urges us to free our thoughts and outlook from the stereotyped grooves of activities. We are speaking of those clashes which are taking place between the people and the organized forces of the ruling class in time of mass struggle-and in some cases features of a civil war are witnessed, even if in flashes. A politically conscious revolutionary must recognize the essence of the aspirations of the people which find expression during such clashes, of the preparations for resistance which in many cases they organize spontaneously. There can be no doubt that these are, though in an embryonic form, the highest form of struggle aspired to by revolutionaries. In the past also a good many struggles were fought, but, in the recent years, their frequent occurrences and the activities of the people during these occurrences **clearly make them qualitatively different from those of the past. These are plainly an embryonic form of what are required to bring about revolutionary changes in the society. So, the bounden duty of this moment is to give all attention to ensure proper nurturing of this embryo, so that it can grow and develop as a well-nourished entity within the womb of mass struggles to its full maturity. This will pave the way for the victory of the People's Democratic Revolution.** Therefore, to continue to neglect the task of generalizing this 'new' will mean gross failure to carry out our Marxist revolutionary duty. Failure to do this will mean reducing the struggles to reformist movements totally devoid of revolutionary content. So,

it is necessary to be vigilant in this regard. On the whole, what we need is a new outlook, a new strategy and new tactics in regard to struggles and organizations and a truly revolutionary way of functioning.

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