

THE "NAXALITE" MOVEMENT IN INDIA

By Sharad Jhaveri

Jamnagar

ing the Naxalite "evil."

It has been reported in the press that at a May Day meeting in Calcutta, Kanu Sanyal, the leader of the peasant struggles of Naxalbari (in the Darjeeling District of West Bengal), had announced the formation of a third Communist party, styled as the "Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)." It is reported that Mr. Sanyal had openly proclaimed the need for an armed insurrection based on the peasantry. Asit Sen, another theoretician of the "Naxalites," who presided over this meeting, hailed the Chinese Communist party and said they will be guided by Chairman Mao's thoughts.

This reported constitution of the Naxalites into a single all-India party has raised a veritable war cry amongst the bourgeois spokesmen and papers. The matter was raised in parliament and many members, mainly from the rightist Swatantra party and the ruling Congress party, urged Home Minister Chavan to take a serious view of this development and nip it in the bud. (Indian Express, 8 May 1969.)

Chavan has assured the members by observing that the government is against armed revolution, no matter who it came from -- Mao, Marx, or Manu (a reactionary ideologue of the Indian patriarchal system -- S.J.). Chavan also stated in parliament that he was trying to meet the leaders of the opposition parties with a view to evolving the strategy of combat-

It is reported that Chavan has already written a circular to various opposition leaders informing them that the government is thinking of amending the Unlawful Activities Act so as to cover the case of the Naxalite party also. It is significant that the pro-Moscow Communist party has opposed this move while there are obvious differences amongst the leaders of the Communist party (Marxist) of India. Mr. Jyoti Basu, deputy leader of the West Bengal United Front government and leader of CPI(M), views the Naxalite movement merely as a "law and order" problem, while Mr. Namboodiripad, another CPI(M) leader and chief minister of the Kerala United Front government dominated by CPI(M), is inclined to treat it as a political problem.

At present the strength of the Naxalites is estimated at 4,500.

In West Bengal during the midterm elections [in February 1969], they launched a boycott movement which proved a total failure. So far not a single systematic approach to create revolutionary bases in rural areas has been reported.

In Uttar Pradesh [UP] and Bihar the Naxalites have the support of an influential section of the leaders who have left the CPI(M). They are active in ten districts of Bihar-Ranchi, Dhanbad, Palamau, Singhbhum and Bhagalpur. They have penetrated into the tribal areas where

tribals are being organised by Hirenroy Roy, who pleads for a separate tribal state with the right of secession.

In Andhra Pradesh, a large chunk of the CPI(M) has joined the movement led by T. Nagi Reddy who is fully committed to Chinese strategy.

The Naxalite movement is distinguished by its uncritical and absolutely blind admiration for Mao and by its wholesale importation of Mao's strategy of partisan warfare in India, in total disregard of the specific dialectic of the Indian situation (well-developed network of transportation and communication deeply entrenched, highly centralized administrative and state apparatus, lack of traditions of protracted armed civil war, still unexhausted parliamentary reformist potential of the Indian bourgeoisie, etc.).

The Naxalites regard the state as representing the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords; whereas in reality it is purely and simply a state of the Indian bourgeoisie. Sanyal considers that the principal contradiction is between the people and feudalism (Liberation, Vol. 2, November 1968, p. 30, "Report on the Peasant Movement in Terai Region"). Thereby the entire capitalist growth of India since 1947 is wiped out.

According to Sanyal, the peasants are the basis and main force of the anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggle. He predicates the liberation of the other oppressed classes on the liberation of the peasants. Thereby the role of the Indian proletariat (so aptly and graphically delineated in the programme of the Socialist Workers party of India [Trotskyist]) is obliterated. By centering their attention entirely on rural areas, in accordance with the Chinese model, the Naxalites overlook several factors of

vital import.

These include: (1) The vital importance of the cities in the present context of the Indian economy. They are being increasingly industrialised in contrast to the forcible dismantling of the coastal cities of China by Japan after the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution. (2) The increasingly indispensable role of the Indian proletariat in the process of production under the bourgeoisie's ever-increasing emphasis on industrialisation. (3) The impossibility of maintaining isolated zones of liberation in India in view of the highly developed science of counterinsurgency placed at the disposal of the Indian bourgeoisie by the experiences of American imperialism, and in view of the easier accessibility and penetrability of such zones under Indian geographical and social conditions by counterinsurgents as compared with the Latin-American countries, etc.

The Naxalites have still to evolve a correct orientation on the question of the nature of the next Indian revolution. Is it bourgeois-democratic or socialist? Or will it be socialist, under proletarian hegemony, but solve first the unfilled tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, such as the agrarian question? The Naxalites have not even raised these questions.

The Socialist Workers party of India has viewed the adventurist activities of the Naxalites as a reaction of petty-bourgeois radicals who still accept the theory of a four-class alliance.

The danger at present is that of deliberate exaggeration of the activities of this tendency by the bourgeoisie, out of all proportion, to justify its own repressive throttling of the remnants of bourgeois liberty operative in India.