

## TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE REVOLUTIONARY PRAXIS

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### On Leninist Conception of Party

I had argued in my pamphlet “Why did I break with SUCI-brand of Pseudo Marxism” that (1) the revolutions could occur [for instance, 1871 Paris Commune, Russian Revolutions of 1905 and of February 1917] irrespective of parties, that is, without the pre-dominant influence of any r-r-r-revolutionary party over the overwhelming majority of the masses [an indispensable pre-condition for success of revolution according to Shibdas Ghosh]; (2) A revolutionary party is to promote the self-activity of the proletariat; and is not meant to substitute itself for this self-activity. No where I have said, the party is unnecessary or superfluous. I have merely fought the SUCI’s pseudo-Leninist dogma that without a revolutionary party there cannot be a revolution. My contention was and is that the self-activity of the masses, not the party, is the starting point for any revolution, bourgeois-democratic or proletarian-socialist. The party or parties or the individuals however powerful and wise, can at best be the agents of intervention working towards acceleration or retardation of a revolution, the spontaneous act of the masses; (3) Lenin’s model of ‘What is to be done’(1902) which emphasised the profound need for a revolutionary party formed around a band of professional revolutionaries, I argued, was partly influenced by Kautskyian proposition ‘Socialism comes from without’ (which Shibdas Ghosh wrongly ascribes to Lenin) and was relevant only to the peculiar, specific conditions of the then Russia (Czarist coercion and ban of open and legal revolutionary activities). Lenin himself had admitted it, and went on revising and recasting the 1902 model in order to restore the role of the masses to its proper place (the decisive, and determining one) as counter-posed to that of the party. The mature Lenin, the Lenin of Bolshevik revolution and its aftermath, the Lenin, liberated from the last vestige of Kautskyian elitism should be the starting point of our study on Leninist conception of the party. Stalin whose ‘History of CPSU(B)’ is only an one-sided and distorted account of the Russian Revolutions (the book did not recognize any contributions of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Kollntai etc. and made only derogatory references to these names and other rivals of Stalin) has made a vulgar caricature of Leninism and cannot serve the present day revolutionaries as a handbook on Leninist conception of party .

Those who still parrot the hackneyed formula “without a revolutionary party..... ” in the name of Lenin should read between the lines the following two passages of mature Lenin to find out the truth for themselves.

### **1. CONDITIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION**

To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms; (1) when it

is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is crisis in one form or another, among the “upper classes”, a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for “the lower classes not to want” to live in the old way; it is also necessary that “the upper classes should be unable” to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in “peace time”, but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the “upper classes” themselves in the independent historical action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution as a general rule is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation. Such a situation existed in 1905 in Russia, and in all revolutionary periods in the West; it also existed in Germany in the sixties of the last century, and in Russia in 1859- 61 and 1879-80 although no revolution occurred in these instances. Why was that? It was because it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution, revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break ( or dislocate ) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, “falls” if it is not toppled over.

Such are the Marxist views on revolution, views that have been developed many, many times, have been accepted as indisputable by all Marxists, and for us Russians, were corroborated in a particularly striking fashion by the experiences of 1905.

**( Lenin: The Collapse of the Second International)**

## **2. CONDITIONS OF SUCCESSFUL INSURRECTION**

One of the most vicious and probably most widespread distortions of Marxism resorted to by the dominant “socialist” parties is the opportunist lie that preparation for insurrection, and generally the treatment of insurrection as an art, is “Blanquism”.

Bernstein, the leader of opportunism, has already earned himself unfortunate fame by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and when our present-day opportunists cry Blanquism they do not improve on or “enrich” the meager “ideas” of Bernstein one little bit.

Marxists are accused of Blanquism for treating insurrection as an art. Can there be a more flagrant perversion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner, referring to insurrection specifically as an art, saying that it must be treated as an art, that you must win the first success and then proceed from success to success, never ceasing the offensive against the enemy taking advantage of his confusion, etc, etc.?

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that turning point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Blanquism.

Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an art is betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution. **(Lenin: Marxism and Insurrection)**

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