

On the Horns of a Dilemma

April 30, 2010 | Gautam Sen

The present essay has been written with the object of examining the ongoing war-like situation between the Indian State and the CPI (Maoist) [henceforth referred to as the 'Maoists']. We ought, therefore, to begin our discussion with a description of this war-like situation.

We have seen that in the name of suppressing the Maoists, the Indian home minister has, on behalf of the Indian state, already made preparations for a long war, which has been launched as a semi-military campaign in the Maoist strongholds; a few extra battalions have been kept ready, while the air force is supposed to keep a vigil on the ground operations even as it awaits a formal order to launch an air-borne attack. A satellite reconnaissance mission, to keep a watch on the Maoist guerillas and to indicate their positions, is also in place. There has, however, been no formal declaration of war and hence no deployment of the army as yet, pressure from a section of the ruling class for the same notwithstanding. On the other hand, an armed campaign has simultaneously been launched by the Maoists against the Indian state with a call to overthrow it. It is as part of this campaign that a police officer was taken in as a prisoner of war by the Maoists, who subsequently let him go on the condition that a specific number of Maoists in police custody be released. Thus, a similar declaration of war seems to have been issued from the Maoist side too. Our task, in the midst of such war preparations by both sides and the military challenges they have thrown at each other, must be to attempt an analysis of the entire situation.

It must be noted that the state conducting this military operation against the Maoists is one that is democratic, not colonial, fascist or some other kind of autocratic institution. The well-known system of 'check and balance' is in place here, what with the existence of an active and independent Parliament, executive and judiciary, which are expected to work within certain constitutionally-ordained limits. The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the right to organisation, and even assures the right to life and self-defence.

In this context, a few more characteristics of Indian democracy ought to be mentioned. This kind of autocratic aggression by a democratic state against a section of its own population is

sanctioned here by Parliament as well as the Constitution. It is true that Parliament is constituted by representatives elected by the people on the basis of universal suffrage, but the nature of this election is such that irrespective of all the ongoing debates and differences of opinion amongst the rival parliamentary parties, it is pre-determined that the elected government would follow the capitalist path and would adopt anti-people measures. It is also true that compared to a feudal state, the structure of the bureaucracy, army as well as the judiciary in a modern bourgeois state is certainly relatively more democratic, since one need not formally belong to the class of aristocrats in order to be included in these organs. Besides, in no sense does the ruling class exercise any direct control over any of these institutions. Every citizen has the right to be appointed to positions within these institutions. That said, there is no denying that the indirect power of capital remains operative in these areas to such an extent that in case of a deep, fundamental class conflict, all these organs separately and collectively take the side of the dominant class as well as the established economic and social relations. Moreover, any perceptive person knows and understands, how with the magic touch of money even the democratic rights of expressing opinions, publishing newspapers, holding meetings and so on, which are purportedly for everyone, actually remain reserved for and in favour of the haves and against the have-nots. (This is even when the restrictions and negations of these rights through the continual interventions of the police and the law are not accounted for.)

Above all, in a capitalist society the democratic rights provided for by a most democratic Constitution are always appended by parallel provisions capable of being used and explained in order to suppress the very democratic rights of people in the interest of the ruling classes. The recent promulgation of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and other similar repressive laws, and their implementation, ought to be understood in this light.

The prime minister has, on behalf of the democratic state of India, repeatedly asserted that the Maoists are the greatest internal security danger the country currently faces. Based on this assessment, the chief ministers of various states have, at the Union home minister's behest, enforced the sternest of measures to safeguard themselves from this danger. However, it does not require one to be an economist or a professor of sociology or political science to understand that this is an attempt to completely invert the cause-effect relationship. Simple common sense would suffice to grasp the reality. While not even the minimum requirement for food, clothing and shelter has been met during

more than six decades of the existence of the democratic republic of independent India, this attempt by the state to teach lessons in democracy is not only shameful but a tragic farce. In spite of all the tall claims contained in all the five-year plans and the so-called development achieved through them, the truth is that only a handful have gained immensely while the majority have almost nothing. In a country, where the biggest problem of security, as far as people go, are posed by hunger, poverty and the uncertainty of life and livelihood, the prime minister's statement shows nothing but indifference and contempt for the suffering of the people and is an insult to democracy. In response to the prime minister's false and deliberately confusing statement we must openly say that far from being the problem, Maoism is an expression of the burning problems facing this country, a revolt against the most cruel and depriving aspects that make for the undemocratic content of this democratic state. We must remember that not even the minimum norms of bourgeois democracy are observed in the affected areas. Anyone can be arrested at anytime of the day or night, anyone can be beaten on a mere suspicion or complaint, not even children or the old are spared, the women can be subjected to sexual harassment with impunity. Police in these areas have been given authoritarian power to ill-treat people even without introducing any special laws. As a matter of fact, many representatives of the ruling class have, albeit in a gesture that is rather belated, pointed out these excesses. Many human rights organisations have pointed to socio-economic causes behind the revolts of the deprived masses, which include the indigenous Adivasis in various marginal areas of India. These revolts, which are being inspired and organised by the Maoists, have succeeded in gaining a degree of justification. The real situation in these areas can no longer be hidden behind the excuses of law and order. In this situation, Romain Rolland's famous saying that "Where order is injustice, there disorder is the beginning of justice," becomes absolutely pertinent.

Even after granting due recognition to the democratic character of the Indian state, the undemocratic aspects of this democracy get exposed to anyone paying a little attention to the phenomenon. First, the Indian state is armed from head to foot with army, police, courts and jails, ever-ready for use against the people. Second, no government helming the Indian state ever feels responsible or gives even an iota of recognition to the democratic language of protests expressed through the dissenting voices of its people. Only when there is a violent reaction, do they sometimes respond positively. Third, the ministers as well as the big bosses of administration, police, army and the judiciary, enjoying hefty salaries and perks, possessing shares of big corporations and

socialising with the capitalists in elite clubs, lean naturally towards the rich and the propertied classes. They have no inclination or need to pay attention to the daily indignities and injustices heaped upon the oppressed and the poor. Moreover, the way Kashmir and several states of Northeast have been forced to live under permanent rule of the army within the geo-political boundaries of India, puts to shame all accepted norms of democracy. In this situation, the responsibility for the armed struggle as well as the revolt of the oppressed masses and oppressed nationalities against the rule of law does not lie upon those who rise up in revolt, but upon the deaf and blind anti-people Indian state. In fact, the entire ruling class ought to be held responsible for inciting the armed uprising of the people against the rule of law and the Constitution.

However, in the interest of democracy and for the establishment of a higher form of democratic practice and culture in society, we cannot support or condone the Maoist agenda. The kind of operation launched by the Maoists to eliminate 'class-enemies' or their strategy of annihilation of individuals is antithetical to the extensive participation of the masses in people's movements. It is also against a favourable atmosphere for a free exchange of different viewpoints within the movement required for its advancement. The Maoists have been killing local activists or office bearers of rival political parties and issuing threats against them. This action of the Maoists cannot be condoned on the ground that the victims are police informers, hated scoundrels or have been punished by the people's courts. Since, first of all, in most of the cases the accusers, judges and executors of punishment are the same persons and this kind of judicial system is in no way higher or more progressive than the existing one, but is rather of a lower standard and regressive, more so in the absence of necessary opportunity and space for the accused to defend his / her case. Secondly, it is not sufficient that the Maoist authorities and the people under their influence believe that the accused are really the perpetrators of the crime they are accused of and that proper justice is being rendered to the accused through the people's court, (although even in these cases it would be necessary to ascertain whether a situation of fearlessness prevails in the area for people to appreciate and approve of these judgments delivered by the people's courts) but they have to become credible even to people who come to know of them from a distance. In these fast-track people's courts, however, there is no scope for such things. Moreover, taking into consideration the degeneration of human as well as democratic values in today's world, we cannot approve of any death sentence whatsoever. Since the Maoists think they enjoy massive support in the areas controlled by them and claim that the

charges against the accused person are transparent to the masses, it ought to be possible for them to isolate and even neutralise the accused. And in case punishment is deemed to be necessary, it should be of a kind aimed at reforming the accused. All vengeful attitudes towards the accused ought to be avoided in the interest of fair justice. (Some of the accused may become targets of attack by spontaneous anger of the masses, but we are discussing here the system of punishment through trial by people's courts.) There is something that needs to be particularly taken note of here: the villagers, both those who are condemned to death by the Maoists in their people's courts and the ones killed by them without any such trial, are mostly poor laborers. We may say the same thing about the common armymen or police constables – they are labourers in uniform.

Now coming to a more fundamental question; even if we were to grant for the sake of argument that the killing of political leaders or individuals suspected of being police informers are merely excesses or mistakes committed by the Maoists, what does the path of guerrilla warfare promise in the specific conditions of India? It should be kept in mind that till today guerrilla wars have succeeded only in countries subjugated by a colonial power, oppressed as a nation or ruled by an autocratic state power. In other words, guerilla wars have succeeded where the immediate aim is defined in terms of national liberation from a colonial power or a democratic revolution within a country. But, in a situation where the struggle is against the undemocratic content of a democratic state, that is, against the power of capital continuously truncating and limiting democracy, converting it into a paradise for the rich and a deceptive inferno for the poor, guerrilla warfare of a handful of determined militants as the only or primary mode of struggle cannot lead that struggle to a desirable end. In a country such as India where democracy exists in an incomplete, deformed state, and where the problem lies in transcending from a stage of national liberation to that of human liberation, or transformation of a formal democracy into a real democracy, we need extended mass movements enriched by the extensive participation of all sections of masses. That is, free and unfettered development of class struggle. Only such unfettered struggles can lead to class consciousness, overthrowing of the democratic state dominated by capital and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship enriched with a higher form of democracy suitable for abolition of capitalism as well as socialist transformation. Whether this struggle for liberation could take the form of an armed struggle, whether a partial use of guerilla warfare would be required or not and what other forms of struggle are needed would be determined

by the existing situation, and is a question of tactics. However, it can be said in general that neither armed struggle nor unarmed struggle, nor even a combination of the two can be raised to a level of principle in our struggle for freedom from exploitation and oppression of capital. It is nevertheless true that the ruling classes are armed to the teeth and their state apparatus is fully prepared to impose violence on the masses. It is also true that they will not quit their ground willingly. Therefore, a demonstration of people's power and deployment of force by the masses becomes an inevitable necessity. As Marx says, "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one."

In this context, we should discuss the fallacies and confusion of those who advise the Indian Maoists to return to the mainstream in blind pursuance of the example of the Nepali Maoists. We would do well to remember that in Nepal the people's movements as well as the movements of various political parties were directed against monarchic autocratic political power towards the aim of accomplishment of an unfinished democratic revolution. Accordingly, when conditions for the establishment of a democratic republic were created in Nepal, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), keeping aside its own agenda of 'People's Democratic Revolution', joined the process of establishing democracy along with other competing parties. Thus by choosing greenness of life to the greyness of theory they demonstrated their wisdom. It is a different question altogether – which can only be answered by the future course of events – whether by sharing power in this democratic republic, the Nepali Maoists succeed in raising democracy in the newly born democratic republic to the higher level of 'people's democratic revolution' or are entirely coopted by bourgeois democracy. The outcome of the process of their newly formed hostile relationship with other participating parties is also yet to be seen. But this example of Nepal, given the altogether different condition of the Indian state and socio-economic system, has little relevance for figuring out the suitable strategy and appropriate tactics necessary to carry it through. It must be noted that even those who have adopted the agenda of Peoples Democratic Revolution in India do not raise the slogan of democratic republic or "so and so quit India". Hence the question of following the Nepali Maoists to return to the mainstream is superfluous here. It is, however, true that in the context of a parliamentary democratic state the question of participating in parliamentary struggles along with the main form of extra-parliamentary struggles is not an insignificant tactical question but a tactical question that is worthy of serious consideration and engagement.

A few others would want to initiate another kind of discussion saying that since we have many instances in this country and elsewhere of governments coming forward to talk with armed militants, it is highly inappropriate and out of character for the Indian government to not invite the Maoists for talks. They also criticise and dispute the government's insistence on the Maoists renouncing violence and laying down arms as a precondition for talks with them. Before we form a proper opinion on this, attention needs to be focused on a fundamental and a specific characteristic of the Maoist struggle which differentiates it from other struggles. The anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa, the struggle for self-determination of Ireland, and the struggle for transfer of power in India had the characteristics of a fundamental strife but at the end of the day they were all resolvable through mutual discussions. The same is true of the struggle for self-determination in Nagaland, Mizoram, Kashmir and Manipur. The demands for separate states of Bodoland, Gorkhaland, Telangana and Jharkhand within the Indian State are of a different kind but are equally resolvable through discussions. Unlike any of the above, however, the ultimate objectives of the Maoists are not attainable through negotiation. [Although the Maoists have declared freedom from exploitation as their final goal, their immediate objective is seizure of state power in India following the traditions of the 'Communist Party' states in China, Vietnam, Hungary, Romania, and so on for stamping their 'socialist blueprint' on society. But having seen the results of all such previous experiments, the big question is to what extent can such societies actually achieve freedom from exploitation. Anyway, as an accompaniment of the Maoist agenda, founding of parallel state power has been part of their strategy in the predominantly jungle areas where they have succeeded in establishing their hegemony.] But it is, of course, desirable that discussions be held in the areas of conflict around the burning problems faced by the inhabitants of these areas, to determine in what conditions, joint forces can be withdrawn to restore the previously existing rule of law. Through these measures a few urgent reforms in favour of people can be achieved along with a reduction in the ongoing tension and conflict in these areas. A few positive gains can certainly be expected as a consequence of the continuous revolts of the marginal people and the attempts-for-revolution by the Maoists. Some 'development' would reach these neglected areas; the people of these areas would be treated with dignity and as equals with those of the mainland and would get the equal benefits of democratic procedures available in the mainland. This may expand the horizons of Indian democracy (of course within bourgeois limits) and create space for free expansion of class struggle. Already, the people of these areas have

succeeded in conveying this strong message to the ruling class and the people at large that they deserve to get equal rights with the rest of the people of India. Herein lies the strength and the beauty of these revolts.

We now enter into a discussion on the issue from another angle. If the central government decides to crack down on the Maoists by assembling the entire military might at its disposal and by coordinating its actions with the concerned state governments, the adverse reaction which is bound to be provoked by that might place the Indian state in an extremely awkward situation. It would amount to a declaration of war by a democratic state upon a section of its own citizens. That, while it is within the limits of the constitutional rights of this (exploitative) democratic state, exposes its extreme undemocratic nature that it wishes to hide. The fact that the Maoists are actively holding on and growing in strength in many of their strongholds is not only because of the shelter being provided to them by the marginal, indigenous people but also because the latter are directly participating in the struggle. Moreover, the way the Maoists are using the jungles as their base of operations, it is impossible to selectively target or attack them. So, any desperate attack by the government would create an adverse reaction not only in the minds of the Indian people but also among the international community at large. Besides, this kind of a step by the ruling class is likely to be strongly rebuffed by the forces and traditions of democratic culture and in the milieu of political democracy in India (however truncated and one-sided it might be), which would certainly not be desirable for the ruling class. And for this very reason, keeping pace with the increasing intensity of the ruling class offensive, new oppressive laws would be promulgated and implemented and there would be curtailment of democratic rights. We, therefore, need to pay serious attention to another issue. The restrictive steps taken by the state will not only curb the democratic rights of common people, sections of the ruling bourgeoisie and their political parties will also be deprived of these rights; as a result they would find it more difficult to mobilise people's opinion in order to pressure or run the government in concert with their respective sectional interests. It is very much doubtful if and to what extent the Indian bourgeoisie can digest and accept curtailment of their democratic rights. We have seen, when in order to keep herself in power, Indira Gandhi launched an all-out attack on democratic rights by declaring Emergency in 1975, she failed to win the bourgeoisie over even by imposing a number of repressive measures upon the working class along with a number of favorable measures for the bourgeoisie. It is well-known how almost the entire bourgeois class had revolted

against the Emergency and the masses steeped in the democratic ethos of India had rejected it by taking advantage of the half-chance provided by the 1977 general election.

Four decades have gone by since. Meanwhile, the power of democratic traditions has become more deeply ingrained in the body-politic and within the political culture of India. This is why, on the question of decisively combating the Maoist challenge the ruling classes are in a dilemma. This dilemma is being expressed in the form of differences even within the main ruling party, Congress. Debates and differences are being expressed more openly and questions are being raised even within the partner parties of the ruling coalition in many states including West Bengal. Although principally in agreement on the question of launching an offensive on the Maoists, no one is ready to take upon themselves the entire responsibility of an actual strike, taking into account the probable consequences. This, however, does not mean that the Indian state will never be able to take stringent measures on behalf of the ruling classes. But it is really on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, faced with the challenge they are obliged to demonstrate the sovereign existence of the state, to uphold its honour as well as law and order. On the other hand, if implemented in practice this is bound to foment internal dissidence. Besides, if unlimited terror is unleashed by the state and increasingly stringent repressive laws are implemented through a concomitant curtailment of democratic rights, there is every possibility that opposition political parties would leverage them as popular issues in a future election to defeat the current ruling clique. The far-sighted representatives of the ruling classes are also troubled by another apprehension. If, instead of addressing exploitation, deprivation and oppression on the soil on which Maoism was born, the ruling classes respond through the power of the gun, then the suppressed anger of the people may erupt like a huge volcano of people's revolt and may spread beyond the orbit of the Maoists and the marginal Adivasis, gripping the imagination of the common masses all over the country and may even infect the state's own security forces. If that happens, neither construction of new jails nor implementation of special laws can save the situation for them. These are reasons why the ruling classes are taking a few steps forward only to take a few steps back. Even if they decide to strike they are unsure whether or not their bite would be as strong as their barking.

And precisely because of the same reason – the existence of a democratic bourgeois state – the Maoists too are caught in another kind of self-contradiction. Although theoretically they do not

recognise the existence of a democratic state in India, nevertheless they take advantage of each and every opportunity provided by this democracy and wish to appropriate such opportunities to the cause of their declared objective and programme. Had it not been so they wouldn't have initiated the movement for freeing of prisoners or participated in the trial sessions in (bourgeois) courts in accordance with (bourgeois) laws or utilised the news and electronic media and, above all, mobilise as well as welcome protests of bourgeois civil society and public opinion against repression of their movement by the bourgeois state. [However, their failure to recognise India as a democracy on the basis of its repressive state apparatus detracts them from their objective and confuses their strategy and political propaganda. On the one hand, they fail to see that even the most democratic nation in the world is similarly flawed, the reason for which cannot be found in the revealed characteristics of the state, since capital succeeds in implanting its indirect but definite imprint upon it. On the other hand, they fail to see that in a capital-dominated democratic state; the thrust of our struggle ought to be directed against capital itself. Their futile attempts to mark as enemy feudalism or semi-feudalism (which are practically extinct except as a cultural remnant) or semi/ neo-colonialism (which came to an end on August 15, 1947) disorients them from developing a thorough, wholehearted struggle against the bourgeois content of this democracy. Many of them give a call for an independent India free from imperialism (which ought to be identified as a form of capitalism to be dealt with at the global level.)] Moreover, it is much more difficult to break the feeling of one-ness between the rulers and the ruled in a democratic state than in an authoritarian/colonial state devoid of democracy. Similarly, it is possible to strike at an autocratic or a colonial state from outside and can be turned into a democratic or independent state by seizure of state power, but in the case of a democratic state it has an altogether different trajectory. In the former case, the revolution is terminated within the bourgeois limit by achieving bourgeois democracy or Independence, whereas in the later case it would be required to destroy the autocratic content of bourgeois democracy from within the bourgeois state and instead of the seizure of state power it would be necessary to smash it and replace it by a new higher form of democracy. At the same time, we have to keep in mind that the destruction of the state is not the end of the said revolution but its beginning. Armed with the characteristics of a qualitatively higher form of democracy, a democratic state under the dictatorship of the proletariat, a democratic state to end the rule of capital would begin its journey. In fact, although it might be possible to broadly indicate a few signposts towards the goal of socialism, the entire project of

socialist transformation lies in the mist of future. After the establishment of the proletarian state, the proletariat will have to advance step by step, very carefully towards socialism and this requires initiatives and creativity of the masses, the indispensable precondition for which is the healthy expressions of multiple opinions and debates accompanied by the free-st form of democracy.

Conclusions

1. As the US is the number one terrorist in the political arena of the world today, in the same way the Indian state is the real terrorist in the context of Indian politics. A great majority of Indian population today is confronted with the terror of hunger, poverty, eviction from land, life and means of livelihood on the one hand and on the other are faced with parliamentary as well as extra-parliamentary terror. And in most cases the so-called anti-national terrorist activities and the armed rebellions are outbursts against these desperate conditions. However, even while accepting the justification for these revolts, we cannot support or condone the methods of struggle persuaded by them since their acts inflict serious damage upon the total perspective of our struggle. But at the same time it should be clear that while our critique of state terror is a principled one, our critique of the erroneous path of the Maoists is a comradely criticism within the same camp of sisterly organisations.

2. The existing conditions remaining the same, no final outcome is possible in the ongoing battle between the Maoists and the Indian State. Taking into account the socio-economic conditions of India, the existence of various political forces and the democratic nature of the Indian republic, it can be said that since the strategy followed by the Maoists is dependent upon the support of the marginal and Adivasi people and the Maoist tactic of using inaccessible jungles, the possibility that the Maoists would be able to expand their influence in the main cities, towns and the vast expanse of the rural areas is bleak. Not to speak of their declared final goal of establishment of an exploitation-free society, even the immediate goal of the seizure of state power through their programme appears to be almost impossible. The success achieved by the Maoists, it appears, can only fluctuate within certain limits, since their guerrilla warfare is confronted with one of the most well-armed, well-trained modern army in the world. On the other hand, it is also a fact that as long as a section of Indian people continue to suffer extreme poverty and hunger, are forced to live in perpetual uncertainty over means of livelihood and subjected to

extreme neglect and indignity, the Indian state will neither be able to halt the ongoing Maoist insurgency nor stymie the possibility of such Maoist-type of rebellions in the future. Some times the rebellion might appear in the form of Naxalism or Maoism, at others inspired by some other ideology. It is, however, not likely that the think-tanks and the administrators of the Indian state are not aware of this peril. But the Indian rulers do not either have the necessary will to allocate the required budget for the amelioration of the extreme misery of the people, or lack sufficient courage to target the vested interests and status quo. So, probably this kind of rebellion has some historical justification if only to wake up the rulers from their deep slumber. But the eagerness of the Indian ruling classes for a military solution to the crisis, instead of a socio-economic one, shows that they would be satisfied if they succeed in merely reducing the intensity of the Maoist insurgency to a tolerable level. The problem, however, lies elsewhere. Although the far-sighted representatives of the Indian ruling class know and understand their own limitations, they have nothing much to offer in the immediate future. And the Maoists, under the strong influence and inspiration of their ideology, are simply incapable of comprehending the limitation of their programme and the long-term futility of their methods. Simultaneously, the indifference and non-intervention of the broad masses of people outside the conflict zones have made the situation worse – more complex, painful and bloody.

3. We have seen how the rights of the media, freedom of expression, freedom to hold meetings, assemblies etc naturally incline towards the rich and the powerful in our day to day life. We have also seen that the most democratic constitution and the democratic laws adopted according to this constitution are invalidated by undemocratic provisions and statutes when needed. These undemocratic laws and statues can easily be used to clear all the obstacles from the path of capital accumulation and also to block the real and potential protests and movements whenever necessary. That's not all. Whenever it is found that the existing laws and provisions do not suffice to suppress protests and revolts, new black laws are promulgated, excessive power is bestowed upon the police, army and the administration; the much publicized 'check and balance' of bourgeois democracy gets paralyzed and even the existing authority of the remaining institutions of the democratic state (e.g. the parliament and the judiciary) are taken away. Moreover, it is now becoming clear from the circumstantial evidence that the Indian rules have a specific agenda to turn this country into the free playing-field of the corporate capital both foreign and domestic. The recent onslaught for the suppression of

Maoists as well as restriction of democracy is a move towards accomplishing the same agenda. Thus the question of democracy in India has moved beyond the arena of civil rights into the arena of class-struggle. Explaining it more broadly, we can say that the issue of protecting and expanding democratic rights in a bourgeois society quite naturally becomes an agenda of class-struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

4. Under the impact and reactions of India's democratic state, a completely different kind of movement could have freed the Indian state, its rulers and the government on the one hand and the Maoist militants on the other from the horns of this dilemma – unleashing of an unbounded class-struggle and mass-struggle, the consequence for the absence of which is being expressed painfully in Indian politics. There are various reasons why the working class can never toe the line of armed struggle by a handful of armed militants. Firstly, the style of working class struggle by its very nature is open and expansive; the more widespread its mobilizations the more forcefully will it be able to resist the offensive of the ruling classes and to strike more powerful blows on capital. Secondly as a class it is aware that a general strike accompanied by widespread resistance, initiative and creativity of masses can deliver the mortal blow to capitalism, contrary to armed guerilla warfare, which is not a suitable strategy for it. But, why the revolts of the oppressed and the exploited are not taking the most suitable and desirable route of class-struggle, the form of struggle which could have simultaneously replaced the undesirable path of the ongoing rebellion and combated the destructive offensive of capitalism; the search for the reasons, background and transforming- alternatives is a subject matter of a different discussion. However, to make a brief comment – the absence of this struggle, the continued predominance of dirty, parliamentary politics is aiding the Maoist cause even though indirectly. Similarly the Maoist agenda and the response of the state to it are continuing to harm the possibility of the struggle taking desired shape.

We have to look ahead and move forward with this perception of reality.

Translated from Bangla by Arvind Ghosh and originally published in Radical Notes, 4 February 2010