

A Few Words About Guerrilla Actions

—Charu Mazumdar

[This article is based on notes taken at a recent meeting of revolutionary peasant cadres at which Comrade Charu Mazumdar gave some practical advice regarding guerrilla actions in the countryside. The notes are approved by the author.—Ed. *Liberation*]

1. **How to form guerrilla units :** *Complete secrecy* must be observed in forming a guerrilla unit. The unit should be kept secret from those among the local people whose vigilance has not yet reached the required level, and even from those Party units which have not yet fully mastered the methods and discipline required for illegal work.

The method of forming a guerrilla unit has to be wholly conspiratorial. No inkling of such a conspiracy should be given out even in the meetings of the political units of the Party. This conspiracy should be between individuals, and on a person to person basis. The petty bourgeois intellectual comrade must take the initiative in this respect as far as possible. He should approach the poor peasant who, in his opinion, has the most revolutionary potentiality, and whisper in his ears: "Don't you think it a good thing to finish off such and such a jotedar?" This is how the guerrillas have to be selected and recruited singly and in secret, and organized into a unit.

However, before proceeding to do all this it is imperative to propagate to a fairly considerable extent the politics of seizure of political power by armed force among the masses, and in particular, among the masses of poor peasants. But it would be wrong to put too much stress on the importance of carrying on an intensive propaganda before starting the guerrilla attacks. The point that

political power has to be seized by armed force must be made very clear, that is, the peasants must be roused, and emphasis must be put on liberating their own villages. The peasants have to seize power *locally* in their respective areas so that the peasant masses themselves, instead of the feudal exploiters, become the sole authority in settling all their local affairs. This is precisely why we must begin by *eliminating the local class enemies*. Once an area is liberated from the clutches of class enemies (some are annihilated while some others flee) the repressive state machinery is deprived of its eyes and ears making it impossible for the police to know who is a guerrilla and who is not, and who is tilling his own land and who tills that of the jotedars (this makes it possible even to carry out the work of land reform under the supervision of a revolutionary committee which is a part of the people's state power).

The guerrilla units must be small, well-knit and mobile. So, a guerrilla unit should not, in general, have more than seven members. Generally speaking, the yardstick to judge the members of a guerrilla unit is whether or not they can annihilate one or two persons by a sudden attack with the help of ordinary traditional weapons.

The following information must not be known outside the guerrilla unit. They are :

- (a) The names of the guerrillas ;
- (b) the identity of that particular class enemy for whose elimination conspiracy has been made ; and
- (c) the time and date of the guerrilla action.

2. **Leader** : It is necessary to appoint a commander after the unit is formed.

3. **Investigation** : We should rouse the hatred of the majority of the local peasant masses against the particular class enemy marked out by us. And it is for this reason that we should arrange an investigation on a small scale with a view to knowing their opinions. In other words,

the point is that we should not be guided by subjective thinking in determining our target ; on the contrary, we should be guided by the will of the majority of the people. Once the target is determined we must keep watch over the movements of the class enemy in a thoroughgoing manner so that we can fix the best possible time and place for the attack. This part of the investigation should be done especially by the leader of the unit himself.

4. **Shelter** : The most important job before the guerrilla action is to make arrangements for safe shelters. This job must be done with utmost care and attention. Every guerrilla must *himself* arrange for his own shelter in the house of a person he relies upon most. None else should do it for him.

It is possible for a peasant to live in hiding among the peasant masses. But this is not easy at all for a petty bourgeois intellectual comrade who is a suspect to the enemy. He faces great inconvenience in this regard. Therefore, great care should be taken in finding a shelter for him in a safe place.

The shelters should be separate and located in *different* villages far removed from the place where a guerrilla action is to take place. In the town it is possible for one to live in hiding in a house without letting even one's next-door neighbour know about it. But it is an altogether different matter in the village. Therefore, in the village the house in which a comrade has taken shelter should have around it the houses of people who have sympathy with our work.

5. **Weapons** : We should not use any kind of fire-arms at this stage. The guerrilla unit must rely wholly on choppers, spears, javelins, and sickles. The tendency to lay stress on making or purchasing locally-made guns, and on capturing guns from the class enemies may arise. We must fight this tendency and patiently explain to the comrades that even if we manage to get hold of a few guns at this stage we shall not be able to retain them and

these will, almost inevitably, fall into the hands of the police. If, however, we come to possess a few guns in spite of this, surely we are not going to destroy them or hand them over to the enemy; we must *hide* them for use *in future* and resist any attempt to make futile use of them now.

The petty bourgeois intellectual cadres and those leaders who have to travel far and wide may, however, carry small pistols with them to frighten away, disperse or kill the enemy if they find themselves suddenly surrounded by him. But we should never give unnecessary importance to it, because that might encourage us to put our reliance not on the *people*, but on *weapons*, which is dangerous.

6. Planning: The petty bourgeois intellectual comrade must then sit together with the guerrilla unit and, basing himself on the findings of the investigation, proceed to work out a plan of the whole thing, including the paths of retreat, and when and where they are to meet next. This plan must be made carefully and in great details.

7. Attack: The guerrillas should come from different directions pretending, as far as possible, to be innocent persons and gather at a previously appointed place, wait for the enemy and when the opportune moment comes, spring at the enemy and kill him.

We must never be impatient or hasty, especially so in case of the first attack which has the greatest importance. We should rather be prepared to make several attempts than make a hasty attack and fail. It may be difficult in the first few actions to raid the house of the class enemy and confiscate his movable property; so, it would be better to lay more stress only on killing him. Later, when the masses are roused and take part in various kinds of work, and the attacks become regular, easier and more powerful, the enemy can be killed even in his stronghold and his property confiscated. The conditions will gradually become so favourable that after carrying out a guerrilla action,

the guerrillas themselves will be able to address the masses, explain before them the importance of such actions and, with arms in their hands, even inspire the masses by making fiery speeches.

Before the first attack is carried out successfully we must remove the rich peasant cadre, if there be any, from the guerrilla unit even if he is willing to stay on. The middle peasant cadre and the petty bourgeois intellectual comrades should also be removed, if possible. When guerrilla actions become more frequent we have to gradually bring in these willing fighters. In fact, a time will come when the battlecry will be: "He who has not dipped his hand in the blood of class enemies can hardly be called a communist."

8. Dispersal: After an attack is made the guerrillas must be ordered to disperse and go to their respective shelters. Everything that may serve as a clue must be destroyed.

The guerrilla unit must be visited frequently, regularly and in secret in order to keep up the morale of the fighters. The fear that invariably grows in their minds after the first action has to be dispelled with the help of politics and inspiring stories.

9. Political Work: Even though completely calm outwardly, the atmosphere will be charged with the expectancy of some impending event. Though the people will inevitably be elated they will still remain hesitant and neutral. At this time the political cadre and the guerrilla units will have to work their way forward secretly and with great caution. Through verbal propaganda and by explaining the programme of guerrilla actions they will have to gradually remove the indifferent attitude of the masses, win them over firmly to our side and enlist their sympathy and active support for us.

The political cadre will rather pose to be a neutral person, and start a whisper campaign like this: "So, that

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inactive! CM lives in a world of imagination which has no touch of reality.

devil of a man has got killed after all, a good riddance, eh? Can't find enough words to praise those who have done it. They have done a heroic thing, haven't they? Wish they would carry on with this business until the whole pack of those blood-suckers is finished off. Oh, how fine will be everything then! Just think, when they are gone all this area will belong to us, all this land, all this crops, all the riches will be ours! Because, once these scoundrels are gone how can the police know who is tilling whose land? The moment the masses begin to respond to such propoganda the political cadre must gradually become much bolder and hold small group meetings.

EM's politics ends in communism!

Then the petty bourgeois intellectual comrade, who had so long been hiding and watching the developments, should come out boldly with his group of courageous fighters and hold meetings to rouse the masses. This stage is a very important one. For, in spite of all his efforts till then to drive off fear from the minds of the guerrillas it had not been possible for him to succeed wholly in his efforts. But, when the heroic fighters begin to *stay among the masses* where their class brothers praise them, cooperate with them and love them and pat them on their shoulders in warm appreciation of their work, they are fired with a new wave of enthusiasm and their hatred against the enemy increases manifold. It is then that they work out new plans of action, find out new targets and form new units. Then each of them becomes tempered like steel and is able to kill ten enemies single-handed.

10. Re-mobilization: At this stage the morale of the guerrillas is higher than ever and they become eager for new actions. The masses also begin to awaken, and rally around their heroic group of fighters and extend their hands of cooperation to them. They also want new guerrilla actions, and eagerly point out their enemies, give advice about new targets of attack, come forward to keep watch over the movements of the enemy and provide important

information to the guerrilla unit. Naturally, all subsequent activities can be carried on with a higher morale, in a more favourable condition and will enjoy a more powerful mass support. Even then we must never violate the rules of secret work.

The guerrilla group then meets and, guided by the advice of the masses and relying on the information provided by them, works out plans for further annihilation of class enemies.

Further guerrilla actions take place and the steady expansion of such actions gives rise to new guerrilla units and the targets of attack spread steadily to ever newer areas—such is the process which goes on repeating itself. The masses become more active and their participation increases with every new guerrilla action and a reign of terror is imposed firmly on the local class enemies.

No state intervention is the near time!

After some offensive actions take place and the revolutionary political line of annihilating the class enemy is firmly established, the political units, through their practice and work, raise, through a whispering campaign, the broad economic slogan: "Seize the crops of the class enemy." This works like a magic in the villages and even the most backward peasant comes forward and joins the battle. Thus, the fight for the seizure of political power initiated by a few advanced sections is nourished by the tremendous initiative of the masses and mass actions, and the flames of people's war engulf the whole of the countryside.

He doesn't ignore the possibility of counter-revolution by the state.