

“To Rebel is Justified”

[Kanu Sanyal—1930-2010]

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Kanu Sanyal with Jangal Santhal and their mentor Charu Mazumdar formed the initial spark that produced the spring thunder at Naxalbari, 43 years ago, a fire engulfing, which the ruling class has been trying to douse ever since by every possible means yet which is smouldering in ever larger areas as a prairie fire. In 1964, a very high level of hope was raised with the formation of the CPI(M) that promised to shun the parliamentary path in order to build up Indian revolution because the ever decaying Indian ruling class can be overthrown and a new democratic system constructed simultaneously only by having recourse to armed revolution. In two successive ‘Bangla Bandhs’ of 1966, the revolutionary cadres saw a ray of hope of forthcoming protracted revolutionary battles while baffling the trigger happy paramilitary forces that were put into action. Around this time the Chinese Communist Party Vice-Chairman Lin Piao’s speech commemorating the victory of People’s War in China appeared in the form of a booklet. Also appeared Gen. Giap’s book “People’s War in Vietnam”. While the military aspect of revolution, especially of People’s War, along with books by Stalin-Mao Tse Tung-Chen Pota-Lin Piao were being studied in various study centres by the revolutionary youth, the ruling clique of the new found CPM party became afraid and betrayed its own revolutionary cadres by going over to the enemy’s tantalizing system of parliamentary politics, by deciding to participate in the ensuing general election in which they won sufficient seats to join West Bengal’s first coalition, the United Front government in 1967. While harping on fear-psychosis of the electorate, the CPM-leaders could become ministers and administrators for the ruling class’s moribund system calling this change of faces at Writers’ Building a revolutionary change, a small section was dismayed. At this critical juncture the trio of Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal and Charu Mazumdar, relying on the “Dare to Rebel” psychosis of the basic masses ignited the spark that is Naxalbari in the same year!

Almost instantaneously thousand flowers bloomed in the form of “*Naxalbari Sahayk Samiti*” (NSS), that is, “Save Naxalbari Group” in almost every locality spontaneously in the face of the now ruling with the police ministry at its command CPM’s policy of carrot and stick, on the one hand and malicious propaganda against Naxalbari movement on the other. Few with a fond reminiscence of those days will forget that the turncoat now-ruling-class party declared that Naxalbari incident was sponsored by CIA thus implicitly calling Kanu Sanyal a CIA agent. On the other hand, the newly transformed ruling class party with Marxist inside parenthesis sent its leader-turned-minister Harekrishna Konar to a face-to-face dialogue with Kanu Sanyal to win him over to its fold persuading him to abjure the Chinese path of People’s War. This game plan failed. On the other hand, murderous skirmishes between NSS activists and CPM goons began to take place. A “Coordination Committee of NSS” was formed with “Deshabratি”, a Bengali weekly, as its mouthpiece. “Dakshindesh”, another Bengali weekly also appeared at the same time as the mouthpiece of Maoist Communist Centre (MCC). The Co-ordination Committee was dissolved when the CPI(M-L) was formed on Lenin’s birthday

and the formation of the party that vowed to lead Indian revolution from the front was announced on the following May Day at a historical rally at Shahid Minar ground by Kanu Sanyal (1 May, 1969). [‘with great pride and boundless joy, I wish to announce today at this meeting that we have formed a genuine communist party—the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)—Kanu Sanyal at the maidan rally on 1 May, 1969]. The MCC however, did not join the party and could keep its organisation more or less safe and sound.

Kanu Sanyal was and remained till death a good disciple of Charu Mazumdar and held a truth secret in his heart. It is the model of Indian revolution as a part of world revolution envisaged by Charu Mazumdar based on Lin Piao thesis which is that China is to the whole world what Yenan was to China. The strategies and tactics emerging out of this Charu Mazumdar (CM) line were devotedly followed yielding some results. But when in course of a vicious power struggle in China, the Chinese Communist Party ‘killed’ Lin Piao, disowned Mao-tse-Tung thought as distilled by Lin Piao, arrested the Gang of Four and kept Mao-tse-Tung himself merely a figure head Chairman bereft of all power and when Sourin Bose brought the news from China to Charu Mazumdar, chaos followed in the CPI(M-L) which broke into pieces and naxalbari movement was on the verge of fizzling out to extinction. The leaders were all either killed or incarcerated. Kanu Sanyal was one in the latter group. Outside, Mahadev Mukherjee with Bhabani Chowdhury tried in vain to carry forward the CM-line and claimed raising it to Vietnam stage of guerilla warfare when their armed squad overpowered the police camp at Baidyabati in Hooghly district and looted all the rifles. Another splinter organisation, CPI(M-L) People’s War Group or simply PWG was carrying on revolutionary struggle in Andhra Pradesh. The MCC, however, spread their activities in Bihar. Later, PWG and MCC merged to become one party, the CPI (Maoist).

Kanu Sanyal was released from jail in 1979 and tried to coordinate among splinter groups of former CPI(ML) going haywire but suspended such activities because of ill-health. He realised that revolution is doing and not just talking. Since he was not doing, he remained secluded in the midst of his own people who loved him so much. But he believed that if revolutionary struggles are carried on sincerely, steadily with “Dare to Rebel” mindset, light will be visible at the end of the tunnel. “There are ups and downs in revolution... it the (Chinese Revolution) came through pains of experiences of many defeats and losses. It came after many pitfalls, errors, setbacks and defeats. Do carry on revolution till the victorious end”, said Kanu Sanyal once upon a time. □□□